

# **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GENDER-BASED LINGUISTIC REFORM ACROSS FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

**ELENA TESO**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Liverpool John Moores  
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Liverpool John Moores University**

**May 2010**

## **ABSTRACT**

The overall aim of this investigation is to identify the strategies adopted for the implementation of gender-based linguistic reform in four European countries (France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom). In addressing this aim, firstly the study explores the recommendations to eliminate discrimination of women and men from language at supranational level in order to determine whether international recommendations have influenced legislation in the four countries. Secondly, the recommendations on non-sexist language in each national context have been reviewed taking into account the structural features of each language. The study shows the diverse linguistic resources that each of the four language systems has in order to achieve non-discriminatory language and identifies the key recommendations as well as the main promoters of gender-based linguistic reform in each country. The study has found that in all four countries a significant number of measures designed to combat linguistic sexism have been introduced.

The investigation also aims at providing evidence of the adoption of guidelines for the avoidance of sexist language as well as the stages of implementation in each country. To this end, a linguistic analysis of job offers in the four languages has been carried out. This longitudinal study has helped to identify patterns of language usage across the four socio-linguistic settings as well as the preferred strategy in each language. The main finding is that, although there is no consistent strategy regarding the feminisation of occupational nomenclature in the four languages, the common intention has been to make the language of communication gender-inclusive.

The study offers a contribution to the existing work in the area of cross-cultural research. Furthermore, the review of similarities and differences between the recommendations for non-sexist language and their implementation in four linguistic settings aims to provide a framework for further research and practical application which can be drawn from the linguistic analysis of naturally occurring data.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr David Bryde and Dr Jarmila Hickman for their guidance, help and patience in the last stages of my research. This study has been the result of a long process and so I would like to express my gratitude to my original supervisory team, especially Professor Linda Archibald for her encouragement in the early stages.

I am also grateful for all the help, advice and support from colleagues and fellow researchers in the Department of Languages and the Liverpool Business School at JMU, especially Brigitte Hordern for her invaluable assistance on French linguistic issues and Adrian McGrath for his friendship and encouragement.

I would also like to thank my friends and colleagues at the Fachhochschule Cologne (Germany) for their valuable contributions on German language and Liz Crolley for her knowledge and expertise in Spanish. Finally, I would like to thank my parents and sister for their support and encouragement to complete this work, and my daughters for putting up with me for so long. I hope they did not feel neglected.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Elena Teso, hereby declare that the work presented herein is an original contribution to the field of study and has not been submitted for the award of a degree to any university before.

Signed:

Date:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract..... ii  
Acknowledgements ..... iii  
Declaration..... iv  
Table of contents..... v  
List of tables ..... ix  
List of figures..... xi

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview..... 1  
1.2 Rationale for the research..... 1  
1.3 Aims of the study..... 3  
1.4 Research methods..... 5  
1.5 Contribution to knowledge..... 5  
1.6 Structure of the thesis..... 6  
1.7 Summary..... 8

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview..... 9  
2.2 Context and background to the study..... 9  
2.3 A review of the definitions of linguistic sexism..... 13  
    2.3.1 Types of sexist language..... 15  
    2.3.2 Areas of study in linguistic sexism..... 21  
    2.3.3 Gender-neutral or non-sexist? ..... 22  
2.4 Measuring attitudes towards sexist language..... 23  
2.5 Language reform. Arguments for and against language change  
    2.5.1 Preliminary comments..... 25  
    2.5.2 Arguments against gender-based language reform..... 30  
    2.5.3 Arguments in favour of gender-based language reform ..... 32  
2.6 Guidelines for non-sexist uses of language  
    2.6.1 Preliminary comments..... 36  
    2.6.2 Aim and content of guidelines..... 37  
    2.6.3 Criticism of the guidelines..... 40  
2.7 Approaches to non-sexist language  
    2.7.1 Preliminary comments..... 40  
    2.7.2 Gender-neutralisation..... 41  
    2.7.3 Gender-specification..... 45  
2.8 Literature in languages other than English..... 47  
2.9 Concluding remarks ..... 52

## **CHAPTER 3            RESEARCH METHODS**

3.1 Overview.....	54
3.2 Research methodology.....	54
3.3 Methods of data collection.....	59
3.4 Methods of data analysis.....	68
3.5 Summary.....	70

## **CHAPTER 4            RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE AVOIDANCE OF LINGUISTIC SEXISM AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

4.1 Overview.....	72
4.2 The United Nations system.....	73
4.2.1 UNESCO.....	75
4.2.2 Other UN specialised agencies.....	82
4.3 The Council of Europe.....	84
4.4 The European Union.....	91
4.5 Have recommendations been applied? A mini case study.....	97
4.5.1 UNESCO' Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (2005)	98
4.5.2 Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (2008).....	101
4.5.3 The Council of Europe's Rules of procedure of the Committee of Ministers (2005).....	103
4.5.4 Conclusion from the analysis of the rules of procedure.....	104
4.6 Concluding remarks.....	105

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE LINGUISTIC SEXISM IN FOUR COUNTRIES**

5.1 Overview.....	108
5.2 Sexism in language: The French experience	
5.2.1 Introduction.....	108
5.2.2 Gender in French.....	109
5.2.3 The debate on the feminisation of language in France.....	110
5.2.4 The debate in other Francophone countries.....	120
5.2.5 Guidelines for non-sexist language in French.....	122
5.2.6 Conclusions from the French experience.....	125
5.3 Sexism language: The German experience	
5.3.1 Introduction.....	126
5.3.2 Gender in German.....	127
5.3.3 The debate on the feminisation of language in Germany....	129
5.3.4 Guidelines for non-sexist language in German.....	132
5.3.5 Conclusion from the German experience.....	138
5.4 Sexism in language: The Spanish experience	
5.4.1 Introduction.....	139

5.4.2 Gender in Spanish.....	139
5.4.3 The debate on the feminisation of language in Spain.....	140
5.4.4 Guidelines for non-sexist language in Spanish.....	147
5.4.5 Conclusions from the Spanish experience.....	154
5.5 Sexism in language: The United Kingdom experience	
5.5.1 Introduction.....	156
5.5.2 Gender in English.....	156
5.5.3 The debate on non-sexist language in the United Kingdom.	158
5.5.4 Guidelines for non-sexist language in UK English.....	160
5.5.5 Conclusions from the UK experience.....	165
5.6 An evaluation of non-sexist language strategies across the four countries.....	166
5.7 Conclusion.....	168

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF JOB TITLE CATEGORIES IN FRANCE, GERMANY, SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM (2001-02, 2007-08)**

6.1 Overview.....	170
6.2 Civil service results.....	172
6.2.1 French civil service .....	173
6.2.1.1 Results from the 2002 corpus.....	174
6.2.1.2 Results from the 2007 corpus.....	177
6.2.2 German civil service.....	179
6.2.2.1 Results from the 2002 corpus.....	179
6.2.2.2 Results from the 2007 corpus.....	182
6.2.3 Spanish civil service.....	184
6.2.3.1 Results from the 2002 corpus.....	185
6.2.3.2 Results from the 2007 corpus.....	187
6.2.4 British civil service.....	191
6.3 Newspaper results.....	192
6.3.1 France – newspaper sample.....	193
6.3.1.1 Results from 2002.....	193
6.3.1.2 Results from 2008.....	194
6.3.2 Germany – newspaper sample.....	196
6.3.2.1 Results from 2002.....	196
6.3.2.2 Results from 2008.....	198
6.3.3 Spain – newspaper results.....	200
6.3.3.1 Results from 2002.....	200
6.3.3.2 Results from 2007.....	202
6.3.4 United Kingdom – newspaper sample.....	204
6.4 Results of longitudinal study.....	205
6.4.1 Longitudinal analysis of civil service results.....	205
6.4.1.1 French civil service .....	205

6.4.1.2 German civil service.....	207
6.4.1.3 Spanish civil service.....	208
6.4.1.4 British civil service.....	209
6.4.2 Longitudinal analysis of newspaper results.....	209
6.4.2.1 French newspaper .....	209
6.4.2.2 German newspaper.....	210
6.4.2.3 Spanish newspaper.....	211
6.4.2.4 UK newspaper .....	211
6.5 Concluding remarks.....	212

## **CHAPTER 7          DISCUSSION**

7.1 Overview.....	213
7.2 Results across the four countries.....	213
7.2.1. Civil service results across the four linguistic contexts.....	213
7.2.2 Newspaper results across the four linguistic contexts.....	215
7.3 Comparative analysis of results from the civil service and newspaper data.....	218
7.3.1.1 France (2001-2002).....	218
7.3.1.2 France (2007-2008).....	219
7.3.2.1 Germany (2001-2002).....	220
7.3.2.2 Germany (2007-2008).....	220
7.3.3.1 Spain (2001-2002).....	221
7.3.3.2 Spain (2007-2008).....	222
7.3.4. United Kingdom (2002-2008).....	223
7.4 Individual countries' analysis.....	224
7.4.1 France.....	224
7.4.2 Germany.....	226
7.4.3 Spain.....	227
7.4.4 United Kingdom.....	230
7.5 Final conclusions.....	230

## **CHAPTER 8          CONCLUSION**

8.1 Overview.....	233
8.2 Aims and objectives.....	233
8.3 Limitations.....	237
8.4 Areas of future research.....	237
8.5 The future of feminisation.....	239

## **REFERENCES**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 Proportion of women employed in the civil service across the four countries.....	63
3.2 Sources of data (public appointments).....	64
3.3 Sources of data (selected newspapers).....	66
4.1 Examples of gender-inclusive nomenclature in UNESCO's <i>Guidelines on gender-neutral language</i> (1999).....	79
4.2 Examples of the avoidance of masculine pronouns as recommended in UNESCO's <i>Guidelines on gender-neutral language</i> .....	80
4.3 Results of the analysis of the Rules of Procedure (English texts).....	105
5.1 Summary of guidelines for non-sexist language in four countries	167
6.1 Job title classification in the civil service (2001-2002).....	172
6.2 Job title classification in the civil service (2007-2008).....	173
6.3 List of selected job titles in the French civil service (2002).....	174
6.4 Distribution of job title categories in the French civil service sample (2002).....	174
6.5 List of selected job titles in the French civil service (2007).....	178
6.6 Distribution of job title categories in the French civil service sample (2007).....	178
6.7 List of selected job titles in the German civil service (2002).....	180
6.8 Distribution of job title categories in the German civil service sample (2002).....	180
6.9 List of selected job titles in the German civil service (2007).....	183
6.10 Distribution of job title categories in the German civil service sample (2007).....	183
6.11 List of selected job titles in the Spanish civil service (2002).....	185
6.12 Distribution of job title categories in the Spanish civil service sample (2002).....	186
6.13 List of selected job titles in the Spanish civil service (2007).....	188
6.14 Distribution of job title categories in the Spanish civil service sample (2007).....	188
6.15 List of selected job titles in the UK civil service (2002 and 2007).....	191
6.16 Job title classification in selected newspapers (2001-2002).....	192
6.17 Job title classification in selected newspapers (2007-2008).....	192
6.18 List of selected job titles in French newspaper <i>Le Monde</i> (2002).....	193
6.19 Distribution of job title categories in <i>Le Monde</i> (2002).....	194
6.20 List of selected job titles in <i>Le Monde</i> (2008).....	195

6.21	Distribution of job title categories in <i>Le Monde</i> (2008).....	195
6.22	Distribution of job title categories in <i>Die Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> (2002).....	196
6.23	List of selected job titles in <i>Die Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> (2002).....	197
6.24	Distribution of job title categories in <i>Die Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> (2008).....	198
6.25	List of selected job titles in <i>Die Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> (2008).....	199
6.26	Distribution of job title categories in <i>El País</i> (2002).....	200
6.27	List of selected job titles in <i>El País</i> (2002).....	201
6.28	Distribution of job title categories in <i>El País</i> (2007).....	202
6.29	List of selected job titles in <i>El País</i> (2007).....	203
6.30	List of job titles from <i>The Sunday Times</i> (2008).....	204



## LIST OF FIGURES

6.1	French civil service corpus (2002 and 2007).....	206
6.2	German civil service corpus (2002-2007).....	207
6.3	Spanish civil service corpus (2002-2007).....	208
6.4	French newspaper corpus (2002-2008).....	210
6.5	German newspaper corpus (2002-2008).....	210
6.6	Spanish newspaper corpus (2002-2008).....	211
7.1	Results of the civil service dataset across four languages (2001-2002).....	213
7.2	Results of the civil service dataset across four languages (2007-2008).....	215
7.3	Results of the newspaper dataset across four languages (2001-2002).....	216
7.4	Results of the newspaper dataset across four languages (2007-2008).....	217
7.5	France: Results 2001-2002.....	218
7.6	France: Results 2007-2008.....	219
7.7	Germany: Results 2001-2002.....	220
7.8	Germany: Results 2007-2008.....	221
7.9	Spain: Results 2001-2002.....	222
7.10	Spain: Results (2007-2008).....	223
7.11	France: Comparative analysis of civil service and newspaper data (2001-2002).....	225
7.12	France: Comparative analysis of civil service and newspaper data (2007-2008).....	225
7.13	Germany: Comparative analysis of civil service and newspaper data (2001-2002).....	227
7.14	Germany: Comparative analysis of civil service and newspaper data (2007-2008).....	228
7.15	Spain: Comparative analysis of civil service and newspaper data (2001-2002).....	228
7.16	Spain: Comparative analysis of civil service and newspaper data (2007-2008).....	229

**1.1 Overview**

The current chapter introduces the study and establishes the motivating factors for the research. In this chapter, the following aspects will be covered: 1) the rationale for the research; 2) the aims and objectives; 3) the research methods employed; and 4) the contribution to knowledge. A summary of the structure of the thesis is also provided.

**1.2 Rationale for the research**

The promotion of equal opportunities for women and men as well as the elimination of all kinds of discrimination against women have been main concerns for international organisations, national governments, feminist groups and academics over the last thirty years. Gender equality, a term which refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, has permeated all areas of action of international organisations and has been widely promoted to ensure equality of treatment of the sexes. Gender equality is about women and men being equally visible in all fields of public, political, social, economic and cultural life. Although a first wave of activities aimed at the promotion of gender equality has already taken place insofar as legislation has been passed to eliminate sex discrimination, it is possible to talk of a second wave of equal opportunities, and this would be a phase of consolidation of gender equality policies.

One of the areas that have been addressed to achieve gender equality is the equal treatment of women and men with regards to language. As discrimination based on gender has been observed in language use, numerous proposals to avoid this type of discrimination have been put forward over the last thirty years. As a result, the elimination of sexist language usages has become part of the measures aimed at overcoming discrimination based on sex. This responds to the socio-cultural changes that have taken place in the position of women in society. There is no doubt that the role of women in society has changed dramatically in recent decades; women have been gaining access to new positions in all spheres of life. As a result, language has had to adapt to this

new reality. For instance, the introduction of equal opportunities legislation in the labour market over the last thirty years has translated in a need to review the language used in contracts of employment and job vacancies in order to eliminate gender bias, stereotyping of gender roles and the invisibility of women in certain areas. It has been argued that the language used in job vacancy advertisements could contain stereotypes which are detrimental to women or which could lead to the exclusion of women because they are not explicitly mentioned. Another argument is that discrimination against women in language has been perceived as another kind of discrimination against women. Consequently, it was felt that linguistic changes needed to be made in order to reflect the fact that more women are now an important part of the labour market in western societies, and that there is a need to name them, that is, to make them visible through language.

At European level, the introduction of equal opportunities legislation in the labour market over the last thirty years has brought about the need to review the language used in employment contracts and job vacancy announcements. One of the early examples at European Union level is the 1976 Council directive on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (76/207/EEC) which declared that there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of sex in the conditions, including selection criteria, for access to all jobs and posts. As a result, it has been necessary to make some changes to job advertisements in order to comply with this European Union directive. In this respect, it has also been essential to draw up recommendations or guidelines specifically aimed at how to avoid discriminatory uses of language. The development of non-sexist language guidelines over the last three decades has been promoted mainly by government agencies, professional organisations as well as by women's organisations. In the 1970s women's groups and task forces within professional organisations began to put pressure on their organisations to eliminate gender-biased language from their materials. Linguistic intervention has taken the form of equal opportunities policies as well as guidelines for the promotion of non-sexist language in official correspondence, publications and job advertisements. This kind of linguistic

intervention has been aimed at promoting a more inclusive language with a view to increase women's visibility in language.

### **1.3 Aims of the study**

This study aims to identify the different strategies that have been adopted in order to eliminate gender discrimination from language and to achieve linguistic equality. The study evaluates the different approaches concerning the avoidance of linguistic sexism at international level as well as at national level in four European countries. By applying a comparative approach, the study aims to identify the most effective strategies and their viability.

In order to support the main aim of the study, one of the objectives of the present research is to identify the general recommendations on the elimination and avoidance of sexist language which have been formulated at international and European level. Over the last three decades, supranational organisations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union have become aware of social inequalities between women and men. One of the aspects these organisations have highlighted is that of language and its socio-cultural repercussions. These organisations have noted that the systematic use of gender-neutral terminology and wording is an important factor in the attainment of equality between women and men. As a result, they have taken steps to promote the elimination and avoidance of sexist language. The review of guidelines for non-sexist language use issued by supranational organisations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union seeks to establish whether “gender mainstreaming”, as a strategy for promoting gender equality, has impacted on policy.

Once the recommendations formulated by international organisations have been identified and analysed, the study aims to determine whether international recommendations have influenced formal legislation in the form of anti-discriminatory linguistic measures to reduce differences in the linguistic treatment of women and men in four European nations. Thus the recommendations to avoid sexism in language in four countries (France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom) are identified and analysed. The

study also explores the general principles underpinning the different linguistic strategies that these four countries have adopted to apply the principle of equal treatment between women and men in reference to language use, taking into account the structural features of each language in the areas of syntax and word formation. The review of the international organisations' policies and practices as well as the individual countries' responses to the international recommendations identified in the study strives to highlight the existing strategies to implement non-sexist language, showing the similarities and/or differences between languages and some of the implications and outcomes of the different approaches.

The third objective of the present study is to evaluate whether gender-based language reform planning has been implemented in practice. To this end, an analysis of a corpus of offers of employment from each of the four countries has been carried out in order to illustrate how each country's proposals are working out in practice. The study is primarily concerned with the specific area of sexism in written language and the strategies which have been put in place to avoid it. Specifically, the study focuses on the language used by public administrations and newspapers to advertise job vacancies. These two areas constitute a highly visible arena in which to obtain gender equality. In addition, the use of masculine occupational labels has been considered by many feminists and linguists as an obstacle to equal treatment and it has been directly linked to gender discrimination in the employment arena (Pauwels, 1998: 196). Linguistic discrimination has been seen as a form of sex discrimination. As a result, several countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Spain and the United States, as well as international organisations such as UNESCO, have set up terminology committees with the aim of revising occupational nomenclature in order to eliminate sex bias in the workforce. This study analyses occupational nouns in four different socio-linguistic settings in order to evaluate whether the recommendations to avoid sexist language have been implemented in practice.

Finally, a sociolinguistic analysis of the different strategies for gender-based language reform as well as the various stages of implementation in the light of the case study findings is carried out across the four sociolinguistic contexts in

order to identify current usage trends. This comparative study where data from four different linguistic and socio-cultural settings are analysed allows for the identification of similarities and differences in the approaches to non-sexist language.

#### **1.4 Research methods**

The study constitutes a sociolinguistic comparative analysis based on linguistic descriptions of gender formation in four languages of various structural and socio-cultural backgrounds. The comparison of four different languages aims to investigate the ways in which structural linguistic features interact with sociolinguistic tendencies of change. It is also a longitudinal study which takes data from two different periods in order to ascertain any tendency toward change over a five-year period. The focus is on post-70s language usage rather than on the analysis of the historical evolution of the four individual languages. Yet it constitutes a diachronic analysis as it aims to investigate whether language has changed over a five year period. This will help to identify current usage trends for the four different countries of the study.

The data used for the analysis have been taken from a varied range of sources. Primary sources consist of equal opportunities policies, rules of procedure, style guides, codes of practice, etc. which have been published by international organisations and also in the four national contexts. Job vacancy advertisements in each of the four countries provide the data source for the case study. A review of the extensive literature on the subject in the four languages studied constitutes the framework of the study. Due to the ongoing nature of the issue, the study has been regularly updated and new developments incorporated.

#### **1.5 Contribution to knowledge**

Since the establishment of feminist linguistics at the end of the 1970s, a wealth of theoretical and empirical information has become available on the topic of linguistic sexism. Many studies have focused on different aspects of gender and language, mainly on the differences in the way women and men speak as well as the structural and functional aspects of gender-related variation and change

in individual languages. Most studies tend to focus on one language (and mainly on English). Some studies (see, for instance, Pauwels, 2004; Romaine, 2001) have examined the spread of non-sexist language reform across different varieties of English. Research on the spread of feminisation in French-speaking countries has also been carried out (see, for instance, Gervais-Le Garff, 2007). Some studies have compared the mechanisms for non-discriminatory language and guidelines for equal treatment in two or three languages (for example, Hellinger (1990) compares English and German; Gomard (1995) compares Danish, English and German) but to date few studies have undertaken a comparative sociolinguistic analysis of several languages of different morphological characteristics which is what the present research covers. This study addresses this gap in the literature by analysing and contrasting the different approaches to the elimination of linguistic sexism in four European languages.

At the same time there is a need to assess how effective recommendations on the avoidance of linguistic sexism have been. The current comparative analysis of the various strategies proposed as well as the stages of implementation of recommendations on non-sexist language aims to highlight the most effective approaches for further practical implementation.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

The study is divided into eight chapters as follows: Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on the topic of linguistic sexism. An extensive literature exists on the different theoretical and practical approaches to the issue of sexism in language. The literature also reveals different definitions of sexism according to the view of the relationship between language and society. Another area of study found in the literature is the measures to assess sexist usages and attitudes. Arguments in favour and against gender-based language reform are reviewed as well as the aim and content of guidelines for non-sexist language. The different approaches to achieve non-discriminatory language are identified in general and for each of the four linguistic contexts of the study. Finally a review of the literature in languages other than English is carried out.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodological considerations and research methods employed to collect and analyse data in the present research. The study of linguistic sexism is a complex one which takes aspects from several disciplines. Here a sociolinguistic approach has been used for the analysis of job vacancy advertisements in the public and the private sector with the aim to assess the state of implementation of gender-based language reform across four linguistic contexts. The case study provides documentary evidence in the four countries of study.

Chapter 4 identifies the recommendations on the avoidance and elimination of sexist language uses which have been issued at international and supranational level. A review of equal opportunities policies and other gender-related legislation for each of three supranational organisations (the United Nations system, the Council of Europe and the European Union) has been undertaken. An analysis of several of these three organisations' basic texts is carried out to assess the practical implementation of their own recommendations.

Chapter 5 analyses each individual country's response to the issue of the avoidance of linguistic sexism. A review of each language's gender system as well as the recommendations to eliminate linguistic sexism is carried out. At the same time equal opportunities policies and other gender-related legislation for each of the four countries of the study are reviewed. The evolution of the debate that has taken place in each linguistic context regarding gender-based language reform is analysed, taking into account the arguments for and against linguistic changes.

Chapter 6 consists of the presentation of findings of the case study which involves the linguistic analysis of a corpus of offers of employment advertised within the public administration and in national newspapers in each of the four national contexts at two points over a five year period. The chapter also presents the findings of the longitudinal study of offers of employment across the four socio-linguistic settings.



Chapter 7 constitutes the analysis and discussion of the findings of the case study which aims to evaluate whether the recommendations identified at international level (analysed in Chapter 4) and in each of the four linguistic contexts (analysed in Chapter 5) are being implemented in practice. Furthermore, the aim of the case study is to identify patterns of usage in each language at two points over a five year period to ascertain whether a change has taken place. This will in turn allow a sociolinguistic comparison of the current situation regarding the elimination of sexist language practices across four linguistic contexts. The evaluation of this comparison aims to identify examples of best practice across the four linguistic contexts in two specific areas, job vacancy announcements in the public administration and in selected newspapers. Chapter 7 concludes with a comparison and contrast of the different approaches for the avoidance and elimination of sexist language uses as well as the stages of implementation in each of the four socio-linguistic contexts. An evaluation of the different proposed strategies individually and collectively can help assess the practical implementation of the stated policy intentions.

Finally, Chapter 8 consists of the concluding remarks about the sociolinguistic analysis of the corpus data in the four linguistic contexts. The chapter also includes the limitations of the present research in terms of methodology and choice of sample. Areas of further research are also identified.

## **1.7 Summary**

This chapter has introduced the rationale for the research as well as the aims and objectives which are addressed in the present study. It has highlighted the contribution to knowledge that the study is intending to provide in terms of a comparative analysis of strategies to achieve gender-inclusive language in four sociolinguistic contexts. This chapter has also referred to the research methods employed in the study and has provided the structure of the thesis.

The next chapter constitutes the review of the extensive literature on the subject of linguistic sexism and the proposals to avoid it.

**2.1 Overview**

The current chapter provides an account of the literature regarding the representation of women in language and specifically the issue of sexism in language and the proposals which have been put forward to eliminate it. For the purpose of this chapter, the literature on the subject is reviewed under the following categories:

- 1) definition(s) of linguistic sexism
- 2) measuring attitudes towards sexist and non-sexist uses of language
- 3) language reform and arguments for and against non-sexist language changes
- 4) analysis of guidelines for non-sexist language
- 5) different approaches to non-sexist language
- 6) literature in languages other than English

**2.2 Context and background to the study**

Since the emergence of feminist linguistics in the 1970s, there has been an explosion of publications devoted to the study of language and gender. This field started to flourish in English-speaking countries, mainly in the United States, but more recently it has been studied in most major languages. The interest this topic has raised in a wide variety of languages is a reflection of the concern for the premise that language has to change to adapt to the new socio-cultural mores. Gender-based linguistic reform has been considered the biggest linguistic change of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at an international level.

The debate on the gender-based language reform and the avoidance and elimination of linguistic sexism has been the result of the change in the position of women in society in the last thirty years. Changing ideologies of gender have affected many social institutions and practices including language use (Cameron, 2003). The effect of those changes in language has been the object of many studies since the 1970s.

The literature on the broader topic of gender and language is very extensive. A large body of research has been devoted to discourse differences, mainly the differences in the way women and men use language (among the most frequently quoted works are Coates, 1993, 2004, Lakoff, 1975 and Tannen, 1992). Another category in the research into the relationship between language and gender is the study of conversational interaction between the sexes (see, amongst others, Tannen, 1986, 1993). A more recent area of research has been that of language and masculinity (see, for example, Johnson & Meinhoff, 1997). This body of research has dealt with speech behaviour mainly of women but also of men.

Another important area of study is the representation of women and men in language and the potential gender bias in both language structure and content. The studies that deal with this issue have tried to ascertain whether women are discriminated against in language and how linguistic inequalities may be connected to social inequalities between the sexes. Drawing from these studies, the focus of the present research is on linguistic sexism and the policies aimed at eliminating it from language.

Although there had been isolated works on the topic of language and gender before, the study of language and gender began in the 1970s, concretely in 1975 which was designated International Women's Year by the United Nations, with the publication of three books which have had significant influence in later sociolinguistic work: *Male/Female Language* by Mary Key, *Language and Woman's Place* by Robin Lakoff and *Language and sex: Difference and Dominance* by Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley). These three books constituted an attempt to open up a field of research which was still in its infancy. The emphasis of these works was on the differences in the way women and men speak. Since then the interest in the subject has spread to a wide variety of disciplines, and language and gender studies have been established as an academic discipline in many universities in the United States first, spreading later to Europe, in particular, the United Kingdom, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Although the debate on linguistic sexism started in English-speaking countries, in the last two decades interest in this topic has emerged in other languages such as French or German where it is seen as a significant issue as well as a rich field of research. In this respect a comparison of the studies which deal with sexism in a natural gender language such as English with those that deal with sexism in languages with grammatical gender, for example, Spanish and Italian, can make a further contribution to the debate. The studies reviewed in this chapter have contributed significantly to the body of knowledge on linguistic sexism and help provide a framework for the present research. These works are mostly limited to one language (and mainly English) whereas the present study addresses the extent to which other languages have dealt with the relationship between language and sexism, taking into account the grammatical differences between them.

A review of the literature on the topic of linguistic sexism also reveals numerous textbooks on the broad subject of language and gender study (from Talbot in 1998 to the more recent work by Litosseliti in 2006 or Jule in 2008). This reflects the growing popularity of university courses on the subject of language and gender, mainly in English-speaking countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Edited collections on the topic of gender and language are also common. The most recent and relevant to the present study is the collection edited by Hellinger and Bussman entitled *Gender across languages: The linguistic representation of women and men*. This three volume collection (2001, 2002 and 2003) represents a systematic description of classification of gender and of the structural and functional aspects of gender-related variation; it also reviews the situation regarding linguistic sexism in 30 languages. The contribution of many specialists in each of the 30 languages constitutes the most comprehensive account of the analysis of gender categories across languages. The popularity of gender and language studies has also inspired a new journal, the *Gender and language* journal, published by the International Gender and Language Association (IGALA) in 2008. This association, established in 1999, constitutes an international interdisciplinary organisation committed to the promotion and support of research in the area of language and gender.

The treatment of the sexes in language is an important issue because it has been argued that the discrimination against women in language is a reflection of the discrimination women suffer in society. Mills (2003) argues that this discrimination is systematic, that sexism is imposed by those in power, that it is ingrained in social structures and that it works to the benefit of men. At the same time, it has been claimed that the elimination of sexism from language is an important tool for eliminating inequalities between women and men in society. Taking this view into account, a review of the definitions of the term 'linguistic sexism' has been undertaken as the different definitions constitute an attempt to show the importance of this issue as well as the relevance of the literature on the topic.

Another field of study, mainly from sociolinguistics, social psychology and psycholinguistics, has been the recognition of sexist language and the development of instruments designed to assess attitudes toward sexist language. Some studies have shown that there is a lack of awareness as to what sexist language is and have concluded that greater awareness may lead to linguistic change and linguistic equality for women and men. Consequently, although outside its scope, the present study has undertaken a brief overview of the studies analysing the measures to assess sexist usages and attitudes.

The following sections review the different arguments that have been put forward in favour of and against gender-based language reform as a way of achieving equal treatment of the sexes. Similarly given that one of the main activities within the scope of gender-based language reform is the drafting of guidelines for non-sexist uses of language, it is pertinent to review the literature that deals with the role and content of guidelines for the non-sexist use of language. The chapter also includes an analysis of the various approaches to non-sexist language which have been put forward in recent years, not only in a natural gender language (or semantic gender) such as English, but also in grammatical gender languages such as French, Spanish and German. The arguments in favour and against the different approaches to non-sexist language are also reviewed. Finally the chapter ends with a review of the literature in languages other than English.

### **2.3 A review of the definitions of linguistic sexism**

Sexism is a complex concept as it can apply to a range of social practices including language. In this respect it is possible to question whether language is in itself sexist and to what extent it can discriminate against one sex or the other. An extensive bibliography of what constitutes sexist language and how to change it exists.

The term “sexism” was originally coined in the 1960s to refer to ideas and practices that downgrade women relative to men (Miller & Swift, 1976) possibly by analogy to the term “racism”. Bodine (1975) used the term “androcentrism”, that is, male-centered, as the biased representation of the sexes in language, mainly portraying men as the norm and making women deviate from that norm. Androcentrism also refers to a language that makes women invisible because they are not mentioned. Early feminist linguists such as Bodine (1975) and Spender (1985) have claimed that men have fixed language to their advantage, therefore making women invisible. More recently, Weatherall (2002) defines sexist language as a language used to control women, as well as discourses that perpetuate social beliefs about women. More specifically, linguistic sexism refers to the inequitable treatment of gender that is built into the language (Crawford, 2004:238). It has also been suggested that linguistic sexism is far more subtle than other forms of sexism (Porreca, 1984) because of the role played by language in maintaining and strengthening sexist values.

As a strategy to engender social change, feminists have challenged sexism in language since the 1970s, and the representation of women in language has become an important feminist concern since then. Some feminist authors have claimed that the sexism which exists in western societies whereby the masculine seems to prevail over the feminine is hindering the establishment of equality between women and men. Feminists argue that sexist language reinforces the image of females as exceptions and therefore propose that reducing the gender bias in language would contribute to reduce sex discrimination.

Feminists are often divided over the relationship between language and society. Some have questioned whether language is in itself sexist and if so whether it reflects male dominance in society. Others have also questioned whether sexist language is a contributing factor in creating sexism in society, and whether by eliminating sexist language, sexism in society will disappear. Many studies have claimed that language in itself is not sexist; it is the use of the language that can be sexist. Three possible types of relationship between language and society have been discussed: 1) language mirrors gender divisions in society; 2) language creates gender divisions and 3) there is an interplay between language and social structures (Coates, 1993; Graddol and Swann, 1989) which indicates that language reflects gender divisions but also helps to create these divisions. Two types of sexism have consequently been identified: social sexism, that is, the kind of sexism that is in the mind of the speaker; and linguistic sexism, that is, the fact that the lexicon and grammatical structure of the language might be sexist in themselves. These two types of sexism are in fact interlinked but for the purposes of the present study a review of linguistic sexism specifically has been carried out.

As a result of the feminist movement and the growing awareness of gender inequalities in languages, many studies that critically analysed sexist language usages and provided alternatives for non-sexist language appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The most salient ones are those by Miller and Swift (1976 and 1989), Nilsen (1977), Thorne and Henley (1975) and Vetterling-Bruggin (1981). Similarly to the work of many feminists, these studies have concluded that languages are sexist because they name the world from a masculine point of view. Moreover, language issues have been viewed as having a strong political component because, it has been argued, sexist language is not only about words used to describe women but also how these words are used and to what ends (Weatherall, 2002:11). Many early texts which studied feminist linguistic reform were oriented to activism and practice, for example, Miller & Swift's work (1989).

In order to combat sexism in language, many feminists and linguists have provided definitions of what constitutes sexism and its relationship with society.

Thus linguistic sexism has been defined in different ways according to the feminist views of the relationship between language and reality. Traditionally sexist language has been defined as those usages which make women invisible or trivialise, stereotype and insult them (Vetterling-Braggin, 1981). However, other definitions which deal with the unfair treatment of both sexes in language, and not only the unfair treatment of women, have also been provided.

The question many feminist linguists have raised is whether the eradication of linguistic sexism will alter the position of women and men in society. Many people believe that society has to be made more equal first and linguistic equality will follow. According to this view, language mirrors socio-cultural patterns; therefore, language is an instrument for the discrimination of women (Lakoff, 1975).

Other authors argue (for instance, Spender, 1985) that the use of sexist language may reinforce and perpetuate the discrimination of women and consequently supporters of language reform believe that a change in language will facilitate social change. The next section reviews the different types of sexist language which have been identified in the literature.

### **2.3.1 Types of sexist language**

Linguistically, an important distinction can be made between lexical sexism (at a word level) and grammatical (or syntactic) sexism. García Meseguer (1977, 1994) argues that syntactic or grammatical sexism reflects an attitude deeply rooted in society and therefore it is more difficult to eliminate. On the other hand, most studies have focused on lexical sexism as it has been argued that sexism at the word level can be eliminated. One of the fields of study in lexical sexism is that of occupational nomenclature which has been the object of a great deal of analysis and constitutes the focus of this study. Three potentially responsible agents of linguistic sexism have been identified: speakers and their mental context, listeners and their mental context and the language as a system (García Meseguer, 1994). Some studies have also analysed whether some languages appear to be more sexist than others. García Meseguer (1994) argues that Spanish, as a linguistic system, is less sexist than English because



in Spanish out of the three responsible agents of linguistic sexism only the first two operate whereas he claims in English the three agents operate.

Henley (1987) suggests that there are three broad types of sexist language: 1) language that ignores women or makes them invisible, 2) language that defines women narrowly, and 3) language that derogates women. These three types are not mutually exclusive. One aspect of women being invisible in language is the use of masculine forms such as *mankind*, *fireman* when referring to people in general, what has been called the 'generic masculine'. Also included under this type of sexist language is the use of masculine pronouns as generic forms to refer to both men and women. In fact, a great deal of research on sexist language has focused on the effects of the generic masculine to include women. It has been argued that the use of masculine pronouns creates exclusively masculine images (Bodine, 1975, Martyna, 1980) whereas the use of job titles marked for gender with feminine suffixes (for example, *waitress*, *manageress*) seems to imply that the role is less important than if the masculine term had been used. It appears therefore that the status of the job is an influential factor in the creation and use of feminine forms. Some studies have shown that the inclusion of women is higher with non-sexist alternatives than with masculine generics (see for instance, the study by Braun et al, 2005 regarding German). This is analysed later regarding grammatical languages such as French and Spanish. Henley also states that women are ignored in language simply by not being topics of discourse.

Henley's (1987) second type of sexist language (language that defines women narrowly) refers to the observation that language usage reflects women's secondary status because they are more often discussed in terms of their appearance and their relationship to men, for example as wife or mother, or by courtesy titles which denote their relationship with men (*Miss*, *Mrs*). Naming practices have also been an important aspect of language study, mainly, courtesy titles, because they constitute cultural conceptions of women in society. Within this type of sexist language the use of asymmetrical courtesy titles has been the subject of many studies since the 1970s. One of the pioneering works was that of Miller and Swift in 1976. The introduction in English of the new

courtesy title *Ms* to eradicate discriminatory practices between the sexes based on women's marital status is well documented (see amongst others Holmes, 2001, Pauwels, 2001 and Romaine, 2001).

Finally, the third type of sexist language identified by Henley suggests that language might demean women, what has been called the 'semantic derogation of women' (Henley, 1987; Miller and Swift, 1976; Schulz, 1975). An aspect of English that has been identified as derogatory to women is that the masculine forms tend to have more positive connotations than the feminine ones. Lakoff (1975), one of the first linguists to directly address the topic of language and gender, compared the connotations of the terms *bachelor* and *spinster*, *master* and *mistress*, and concluded that the masculine forms have a more positive connotation, that in fact, these terms are not parallel, because the feminine has a more negative connotation. Research in this field has also shown that there are far more negative sexual terms for women than for men and also that words referring to women have tended to acquire a negative meaning over time (Schulz, 1975).

Although sexism can in theory apply to the discrimination of both sexes, in practice the term has been frequently used to refer to the bias against women. However, this emphasis on discrimination against women has been often criticised because it can be in itself sexist (Pauwels, 1998) and therefore more recently new definitions of sexism have been provided in order to reflect the fact that sexism is the discrimination based on gender and therefore can apply to men as well. Cameron (1998) defines sexism as any discrimination on the basis of gender, that is, ideas and practices that treat either sex unfairly, arguing that sexist language is not best thought of as the naming of reality from a single male perspective but as a multifaceted phenomenon, taking different forms in different representational practices. Taking into account the premise that gender bias can apply to both sexes, sexist language has been defined as the language which promotes and maintains attitudes that stereotype people according to gender (Nattfhe, 1993).

Feminists have often been ridiculed because of their claims on sexist language and their attempts to change it. Weatherall (2002:10) says that “the trouble provoked whenever feminist issues about language are raised is an indication that issues of sexist language are inextricably tied to the prevailing social and moral order”. For example, attempts to change sexist language in France have encountered a great deal of criticism and ridicule; this is because, it has been claimed (Yaguello, 1978) it is the fear of innovation which makes the feminine forms difficult to be adopted. This is especially true of countries, such as France, where there is a strong tradition of control over the language (see Chapter 5.2).

The different views regarding language and its relationship to the position of women in society vary according to the feminists’ conceptions of gender. A great deal of research has concentrated on the ways in which language shapes our view of the world (Cameron, 1995, Coates, 2004). In relation to this, there is a division amongst feminists as to what constitutes sexist language. For some, sexist language is a symptom of the oppression of women in society and therefore language has to change to bring it into line with reality. The main exponents of this view are Miller & Swift who wrote *The Handbook of non-sexist writing for writers, editors and speakers* in 1981 as a set of guidelines to avoid gender bias in written documents. Miller & Swift, as other advocates of this view, have been called ‘reformists’ (Cameron, 1998) because for them there is a need to reform language in order to adapt it to the present times. These two authors point out that as women become more prominent in fields from which they were once excluded, their presence triggers questions of linguistic equality to bring new visibility to women. Miller & Swift’s argument is that the vocabulary and grammar of English language discriminate against women. They also claim that dictionaries lag behind actual usage, and consequently they are not always reliable indicators of new meanings.

Miller and Swift’s argument has been labelled as conservative given that the other, more extremist, view is that sexist language is the cause of the oppression that women suffer in society and that it reinforces the superiority of men in society. An important exponent of this view is Spender (1985). In her book *Man made language*, Spender builds on the work done on sexism in

language in the 1970s and provides a useful review of the bibliography on the subject. She defines sexism as the bias in favour of males. For her language is man-made: men have fixed the meaning and usage of words and that is the reason words embody sexism. She argues that the English vocabulary has been designed to construct a male supremacy and for her, language has to change because for women to become visible in society, it is necessary that they become linguistically visible (Spender, 1985:162). In her opinion sexist language assumes that the masculine is the norm and consequently it needs to be changed. Language was and is seen by many feminists as a powerful instrument of patriarchy.

Whether feminists view sexist language as a symptom or as a cause of women's oppression, the argument which is common to most feminists is that language needs to change. One of the most common arguments in favour of changing language is that the elimination of sexist language will lead to the elimination of sexism in society. In arguing for the need of non-sexist language reform, feminist linguists assume that language is not a neutral means of representing social realities (Ehrlich and King, 1998). The arguments in favour of (and against) changing language are analysed in section 2.5 below.

The literature reveals that sexist linguistic practices reflect a common reality of gender inequality: men are seen as the norm usually, and women are seen as a deviation from this norm. The most common argument is that linguistic inequalities may be related to social inequalities between women and men. These linguistic inequalities in turn reflect the discrimination that women suffer in society. One of the more obvious signs of linguistic discrimination against women is that of naming conventions including the use of occupational terminology which is analysed later in this study. The supremacy of the masculine over the feminine in most languages has been viewed as an obstacle to achieving effective gender equality between men and women (European Parliament, Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities, 2003).

Most of the research on sexist language and proposals to change it started in English-speaking countries. It has been argued that English as an international

language and lingua franca provides a model for international language reform (Romaine, 2001). Examples of sexist language (in English) include masculine generics, the use of generic masculine pronouns, generalizations and stereotyping. Many feminists have argued that the use of masculine generic forms could be ambiguous and discriminatory because in fact they could – and often are – interpreted as being masculine-specific and in some cases they could be construed as not referring to women at all. This view is reflected in the conclusions of the various studies on the effect of masculine generic forms. Research in this area has shown that masculine generics do not function generically and that they tend to exclude women and promote an androcentric view of the world (Bodine, 1975). For instance, studies that assess the impact of sex-biased job advertisements have found that sex-unbiased advertisements encourage more females to apply (Bem & Bem, 1973). Most of these studies are from social psychology research and in this respect constitute a useful body of evidence to support calls for language change (Weatherall, 2002). Various studies, especially from psycholinguistics and psychology research, have been conducted to determine the influence of generic masculines on the inclusion of women; these studies show that women feel more included when non-sexist alternatives have been used than with masculine generics only (see, for example, Crawford and English, 1984; Hamilton, 1988).

A more recent trend in the study of sexism in language is moving away from the impact of isolated words and consequently many researchers have shifted their attention to the analysis of discourse that emphasizes language as social action, what Weatherall (2002) has called the 'discursive turn'. Romaine (2001) has also called for an analysis of sexism in discourse rather than isolated words and expressions. At the same time she has argued that one of the more subtle forms of discrimination against women is that they are not mentioned at all (Romaine, 2001:154). Consequently from the late 1990s the study of language and gender has increasingly become the study of discourse and gender and the literature on the topic shows this new trend (Bucholtz, 2004; Cheshire and Trudgill, 1998; Tannen, 1994; Wodak, 1997). Weatherall (2002:96) claims that this new trend of analysing language in use has renewed the vigour of gender

and language research which was in danger of being stuck on the same old debates.

A more recent view by feminist scholars such as Mills (2003) and Schwarz (2005) is that the analysis of linguistic sexism is an unfashionable topic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has a slightly anachronistic feel to it. For these authors the Second Wave Feminist Linguistics is over and we are now witnessing a Third Wave Feminist Linguistics, highly influenced by post-structuralism, whereby gender is increasingly treated as a socially constructed category. Third Wave Feminist Linguistics has challenged earlier feminist research on language and gender, especially Second Wave Feminist linguists such as Dale Spender, Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen for their focus on a homogenous “women’s language” which they assume is the result of either the oppression of women or of the different socialisation of women and men (Mills, 2003).

### **2.3.2 Areas of study in linguistic sexism**

A review of the extensive literature on language and gender reveals many studies which have focused on the topic of linguistic sexism in a wide range of areas. Since the mid 1970s up to the present day, many studies have addressed the issue of the representation of linguistic sexism in different fields such as in educational materials (for instance, Sunderland, 1994 and Swann, 2002); in dictionaries (Graham, 1975; Kramarae and Treichler, 1985; Vargas et al., 1998, amongst others); in grammar books and foreign language textbooks (Hellinger, 1980; Porreca, 1984); in children’s books and teaching materials (Nilsen, 1977); in the written press (Fujimura, 2005 and Gervais-Le Garff, 2002 in French daily newspapers, Talbot, 1997 in British tabloids, Bengoechea, 2007 in Spanish newspapers); in legislative texts (Petersson, 1999, Williams, 2008); in sports coverage (Parks & Robertson, 2001; Crolley & Teso, 2007), as well as in the language of religion (Greene & Rubin, 1991). The impressive “Gender and genre bibliography” compiled by the Gender and Language Research group at Lancaster University, first in 1999 and reedited in 2002, is an excellent reflection of the increasing amount of publications on the issue of linguistic sexism in all these areas.

Although most of the publications on the subject are written in English about English language, more recently there has been an explosion of studies on linguistic sexism in other languages. A growing number of studies deal with grammatical gender languages such as French, Spanish, Italian or German. The differences and similarities in feminine formation and their specific strategies to eliminate linguistic sexism in these languages provide a useful framework to the study of linguistic sexism. The review of the extensive literature in other languages reveals that the interest in the subject has been enormous. The comprehensive three volume collection by Hellinger and Bussman (2001, 2002 and 2003) on gender representation across thirty languages reflects this interest.

### **2.3.3 Gender-neutral or non-sexist?**

In the field of linguistics, different terms have been used to refer to a language which is free of sexism and includes both women and men: gender-free, gender-inclusive, gender-neutral, gender-fair, non-sexist, non-discriminatory language. These terms are similar but not necessarily equivalent. For example, gender-inclusive is not exactly equivalent to gender-neutral or non-sexist. A gender-inclusive language implies that both sexes are explicitly included. On the other hand, gender-neutral is in fact a linguistic description whereas non-sexist is a social, functional description (Frank and Treichler, 1989). A gender-neutral term is formally unmarked for gender. Gender-neutral language involves recasting words or sentences so that they do not exclude either men or women (Miller and Swift, 1989). In grammatical gender languages such as French and Spanish, the term used to refer to language free of gender bias is “non-sexist”. In these languages there is no real equivalent for the English terms “gender-neutral”, “gender-fair” or “gender-inclusive”. In French, for example, the term which is most frequently used in this field is the “feminisation of language” which implies a more visible presence of women in language. In this study the term non-sexist language has been used. The approaches to non-sexist language in grammatical gender languages differ from a semantic gender language such as English and the analysis of these strategies has been carried out in Chapter 5 below.

## **2.4 Measuring attitudes towards sexist language**

A great deal of sociolinguistic, social psychology and psycholinguistics research has dealt with the relationship between language attitudes and behaviour. Some studies have found it necessary to question whether it is possible to measure the use of sexist language and the attitudes towards linguistic sexism and whether the sex of the speaker has a correlation with the amount of non-sexist language used. However, rather surprisingly, there are few instruments available to measure attitudes of individuals toward sexist/non-sexist language or even recognition of this. Most of the studies "measuring" attitudes toward non-sexist language have been carried out in colleges and faculties in the United States. For example, Bate (1978) was one of the first authors to systematically survey attitudes toward gender-inclusive language in the classroom.

In this context over the last 25 years three primary instruments have been developed to measure attitudes towards sexist language. The first two consist of questionnaires to survey attitudes toward non-sexist language (Henley & Dragun, 1983; Rubin & Greene, 1991). The Rubin and Greene instrument was designed to analyse the effect of biological and psychological actors on attitudes toward gender-inclusive or gender-exclusive language. It was an adaptation of the early study by Henley and Dragun (1983) entitled The Language Questionnaire. Both studies indicated that attitudes toward gender equality did not match language use, that is, those who used less sexist language did not necessarily hold more egalitarian views.

The third instrument designed to assess individuals' ability to recognise sexist language was designed by McMinn et al (1994). These authors acknowledged the difficulty in measuring sexist language because of the difficulty to define precisely what sexist language is. The Gender-Specific Language Scale (GSLS) developed by McMinn et al assessed respondents' ability to recognise sexist language. It consists of sentences comprising a variety of grammatical, spelling and punctuation problems and also some sentences which include gender-specific language. Respondents in this study were instructed to identify the problems in each sentence. The GSLS consisted of four subscales: Pronouns



subscale, Stereotypic Assumption subscale, Generic Male subscale and the Lack of Parallelism subscale. Significantly this scale was designed to measure sexist uses of English language, and more specifically, American English.

In view of the need for a valid and reliable measure which could promote the systematic, coherent examination of attitudes toward sexist/non-sexist language, Parks & Roberton (2000) also developed an instrument to measure attitudes toward sexist/non-sexist language, what they called the Inventory of Attitudes toward Sexist/Nonsexist Language (IASNL). Their tests confirm that the respondents' gender is significant in determining their language attitudes. Their study confirms that women are in general more aware of non-sexist issues, more attentive to the need for change and more committed to effecting change than men.

The fact that the respondents' gender is significant in determining their language attitudes toward non-sexist language was also the conclusion of earlier studies aimed at measuring attitudes towards non-sexist language (see for example, Rubin & Greene, 1991). In a later study, Parks and Roberton (2004) claimed that a partial explanation for the gender gap in attitudes toward sexist language might lie in differing attitudes toward women. Two studies have suggested that awareness of the secondary status of women in US society is associated with attitudes toward sexist language (Harrigan and Lucic, 1988 and Rubin and Greene, 1991). Parks and Roberton have claimed that "the findings that attitudes toward sexist language are affected by cultural phenomena such as sex role stereotypes lend credence to the Whorfian principle of linguistic relativity" (Parks and Roberton, 2004:234). Whorf's principle that language and cultural patterns have a reciprocal relationship has provided the theoretical framework for many studies of sexist language since the 1970s.

Also in an American context, Swim et al (1995) developed a scale which attempted to measure more subtle forms of sexism such as the denial of continued discrimination, antagonism toward women's economic and political demands and lack of support for policies designed to help women. They called this scale the Modern Sexism Scale (MSS). For these authors, Modern Sexists

express beliefs that indirectly condone the unequal treatment of the sexes. More recently, Swim (2004:117) argued that sexist language is an example of subtle sexism because it reinforces and perpetuates gender differences between women and men. With this definition in mind, she tried to understand people's awareness of subtle sexist behaviour by means of the testing of their awareness and use of sexist language. Swim therefore tested the relationship between modern sexism and the detection of sexist language. She argues that there is a general lack of awareness of what constitutes sexist language, but that if examples of sexist language are provided, respondents usually can identify them more easily and at the same time be more aware not to use them. This is what the supporters of language reform recommend, that if language changes, then attitudes will follow. The research into this area is reviewed in the next sections.

## **2.5. Language reform. Arguments for and against language change**

### **2.5.1 Preliminary comments**

This section reviews the literature that has analysed the extent to which language change has been a possible and effective way to achieve equal treatment of women and men. Firstly, it is necessary to define language reform and to identify the sources of these reforms. Frank (1985) argues that a major task of language planning today is to recognise specific aspects of society and identify language problems. A very obvious example of language planning is the need to adapt the language to the new technologies. Similarly, Frank also argues that the structure of contemporary society is no longer congruent with a language that ignores women. She indicates that although language changes constantly, for example, to adapt to new products and technology, not all change is spontaneous. As a result, in an era of equal opportunities, non-sexist language reform is designed to bring about change. The focus in non-sexist language reform is therefore whether action to reform language will encourage a change in attitudes or whether only when a change in attitudes has taken place a change in language will follow.

Two types of language reform can be identified: non-sexist language reform and feminist language reform. Hellinger (1993) defines non-sexist language reform

as the planning effort of agencies with regard to the issue of linguistic equality, not necessarily from a feminist point of view. On the other hand, feminist language planning stems from political and sociolinguistic motivation rather than pure linguistic motivation. The aim of feminist language reform is the elimination of the differences in the linguistic representation and treatment of the sexes. It consists of eliminating the gender bias found in the structure, content and usage of a language; it also involves modifying existing language as well as creating new forms. Feminist language planning involves an analysis of the problem followed by modification, replacement and/or creation of new language forms (Pauwels, 1998). However, many feminists consider that changing language is a necessary, albeit insufficient, move in changing an androcentric world order (Gibbon, 1999:52). Their argument is that language could be viewed as the vehicle for other forms of discrimination (equal pay, promotion, etc). For those in favour of non-sexist language reform, on the other hand, changes to language would contribute to obtaining equality for women. The assumption behind this is that changes in language will translate into changes in society. This follows the Whorfian principle of linguistic determinism which states that

“We apprehend reality through language so that language influences –or even determines- how we think and how we perceive reality”  
(Whorf, 1958)

Miller and Swift (1972, 1976) were two of the first linguists to advocate the need to ‘desex’ the language by changing it. Since the 1970s a great deal of debate has taken place regarding the form this change could take. Blaubeurgs (1978) pointed out three approaches to avoiding linguistic sexism in English:

- an indirect approach through social change. This approach is supported by Lakoff (1975) and other linguists who discuss the relationship between linguistic and social change but argue that language change always follows social change and that once social equality is reached, language will no longer reflect an inequality;
- a direct approach by means of gender-neutral forms. This approach is supported by Miller and Swift (1972,1976) who recommended to ‘desex’ the language by making it neutral;
- a more radical reform by means of direct change which emphasizes feminine forms (what has been called total feminisation). This reform

aims at disrupting the existing system by introducing a generic feminine form instead of the generic masculine.

The last two approaches have caused most discussion because on the one hand, it has been argued that the use of gender-neutral forms may raise male images and on the other, the new forms proposed by the more radical reformers (for example, the introduction of a new pronoun system) may disrupt the status quo. These approaches are analysed in detail in section 2.6.

The idea of non-sexist language reform is not new. There have been many efforts to reform sexist language from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1980s. Earlier attempts to create a non-sexist language go back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century with German Benedict abbess Hildegard of Bingen. More recently many attempts to create new forms to achieve a language free of sexist bias have been made. Baron (1986:200) reviews several proposals which dealt with non-sexist language, for example, the work of Charles Crozat Converse, who in 1884 created a neologism in the form of an epicene (or common-gender) pronoun, *thon*, as a blend of *that* and *one*. The debate that ensued on the creation of new common-gender pronouns to eliminate the sexism of the generic masculine is a reflection of the interest to reduce sex-bias in language during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This interest continued during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with many proposals to change the traditional English pronoun system (see Baron, 1986: 205-209 for a detailed list of neologisms and their proponents until 1985). These proposals have encountered resistance and often ridicule. In the next section a review of the arguments against language change is offered.

Language planning reforms have been studied in great detail by Ehrlich and King (1998), Frank (1985), Frank and Treichler (1989), Hellinger (1990) and Pauwels (1998). One of the first studies of language planning policies, Frank and Treichler's study addresses the relationship between language and social attitudes and constitutes a major contribution to linguistic scholarship designed for teachers, students and professionals. These two authors call for the elimination of sexist language, although the tone of their book is not prescriptive because these authors believe that it would be inappropriate to dictate linguistic conduct (1989:1). For them the drafting of guidelines for non-sexist language

falls within the scope of language planning calling for a broader understanding of the issue of sexist language which aims at reconciling the commitment to equal opportunities with linguistic traditions.

Another work on gender-based language reform is that of Ehrlich and King (1998) who argued that the relative success of attempts at gender-based language reform is dependent on the social context in which the language reform occurs. They argue that “when language reform occurs within the context of a larger socio-political initiative whose primary goal is the eradication of sexist practices (for example, employment equality programmes) it is more likely to succeed” (Ehrlich and King, 1998: 179). They also say that the success of gender-based language reform is determined by the extent to which high-status subgroups within a speech community adopt non-sexist values. This means that if government agencies (high status) adopt non-sexist language, then it will be easier for non-sexist language to be adopted by the society as a whole rather than if a small group, for example, feminists (low status) adopt the non-sexist linguistic uses. Similarly Ager (1996:179) argues that success in language policy as well as language planning is crucially dependent on the speech community accepting and implementing the changes proposed.

Ehrlich and King (1998: 176) provide examples of attempted gender-based language reform in the mainstream media. They review the work of Fasold (1987) who found that a newspaper's non-sexist language policy correlated positively with non-sexist language use in the newspaper. The literature also suggests that there is a relationship between gender-based language reform and employment equality initiatives. Ehrlich and King (1998) provide an example from the case of Canada where non-sexist language has come to be regarded as an essential component in achieving employment equality in the workplace. In this case, language reform is connected to a larger socio-political goal. This emphasis on employment equality in the workplace has led many institutions to adopt non-sexist language guidelines. For example, numerous English-speaking universities in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States have adopted non-sexist language guidelines to promote equality within their institutions. Similarly professional organisations, such as the British

Sociological Association, have formulated guidelines to reduce bias in language. Some of these organisations' guidelines are reviewed in Chapter 5.

One of the most comprehensive reviews of gender-based language reform is that of Pauwels (1998) in *Women changing language* where she documents the efforts and proposals of feminists around the world to change the biased representation of the sexes in language. She works from a feminist perspective, although different views are also examined, to get to the premise that language is sexist and reflects the sexes' unequal status. Pauwels questions what can and should be done about the premise that language is sexist. Her book provides a comprehensive overview of the analysis of non-sexist language planning in several languages (German, Dutch Italian and Spanish) other than English. Pauwels identifies three types of language planners:

- women associated with the women's movement
- women's groups, feminist groups and equal opportunities committees which constitute a more 'visible' group of language planners. These groups put pressure on their organisations to address the issue of sexism in language
- government or semi-government agencies whose aim is to eliminate sex discrimination in job and occupational titles in order to achieve gender equality.

Pauwels (1997) argues that there are many political, ideological and social differences among these groups as regards their aim and objectives for gender-based language reform. Similarly, they have different methods of implementation of language reform. The work of some of these language planners is analysed later in Chapter 5 for the four countries of the study. Pauwels also argues that an important area is the evaluation of gender-based language planning. According to her, the two major aspects of such evaluation are:

1. evidence of the (successful) adoption of feminist linguistic proposals
2. insights into the ways feminist changes spread throughout the community

The literature shows that the adoption and spread of feminist linguistic reform have been examined in relation to a prominent feature of feminist linguistic reform, namely the use of gender-neutral and/or gender-inclusive occupational nouns and titles. However, the discussion of linguistic reform spread has not yet been subjected to a thorough analysis. Findings from research into the adoption of non-sexist job titles confirm that feminist linguistic alternatives are (increasingly) used, although adoption varies substantially from language to language and according to the sociolinguistic context. The aim of this study is to explore linguistic tendencies in the use of gender-inclusive occupational nouns and job titles across four linguistic contexts. It also aims at providing evidence of the adoption of guidelines and recommendations for the avoidance of sexist language which is presented in chapter 6.

### **2.5.2 Arguments against gender-based language reform**

Since the beginnings of gender-based language reform, there have been substantial attacks and criticism to changing language. One of the first authors to study arguments against language change is Blauger (1980) who identified eight arguments in favour of retaining and enforcing the use of masculine terms as generics. The first argument identified by Blauger is the cross-cultural argument that claims that there is no evidence that cultures using a sexist language have any more discrimination than others using non-sexist language. A second form of this argument states that non-sexist language does not necessarily result in equal treatment of the sexes. Opponents of language reform have also argued that feminists should focus not on language but on more important forms of sexism as for example discrimination in employment, violence against women, etc. Blauger calls this the “language is a trivial concern” argument. Another argument studied by Blauger is the “sexist language is not sexist” argument which implies that linguistic prejudice is in the ear of the beholder, that the terms considered sexist are just being misinterpreted. It has also been claimed that no one has the right to tell people how to speak or to change their language, what Blauger calls the “freedom of speech/unjustified coercion” argument. Another argument is that innovation will destroy our literary and linguistic heritage, losing the essence of the language. The sixth argument deals with word etymology which involves the historical

meanings of specific words and is concerned with the usage of masculine terms as generics. This argument claims that the term *man* is the unmarked form in English and therefore appropriate to name both women and men. Another argument has been the “appeal to authority” argument. Here authority is the dictionary which has been identified as a major contributor to sexism. Finally, Blaubergs identified the argument that change is too difficult. For opponents of language reform, although certain terms could be considered sexist, change is too difficult for most people. All these arguments point out at the conclusions that opponents of language reform maintain that there is not necessarily a connection between the treatment of language and gender and the degree of sexism in a given society. Parks and Robertson’s study (1998) confirmed that most of the arguments against non-sexist language used by their sample of university students fit into Blaubergs’ categories.

Another analysis of arguments against changing language is provided by Henley (1987) who lists six arguments which have been put forward against language reform. Her list of arguments is very similar to those of Blaubergs’. Henley’s (1987:6-11) arguments include the following: 1) “Linguistic sexism is largely imaginary; specifically, there is a distinction between the use of the masculine as generic and the use of the masculine to reference gender; 2) linguistic sexism is superficial and trivial compared with the “real” problems of today; 3) language may be sexist (...) but changing it is unnecessary; 4) language change might be desirable, but the changes proposed are inelegant and awkward; 5) attempting linguistic change is impossible because language is too deeply ingrained, slow to change and shaped by other forces than social movements, and finally argument 6) to make people give up certain usages is a form of censorship and infringes on freedom of speech”.

Baron (1986:219) claims that although some of these arguments may be valid, if enough people became sensitized to sex-related language issues (such as the use of generic *he* or *man* compounds), then there will be essential tools in motivating change. He emphasizes that although language change is difficult to legislate, “the question of sexism in language differs from many of the standard



language controversies (such as the spelling reform) because [...] it involves our linguistic sensitivities as well" (Baron, 1986:218).

One of the more recent arguments put forward against language reform is that it is an ineffective way to change things. In this respect, Cameron (1992) and other feminist linguists have argued that gender-neutral terminology is ineffective in the sense that there is no guarantee that it will make women visible. Cameron claims that words could be neutral on the surface but masculine underneath (a gender-neutral denotation but a gender-specific connotation). She argues that changing language by recasting sentences so that they are not offensive to women are purely cosmetic measures and do not entirely work. Her own position is total feminisation which entails using feminine forms for generic referents instead of the traditional generic masculine. Cameron calls this 'positive discrimination through positive language' (1985:88) and believes that this strategy will raise consciousness and that it will reclaim language. On the other hand, Cameron also argues that resistance to sexist language has brought about significant changes but these are not enough. She claims that there are no guarantees when it comes to linguistic 'neutrality'.

Similarly to other kinds of language reform, attempts at linguistic intervention to eliminate sexist usages have often faced ridicule. This has been an obstacle for the implementation of gender-based language reform. Although some languages have faced more criticisms than others, it is true to say that non-sexist language planning has encountered many obstacles. This is discussed later in Chapter 5 when reviewing the proposals made in each of the four countries of study.

### **2.5.3 Arguments in favour of gender-based language reform**

In terms of arguments in favour of gender-based language reform, the use of androcentric occupational nouns or generic masculines has been considered as an obstacle to equal treatment in employment. Aware of this situation, several countries and international organisations have set up terminology committees with the task of revising occupational nomenclature in order to eliminate sexist bias from official documents. Examples of these terminology committees can be

found in Canada, France, Spain and the USA; also supranational international organisations such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe have set up their terminology units to eliminate sexism from language. The work of some of these committees and organisations is analysed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Pauwels (1998) concludes that there has been no uniform approach to gender-based language reform. Some reform initiatives have aimed at exposing the sexist nature of language by causing linguistic disruption. The strategies used to achieve linguistic disruption frequently have involved experimentation and creativity. An example is the experimentation with the word "*herstory*". Another objective of gender-based language reform has been creating a women-centred language capable of expressing reality from a female perspective. Proposed changes range from the creation of new women-centred meanings and neologisms such as "*malestream*", graphemic innovations including "*womyn*" or "*wimmin*" to the development of women-focused discourses and even the creation of an entirely new language. An example of such a language is the Láadan language, created by science fiction writer and linguist Suzette Haden Elgin (1988) "for the specific purpose of expressing the perception of women".

The "linguistic equality of the sexes" approach has therefore become synonymous with feminist language planning. Linguistic discrimination has been seen as another form of sex discrimination. In fact, the question of gender bias in occupational nomenclature could be seen as directly linked to gender discrimination in the labour market.

The review of the literature shows that English speech communities seem to lead the way in the adoption of feminist linguistic alternatives for occupational terms. This highlights the importance of English as a model for international gender reform (Romaine, 2001:154). It is also true that English, as a semantic gender language, does not pose the difficulties that grammatical gender languages such as French and Spanish may experience.

Although most of the guidelines for non-sexist language have been formulated in English, Pauwels attempts to provide a multilingual focus to the topic of

sexism in language, with an analysis of feminist language reform in several languages, mainly Northern European (Dutch, English and German). Her conclusions show that there are common features of linguistic sexism across languages, but each language shows different patterns of feminine noun formation as well as different attitudes toward linguistic changes. Pauwels' conclusions regarding progress or whether change has occurred regarding removing sexist practices are far from triumphant. She concludes that in many areas nothing has changed and that what may seem like changes are not advances at all. This is the case of the English neologism *Ms* to refer to all women, regardless of their marital status, which in fact, is now often used as another category added to the previous choice: *Miss, Mrs or Ms*. Nevertheless, one of the hopeful points Pauwels makes is that language reform has at least raised awareness of the issue of sexism in language. The focus of her study is on equal opportunities planning, that is, the application of the principle of equal treatment between women and men, which does not need to be feminist.

Pauwels concludes that there has been no uniform approach to anti-discriminatory linguistic reform. She claims that the social, cultural and political diversity of the feminist movement is also reflected in the different proposals for language revision. While some have traditionally claimed that language change is necessary (Miller and Swift, 1989, among others), there has also been strong resistance to language reform even resorting to irony and derision. For example, Blaubergs' conclusions (1980) of the different arguments which were put forward in the 1970s against changing language in the USA regarding the question of the genericness of masculine terminology are the ones which have been most negatively received. Many researchers have concluded that changes in language can be seen as threatening because they signal changes in social mores.

For those in favour of language reform, sexist language practices can be avoided by recasting sentences and expressions so that they clearly do not exclude women (or men) and by avoiding words which clearly discriminate against either sex. Pauwels (1998) states that promoting language change through the formulation and distribution of language guidelines and

recommendations is the most widespread and popular strategy of implementation of language reform. She claims that the publication of language guidelines is the main vehicle for the promotion of non-sexist language because the main role is to raise awareness, not to cause disruption or confusion.

Another more recent argument related to language reform emphasizes that reform must be directed at discourse as a whole rather than at bits of the language such as titles, forms of address and generic masculines (Romaine, 2001:154). Finally another argument regarding language reform is that one of the more subtle forms of discrimination against women is that they are not mentioned at all.

More recently, Mucchi-Faina (2005) provides another overview of language reform and the strategies used to implement it. She gives an account of the changes regarding non-sexist language introduced in several European countries (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands and Switzerland) and discusses the practical implications of the scientific findings on the issue. Her study is the most recent example of the study of language and sexism and of the analysis of the viability of language planning reform and implementation of guidelines for non-sexist language in several European contexts. She reviews the different studies which have been carried out to ascertain the feasibility of language reform in several European countries. Like Pauwels (1998) earlier, Mucchi-Faina concludes that there is no uniformity when it comes to language reform and that the perfect solution does not exist. Linguistic and cultural constraints may make people prefer one strategy or another. Therefore the first step is to raise awareness of the issue as well as to make people sensitive to the possibility of choosing between different strategies and of the potential consequences of their choice. She states that when the issue is widely known, people will be able to choose the strategy they prefer. The present study aims at contributing to this debate by identifying and evaluating the different strategies to achieve non-sexist language in four European countries as well as the stages of implementation of these strategies.

## **2.6 Guidelines for non-sexist uses of language**

### **2.6.1 Preliminary comments**

Promoting language change by means of formulating and distributing non-sexist language guidelines is considered the most widespread strategy for the implementation of gender-based language reform. In the early 1970s women's groups within professional organisations began to influence their organisations to eliminate gender-bias in language from their materials. Since then a variety of organisations, including publishers, government agencies as well as trade unions, have published guidelines to avoid sexist language in their documents. Linguistic intervention has most frequently taken the form of guidelines and equal opportunities policies aimed to promote a more inclusive language and women's visibility in language. Guidelines and recommendations for non-discriminatory language typically identify areas of conventional language use as sexist and offer alternatives which aim at a gender-fair representation of women and men. Frank and Treichler (1989) define guidelines for non-sexist language as an instrument of language planning and analyse the guidelines for non-sexist language developed by organisations like publishing companies and professional bodies (in English) and address the most commonly identified problems in discussions of sexist usage such as the use of masculine pronouns and *-man* compounds as generics.

Frank (1985) provides an analysis of the goals and content of different guidelines using the classification system proposed by Kloss (1968) to identify government attitudes toward specific language in multilingual societies. The format of the guidelines ranges from a single sentence in style manuals to an entire handbook. The majority of the guidelines take the form of short booklets for free distribution among professional communities (for example, the *Guidelines for equal treatment of the sexes in McGraw Hill Book Company Publications* (1974)). Their aim is to raise awareness to the issue of sexism in language and suggest non-sexist alternatives. They usually include words, phrases and expressions which may imply a sexist bias and suggest some ways of avoiding them. Most guidelines do not intend to be prescriptive, but constitute a recommendation to avoid sexist usage whenever possible. In

general, non-sexist guidelines discourage language uses that ignore or demean women or that reinforce gender bias and stereotypes.

### **2.6.2 Aim and content of guidelines**

The main aim of non-sexist language guidelines is to formulate the promotion of linguistic equality of the sexes by eliminating a range of discriminatory practices. Most guidelines are not aimed at prescriptivism but their main function is to raise awareness. Pauwels (1998) reveals that the linguistic changes resulting from guidelines seem to occur in written forms of public and official discourse. Very often guidelines for non-sexist usages have been published by equal opportunities bodies and other government agencies (see for example, the recommendations published by the Spanish Ministry of Education and the Spanish Equal Opportunities body (*Instituto de la Mujer*) as well as local council guidelines).

Most guidelines for non-sexist language (in English) deal with the avoidance of *man* as a false generic, the generic use of masculine pronouns, generalisations and stereotyped references for women, the lack of parallelism between masculine and feminine terms, and also with occupational nomenclature. They present specific examples of sexist language and offer non-sexist alternatives. Guidelines in English recommend the avoidance of the masculine third person pronouns *him*, *him* and *his* when both sexes are intended. The preferred solution is rephrasing, using singular *they* or using the plural form in order to avoid monotony and awkwardness. Also it is recommended to avoid truncated expressions such as *s/he* which can be often found in written texts but could be awkward when speaking. An analysis of the McGraw-Hill book company guidelines (1974), one of the first guidelines to be published which have become a reference point for many other further recommendations, reveal some common elements in this type of guidelines. The McGraw Hill guidelines indicate that "Neither sex should be stereotyped or arbitrarily assigned to a leading or a secondary role" and recommend the avoidance of stereotypes for both men and women. These guidelines therefore recommend the avoidance of stereotypes based on life styles and career options. Accordingly, in terms of personal pronouns, the guidelines recommend the avoidance of the masculine

pronouns in generic contexts. Alternatives to be considered are also provided such as the systematic use of masculine and feminine pronouns, the use of singular *they*, or rephrasing the sentence in order to avoid generic masculine pronouns. Later guidelines are usually based on the McGraw-Hill guidelines and recommend similar usages to avoid sexist language.

As far as job titles are concerned, English guidelines recommend that different nomenclature should not be used for the same job depending on whether it is held by a male or a female, that is, the same term should be used for both sexes (gender-neutralisation). In order to do this, several strategies have been proposed (in English): lexical replacement as in the case of the gender-neutral *flight attendant* instead of the gender-specific *air hostess*; the introduction of neologisms such as the gender –neutral *firefighter* instead of the sex-specific *fireman*; and also compounds with –*person* instead of –*man/-woman*, for instance, *chairperson*. Guidelines also often deal with the parallel treatment of women and men (so instead of “*man and wife*”, it is recommended to use “*husband and wife*”). They also deal with the avoidance of unnecessary reference to a woman’s marital status.

It is significant to point out that early guidelines used to refer specifically to gender-based language issues like the ones described above, whereas in the 1990s, mainly due to the growth of equal opportunities policies, guidelines for equal linguistic treatment in English often included non-discriminatory alternatives in terms of race, age, disability or sexual orientation (see for example, the guidelines provided by the British lecturers’ union Natfhe, 1993). This trend concerning equal treatment guidelines is especially true of English-speaking countries. The literature on the topic on the other hand reveals that recommendations in other languages, for example, Spanish, French or German, still specifically concentrate on the representation of women in language. The content of guidelines for non-sexist language in three other languages other than English (French, German and Spanish) is analysed in Chapter 5.

Many proposals for the use of non-sexist language have been put forward since the 1970s when it was felt that occupational nomenclature had to be in line with

new non-discriminatory legislation. At an institutional level, government agencies also began to take note of the need to accommodate sensitivities about sexist usage in the 1970s; for example, in 1975 the US Department of Labour produced a publication entitled *Job title revisions to eliminate sex-and age-referent language form the Dictionary of Occupational titles*. This publication aimed to bring job titles into conformance with equal employment legislation which prohibited the use of sex- and/or age-referent language by the public employment service.

Together with job title revisions issued at institutional level, professional organisations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1975 and the American Psychological Association in 1977, along with major publishing companies such as McGraw-Hill in 1974 or Macmillan in 1975 have adopted guidelines for non-sexist language usage urging their authors to use non-sexist language in their books, articles and contributions. These early guidelines for the equal treatment of the sexes come mainly from the United States and have become reference points for other academic journals in terms of format and style. In fact, the *Guidelines for non-sexist use of language in NCTE publications* (1975) can be considered a representative example for many other guidelines published later. A detailed analysis of the revised edition of the National Council of Teachers of English has been provided by Nilsen (1987). In other materials, for instance, newspapers, in particular British newspapers, guidelines for non-sexist language have not often been adopted. Romaine (2001) states that *The Times*, for instance, still uses androcentric language and that on the whole the UK has shown conservatism concerning gender-based language reform in comparison with other English speaking countries, mainly the United States and Canada.

Guidelines are based on the assumption that a change in behaviour, for example, using more instances of non-sexist language, will be followed by a change in attitude and positive attitudes in turn will motivate speakers to use less sexist language (Frank and Treichler, 1989). In chapter 5, a review of the debate on linguistic sexism and the proposals to eliminate it in four European



countries (France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom) has been carried out.

### **2.6.3 Criticisms of the guidelines**

Despite the positive acceptance by most sectors, guidelines for non-sexist use of language have also been subject to resistance and criticism. The resistance to the recommendations in some of the guidelines derives from the negative attitudes toward prescriptive language rules. Persuading people to change their language usage involves a change of attitudes toward language and toward other forms of “sexist” behaviour (Frank, 1985: 232). Part of the resistance to change language usage derives from historical appeals from language academies, governments and other official bodies to use or not to use specific words. An illustration of this resistance to linguistic prescriptivism is France, where the *Académie Française*, the defender of the purity of the French language, has often intervened in linguistic matters. A particularly significant example of their intervention is their fighting off the invasion of foreign words, mainly English, into the French language, and more relevant to the present study, the feminisation of language.

## **2.7 Approaches to non-sexist language**

### **2.7.1. Preliminary comments**

The following section addresses the literature that deals with the question of how to change language to make it less discriminatory against women. Since the 1970s different approaches have been put forward and used to achieve equal linguistic treatment. Research into non-sexist language has mainly focused on occupational lexis since some job titles, it has been claimed, may have a gender-neutral denotation (*doctor, lawyer, nurse*) but not a gender-neutral connotation for all readers and listeners. A great deal of debate has taken place, especially after some recommendations and guidelines regarding the elimination of sexism from language were published at supranational level (UNESCO and the Council of Europe, for instance). These recommendations are analysed in Chapter 4.

An area where sexism in language is most visible is that of occupational nouns for men and women. Until recently women have been absent from many professions and so there was no terminology to name them. Consequently masculine terms were used for women in those occupations with masculine forms representing the linguistic norm and feminine forms deviating from that norm. For example, in English the unmarked form is *doctor* whereas the marked, deviant form for females would be *woman doctor* or even *lady doctor*. Over the last few decades many academics and language planners have claimed the need to employ a language that reflects the position of women in today's society and as a result they have formulated strategies to avoid discrimination against women in language. The strategies adopted to avoid sexist language vary according to the individual languages. The main strategies adopted in four European languages are studied in detail in Chapter 5.

Two main strategies to achieve gender-fair language, that is, to make women more visible in language and to balance the lexis used for occupational titles have been identified. Pauwels (1998) is one of the main authors in the analysis of the viability and effectiveness of these two strategies, namely, 1) gender-neutralisation and 2) 'gender-specification' (or feminisation). The next two sections analyse in detail these two approaches, provide examples and identify the arguments in favour or against them.

### **2.7.2 Gender-neutralisation**

The aim of the gender-neutralisation strategy is to obtain linguistic equality of the sexes by minimising or discarding gender-specific expressions or constructions (Pauwels, 1998). Gender-neutralisation involves the use of one term to refer to both sexes. The aim of this strategy is to have a society in which a person's sex has no relevance for their occupational status. Romaine (2001) calls this strategy "degendering". This approach has also been called "inclusion" which involves reducing or abolishing terms that connote one sex to the exclusion of the other (Mucchi-Faina, 2005). A gender-neutral term is linguistically unmarked for gender: for example, *police officer*, *fire fighter* or *chair* instead of gender-marked *policeman*, *fireman* or *chairman*. In languages where some female occupational nouns are derived from the masculine noun

by adding a feminine suffix, this strategy recommends removing these suffixes and proposes the use of a single form to designate a person, independently of the sex. In English, for example, the strategy will eliminate gender-marking suffixes such as *-ette*, *-ess*, *-trix*. Therefore, by applying this strategy marked terms such as *poetess* or *actress* would disappear and in their place the gender-neutral *poet* or *actor* would be used for both sexes. Gender-neutral terms could be called “unisex” forms because they can be used to name males and females indistinctively.

It is obvious that the application of this strategy depends on the language concerned and its gender system. In English, as a natural gender language, most occupational nouns are gender-neutral anyway (*lawyer*, *doctor*, *teacher*), so the gender-neutralisation strategy is only relevant in terms of the elimination of gender-marking suffixes such as *-ess* or *-ette* or compounds with *-man*. However, this can be more problematic in grammatical gender languages such as Spanish or French. In grammatical gender languages there is a correspondence between the feminine and the masculine gender class and the lexical specification of a noun as female-specific or male-specific (Hellinger, 2002). Languages with grammatical gender possess a larger number of devices for gender marking whereas non-gender languages such as English resort to a variety of linguistic means to refer to gender, for example, gender-variable pronouns.

The gender-neutralisation strategy for grammatical gender languages such as French involves the use of a gender-neutral word such as *écrivain* (writer) taking either masculine or feminine articles and adjectives or both in contexts where the sex of the holder is not specified.

e.g.    *un écrivain anglais* (a (male) English writer)  
         *une écrivain anglaise* (a female English writer)

However, it has been argued that the application of this strategy in grammatical gender languages such as French implies the use of the masculine form (*écrivain*) as the gender-neutral form.

Yaguello (1978), one of the first French linguists in the study of non-sexist language reform proposals in France, concluded that the speakers of grammatical gender languages such as French constantly face the difficulty of grammatical gender agreement. In this respect, some French feminists have argued that the neutralisation of masculine forms into epicenes actually does a disservice to women making them even less visible socially and professionally. This has also been studied in English where a new gender-neutral term such as *chairperson* has been proposed to replace the gender specific *chairman*. However, evidence has shown (Dubois and Crouch, 1987, for example) that the term *chairperson* tends to be used for women only whilst the word *chairman* is being used for men when the sex of the referent is known.

The gender-neutralisation strategy can also include what is called 'gender abstraction' because it sometimes recommends the use of an abstract term or word to avoid gender specification in relation to occupational nouns for women and men. For example, in Spanish, a grammatical gender language where the generic masculine is widely used, abstract nouns have been proposed in certain contexts to replace the generic masculine term: for example, *el profesorado* (teaching staff) is often used to replace the generic masculine *los profesores* (the [male] teachers). This strategy is also used in German where the term *Studierende* (student body) has been recently coined to avoid splitting of masculine and feminine forms. Another solution in German is to use a designation to replace the process of splitting; accordingly, *Professur* (professorship) can be used to replace either a masculine generic form (*der Professor*) or to avoid specifying both the masculine and feminine forms (*der Professor und die Professorin*). This strategy is discussed in Chapter 5 in more detail for the four languages of the study.

Promoters of the gender-neutralisation strategy have defended it on the basis of linguistic viability; they claim that it does not interfere with the economy of language (it is simpler and it does not cause the stylistic problems the feminisation strategy can cause) and that the use of gender-neutral terms draws attention away from the category 'sex' in occupational nomenclature; for them the aim is to have a society where men and women are equal and this is done

by eliminating differential treatment (Pauwels, 1998). For those in favour of gender-neutralisation men and women should be treated equally and therefore the same occupational term should apply to both.

However, this strategy has also encountered strong opposition. For some the use of gender-neutral terms is seen as a disguised masculine (Niedzwiecki, 1993). This can be observed in languages with grammatical gender such as Spanish where the masculine form would be transformed into the gender-neutral term: *el/la médico* (male/female doctor). In this example, only the determiners (masculine and feminine articles *el/la*) become gender-specific whereas the agent noun remains in the masculine. The gender abstraction strategy as a solution to avoid the generic masculine as the unmarked form could also highlight this disguised masculine. In the previous example, *el profesorado* (teaching staff) is a masculine word and consequently, it can be claimed that the masculine still prevails even though the term is an abstract, collective noun, which refers to both sexes.

Niedzwiecki (1993:43) also claims that the effect of the gender neutralisation strategy has been to hide women because “the ambiguous and confusing generic use of the masculine merely reinforces masculine forms and excludes the feminine dimension”. She also criticises the use of masculine terms by women to refer to their occupations because they identify the masculine with the concept of prestige. It has been argued that women are afraid that the occupations they fought so hard to enter might be devalued by the use of feminine forms (Corbisier-Hapon quoted in Niedzwiecki 1993: 49). As a result, many women continue to use the masculine job title, sometimes on the pretext that the feminine equivalent does not exist. This is the case of professional nouns in prestigious occupations where there is a tendency to maintain the masculine term for women; however, it has been proven that certain grammatical gender languages such as Spanish have the flexibility to make most occupational nouns feminine by means of a feminine suffix (-a) replacing the masculine (-o). For critics of the gender-neutralisation strategy there is no reason for not using *la médica* (the female doctor), that is, the gender-specific noun, however unfamiliar this may sound. The common argument in this

respect is that once women become active in fields where they were underrepresented in the past, the feminine form will become more accepted.

Niedzwiecki (1993) also claims that the “artificially imposed” neutralisation has not worked, even in English. She illustrates this idea with “neutral” agent nouns such as *actor* to refer to both men and women, replacing the existing feminine word *actress*. Other examples include the use of a term such as *chairperson* as a neutral word for both sexes, when in practice this is only used to refer to a woman, instead of the more direct feminine term *chairwoman*. Feminist linguists such as Cameron (1992) also support this idea that the neutral form is only used for women whereas the masculine one is used only for men.

### 2.7.3 Gender-specification

Regarding the second strategy to achieve equal linguistic treatment, Pauwels (1998) defines the gender-specification strategy as the approach which aims at achieving equal treatment of the sexes in language by making women visible through the systematic and symmetrical marking of gender. It has often been called feminisation of language. Romaine (2001) has called this “engendering” or “regendering”. Mucchi-Faina (2005) defines this as the ‘visibility principle’, that is, constantly recalling that women are present, even creating a neologism if the feminine form of a word does not exist. Gender-specification can be achieved in different ways, for instance, by using both the masculine and the feminine forms as a way of explicitly mentioning both sexes especially in contexts where the sex of the referent is unknown. In grammatical gender languages such as French, German, Italian or Spanish, this strategy involves the systematic use of feminine suffixes for occupational nouns. If the feminine form does not exist, the gender-specification strategy recommends the creation of neologisms, which in time could become commonplace by frequent use. This practice of mentioning both genders in a generic context has also been called “gender-splitting”. An example of gender splitting is the use of dual third person pronouns for generic contexts (*he or she* and its variations) in English, the use of slashes with the masculine and feminine forms in German (e.g. *Lehrer/in*) and also in German the graphemic innovation of a capital *I* inside the word to name both males and females: *LehrerIn* (male/female teacher). In Chapter 5, a

detailed account of these strategies for the different languages of the study is provided.

Promoters of the gender-specification strategy claim that linguistically it acknowledges women's presence in professions that have traditionally been masculine by consistently referring to them in a feminised form. Supporters of feminisation believe that this strategy is more effective than the gender-neutralisation because it not only makes women visible in language, but also ensures that all occupations are seen as accessible for both women and men. However, Niedzwiecki (1993) argues that there has been a significant backtracking on the feminisation of language. She argues that despite the fact that some European countries have adopted anti-discriminatory linguistic measures towards the feminisation of language (France and Belgium, for example), these have sometimes proved contradictory and in fact it seems that women holding high positions are more likely to use the masculine term as this is seen as a form of prestige. It has also been argued that the creation of feminine forms is relatively easy, but their acceptance and adoption is not so easy (Frank, 1985). In French, for example, one of the main problems is the number of forms available to form the feminine which causes the problems. Frank (1985) believes that this is due to the fact that some feminine forms have acquired a pejorative meaning and that is the reason why they are considered unsuitable to new social roles. She finds a gap in research which is the comparative study of the evolution of feminisation in three Romance grammatical gender languages (French, Italian and Spanish).

Another argument put forward against the gender-specification approach is that it runs counter to the principle of 'linguistic economy' and may cause stylistic problems. For example, in generic contexts, the systematic use of dual forms (feminine and masculine) in grammatical gender languages can be regarded as cumbersome and awkward (Pauwels, 1998: 122) especially when it involves agreement with articles and adjectives.

A more radical strategy to achieve a language which is free of gender bias is what has been called 'total feminisation', or the use of generic feminine forms in

place of the generic masculine in generic contexts. This is what some linguists have called “the visibility strategy” or “positive language” (Pusch, 1990). German feminist linguist Pusch (1990) is one of the main supporters of this approach which entails the reversal of the current practice of attributing generic status to the masculine form by making the feminine the unmarked form in generic contexts. Some feminist authors such as Cameron (1985, 1995) systematically employ this strategy in their books, mainly to emphasise women’s presence in the world and to raise people’s consciousness. Pusch applies this radical strategy to German because in her opinion such a strategy is simple, straightforward and does not involve the creation of new forms like the gender-specification approach. Pusch claims that it is also a question of “turning the tables” arguing that this strategy gives men the chance to experience personally what women have been experiencing for many years. It also gives women the opportunity to experience being named explicitly. In grammatical languages such as German and Spanish, for instance, this strategy has been criticised because the argument is that the masculine has always included the feminine. The debate on these issues in each of the four languages of study is analysed in chapter 5.

In general, there have been many discussions on the two strategies to achieve gender-fairness in language, especially for those languages with grammatical gender. In fact, most supporters of language do not argue in favour of one single strategy to the exclusion of the other, and in many cases a mixture of both is proposed. Language reformers try to apply a primary strategy. In other words, supporters of gender-neutralisation may include some feminine and masculine forms in gender-specific contexts. Similarly, supporters of the gender-specification strategy may recommend the use of some gender-neutral nouns, especially in generic contexts. It could be concluded that most language planning reforms apply a mixture of the two strategies which are analysed in detail by language in Chapter 5.

## **2.8 Literature in languages other than English**

Although the study of the topic of language and gender started in English-speaking countries and a vast amount of references are devoted to English, and



there is no doubt that English-speaking countries lead the way in matters of sexism in language, the interest in the area of linguistic sexism has more recently emerged in other languages such as French, German, Spanish or Italian. The study of the different approaches in languages other than English has added an extra dimension in the sense that in other languages, such as grammatical gender languages, gender assignment is largely morphologically determined and consequently various obstacles have therefore been encountered with regard to feminisation. Although these languages share some characteristics in feminine word formation, their strategies for feminisation are somehow different. Here a brief overview of the literature written in French, German and Spanish is presented.

Non-sexist language strategies have been debated at length in gender languages (Hellinger and Bussman, 2001) such as French (Houdebine, 1987, 1998), German (Hellinger, 1990), Italian (Sabatini, 1987), and Spanish (Nissen, 1986) and in natural gender languages (Australian and New Zealand English, Pauwels (1998) and Holmes (2001) respectively). The most representative studies have been analysed here although there are more references to the literature review in the four languages of the study in Chapter 5.

In France one of the first sociolinguistic studies on the subject of sexism in French was that of French linguist Marina Yaguello who in 1978 published *Les mots et les femmes* [Words and women]. In her book Yaguello analyses the grammatical asymmetries between masculine and feminine nouns in French and to what extent language reflects the status of women in society. Yaguello argues that it is the fear of innovation which makes the feminine forms difficult to be adopted (1978:135) because on the one hand, France has a strong academic tradition of purity and control over the language and on the other, it is necessary to change mentalities in order to change language:

“Les résistances viennent pour une part de l’immobilisme linguistique et très souvent des femmes elles-mêmes et du corps social tout entier qui fait encore aux femmes une place à part”,

[Opposition comes partly from linguistic stagnation but also from women themselves and society as a whole, which still makes a distinction for women]

Yaguello's work inspired the debate that took place in France in the 1980s and 1990s regarding the feminisation of French. One of the most significant works at this time was that of Houdebine (1987, 1998) who analysed the reactions to the legislation on the issue in the 1980s when the question of gender and language became part of the political and public debate. Like other feminist linguists, Houdebine argues that the difficulties to the feminisation of language are not of a linguistic nature but ideological and social. This is illustrated by the non-sexist language reforms which had already been implemented in other Francophone countries such as Belgium and French-speaking Canada which seem to be more advanced in terms of feminisation than France. A comparative study of feminisation reforms in Canada and France by Gervais-Le Garff (2007) shows that feminisation in French has been a two speed process whereby Canada and Belgium have adopted changes to the language before France. One of the arguments to explain this phenomenon is that Francophone countries do not think that the *Académie Française* has the right to impose their views on feminisation. Besides this, Gervais-Le Garff (2007) argues that usage will end up prevailing over the norm. More references to the literature on French language are provided in Chapter 5.

Regarding Spanish, the first references found on the subject were not published in Spain but in the United States (for instance, Roca-Pons, 1963) and dealt with the question of creating feminine forms for occupations which had traditionally been occupied by men. This was one of the first examples of the debate on the feminisation of Spanish language. Roca Pons proposed that however strange it may sound at first, there is no reason why Spanish cannot "feminise" occupational terms such as *arquitecto* (male architect). The issues which were raised in an early doctoral thesis in 1973 by Suardíaz in the United States called *Sexism in Spanish language* were still relevant when the book was finally published in 2002. In Spain the first book published on the topic of language and gender was *Lenguaje y discriminación sexual* [Language and sexual discrimination] by Alvaro García Meseguer (1977). It is rather curious that the first book published in Spain on the subject of sexism was in fact written by a man who is not a linguist when most of the literature has been and continues to be written by women. This book was followed a year later by María Jesús

Buxó's *Antropología de la mujer: Cognición, Lengua e Ideología cultural* (1978). Her contribution to the debate on gender differences in language was based on the work of French linguist Yaguello (1978) as well as on general research done by women outside Spain in the 1970s, mainly in education. A small number of articles were published in international journals such as that of Hampares (1976) but on the whole the publications on this topic in Spanish were scarce at that time. An early reference to the topic of sexism in Spanish dictionaries, in her article Hampares compares entries for occupational nouns in three Spanish dictionaries and concludes that there are different approaches in all three regarding the feminisation of occupational terminology; she wonders whether lexicographers are sexist or not: "Sexism affects usage, but it originates in speakers, not in lexicographers, whose duty is to report what is said" (Hampares, 1976:108). Sexism in Spanish dictionaries has been the subject of recent subsequent studies, for example, or more recently Alario et al. (1995) as well as the work of the advisory commission on language matters, NOMBRA (see chapter 5.4).

In the 1980s, there was some interest in the topic of sexism in Spanish from outside Spain as part of an international overview of the issue in several languages; for instance, the Danish linguist Nissen (1986) claimed that in Spanish there is no reason not to provide women with feminine titles. For Nissen, linguistically speaking there are no severe obstructions to promote a feminine word-formation.

Despite the academic interest mainly from outside Spain, it was not until the 1990s when an explosion of books and articles on the subject took place in Spain (see Lledó Cunill (1992), Alario et al (1995), Bengoechea (1995 and 1999), Catalá González, (1995), López Valero (1998) among others). One of the books that have been most studied and reviewed is Meseguer's *¿Es sexista la lengua española. Una investigación sobre el género gramatical* (1994) [Is Spanish a sexist language? An investigation on grammatical gender]. In this book he contradicts his original 1977 premise that Spanish was a sexist language by stating that it is not in the linguistic system but the language users (speakers and listeners) where linguistic sexism can be found.

There is no doubt that the influential role of the Spanish equal opportunities body, the *Instituto de la Mujer*, has prompted a great deal of interest and research on the subject of non-sexist language in Spain in recent years. Studies of the analysis of sexist language in the press and administrative documents (see among others, Bengoechea, 1999, 2005) have flourished in the last ten years. More references will be provided in Chapter 5.4 when the Spanish experience is analysed in depth.

In Germany the influence of the women's movement has played a prominent part in the debate on the feminisation of language. German feminist linguists such as Guentherodt (1979), Hellinger (1980, 1995) Pusch (1984, 1990) and Trömel-Plötz (1992) have been active in the introduction of gender-based language reform to make women visible through (German) language. Similarly to other countries, a great deal of interest has focused mostly in the area of occupational terminology. Over the last three decades, the referential range of the so-called masculine generics has been reduced and feminine forms are expanding their referential range, even occasionally being used as generic (in feminist contexts). Pusch (1984, 1990) became extremely influential in Germany both in academic and public discourse. She was one of the first feminists to advocate the need to reform German language. Hellinger (1995) also provides an extensive study of linguistic sexism in German and concentrates on four major areas in the field of feminist linguistics. One of them is language change under the influence of the women's movement. She takes a contrastive approach to the issues, comparing German and English in terms of the strategies employed in the two languages to avoid sexist usage. Hellinger (1995) argues that German is not a sexist language or more sexist than other languages. However, she claims that the risk of linguistic sexism is higher due to the fact that the markers of grammatical gender naturally lead to gender-specification. She also notes that the development on non-sexist alternatives require more effort in German than in English. The review of the non-sexist language alternatives in German will be analysed in Chapter 5.3.

There has also been a great deal of interest on the issue of linguistic sexism in other languages, such as Italian (Sabatini, 1987) or Dutch (Pauwels, 1998)

which have contributed to the debate on the feminisation of language. The issues in these languages are very similar to the ones identified in the four languages of study.

## **2.9 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature on the topic of sexism in language and the different approaches that have been put forward to avoid sexist linguistic uses in several languages. The continuity of the publications on the topic over the last 30 years points at its relevance in the present and shows that the feminisation of the lexicon could be considered as one of the most important linguistic changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the arguments in favour of changing language which were identified in the late 1970s when the feminist movement peaked are still valid and the topic is by no means an 'old' topic. Different approaches have been proposed in more recent years, for example, the analysis of the discourse rather than isolated lexical items. Given the amount of recent publications on the subject of gender and language study over the last five years (Litosseliti (2006), McElhinny (2006), Mills (2008), Sunderland (2004, 2006), amongst others), it could be argued that the topic is still 'alive'. To illustrate the current interest in it, a new revised and expanded edition of Lakoff's 1975 pioneering work on language and gender was published in 2004 (Bulchotz), and a new journal on the topic of gender and language was launched in 2008 (published by Equinox). This means that the issues brought up in the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s are still relevant. What has happened is that there has been a shift away from the study of sexism in isolated words and now the focus is more on discourse. Yet there is no doubt that there is a great deal of interest in the topic of gender and language. This interest is also reflected in other languages other than English. In the last twenty years an explosion of studies on linguistic sexism in many languages has taken place (see the comprehensive collection edited by Hellinger and Bussmann *Gender across languages*, 2001, 2002 and 2003). This means that the issue has been "internationalised" (Cameron, 1998) which reflects the concern that many feminist and equal opportunities campaigners had in the 1970s. Undoubtedly profound changes in terms of greater awareness about gender issues and language have taken place in society over the last

thirty years. The present study addresses these changes from a multilingual perspective.

The literature also reveals the debate around the different strategies that have been put forward to achieve linguistic equality of the sexes. The current research presents an evaluation of the different recommendations for non-sexist language issued at international level and in four European countries. At the same time, once the recommendations and guidelines have been formulated, there is a need to evaluate whether such gender-based language reform measures have been implemented as a way to achieve equal treatment of the sexes. There is also a gap in the current literature in terms of comparative analysis which this study aims to address. This investigation attempts to identify the different strategies to the avoidance and elimination of linguistic sexism in four European countries. It also aims to ascertain whether the recommendations for non-sexist uses identified are being implemented in practice in the four linguistic contexts. In terms of contribution to knowledge, there are few studies which analyse the attempts to eliminate sexism from language at international level and in different national contexts. The case study will aim at identifying the difficulties encountered in each linguistic setting as well as their practical implementation.

## **CHAPTER 3            RESEARCH METHODS**

### **3.1 Overview**

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research philosophy and strategies as well as the methods which will be used in the present study. It also explains the different stages of the research and gives details of the different methods of data collection and analysis. The aim and objectives that were developed at the end of the preceding chapter provide the rationale for the research methodology described below. The overall aim of the research is

- To identify and evaluate the different strategies that have been adopted in order to eliminate discrimination of women and men from language and to achieve linguistic equality in a European context.

The present investigation evaluates the strategies that have been employed in the implementation of a non-discriminatory linguistic policy across four European languages. In order to achieve the main aim, the research has four supporting objectives as follows:

- To identify the general recommendations issued by international and European organisations on the topic of the avoidance of sexism in language;
- To identify and analyse the different recommendations that four European countries have adopted to apply the principle of equal treatment between women and men in reference to language use;
- To evaluate whether the recommendations have been implemented in practice;
- To compare and contrast the different approaches in order to identify current usage trends.

The next sections introduce the research methodology that will be used as well as the methods of data collection and analysis.

### **3.2 Research methodology**

The present investigation falls within the gender and language field of study. The study of sexism in language and the elimination of sexist practices from language is a complex issue which takes aspects from education, linguistics,

sociolinguistics, sociology, psychology and women's studies, among others. Within linguistics, several approaches have been used in gender and language study, namely, conversational analysis (CA), corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis (CDA), discourse analysis (DA), ethnomethodology, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. These relatively new movements in linguistics (from the 1990s) have made a significant contribution to issues concerning gender and language research. For example, ethnomethodology and conversational analysis stress the importance of the kinds of general assumptions that people make about everyday life (Weatherall, 2002). Consequently, an ethnomethodological approach to gender examines the methods that people use to make sense of everyday life. Conversational analysis (CA), on the other hand, is derived from ethnomethodology but focuses specifically on investigating language and social interaction and not, like ethnomethodology, on how people understand their social world.

Discourse analysis has also been used in the study of language and gender. In this field DA is the approach that examines linguistic constructions of gender and considers how they operate to reproduce the dominant social order (Weatherall, 2002). Discourse analysis encompasses other approaches such as critical discourse analysis (CDA), discursive psychology and Feminist Post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA). Critical discourse analysis is a way of doing discourse analysis from a critical perspective, focusing on theoretical concepts such as power, ideology and domination (Baker et al, 2008). Discursive psychology is an approach for examining the social construction of gender. The emphasis of this approach is on action rather than representation.

Another approach used in the study of language and gender is sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics focuses on the social aspects of language use and encompasses a broad range of theoretical concepts and research techniques (Davis, 1995:430). Some of these techniques draw from various sources including linguistics, sociology and language planning. Many sociolinguistic studies have shown differences between the language used by women and men. These studies have found differences in phonological features, in the choice of vocabulary and in the use of tag questions, among others. Other



sociolinguistic studies have also been concerned with the sexist bias in the structure of the language, for instance, the use of masculine pronouns as generic.

Early studies on language and gender did not have a clear methodological approach (Harrington et al, 2008). Many used introspection and personal experience as their methodological approach (see, for example, Lakoff, 1975). However, Lakoff's intuitive speculations about the nature of women's language have been refuted by later empirical research and more recently, different approaches have been used for the analysis of aspects of language and gender study. For instance, sociolinguistic approaches that study the relationship between language and society are quite abundant. In fact, language is so closely linked to other social and political issues that language debates often reflect other social changes or conflicts. Language evolves historically as a result of social and political processes and therefore normally mirrors other social tendencies (Litoselitti, 2006). An important theme within sociolinguistics is how language changes across time and geographical areas. Because the present study aims to evaluate the changes that have taken place in language from a non-sexist point of view over a period of time, a sociolinguistic approach has therefore been used in this study.

As well as the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, there are two different perspectives from which the topic has been examined: a feminist and a non-feminist approach. In fact, gender and language study does not need to take a feminist approach. It was during the second wave of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and 1970s when the feminist approach to the study of gender and language was introduced. Since then, most analyses of linguistic sexism have been undertaken from a feminist perspective. According to Cohen (2000: 35), feminist research seeks to demolish and replace positivist research with an agenda of empowerment, voice, emancipation, quality and representation for oppressed groups. Raising consciousness of these aspects is therefore a methodological tool for feminist research. Feminist researchers reject positivism and objectivity as male mythology. For them, there is a need to change the status quo, not simply to understand or interpret it. In the positivist philosophy,

however, the researcher assumes the role of an objective analyst making detached interpretations about the data (Saunders, 2003:83).

The focus of the present study is on equal opportunities planning, that is, the application of the principle of equal treatment between women and men. It does not only focus on the analysis of linguistic sexism from a feminist perspective although feminist views are indeed analysed. Sunderland (2006:82) argues that equal opportunities can be viewed as a discourse which is culturally and historically situated and which is in turn part of an interpretive discourse. The study places the issue of language and gender in four European countries in their socio-historical contexts. A sociolinguistic approach can contribute to define the relationship between language and society in context.

In terms of the methodology used, gender and language studies could be qualitative, quantitative or both. Traditionally, non-empirical studies have dominated the study of gender in language and of applied linguistics in general. Many studies were based on introspective evidence. An example of this approach is Robin Lakoff's (1975) early influential work on language and gender. In the 1980s there was a rise in quantitative studies as it was claimed that applied linguistics must follow the natural sciences in their scientific methods. Qualitative studies on language and gender, on the other hand, appeared in the late 1980s. This was due to feminist research methods which sought to challenge traditional quantitative methods as male-centred and male dominated. Qualitative methods such as action research and ethnography became popular in this field of gender differences in language as well as in the social sciences in general. However, in the 1990s most studies in applied linguistics, for example, were still quantitative (Lazaraton, 2000). More recently there have been calls for using qualitative methods to provide a more nuanced understanding of gender relations in specific communities (Cameron, 2003).

The present study adopts a mixture of both approaches. A quantitative approach has been employed to analyse the primary data of the case study. This investigation therefore takes an empirical approach as the emphasis is on quantifiable observable data, that is, the use of observable evidence to

establish knowledge (Payne and Payne, 2004). The frequency of occurrences of word usage in the comparative case study will determine whether there is a pattern in each language of the study. This quantitative method allows the researcher to see patterns of language use. Once the existence of a pattern is determined, its frequency will determine its significance (Hall, 2002:133). The descriptive statistics of occurrences of occupational nomenclature for job vacancies within the public administration and the private sector in four European linguistic contexts will also allow generalisations in other contexts as well as comparisons with other contexts not studied here. However, a quantitative approach on its own is not sufficient. Yet the significance of the quantified data can only be determined through a qualitative analysis. A qualitative method will provide an understanding of gender relations in these specific communities. Thus a qualitative approach will, at the same time, help place the findings in relation to the wider social context as well as establish whether there is a link between language reform recommendations and application of the policy. These methods are complementary rather competing forms of data. Therefore the present study applies a comparative methodology where different strategies in four linguistic contexts have been compared. This will generate theoretical insights as a result of contrasting the findings of the case study.

The focus of the study is on up-to-date language use and how it may have changed over time, that is, from a diachronic point of view. The study gathers data at two different points over a five-year period, constituting a longitudinal study. The main strength of longitudinal studies is their capacity to study change and development over a period of time (Saunders, 2003). The present study analyses data taken randomly in a six month period between 2001- 2002 and 2007- 2008, as a way of ascertaining whether a change has taken place over this period of time. This will also help attain one of the supporting objectives of the research which is whether the recommendations for the elimination of sexist language have been implemented.

### **3.3. Methods of data collection**

The data collection method used is document analysis. This means that the researcher has worked with pre-produced (rather than generated) texts. All data is naturally occurring authentic linguistic data from written sources. The data has been collected in two stages: In the first stage, the collection of secondary data on the different approaches to the topic of linguistic sexism as well as the strategies to eliminate it from language will help identify the theoretical framework of the study. This early stage of collection of data has been done through desk-based research by the categorisation of data collection as follows:

1. General approaches to non-sexist language will be identified
2. The arguments in favour and against gender-based language reform will be identified
3. An analysis of guidelines for non-sexist language will be carried out

An objective of the study is to identify the guidelines and recommendations regarding the avoidance of sexist language as a way of promoting linguistic equality. Therefore, this first stage of the data collection process will involve the identification of the recommendations to avoid sexist language at international level in three organisations (Chapter 4). The supranational organisations which have been selected for study are 1) the United Nations and specifically one of its specialised agencies, UNESCO, 2) the Council of Europe and 3) the European Union. These three organisations are the largest supranational bodies in the world<sup>1</sup> and one of their main aims is the achievement of gender equality as reflected in their charters or founding treaties.

Once the recommendations to avoid sexist language have been identified at international level, a linguistic analysis of three of these organisations' basic texts will be undertaken. The aim of this analysis is to test whether the guidelines for the avoidance of sexist language are being implemented in their own institutional texts. Given the large amount of documents which could be used for analysis at international level, it was necessary to select a sampling technique which will allow generalisation of findings. Here purposive sampling has been selected. This form of sampling is often used when working with very

---

<sup>1</sup> Member states are as follows: UN, 192; UNESCO, 192; Council of Europe, 47; European Union, 27 (2009)

small samples and when the researcher wishes to select cases that are informative (Saunders, 2003: 175). As the aim is to explore how these organisations have implemented their own recommendations on non-sexist language in their own texts, three documents have been selected for analysis: UNESCO's Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (2005), the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure (2008) and the Council of Europe's Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers (2005). These three documents are very similar in size and content. They constitute the most recent internal organisational and operational rules of three large supranational bodies. The analysis of this sample will help test whether the recommendations identified at an earlier stage are actually applied in practice. In addition and in order to illustrate the differences between grammatical and non-grammatical gender languages in implementing the recommendations for non-discriminatory uses of language, the above documents have been analysed in two of these organisations' working languages, English and Spanish and in English and French for the Council of Europe.

Once the recommendations at international and European level have been identified, an objective of the study is to identify how four European countries are attempting to implement non-sexist language according to 1) their own language and socio-cultural context, and 2) their own policies and strategies for effecting change. One of the methodological challenges for a comparative cross-national linguistic study is the choice of languages. The four European countries in the study are France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. This choice of countries is not an arbitrary one and responds to sociolinguistic issues. Two of the languages of the study (French and Spanish) are Romance languages which share the common linguistic feature of possessing a grammatical gender system inherited from Latin. The other two languages (English and German) are of Germanic origin although they present differences in terms of their grammatical gender systems in that, for instance, in English gender marking is minimal whereas in German gender marking is systematic. These four languages are also the most widely spoken languages in Europe<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> French is spoken by around 60 million speakers in France; English is spoken by 60 million speakers in the UK; German by 80 million in Germany and Spanish by 40 million in Spain (BBC Education, *Languages*)

and three of them have varieties in other continents (English, French and Spanish). The study of the differences in approach in other English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada or Australia, French-speaking countries (French-speaking Canada, Belgium and Switzerland) or Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America will be mentioned although an in-depth analysis of the differences and similarities in approach is outside the scope of the study. At the same time, the four countries selected for the study have legislation providing for equal treatment in recruitment and at work. In fact, as Member States of the European Union, the Council of Europe and United Nations, these four countries are obliged to take steps to establish and guarantee equality of entry into the labour market regardless of sex. An example of this is that in these four countries employers must not discriminate directly or indirectly when recruiting workers. The analysis of equal opportunities policies in each of the four countries is also relevant to attain the aim and objectives of the present study.

The next stage of the data analysis will be carried out from a sociolinguistic perspective, identifying the strategies each language has adopted to avoid sexist uses of language in their own socio-cultural contexts (Chapter 5). At the same time, the qualitative analysis reviews the challenges and problems which have arisen in each country's attempts to implement language reform measures, for example, the obstacles to language reform as well as the criticisms of such reforms. It is therefore essential to consider the socio-linguistic contexts and to this end, the four countries' national contexts will be analysed by looking at equal opportunities plans and other gender equality legislation.

After analysing the individual countries' guidelines for non-discriminatory uses of language in their own contexts, and taking into account their own linguistic features, it is essential to test the situation by analysing a sample of data with a view to determine the actual usages and whether the guidelines have been implemented in practice. Given that it would be extremely difficult to analyse all types of language, it was necessary to find a site where the practical

---

across Europe [http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european\\_languages/languages/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/european_languages/languages/index.shtml) [accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2007]

implementation of the recommendations could be tested. One of the areas that have been highlighted in the literature review where linguistic sexism could be more visible is that of offers of employment. For instance, Bem and Bem (1973) found that job advertisements which used masculine generic terms diminished women's motivation to apply for them, arguing that in fact the wording of a job description does affect an individual's interest in applying for a job. More recently Braun et al (2005) in a study of German occupational nouns found that the inclusion of women is higher when non-sexist alternatives are used. Drawing on this research into occupational nomenclature, the present study analyses a sample of the language used for job vacancy advertisements as a site where the implementation of the recommendations can be tested. The sample will be examined in the light of the recommendations identified in each country with the aim to ascertain the extent of implementation as well as the methods used. The case study therefore is a way of establishing valid and reliable evidence for the research process and allows the researcher to identify patterns of language use. In this way the case study is not an analytic approach in itself but a data collection technique (Lazaraton, 2000).

In terms of the methodological considerations for the choice of sample, it was important to select offers of employment found in areas with common features and audience for the four countries of study. The literature review has also highlighted that most of the linguistic changes resulting from guidelines occur in written forms of public and official discourse (Pauwels, 1998). Consequently, the language used in offers of employment in the public administration has been chosen because firstly, it is a highly visible arena where the seriousness of the intentions can be tested, and secondly, unlike other types of language, the language of the public administration is very comparable and it presents similarities in the four languages; for instance, it is highly bureaucratic and impersonal. Within the language of the public administration, it was necessary to find a meaningful source of data. As a result, the language used for job vacancy advertisements within each country's public service constitutes part of the sample where the implementation of the recommendations can be tested. In terms of similarities in the four linguistic contexts, public vacancy announcements is the method generally used to advertise the staging of a



recruitment competition or the need to fill vacant posts within the public administration across the four countries. It is also relevant to note that the civil service is a field of work which increasingly employs more women across the four linguistic contexts. The following table shows the proportion of women employed in the civil service in the four countries of study:

Country	Year	Percentage of women in the civil service
France	1998	48.9%
Germany	1997	52.9%
Spain	2009*	52.7%
UK	2005**	52.4%

Source: European Parliament (2000) *Recruitment and Equal Opportunities System*  
\* *Boletín estadístico del personal al servicio de las administraciones públicas*, January 2009  
\*\* *Civil Service Statistics 2006*

**Table 3.1: Proportion of women employed in the civil service across the four countries**

The increasing presence of women in the civil service contrasts with the fact that this domain has traditionally been male preserves in these countries. In fact, jobs within the civil service in Germany and the United Kingdom for instance were not open to women until after the First World War (1919). After this date, the celibacy clause prevented married women from entering the civil service. However, this clause was abolished in most countries in the 1950s. Today, as European Union members, these countries are obliged to take steps to establish and guarantee equality of access into the civil service regardless of sex or marital status (European Parliament, 2000).

In terms of comparable sources of data, the respective departments for public administration in each of the countries of study were selected. The information required was found in official websites which regularly publish employment vacancies for the public administration in each national context. The following table illustrates the different sources of data for the public administration in each country:



Country	Publishing department	Webpage
France	<i>Journal Officiel</i>	<a href="http://www.admi.net/jo/2002/18769.htm">http://www.admi.net/jo/2002/18769.htm</a>
Germany	<i>Verwaltung Online</i> (Federal Government's Portal)	<a href="http://www.bund.de">http://www.bund.de</a>
Spain	<i>Ministerio de Administraciones Públicas</i>	<a href="http://www.060.es">http://www.060.es</a>
UK	<i>Civil Service Recruitment Gateway</i>	<a href="http://careers.civil-service.gov.uk">http://careers.civil-service.gov.uk</a>

**Table 3.2 Sources of data (public appointments)**

Civil services in the four countries of study vary in terms of the recruitment process and the types of job vacancies advertised. In the United Kingdom the jobs advertised are managerial jobs whereas in France and Spain all categories of civil servants are announced, including local police officers, the armed forces and even cleaning staff for the different public administrations.

In France the official publication chosen for the analysis of job vacancies is the *Journal Officiel de la République Française* which is the official record of all legislation passed in the country as well as of job vacancy announcements. The recruitment process is called *concours publique* (public examination) which usually consists of written and oral tests. The announcement of vacancies is divided into three categories (A, B and C) which correspond to the different educational levels needed to apply for the job. The job vacancy announcements which are published in the *Journal Officiel* cover all French ministries and include the armed forces, the police and local governments such as Paris City Council.

The Spanish sample comes from the *Boletín de Ofertas de Empleo Público* which publishes the different *convocatorias* (official announcements) weekly. Although the Spanish recruitment authority is decentralised, the recruitment process is usually coordinated by the *Ministerio de Administraciones Públicas*

(Public administration department). The Spanish job vacancy announcements also cover different categories of public appointments like France, except the armed forces.

In the United Kingdom and Germany there is no single officially recognised means of informing about job vacancies through an official publication as it is the case for France or Spain. In Germany, the recruitment authority is decentralised but the job vacancies across the different ministries are published by the Portal of the Federal Government which is the gateway to services and online information of the German Administration and other public agencies. In the UK the Civil Service Recruitment Gateway, a service by the Cabinet Office, provides the source of data for the case study.

The data for the case study of public appointments will be taken from these four official publications at random within a six month period between 2001-2002 and 2007-2008. By analysing job advertisements in the four languages of the study within a five year period, the current research aims to compare the stages of implementation of the different strategies proposed across the four national contexts.

All data will be taken from the same sources for three countries: France, Spain and the United Kingdom. However, for Germany there are two sources of data. The first set, corresponding to 2002, includes public and private job advertisements although it is published by the German Federal Ministry for Work. This is because a source of exclusively public administration data online was not found for 2002. It is, however, notable in itself because it provides a useful comparison of the public and private sectors within the German context.

The second source of data for the case study will be job vacancy announcements which are published in daily newspapers. This will provide a comparison of the language used by public bodies to advertise job vacancies with the language used in job advertisements which appear in the daily press. A useful social barometer is how language is used in context, for example, in the media. Some studies have analysed the language of the written press (see



Pauwels, 1998 for examples) in order to identify sexist/non-sexist linguistic uses. Most of these studies have focused on one language and national context (see Mucchi-Faina, 2005 for a study of the Italian press; Gervais-Le Garff, 2002 and Fujimura, 2005 for a study of newspapers in France; Conrick, 2002 for an analysis of Canadian Francophone newspapers; Fasold, 1987 for a study of US newspapers, among others). These studies analyse a corpus of newspaper language in a specific language. Here the sample contains a corpus of newspaper job advertisements in four linguistic contexts. This set of data comes from job advertisements published in one daily newspaper for each country of study. The aim is to compare the two sets of data, job advertisements from the civil service and from the private sector, and analyse the differences and similarities, if any, in approach across the four linguistic contexts.

The criterion used for the selection of newspapers is the nationwide circulation figures amongst broadsheet daily newspapers. Specialised press (such as sports newspapers) or tabloids (which are the biggest selling daily newspapers in the United Kingdom, for instance) have been excluded. Circulation figures refer to the number of newspapers sold on an average day over a period of time. The largest circulating broadsheet newspapers which have been chosen for each country are as follows:

Country	Newspaper	Daily Average circulation
France	<i>Le Monde</i>	359.000 copies (2007)
Germany	<i>Die Süddeutsche Zeitung</i>	412.295 copies (2007)
Spain	<i>El País</i>	453.602 copies (2005)
UK	<i>The Sunday Times</i>	1.042.898 copies (Jan-Feb 08)

**Table 3.3: Sources of data (Selected newspapers)**

These four national newspapers are widely respected and influential at national and international level. They constitute newspapers of reference in their respective languages. The French sample comes from the job section of the daily newspaper *Le Monde* which is considered the most important and well

respected daily newspaper in France. According to a study published in July 2007, *Le Monde* is the biggest-selling national daily in France (with a daily average circulation of 359.000 copies)<sup>3</sup>. The German sample comes from *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* which, although a regional newspaper, has the largest daily circulation in Germany (with an average circulation of 412.295 copies (Monday to Friday) and 523.185 copies on Saturdays<sup>4</sup>). With regard to the Spanish sample, the biggest selling daily newspaper (apart from sports newspaper *Marca*) is *El País* with a daily circulation of 453.602 copies<sup>5</sup>. It is also the most influential newspaper in Spain and amongst Spanish-speaking countries. Finally, the largest circulation newspaper in the United Kingdom, apart from tabloids, is the weekly publication *The Sunday Times* with an average net circulation of 1.042.898 copies<sup>6</sup>. Although the Sunday Times is a weekly newspaper, it has been selected as it is the largest circulation paper in the UK. This will retain parity of samples. All these newspapers normally publish graduate to middle management positions. A random sample from the appointments section in each of these newspapers will be taken at two points over a six month period 2001-2002 and 2007- 2008. The advantages of random sampling is that it relies on a process by which each element has an equal chance of selection, thus eliminating researcher bias and allowing for representativeness (O'Leary, 2004: 107).

The analysis of offers of employment within the four countries' civil service and the offers which appear in the daily press seeks to attain the objective of whether the recommendations identified at both international and national level are being implemented in practice. Methods followed during the analysis of data are identical for the four countries of study.

---

<sup>3</sup> "La France des cadres actifs" (2007) [www.ipsos.fr](http://www.ipsos.fr) [accessed on 16.1.2008]

<sup>4</sup> "Argumente Marktforschung", December 2007

[http://mediadaten.sueddeutsche.de/home/files/argumente\\_1207.pdf?ID=ec3ad813f7ddfb69bc9307b52d20e817](http://mediadaten.sueddeutsche.de/home/files/argumente_1207.pdf?ID=ec3ad813f7ddfb69bc9307b52d20e817) [accessed on 12.02.08]

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.prisa.es/prisamedia/prisa/media/200604/18/actividad/20060418prsprsa> [accessed on 18.08.08]

<sup>6</sup> Audit Bureau of Circulation, January-February 2008, <http://www.abc.org.uk/cgi-bin/gen5?runprog=nav/abc&noc=y> [accessed on 16.1.2008]

### 3.4 Methods of data analysis

Once the relevant data have been gathered, it is necessary to develop a framework within which the data can be analysed. This framework will enable an assessment of the frequency of data using a system of percentage calculations. The statistical approach employed in the current study provides a mechanism by which the aim of the current investigation may be achieved. Analysing the frequency of language occurrences aims to establish a comparison between the four countries. This quantitative analysis is followed by a qualitative approach of the analysis of offers of employment within the four countries. The case study examines documentary evidence in each of the four languages regarding offers of employment. Official bulletins advertising vacancies as well as newspaper appointments pages have been analysed at two points over a five year period.

The analysis of the data from the case study entails a systematic grammatical analysis of the job vacancy advertisements for occurrences of masculine, feminine or neutral (epicene) forms for each language. Only occupational nouns will be analysed; that is, no analysis of the body of the text will be carried out except in the English corpus. The main linguistic challenge was to find a categorisation division which could be applied to different languages with different gender systems. Following the classification by Gervais-Le Garff (2002) in French, linguistic data has been classified into five categories:

1. *masculine forms: those which follow masculine morphological rules (M)*
2. *feminine forms: those which follow feminine morphological rules (F)*
3. *epicene forms: those which are unmarked for gender (E)*
4. *masculine and feminine forms: i.e. gender-splitting by specifically using both the masculine and the feminine forms (M/F)*
5. *unspecified/other (O)*

The first two categories (M and F) follow each language's dictionary classification into masculine (n.m.) and feminine forms (n.f.) which are currently attested in dictionaries and in common usage. The third category, epicene forms (E), applies to those terms which are unmarked for gender, that is, there is no morphological difference between masculine and feminine forms. In a

dictionary they usually appear as *nmf*. The fourth category (M/F) has been included in the analysis since the systematic use of both masculine and feminine forms has been identified as one of the strategies to reduce gender differences (Pauwels, 1998). This category also includes gender-splitting by means of the *m/f* (male/female) descriptor but without a grammatical change of the occupational noun: for instance, in French *directeur (h/f)* [male director [m/f]] where the m/f descriptor is attached to a masculine word. The fifth category has been labelled “unspecified/other” (O). Included in this category are 1) collective and abstract words which are abstractions such as the Spanish expression *personal* (staff), 2) the use of metonymy which involves the replacement of a noun by an expression related to it, for instance, an academic qualification rather than the job title itself (for example in Spanish *licenciatura en ingeniería*, [an engineering degree] instead of *licenciado en ingeniería* [male graduate in engineering]), and 3) foreign words. The reason behind the inclusion of the foreign words variable is to ascertain whether the use of foreign terminology, mainly English, resolves the issue of gender specification/neutralisation. The research carried out in this respect has found that using English occupational terms such as *manager* or *call centre operator* in other languages may be considered as a way to solve the issue of systematically finding masculine and feminine forms (Mucchi-Faina, 2005).

Given the multilingual nature of the case study data, the most challenging task will be the accurate classification of job titles in four languages of various grammatical and morphological characteristics. To this effect, in the three grammatical gender languages of the study (French, German and Spanish), several monolingual and bilingual dictionaries have been consulted in order to ascertain the gender of a term. Until recently printed dictionaries were the main authoritative reference works. Now electronic dictionaries are slowly replacing the print ones and provide an immediate access to words and grammatical structures. Electronic dictionaries also constitute significant databases which can be revised and amended as they adapt to the new social reality. Consequently, for the purpose of this study, online dictionaries have been consulted as follows: In French the online monolingual dictionary consulted is one of the most important reference works in French, the Laroussé dictionary

(<http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires>). The Spanish reference dictionary is the *Diccionario de la Real Academia (DRAE)* in its 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of 2001 (<http://buscon.rae.es/drae/>). For the study of the corpus of German job titles, the third edition (2005) of the online Concise Oxford German Dictionary ([http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK\\_SEARCH.html?book=t65a](http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t65a)) has been used. Moreover, in several cases the classification of job titles has had to be confirmed by native speakers. In addition, the linguistic analysis of the job announcements data takes into account the recommendations and guidelines for non-sexist language which are identified in Chapter 5 for each of the four countries.

The results of the case study are quantified into the five job title categories which will allow the researcher to establish frequencies of job title categories across the four different languages. The distribution of frequencies of job title categories are analysed per year across the four countries and by individual country. This will allow the researcher to ascertain a) the consistency of the wording and terminology used for each language in both the public administration and in the newspaper advertisements, and b) whether the terms used comply with the guidelines identified in Chapters 4 and 5. This will help establish a comparison across the four linguistic contexts in order to establish current usage trends. At the same time, a qualitative analysis of policy documents and guidelines and recommendations for non-sexist language is carried out at international and national level in the four countries of study.

### **3.5 Summary**

This chapter has described the research methodology and tools for the present study. In adopting a sociolinguistic approach, the present study provides a multilingual and multicultural perspective by applying a contrastive method to the linguistic analysis of four European languages. The case study establishes valid and reliable evidence in the research process by means of the analysis of job offer advertisements in two sectors, the public administration and in daily newspapers. The analysis of frequencies in the case study allows the researcher to identify a pattern of language usage which will help to establish similarities or differences in approach between languages. A longitudinal

approach also helps to establish patterns of language use over a five year period, identifying any change that might have taken place. The study provides a framework for cross-cultural comparisons of ways in which different countries have tackled the issue of sexism in language.

In the next two chapters an analysis of the recommendations on the avoidance of linguistic sexism at international and national level in each of the four countries of study is undertaken. The aim of this analysis is to identify tendencies of use in each language which in turn will enable an evaluation of whether gender-based reform policies have been implemented in practice across four linguistic contexts.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE AVOIDANCE OF LINGUISTIC SEXISM AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

#### **4.1 Overview**

Over the last three decades international organisations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union have become aware of social inequalities between women and men. These institutions have stipulated gender equality for men and women in their founding charters or treaties. Gender equality means an equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life<sup>7</sup>. Gender mainstreaming, a concept introduced in 1985 during the United Nations' Third World Conference on Women which took place in Nairobi, calls for the incorporation of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that an analysis is made of the effects on women and men before a decision is made. The ultimate objective of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. As a result, legislation to combat discrimination based on gender and to promote equal treatment of women and men has been adopted in many countries.

Nonetheless, despite women having obtained equal rights and equal status in most developed countries at least in theory, in practice women are still being discriminated against in many areas. One of the areas these organisations are concerned with is the socio-cultural repercussions of language. Since the 1990s this issue has risen higher on the political agenda and has been the focus of a great deal of discussion in international and national fora. An overview is offered here of the general recommendations made by three supranational organisations regarding the avoidance of linguistic sexism. These are 1) the United Nations and one of its specialised agencies, UNESCO; 2) the Council of Europe and 3) the European Union. Additionally recommendations regarding the avoidance of linguistic sexism from other UN specialised agencies such as the International Labour Organisation have also been identified. Once the analysis of the recommendations and guidelines has been completed, a sample of texts from UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union have been analysed

---

<sup>7</sup> 1009 Meeting, 24 October 2007 of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG)

with the aim to ascertain whether the recommendations are being implemented in practice within these three supranational organisations.

The three organisations selected for analysis represent the most active organisations in the field of equal opportunities and the elimination of inequalities between men and women at international level. The achievement of gender equality is an important goal for these organisations and it is reflected in their charters or founding treaties; at the same time, they have been working proactively in the promotion of equal opportunities between the sexes over the past decades. They are the largest supranational organisations in the world: the United Nations has 192 members, UNESCO 193, the Council of Europe 47 and the European Union 27 (2007). The following sections deal with the recommendations for the elimination and avoidance of sexist language formulated by these organisations.

#### **4.2 The United Nations system**

The founding Charter of the United Nations of 1945 was the first international agreement to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental right. Since then, the United Nations has been at the centre of a growing global movement for women's rights and several treaties have reaffirmed the principle of equal rights, notably the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) which provides the basis for the promotion of equality between men and women. The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1979 and was ratified by most member states in September 1981. The Convention is a comprehensive human rights treaty which aims to advance the status of women, or in other words, an international bill of rights for women. The Convention defines discrimination against women as:

“any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” (Article 1, 1979).

Although the Convention does not mention the issue of gender discrimination in language specifically, it constitutes the framework for taking further measures with regards to non-discriminatory practices. Article 5 of the Convention states that members shall take all appropriate measures

“to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women” (UN, 1979).

The first declarations and human rights documents within the UN system were for a long time drafted in the masculine. This started to change after the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) in 1979 which encouraged member states to introduce positive action measures designed to promote gender equality. The introduction of gender-neutral drafting in the United Nations system took place during the 1980s (Williams, 2008).

Additionally gender gaps were visible in the UN which did not have women in high office positions until the 1970s. In order to promote gender equality, the UN General Assembly (1999) set out clear directives aimed at promoting the appointment of women as one of the objectives of the recruitment policy with a view to obtaining a more equitable balance of men and women in the Secretariat, particularly in top management positions. In order to achieve this objective, it is stated that preference will be given to equally qualified women candidates. Their equal opportunities policy is also reflected in the note included in each vacancy notice which states:

“The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs” (Article 8, 1945).

There is evidence that this is common practice in job vacancy announcements within the whole UN system whereby women candidates are encouraged to apply for posts in order to reverse the traditional trend of a majority of men applying (and getting the jobs). To this end, some UN specialised agencies include a note to this effect; for instance, all of UNESCO’s vacancies include the following statement:

“UNESCO is committed to gender equality in its programming and to gender parity within the Secretariat. Therefore, women candidates

are strongly encouraged to apply, as well as nationals from non- and under-represented Member States”.

From the analysis above it can be inferred that the United Nations have been proactive in the field of equal opportunities over the last 30 years. The recommendations on the avoidance of sexist language usages from one of its specialised agencies, UNESCO, are analysed below.

#### **4.2.1 UNESCO**

As one of the first UN agencies to address formally the issue of sexism in language, the policy of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is to avoid discrimination between the sexes in all its fields of competence and notably education. Their aim is to transform behaviour and attitudes that legitimise and perpetuate the moral and social exclusion of women. Concerned with the idea that language shapes our thinking, UNESCO has been working over the last twenty years to revise the language used in the Basic Texts published by the organisation and to promote guidelines for a more gender-neutral language in educational textbooks and fora.

One of the most explicit recent demonstrations of the importance of the issue of sexism and language at this level was a formal call made in 1987 at UNESCO's General Conference by Canada and the Nordic countries to avoid gender-specific language. In the 1987 session the General Conference invited the Director-General

“to adopt a policy related to the drafting of all the Organisation's working documents aimed at avoiding, to the extent possible, the use of language which refers explicitly or implicitly to only one sex except where positive action measures are being considered” (General Conference, 1987).

At the following session two years later the issue of sexism in language was brought up once again and the General Conference invited the Director-General

“to pursue the establishment of guidelines on the use of vocabulary that refers explicitly to women, and to promote its use among the Member States” (General Conference, 1989).

These guidelines were published in 1989 in the form of a booklet in three of the UN official languages: English, French and Spanish, in collaboration with the Bureau of Conferences, Languages and Documents and the Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality (*Guidelines on non-sexist language/Pour un langage non sexiste/Recomendaciones para un uso no sexista del lenguaje*). Although German is not a UNESCO official language, these guidelines have also been published in German (Hellinger and Bierbach, 1993). A second edition of the English/French guidelines was published in 1994 and the latest third edition was published in 1999<sup>8</sup>.

Once the guidelines had been published, the emphasis was placed on the revision of official documents as part of the overall review of the Organisation's constitutional and statutory texts. As part of this, in 1991 the General Conference at its 26th session invited the Director-General

"to pay attention to the guidelines on non-sexist language, so that UNESCO documents and fora do not further spread biased and stereotyped connotations" (General Conference, 1991).

A year later in 1992 as a response to the General Conference, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to undertake a total revision of all Basic Texts in order to eliminate all sexist language, using consistently gender-neutral terminology and wording.

The issue was raised again at the General Conference in 1993 even though the Legal Committee had observed that the Basic Texts did not lead to discrimination against women. Despite the Legal Committee's remarks, the General Conference agreed to continue to work on the revision of the organisation's Basic Texts on the basis of the guidelines set up by the Executive Board in 1992 because it was stated that

"the systematic use of gender-neutral terminology and wording may alter attitudes and expectations that now constitute a barrier to achieving equality of opportunity for women and men" (General Conference, 1993).

---

<sup>8</sup> The latest guidelines (1999) are entitled *Guidelines on gender-neutral language*

As a result of this recommendation, the Executive Board agreed to a new edition of the Organisation's Basic Texts with a view to bringing the language of these in line with the Organisation's policy of avoiding discrimination between the sexes. The revision would then be carried out in two ways:

“First, to eliminate expressions whose semantic field completely *excludes* women and whose use is a survival of a stereotyped view of masculine and feminine roles. Secondly, to eliminate generic masculine terms which do not actually exclude women but which, because of their masculine connotation, could, in the mind of the reader, *relegate women to the background*”.(Executive Board, 25<sup>th</sup> August 1994)

These revisions were suggested for the six UN official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish) offering different solutions to account for the different nature of each of the six languages. One of the aspects that were central to the revision requested was the case of titles and names of occupations and posts. It was stated that the exclusive use of the masculine gender to refer to all holders of posts (i.e., the so-called generic masculine) could eclipse the participation of women. Gender-neutralisation was proposed in English which meant that words that sound distinctively masculine such as *chairman* (or *vice-chairman*) could be replaced by a more “neutral” word, such as *chairperson* or *chair*. The other main amendment was to eliminate the use of exclusively masculine pronouns and to use dual pronouns such as *he or she* and *him or her*. This practice and its variations (for example, changing the order so that the masculine is not always first as well as the graphemic innovation *s/he*) are common in English-speaking countries such as the United States and Canada and within the United Nations system.

The document also included a proposal to insert a disclaimer, for all official languages, at the bottom of the last page of contents of the Organisation's Basic Texts in order to raise awareness of the issue of sexism in the language; the disclaimer stated that:

“None of the terms used in the Basic Texts to designate the person discharging duties or functions is to be interpreted as implying that men and women are not equally eligible to fill any post or seat associated with the discharge of these duties or functions”. (Executive Board, 1994)

The Basic Texts referred to include the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference and the Executive Board which are analysed later. It is noteworthy to point out that the General Conference was aware of the difficulties relating to this issue in six official languages and of the scope of the changes according to each language. In English the solutions adopted were to replace the noun *chairman* by a gender-neutral word such as *chairperson*, and to double the third person pronouns (e.g. *he or she*). However, in French and Spanish it was recognised that the problem is to find a truly gender-neutral wording given that all nouns are marked for gender. It was suggested that the only way to feminise the Basic Texts would then be to use the feminine forms systematically alongside the masculine ones. However, it was stated that this not only creates "inextricable problems of logic but would results in an unbearably wearisome text"<sup>9</sup>. The only practicable solution seems to keep the masculine as the generic form, without using the parallel feminine form. The document points out that this maintenance of the masculine form in texts of a general nature to designate unidentified persons is not contradictory to the principles set out in the *Guidelines*. In 1995 the General Conference confirmed the decision to revise all of UNESCO's Basic Texts in order to remove all sexist language and to ensure the use of neutral terminology and wording.<sup>10</sup>

As the UN advisory body in education matters, UNESCO's Executive Board has also recommended the revision of the content of textbooks in order to eliminate sex-stereotypes in education. In particular, "lessons on careers, pictures and language have been made gender-neutral" (Executive Board, 1999).

Continuing this initiative to promote gender-neutral language, in 1998 UNESCO's Unit for the Promotion of the Status of Women and Gender Equality organised a debate on sexist stereotypes in language to commemorate International Women's Day. Researchers, journalists, community leaders and writers were invited to discuss issues relating to the neutrality of language and its impact on gender relations. The third edition of the *Guidelines on gender-neutral language* which was drafted in collaboration with UNESCO's Translation Division was presented.

---

<sup>9</sup> Report by the Director-General on the revision of all the basic Texts with a view to the use of gender-neutral terminology and wording, General conference, 27<sup>th</sup> session, Paris 1993, available online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0009/000955/095530Eo.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> 28C/Resolution 1.13, 28th Session, General Conference, August 1995

As the previous editions of 1989 and 1994, these guidelines have been published in three of the six official languages of the United Nations: English, French and Spanish. Their aim is

“not to abolish certain words or to alter historically established texts; nor it is suggested that these guidelines be followed to the letter. For the sake of equality, however, writers are asked in every case to pause and consider the alternatives” (UNESCO, 1999:6)

The aim of these guidelines was therefore to encourage people to show greater sensitivity to the implications of the language they use because “imprecise word choices may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning, even if they were not intended to be” (UNESCO, 1999: 4). According to the *Guidelines*, there are two main problems that arise from this issue: (1) ambiguity, in cases where it is unclear whether the author means one or both sexes, and (2) stereotyping, where the writing conveys biased connotations about roles and identities. The *Guidelines* include examples of discriminatory uses in these two categories in the three languages and propose a more sensitive alternative followed by a comment or explanation. The following table illustrates some of the suggestions made in the *Guidelines* (for English):

Example	Alternative	Comment
man, mankind	people, humanity, human beings, humankind, the human race, we, men and women	a variety of terms may be used
to man (a project)	to staff, to hire personnel, employ staff, run,	
man-made	artificial, synthetic, manufactured	appropriate term depends on the context
man and wife	husband and wife, wife and husband	
businessman	business manager, executive	
cameraman	Photographer, camera operator, camera crew	
chairman	chairperson, chair, president, presiding officer	
fireman	firefighter, fire crew, fire brigade	
salesman/girl	shop assistant, sales assistant, sales staff	
spokesman	spokesperson, representative	Use <i>spokesman</i> and <i>spokeswoman</i> as appropriate when a specific person is intended. Use non gender-specific term when reference is indeterminate

**Table 4.1: Examples of gender-inclusive nomenclature in UNESCO’s *Guidelines on gender-neutral language* (1999)**

The need to revise titles and names of professions is emphasised in the guidelines, stressing the avoidance of the masculine form to refer to women who occupy that post. Despite this recommendation, however, the *Guidelines on gender-neutral language* state that existing titles of programmes, documents, etc.



cannot, as a rule, be changed, although the avoidance of the generic masculine in new titles is recommended.

The *Guidelines* also recommend the avoidance of the masculine nominative and possessive pronoun as generic. Several suggestions to replace the generic masculine are as follows:

Example to avoid	Alternative	Comment
The teacher is usually appointed on the basis of <i>his</i> training	Teachers are usually appointed on the basis of their training	Changed to plural
There were 16 girls and 16 boys in the class. Each child was to write an essay on <i>his</i> favourite hobby	Each child was to write an essay on <i>his or her</i> favourite hobby	Change <i>his</i> to <i>his or her</i> ; however, use sparingly to avoid monotonous repetition
Anyone disagreeing with this statement should give his reasons	All those disagreeing with this statement should give their reasons/Anyone... should give <i>their</i> reasons	Use of <i>their</i> as singular pronoun in the second alternative as a singular pronoun of common gender is widely used and has sound historical antecedents

**Table 4.2 Examples of the avoidance of masculine pronouns as recommended in UNESCO’s *Guidelines on gender-neutral language***

According to the UNESCO guidelines, the preferred solution to the avoidance of masculine pronouns involves recasting sentences in the plural; yet the use of double pronouns is also offered as a solution although it is recommended to use this strategy sparingly in order to avoid cumbersome formulations and monotonous repetition. Another strategy is the use of *they* and *their* as singular pronouns. The guidelines claim that this form has historical antecedents and it is now widely used.

Finally, a section of the *Guidelines* is devoted to titles and forms of address. An important issue raised by the guidelines is the avoidance of the distinction of women based on their marital status, for example, the forms *Miss* and *Mrs* in English, *Madame* and *Mademoiselle* in French or *Señora* and *Señorita* in Spanish as opposed to the only form used for men. The suggestion in the *Guidelines* is to replace feminine courtesy titles such as *Miss* and *Mrs* with an only form, *Ms*, as “a woman’s marital status is very often irrelevant to the matter in hand (participation in a meeting, etc) and there is no masculine equivalent to *Miss/Mrs*”. For titles of

functions such as that of *Chairman*, the suggestion is to use a more gender-neutral term such as *Chairperson*, *chair*, *presiding officer*. When addressing the individual the following formulas could be used: *Madam Chairperson*, *Mr Chairperson*. The comment is that when new bodies are set up or rules of procedure, etc of existing bodies are updated, gender-neutral terms such as *chairperson*, *chair* or *president* should be used in place of *chairman*.

These recommendations are very similar in the other two language versions (French and Spanish) and many of the issues raised in the UNESCO guidelines also appear in other documentation at national and international level. Although the problems the guidelines deal with differ linguistically according to the nature of the language concerned, the general principles the guidelines deal with are the avoidance of terms which give the impression that women are not taken into consideration, by using for instance the generic masculine in occupational terminology; for example, Spanish UNESCO guidelines recommend to avoid *el candidato* (the (male) candidate) to address both women and men and replace it with *las personas candidatas* (the candidate persons); they also deal with the avoidance of terms which explicitly exclude women (for example, in French it is recommended to avoid expressions such as *les hommes politiques*- (political men); similarly they recommend the avoidance of terms which exclude men (for example, also from French *les infirmières*- female nurses) which reinforce stereotypes of male and female occupations. Finally UNESCO's guidelines recommend the avoidance of formulas which convey a stereotyped conception of masculine and feminine roles (e.g. *les délégués et leur épouses* –the delegates and their wives; *Transport will be provided for delegates and their wives*).

The UNESCO's *Guidelines on Gender-neutral language*, in their three linguistic versions, constitute a reference and a standard tool for reviewing and scanning manuscripts regarding the avoidance of sexist language within UNESCO and the United Nations system in general. According to a report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 2000), more than 10,000 copies of the third edition of the *Guidelines on gender-neutral language* in English and French had been distributed by February

2000, that is, less than a year after its publication. Now this document is readily available online<sup>11</sup>.

#### **4.2.2 Other UN specialised agencies**

UNESCO is not the only UN agency that has tackled the topic of discrimination in language. Other United Nations specialised agencies that have expressed concern about linguistic sexism are the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Following the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights and Programme of Action of 1993 which stated that "the human rights of women are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights"<sup>12</sup>, the issue of women's rights was incorporated into the human rights system of the United Nations. Since then the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) has aimed at integrating gender perspectives into human rights activities; significantly this has included the linguistic representation of women and men. In an expert group meeting on the development of guidelines for the integration of gender perspectives into UN Human Rights activities and programmes, the recommendation made was that

"the language used in human rights instruments and practices should be gender-inclusive. Language both defines and perpetuates reality. At present, the continuing use of male-defined language (both within and outside the United Nations) which is andro-centric, stereotypical, discriminatory and exclusionary, maintains the current imbalance in power relations and contributes to a situation in which women are unable to exercise and enjoy their human rights. It has the further effect of obscuring women, their experiences and their social value"<sup>13</sup>.

One year later on 20 December 1996, the Commission on Human Rights reported on the further promotion and encouragement of human rights and fundamental freedoms. One of the recommendations of the Commission was that "in preparing reports of the treaty bodies' sessions, attention should be paid to the use of gender-inclusive language wherever possible" and that "the commission on Human Rights and other human rights mechanisms should also strive to ensure

---

<sup>11</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950Mo.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, part I, para. 18, 25 June 1993

<sup>13</sup> Expert group meeting on the development of guidelines for the integration of gender perspectives into human rights activities and programmes, Commission on Human Rights, 20 November 1995

that the language used in reports and resolutions is gender inclusive"<sup>14</sup>. It was recommended that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should establish guidelines on gender inclusive language in all the official languages of the United Nations for use in the preparation of all its communications, reports and publications. This was echoed by the UN Economic and Social Council in 1997.

As part of the commitment to equal opportunities, another UN specialised agency, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), has also addressed the issue of sexist language. Aware that gender-inclusive language is important for promoting and achieving equality between men and women, the ILO has recommended using non-sexist, gender-neutral language in all union documents and communications (ILO, 2001). Instructions on avoiding sexist language in ILO publications can be found in the ILO house style manual (ILO, 2006). Different approaches to implement gender-inclusive language in ILO documents include:

- the use of plurals or repetition of the subject to avoid masculine pronouns (e.g. replacing *the worker....he* by *workers.....they*)
- the use of parallel constructions to avoid gender-biased terms (e.g. replacing *man and wife* with *husband and wife*)
- the avoidance of parentheses, slashes, hyphens when introducing feminine and masculine forms. The recommendation is to use repetition of both masculine and feminine pronouns such as *he or she* rather than the use of the truncated symbols such as *he/she* or *(s)he*
- to restructure sentences whenever necessary to avoid generic masculines
- to avoid occupational titles ending in *-man*, for example, *chairman* should be replaced by gender-neutral terms such as *chairperson* or gender abstraction such as *chair*
- to eliminate sexist terms to enhance the visibility of women in texts, therefore avoid using generic masculine titles or job names to functions which are exercised by women.

These recommendations are also available in French and Spanish (see *Manuel de rédaction des instruments de l'OIT* and *Manual para la redacción de instrumentos de la OIT*). They are very similar in content to the various linguistic versions of the recommendations formulated by UNESCO (1999).

---

<sup>14</sup><http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/80a4879be00458598025668a0043c113?OpenDocument> [accessed on 13.1.09]

From the analysis of recommendations carried out above, it would be reasonable to presume that all these organisations within the UN system have incorporated gender-inclusive language in their basic texts and documentation. A brief analysis of the language used in the Rules of Procedure of UNESCO's Executive Board has been carried out to evaluate this (see section 4.5).

### **4.3 The Council of Europe**

Another international organisation that has addressed the issue of sexism in language and the need to employ non-discriminatory language to reflect the principle of equal opportunities is the Council of Europe. This supranational organisation, made up of 47 European countries, has taken several steps to promote equality between women and men through different recommendations to Member States. Thirty years after its creation, the Council of Europe's first equality committee (the Committee on the Status of Women, or CAHFM) was created in 1979. This committee has undergone several transformations in order to reflect the change of focus from the situation of women in particular to that of equality of the sexes. Consequently, in 1981 a new Committee on Equality between women and men was created (CDEG, 1981-1986) which in 1987 was replaced by the European Committee for Equality between women and men (CEEG, 1987-1991). This committee had a pioneering role in developing mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. Finally in 1992 it was made permanent and was given the status of a steering committee as equality was gradually being recognised as a fundamental issue. The transformation of the ad hoc committee for equality into a steering committee indicated a significant change whereby equality is no longer a temporary concern but an ongoing commitment.

As part of their commitment to the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, in 1985 the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on legal protection against sex discrimination (Recommendation R (85)2). This recommendation included the issue of sex discrimination in advertising encouraging Member States to adopt suitable measures to avoid and eliminate sex discrimination in advertisements. It also addressed the topic of sexism in language stating that "unless there is a clear reason, offers of employment should

not be worded in such a way as to attract only one of the sexes"<sup>15</sup>. According to this recommendation, member states were encouraged to draw up guidelines to prevent sex-stereotyping.

Three years after the recommendation on legal protection against sex discrimination, the Council of Europe's Declaration on Equality of women and men (1988) affirmed that equality was an integral part of human rights and condemned sexism in all its forms as it "has the effect of perpetuating the idea of superiority or inferiority of one of the sexes, and justifying the preponderance or dominance of one over the other"<sup>16</sup>.

Following the Council of Europe's Declaration on equality, there has been a series of recommendations to member states aimed at achieving de facto equality between men and women. The most explicit output of the Declaration of Equality was, in 1990, a specific recommendation on the elimination of sexism from language (Recommendation R (90)4). This recommendation underlines the fundamental role that language has in forming the social identity of an individual and the interaction which exists between language and social attitudes. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers was also aware that the sexism reflected in language constitutes a barrier to the process of equal opportunities between women and men because it hides the existence of women and denies equality. In this recommendation Member States were therefore urged to take up the following measures:

- 1) to encourage the use, as far as possible, of non-sexist language to take account of the presence, status and role of women in society, as current linguistic practice does for men;
- 2) to bring the terminology used in legal drafting, public administration and education into line with the principle of sex equality; and
- 3) to encourage the use of non-sexist language in the media.

This recommendation was intended to provide the basis for European countries to continue to work in the field of sexism in their respective languages. In accordance

---

<sup>15</sup> Recommendation R(85)2, Appendix II, explanatory memorandum, p. 25

<sup>16</sup> Declaration on Equality of Women and Men, Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe, 16 November 1988

with the Recommendation R(90)4, guidelines for introducing non-sexist language have been set up within the Council of Europe and to this end in June 1994, the Secretary General wrote to the directors of the different departments calling for the appropriate application of these guidelines. According to Instruction No. 33 of 1 June 1994 concerning the use of non-sexist language in the Council of Europe's documentation,

“sexism shall be removed from language at all levels of the organisation (Article 1) and all Council of Europe texts, publications and audiovisual material shall be revised following the guidelines for the use on non-sexist language”.

Guidelines have been drawn up for the two official languages of the Council of Europe (French and English) with recommendations to extend them to other languages where appropriate. In English, the guidelines propose the avoidance of gender-specific pronouns when the sex of the person concerned is not known. To this end, a series of alternatives to avoid generic masculine forms are suggested:

- to use a plural form instead of the generic singular masculine form
- to reword the sentence
- to delete the (masculine) pronoun altogether
- to replace the personal pronoun by an article
- to use *we*, *one* or *people* instead of the gender specific third person pronoun
- to use dual pronouns, that is, *he or she*, *his or her*, although it is recommended that this solution is used sparingly
- in occupational terminology, to avoid “*man*” compounds
- In the case of forms of address, to use *Ms* to avoid the differentiation based on marital status. Otherwise the recommendation is to use the first name and surname without the title
- to use parallel language, i.e., avoid non-parallel expressions such as *man and wife* and replace it with *husband and wife*, *man and woman*
- to avoid stereotypes such as *the ambassadors and their wives* or marked terms such as *a woman doctor*, *a male nurse*

It is noted that whilst there is a tendency in English for gender-neutralisation where there is a preference for terms that apply equally to both sexes, in French

the tendency is to introduce a new feminine form of titles and occupational designations. This responds to the structural differences between the two languages, rather than to differences in the socio-political context<sup>17</sup>. The French Council of Europe guidelines recommend the gender-specification approach whereby masculine and feminine terms should be used systematically. Given that French is a grammatical gender language with a variety of ways to form the feminine, a glossary of occupational nouns (*Liste de noms de métiers, de fonction, de grade ou de titre*) is also included in this Instruction. The list is based on the terms adopted by the Belgian government following the advice of the Belgian *Conseil supérieur de la langue française*. The following is the list of recommendations in French:

- the term “*le statut des agents*” (agents’ charter) shall be replaced by “*statut du personnel*” (staff charter)
- the grammatical rules of French will be applied without exception
- when a text includes a masculine word in a generic sense (for example, *un expert sera nommé*) the feminine form of that term shall be added to the masculine form (e.g. *Un expert ou une experte sera nommé*). It is worth noting that in this case the past participle has not been expressed in the feminine form *nommée*.
- to avoid feminine endings in brackets (for example, *un(e) député(e)*) because these make reading difficult. The recommendation is to use the masculine form followed by the feminine one side by side
- Nouns whose gender is not specified by a specific ending in masculine or feminine (that is, epicene) will be specified by the use of the masculine and feminine determiner
- Invariable nouns such as *personne, recrue, victime, conjoint, individu, être humain, membre* are recommended
- The plural forms of nouns, adjectives and verbs are always ruled by the masculine, so the terms *délégués, experts, représentants* do not need to change

These recommendations are accompanied by a glossary with masculine and feminine versions of many names of occupations to be consulted in case of uncertainty as to the form the feminine form takes. These French guidelines are much more detailed than the English ones which reflect the complexity of the grammatical rules of gender formation in French.

---

<sup>17</sup>Instruction n° 33 du 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1994 relative à l'emploi d'un langage non sexiste au Conseil de l'Europe



The analysis of the Council of Europe guidelines (1994) reveals that they are very similar in content to those issued by UNESCO (1999) identified in section 4.2.1. Both sets of guidelines deal with the avoidance of generic masculines in terms of occupational terminology and use of personal pronouns.

The Council of Europe's 1990 recommendation on the elimination of sexism from language was later reinforced by other recommendations in the same area, specifically Recommendation 1229 (1994) on equality of rights between women and men that recommends (amongst other things)

- a. that the committee of Ministers "introduce in French the feminist form of titles and names of functions into current language, for instance by extending and implementing the French circular of 11 March 1986 on feminisation of names of professions, functions, grades or titles" (Council of Europe, 1994) .
- b. to overcome the ambiguity of the French term *droits de l'homme* (man's rights) by replacing it with *droits de la personne* (people's rights)

This is a very specific recommendation concerning French language and therefore is discussed in depth in the following chapter in the section that deals with the French experience.

Other recommendations that have echoed the need to revise texts to avoid discriminatory uses of language include Recommendation 1281 (1995) on gender equality in education which urges Member States to take measures to "revise teaching material and methods with a view to reinforcing non-discriminatory language and non-sexist teaching" (Council Of Europe, 1995).

In this context, the Second Declaration of Equality between men and women as a fundamental criterion of democracy adopted at the 4<sup>th</sup> European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (Istanbul, 13-14 November 1997) invited social partners such as trade unions and employers, political parties and other relevant bodies to

- "incorporate equality of opportunity into their human resources policy by analysing and modifying, if necessary, documents and practices

implemented in the framework of recruitment procedures, job offers, selection of applicants, training programmes and promotions<sup>18</sup>.

More recently Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms (adopted on 21 November 2007) urges governments of member states to take or reinforce the necessary measures to implement gender equality in practice, taking into account specific gender equality standards including the elimination of sexism from language and the promotion of a language that reflects the principle of gender equality. According to this, actions must be targeted at the promotion of the use of non-sexist language in all sectors, particularly in the public sector, at all levels and in all forms of education and the media. Elements indicating member states' commitment to gender equality in this regard include the adoption and implementation of norms imposing an obligation on the public sector to use non-sexist language in official documents; the existence of a clear mandate to monitor the implementation of the use of non-sexist language; and the promotion of gender-based research into the language used, especially in the information sector, the media and in education<sup>19</sup>. The aim of this recommendation is to give women and men equal value and equal visibility and to this end it includes the monitoring of the implementation of these guidelines which must be carried out by gender equality institutions or especially dedicated structures.

In terms of practical application of these recommendations, therefore, there has been a need to revise all materials published by the Council of Europe. These include the Staff Regulations whose revised edition of February 1996 follow Instruction No. 33 in order to meet the need to eliminate sexist language in compliance with Recommendation R (90), Recommendation 1229 (1994) and the request of the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men to eliminate sexism from language. The strategies recommended in English to eliminate gender specific language include: 1) the addition of feminine pronouns to the existing masculine ones (*he or she, his or her, him or her*); 2) recasting the

---

<sup>18</sup><https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=459517&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864> [accessed on 18.08.08]

<sup>19</sup>[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec\(2007\)17](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2007)17) [accessed on 19.06.08]

sentence in the plural (for instance, a sentence such as “Any hierarchical superior in the Secretariat shall exercise his authority”... has been rephrased as “Hierarchical superiors in the Secretariat shall exercise their authority...”); and 3) removing all instances of the term *Chairman* and replacing them with the gender-neutral *Chair*.

It is also relevant to point out that the Council of Europe has introduced specific measures to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. As a result, the administration not only ensures that the wording of vacancy notices is bias-free, but also inserts an explicit statement encouraging women to apply for jobs within the Council of Europe system<sup>20</sup>. Since the adoption of the Equal Opportunities Policy, a new paragraph has been included in all internal and external vacancy notices, specifically mentioning the Council of Europe’s commitment to equal opportunities:

“The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all suitably-qualified candidates, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation”.

Also as part of this equal opportunities commitment, the Council of Europe is required to include in all of their vacancy announcements the following note:

“Under its equal opportunities policy, the Council of Europe is aiming to achieve parity in the number of women and men employed in each category and grade. In the event of equal merit, preference will therefore be given to the applicant belonging to the under-represented sex”.

In practical terms this has resulted in the requirement to use the word “*applicant*” in both masculine and feminine in those languages with grammatical gender (for example, in French *le/la candidat(e)*) as well as the agreement of past participles and adjectives: e.g.: *Le/la candidat(e) retenu(e) sera recruté(e)*, where the noun, the determiners and the past participles are morphologically marked for masculine and feminine.

---

<sup>20</sup> Report by the Secretary General on equality between women and men in the Council of Europe (1992)

Both the 1990 Council of Europe recommendation on the elimination of sexism from language and the more recent 2007 recommendation setting gender equality standards and mechanisms constitute reference documents for European countries to work on the issue of non-sexist language use. One of the objectives of the present study is to ascertain whether these recommendations to Member States are being adopted and implemented in four European linguistic contexts. This has been analysed in the different sections for the four countries of the study in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4 The European Union**

The European Union has been working for equal opportunities since its founding Treaty of Rome in 1957 which enshrined the principle of equality between women and men. An example of its commitment to the principle of equal opportunities is provided by the 1976 EEC Directive (76/207/EEC) which concerns the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions. Article 3 of this directive states that

“application of the principle of equal treatment means that there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of sex in the conditions, including selection criteria, for access to all jobs or posts”.

This directive constituted the starting point for equal opportunities within the European Community and could be considered as the basis for the principle of equality in language although the issue is not expressly mentioned. The 1976 directive was amended in 2000 by Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. This directive also recommends the adoption of further measures to promote equality between men and women.

As well as the principle of equal opportunities, the principle of gender mainstreaming has too been applied to all policies and programmes at European Union level. Gender mainstreaming is the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men. In fact, the EU has produced a conceptual framework of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for the promotion of equality between women and men. In a report on

gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, the High Level group on gender equality urged that guidelines for gender-neutral language in European Parliament texts be drafted and that the terminology and language used in European Parliament documents be reviewed. It also considered that this would require training of all staff involved in administrative drafting and the translation service (European Parliament, 2003).

The elimination of gender stereotypes is one of the priority areas for EU action on gender equality. As part of this commitment, gender-neutral drafting in the European Union started in the 1990s. One of the first references found on the topic of sexism in language within the European Union documentation is the Conference of Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting in Brussels on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1996, which set out to produce a draft revision of the Treaties as requested by the European Council in Florence which would later constitute the Treaty of Amsterdam. Thus, under Chapter 1, devoted to Fundamental Rights and non-discrimination, the Conference aimed to introduce gender-neutral language into the Treaties. In 1997 the Treaty of Amsterdam still used the masculine as generic, but by the time the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union was drafted three years later, gender neutrality was already established and has become a consolidated principle in the drafting of major documents (Williams, 2008). The drafting of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, proclaimed in October 2000, also indicated the need to use gender-neutral wording in all its linguistic versions. In fact, one of the main innovations of the Charter, it was claimed, is the gender-neutral language used in the text: "The Charter is addressed to everybody, with no predominance of one gender over the other and guarantees equal rights to women and men". However, despite this claim, there were some criticisms about the drafting of the Charter; for example, the European Women's Lobby criticised parts of the draft charter saying that "the Charter in its English version uses sexist language several times"<sup>21</sup>. A short analysis of the December (2000) edition of the Charter shows that feminine pronouns in the English version are used consistently alongside masculine ones. However, the situation is different in

---

<sup>21</sup> Press release of 2/8/00 entitled "Women excluded from the EU Charter: Gender gap and sexist language"

languages with grammatical gender, such as Spanish where the draft Charter employed both gender-neutral terms such as *persona* (“*Toda persona tiene derecho...*”) together with generic masculines: *nadie podrá ser condenado* [nobody could be accused, masculine past participle], *los ciudadanos* [citizens, in masculine plural] *los padres* [parents- masculine plural], *los hijos* [children – masculine plural], *todos aquellos* [those who... - masculine plural].

It is relevant to highlight, however, that unlike UNESCO or the Council of Europe, no recommendations or guidelines on how to avoid sexist language use had been issued at European Union level at that time. Only the European Commission’s Translation Directorate General had addressed the issue in its style guide issued in English and Spanish versions. The *English Style Guide: A handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission* (1982) represents a comprehensive manual on writing and translating in English for those working for the European Commission. This guide in its fifth edition (October 2007, revised in May 2008)) addresses, albeit very briefly, the issue of language and gender. It states that

"using gender-neutral formulations is more than a matter of political correctness. The Commission wholeheartedly endorses equal opportunities, and its language should reflect this. Using the generic ‘he’ is incongruous, since Commission documents are just as likely to be addressed to women”<sup>22</sup>.

Previous versions (1993 and 1998) commented that “arguing that the masculine embraces the feminine is not calculated to resolve the issue”. The English style guide proposes the use of gender-neutral language in all documents of the European Union. The recommendations to use gender-neutral language also tend to include the avoidance of dual forms such as *he/she*, *s/he* because they could be construed as clumsy and repetitive. The best solution, it is claimed, is to use the plural, which in any case is more commonly used in English for the generic form as it does not require the definite article. They also prefer the use of singular *they*: for example, *Everyone has their own views on this*. In the case of occupational nouns, translators are advised to use their discretion but on the whole to avoid compounds with *-man* and marked terms such as *woman pilot*.

---

<sup>22</sup> *English style guide*, available at [http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style\\_guides/english/style\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style_guides/english/style_guide_en.pdf) Page 51

Therefore in the case of English, the gender-neutralisation approach is recommended.

The Spanish version of the *Style Guide* (Brussels and Luxemburg, June 2008) also includes a section on the terminology to be used for positions occupied by women and whether they should appear in the feminine or masculine form. The Spanish guidelines advocate using the feminine form (for example, *directora*, *jefa*, *consejera*, *comisaria* [female director, head, councillor, commissioner]) when the position is held by a woman. This recommendation follows the gender-specification approach which makes the visibility of women through language explicit by using the feminine forms. A special mention is made of the term *asistente* (assistant) which is usually unmarked for gender in Spanish. However, unlike the growing trend in Spanish to make a feminine form ending in *-a* as in *la presidenta* (the female president), the guide recommends to leave *la asistente* because this is a position which can be mainly found in the European Union institutions but is not frequent in the Spanish administration system. There is also a special mention of the term *miembro* which is valid in the masculine form preceded by the feminine article, i.e., *la miembro* (female member). Finally there is a criticism of the use of the masculine form for functions, regardless of the sex of the referent, in the EU *Whoiswho* database. The Spanish department of the Translation Directorate General urges the correction of this “linguistic anomaly” as soon as possible.

Another body of the European Union, the European Court of Justice, has also published a Translation Style Manual which recommends that sexist language should be avoided whenever possible in translations into English. This manual suggests that words such as *applicant* and *defendant* in general contexts have generally been construed as masculine but the recommendation is to avoid the use of the masculine personal pronoun *his* by means of the plural pronoun *they* in generic contexts, that is, when the sex of the referent is not known.

Despite the lack of specific guidelines to avoid sexist usages of language, the European Union is one of the international organisations which have shown a greater commitment to equal opportunities between women and men. This is

reflected in the EU treaties, for example, the Treaty of Amsterdam which came into force in 1999 aimed to strengthen the EU commitment to the principle of equality between men and women (Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Community) and this commitment was reiterated by the Treaty of Lisbon of December 2007.

There is evidence that the issue of sexism in language and its elimination is still relevant within the European Union system. Since 1982 four medium-term action programmes on equality have been set up at European Union level and some of them include the elimination of sexist usages in language. For instance, the Fourth Action Programme of the European Commission's Directorate General for Personnel and Administration covering the period 2004-2008 stresses the policy of equality between women and men within the European Union and endorses a revision to the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities which ensures that full equality in practice is one of the aims of the European institutions. The proposed measures in terms of recruitment and selection ensure that the Directorates-General will advertise vacancies in a gender-neutral manner and draft job specifications that do not discriminate against women. Alongside these measures, the latest Action Programme includes a proposal to provide gender awareness training for those involved in selecting and recruiting staff, as well as for officials involved in administrative drafting where the use of gender-neutral language is important.

However, despite all the legislation toward equality between men and women, no guidelines to avoid gender bias in language had been published at European Union level until May 2008 when the first set of language-specific guidelines for gender-neutral language were issued. These were drawn up by a working group under the auspices of the European Parliament's High level Group on Gender Equality and have been the result of a close collaboration among different EU linguistic services. Until then the departments of translation and interpreting of the different EU institutions were understandingly the most active in the avoidance of linguistic sexism.



The present research has analysed the English and Spanish versions of these guidelines. In terms of content, similarly to those already identified from UNESCO or the Council of Europe, the May 2008 guidelines, which were issued in the form of a pamphlet to all European Parliament departments, provide suggestions and examples to avoid sexist usages. They list issues which are common to most languages although it is recognised that the specific problems in avoiding sexist language vary from language to language. The guidelines also provide a list of recommended names of professions and functions which entails the use of a gender-neutral term in English for both men and women in the post.

The issues identified as common to most languages are the generic use of the masculine, the issue of whether to use gender-neutral or gender-specific terms for names of professions and functions, and the issue of names, marital status and titles. In relation to the issue of names of professions and functions, the guidelines recommend to avoid double forms in favour of generic terms when referring to the job function. Therefore in the more formal setting of the European Parliament, gender-neutralisation is the technique recommended given that the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine forms and the possible agreements with articles, adjectives and past participles can be seen as “clumsy, distracting and ambiguous”. Regarding occupational terminology, the guidelines recommend the use of a single form, regardless of the sex of the incumbent, followed by the expression m/f. The reason behind this is for clarity of the text, especially in grammatical gender languages. According to these guidelines, “in the multilingual environment of the European Parliament the principle of gender neutrality cannot be applied in the same way in all languages and what works in one language may not work in another. It is therefore essential that authors in the European Parliament take account of such cultural and linguistic differences” (European Parliament, 2008: 1). The guidelines conclude with the recommendation that “appropriate non-sexist terminology must be sought which is in accordance with the national customs and takes into account any national legislation”. One of the reasons behind this could be that the European Union is made up of 27 countries and has 23 official languages, which can represent an obstacle, at least at linguistic level, when drafting recommendations on how to avoid sexist usages.

These guidelines at European Union level have caused a great deal of criticism, at least in English-speaking settings, mainly from the United Kingdom (see, amongst others, The Daily Mail, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009 “EU bans use of 'Miss' and 'Mrs' (and sportsmen and statesmen) because it claims they are sexist”). What is interesting here is that these arguments against changing language are not new as they had already been put forward much earlier. However, as they come from the European Union, they have been seen as another “directive” and interventionist idea by “Brussels bureaucrats”. These criticisms are therefore mainly directed to EU institutions. The argument is that banning certain words is not going to change attitudes and that the EU would do far better to concentrate on reforming some of the negative attitudes, behaviours and perceptions in society. Some of the opponents to such guidelines from the European Parliament have called for the pamphlet to be withdrawn. However, this has been considered inappropriate as the guide is a voluntary code intended for EU staff and not politicians.

Having identified the recommendations for non-sexist language in each of these supranational organisations, the following section provides an analysis of some of their basic texts to ascertain whether the recommendations are being implemented in practice.

#### **4.5 Have these recommendations been applied in practice? A mini case-study**

This section aims to ascertain whether the recommendations to avoid sexist language identified earlier in this chapter are being applied in practice in three of the organisations’ basic texts. It was therefore necessary to select a meaningful sample of the language used by these three supranational organisations. The texts have to be similar in content and function to illustrate whether the formal recommendations have been implemented systematically and consistently in their own texts. The three documents that have been selected for analysis are:

- 1) UNESCO’s Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (2005 edition),
- 2) The Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (16<sup>th</sup> edition, October 2008) and
- 3) the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (5<sup>th</sup> edition 2005)

The rules of procedure of these three supranational organisations have been selected because they contain the provisions for their internal functioning and consequently they allow for comparability across organisations. It is also been noted that rules of procedure constantly updated and consequently the latest rules of procedure for each of the three organisation have been selected for analysis. The comparison of the latest versions with earlier ones, although outside the scope of the present study, would constitute a relevant research to explore if the implementation of the recommendations to remove sexist language has changed.

The linguistic analysis of the language of the three organisations' rules of procedure aims at identifying 1) the occurrences of masculine and feminine markers such as third person pronouns and 2) gender marking in occupational terminology. This analysis has been carried out in two of these organisation's official languages: English and Spanish for UNESCO and the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure, and English and French in the case of the Council of Europe's Rules of Procedure. This provides a comparison of the strategies employed in a natural gender language (English) and a grammatical gender language (Spanish and French). German is not an official language of UNESCO or the Council of Europe and has therefore not been analysed at this stage.

#### **4. 5.1 UNESCO's Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board (2005)**

Drawing from the recommendations found in the *Guidelines for gender-neutral language* (UNESCO, 1999), an analysis of UNESCO's Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board has been carried out to ascertain whether third person pronouns and occupational terminology are used in the masculine only or in the masculine and feminine forms (gender-splitting). This analysis has been done in two official languages of UNESCO: English and Spanish.

First of all, the analysis of the Rules of procedure involved occupational terminology. The General Conference's resolution of April 1993 (27C/34) recommended the replacement of the word *chairman* by the gender-neutral *chairperson*, and to double the personal pronouns. To ascertain whether this had been implemented, the English document was analysed for all occurrences of the

terms *Chairman/vice-chairman* and its plural variant, *Chairmen/vice-chairmen*, as well as the recommended gender-neutral version *Chairperson*. Other occupational terminology such as Director-General or President have not been analysed in the English version because they are gender-neutral, with no gender marking. The analysis found sixty cases of the noun *Chairman* (53 cases) and its plural variant *Chairmen* (7 cases) but only two cases of the gender-neutral *Chairperson* were used. No cases of the gender marked noun *Chairwoman* have been observed nor are there gender abstractions such as *Chair*.

In terms of third person pronouns, 17 cases of the masculine pronoun *he* were found in the English version, but none of feminine personal pronoun *she*. There are nine cases of the masculine pronoun *him* but none of *her*. There are 18 cases of masculine possessive adjective *his* but only one example of dual pronouns (*his or her*) has been found: "The Chairman may call a speaker to order if *his or her* remarks are not relevant..."<sup>23</sup>(my italics)

The linguistic analysis above reveals a majority of occurrences of the term *Chairman* as well as masculine third person pronouns. Although it could be argued that the referents for these terms can be sex-specific and that is the reason for using the masculine form, the Rules of Procedure are on the whole generic documents to refer to the members of the Executive Board and the use of the masculine forms only cannot be justified. Moreover, there is evidence of non-application of the recommendations set out in 1993 to revise Basic Texts to remove sexist terminology. However, the recommendation to insert a note so that it is perfectly clear that all functions are open to women as well as men has been applied. Thus the document includes a note for the reader or disclaimer at the beginning of the text:

"All the terms used in this collection of texts to designate the person discharging duties or functions are to be interpreted as implying that men and women are equally eligible to fill any post or seat associated with the discharge of these duties and functions."

Significantly this disclaimer is a reworded version of the previous one (1994), perhaps due to the fact that the previous version was not very clear. The use of

---

<sup>23</sup> UNESCO (2005) *Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board*, page 15

disclaimers or notes to the reader in this sort of texts is significant. One possible reason for the use of disclaimers is that they are usually employed as one way to reduce the likelihood of confusion. They can be very revealing of attitudes too, and could reflect a certain degree of “laziness” to change long texts such as the rules of procedure. Yet rules of procedure are often revised and amended and there is no reason why the language used cannot be changed in new editions (Schwartz, 1994). UNESCO is not the only international organisation which makes use of disclaimers in their texts. Disclaimers have also been found in the European Parliament, for instance.

Regarding UNESCO’s Rules of Procedure in Spanish (*Reglamento del Consejo Ejecutivo*, 2005), as a grammatical gender language, Spanish poses different challenges to those presented by English regarding non-sexist language. In Spanish the main issue is that all nouns are either masculine or feminine and agreement is needed for articles, past participles and adjectives. The reference document used here, the UNESCO’s Spanish Guidelines on gender-neutral language (*Recomendaciones para un uso no sexista del lenguaje*) addresses the generic use of the masculine as well as the discriminatory use of the masculine for professions of prestige whereas the feminine is used for inferior occupations (for example, *las limpiadoras* (cleaning women)).

In terms of occupational nomenclature, the findings of the analysis of the Spanish text show that the masculine form is used throughout the text (*el Presidente, el Director General, un orador* (a speaker), *el autor de una propuesta, el candidato*). No feminine occupational nomenclature has been found in the analysis. This can be explained by the argument made at the General Conference (27<sup>th</sup> session, 1993) that the only practicable solution in grammatical gender languages seems to lie in keeping the masculine as the generic form if the texts were to remain readable.

As in the English text, application of the recommendation takes the form of a disclaimer that acknowledges that men and women are equally eligible to hold duties and functions:

“Cualesquiera que sean los términos utilizados en el presente Reglamento para la designación de los cargos u otros cometidos o funciones, huelga decir que éstos podrán ser desempeñados indistintamente por hombres o por mujeres”.

From this short analysis it is reasonable to assume that the decision to revise all of UNESCO's Basic Texts in order to ensure the use of neutral terminology and wording (1995) has not been implemented in a consistent manner because in the latest edition of UNESCO's Executive Board Rules of Procedure the language used clearly shows a predominance of the generic masculine in the English version (*chairman, he, him*). In the Spanish version, all occupational terminology is cast in the masculine (for example, *el presidente, el autor*, etc). Although a disclaimer has been included to highlight the fact that women and men are equally eligible for the duties mentioned, the linguistic forms used in the English version do not correspond with UNESCO's *Guidelines on gender-neutral language*. In the Spanish version, the masculine seems to have been considered as the generic form in the interest of readability of texts.

#### **4.5.2 Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament (October 2008)**

The latest edition of the Rules of Procedure of one of the institutions of the European Union, the European Parliament, was selected for analysis (in their 16<sup>th</sup> edition of October 2008). The European Parliament is the European Union's institution which together with the European Council exercises legislative and budgetary functions. Similarly to the Rules of Procedure of UNESCO's Executive Board, they have been analysed in English and Spanish, two of the official languages of the EU.

The analysis of this document in both its English and Spanish versions reveals that, similarly to UNESCO's rules of procedure of the Executive Board analysed earlier, a note for the reader has also been inserted:

“In accordance with Parliament's decision on the use of gender-neutral language in its documents, the Rules of Procedure have been adapted to take account of the guidelines on that subject approved by the High Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity on 13 February 2008 and endorsed by the Bureau on 19 May 2008”.

This is a new revised note to the reader. The earlier version of this 16<sup>th</sup> edition (September 2007) included a differently phrased note:

“Any reference in these Rules of Procedure to a person of the male sex shall be deemed also to constitute a reference to a person of the female sex, and vice versa, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise”.

The 2008 note is much more specific than the previous one (and the one used in the UNESCO text) in the sense that it clearly states that the document has been revised taking into account guidelines to use gender-neutral language. However, these guidelines referred to are quite vague. The analysis of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure shows that, despite the above note on the use of gender-neutral language in the document, the distinctively masculine term *Chairman* appears seven times. In all other cases a gender-neutral abstract word such as *Chair/chairs* (56 occurrences) or *chairperson* (8 occurrences) has been used.

The analysis of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure also entailed the frequency of masculine, feminine and dual pronouns. The analysis reveals that in the English version there were 69 cases of the masculine personal pronoun *he*, 67 occurrences of *his* and 11 cases of *him*. In fact the number of cases of masculine pronouns used outnumbers by far the number of gender inclusive dual pronouns: only 4 cases of *he or she* (*he/she* in one case), 10 cases of *his or her* (of which two are in the form *his/her*) and three cases of *him or her*.

Regarding the Spanish version of the Rules (*Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo*), the analysis reveals that masculine occupational terminology has been employed throughout the text: for example, *el Presidente* [the (masc.) president], *los diputados*, [the [masc.] members of Parliament], *los candidatos* [the [masc.] candidates], etc. Also an instance of the use of masculine anaphoric pronoun *él* (he) has been found: *el presidente podrá proponer que el ponente o él mismo* [The president may suggest that the speaker or himself] (Article 43). A note for the reader for the use of gender-neutral language has also been inserted in the Spanish version (which did not appear in earlier Spanish versions of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure).

The analysis of the European Parliament's text reveals that the latest edition of the Spanish rules of procedure still includes exclusively masculine terminology despite having been revised for gender-specific terminology. Although outside the scope of the present study, an analysis of previous editions of the European Parliament's rules of procedure would reveal any changes that have been made and if by inserting a note to the reader regarding gender-neutral language they have succeeded in resolving the issue.

Another factor which might be taken into account to explain the predominant use of the masculine in the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure is the fact that until March 2009 no clear guidelines have been issued at European Union level to avoid sexist language. As documents of this kind are usually very long and detailed, it is as if they have been written by different people who might not be aware of the guidelines on gender-neutral language.

#### **4.5.3 The Council of Europe's Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers (2005)**

The latest Council of Europe's Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers (5<sup>th</sup> edition 2005) have been analysed to quantify the number of masculine and feminine personal references. In the English version, occurrences of occupational masculine terms such as *Chairman*, and personal pronouns *he*, *his*, *him* and their feminine equivalents have been analysed. Five cases of the term *Chairman* have been found in comparison with three cases of the gender abstraction *Chair/chairs* (although these three cases come from the same section (article 6)). However, no cases of feminine occupational terminology have been found (for example, *Chairwoman*). All references to human incumbents are in the masculine except three references to *Chair* (gender abstraction).

In terms of personal pronouns, 18 occurrences of masculine pronouns (*he*, *his* and *him*) have been found. All references to the various functions such as Secretary General, member, representative, etc are cast in the masculine without any use of dual pronouns.



Similarly, the French version of the Rules (*Règlement intérieur du Comité des Ministres*) also uses exclusively masculine occupational terminology and pronouns (for instance, *le Secrétaire Général*, or *le Président*). Only one case of the gender abstract term *la présidence* (the Chair) has been found instead of the masculine *le président* (article 6 as in the English version).

In terms of personal pronouns, the analysis of the French version reveals that all references are made in the masculine (*il, le, lui, lui-meme*). This is similar to the Spanish versions of the UNESCO and the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure.

Unlike the other two documents, no disclaimer or note to the reader has been inserted in the Council of Europe's documents to justify the use of the masculine terms as generics. However, as it has been identified above, the Council of Europe has issued specific guidelines to eliminate gender bias in all of its documentation (Instruction no. 33) and has recommended member states to encourage non-sexist language (Recommendation R (90)4).

#### **4.5.4 Conclusion from the analysis of the rules of procedure**

The analysis of these three basic reference texts in their two linguistic versions shows that there is evidence of a lack of uniformity when it comes to using non-sexist terminology and wording in the basic texts of these organisations. The number of occurrences reveals a predominant use of masculine occupational terminology such as *chairman*, as well as masculine third person pronouns. It can be concluded that the rules of procedure in three supranational organisations are still drafted predominantly in the masculine. The following table summarises the statistical findings of the analysis of the English texts:

Organisation	Category	Masculine		M/F Masculine and feminine or gender-neutral		Note for the reader
UNESCO	Occupational terminology	60	96%	2	4%	Yes
	Pronouns	44	98%	1	2%	
Council of Europe	Occupational terminology	5	62.5%	3	37.5%	No
	Pronouns	18	100%	0	0	
European Parliament	Occupational terminology	7	10%	64	90%	Yes
	Pronouns	147	89%	17	11%	
	Total	281		87		

**Table 4.3: Results of the analysis of the Rules of procedure (English texts)**

The table shows that the European Parliament is the only supranational organisation that uses a majority of gender-neutral terminology such as *Chair* or *Chairperson* (90%); however, in terms of personal pronouns, the analysis reveals a tendency to use the masculine as generic with a majority (89%) of masculine pronouns. This points out at a lack of consistency regarding non-sexist language within the same text.

Regarding the results in two grammatical gender languages, Spanish and French, the analysis reveals that no attempt has been made at making the language of the rules of procedure gender-neutral. The masculine form is used throughout the three texts in both languages. Despite the recommendation of the guidelines issued by UNESCO and the Council of Europe to use both the masculine and the feminine forms, only the masculine has been found. A possible explanation is that gender-neutralisation in grammatical gender languages poses a great deal of complexity due to the lack of a neutral form. At the same time the gender-specification approach could also pose drafting difficulties because of the agreement of adjectives, articles and past participles.

#### 4.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has identified and reviewed the guidelines and recommendations to remove sexist usages issued at transnational level in three international organisations. Most international organisations have been working towards the elimination of sexist language practices in their own texts, and they have been proactive in the publication of guidelines for internal and external use. This is the

case of the UNESCO's *Guidelines on gender-neutral language*, published in three official languages which is a public document. The recommendation of the Council of Europe to member states also represents an important reference point for countries to work on in their own languages. Regarding the European Union, however, the European Commission for example has not adopted mandatory internal rules or guidelines for non-sexist language because "the different EU languages do not always provide to the same extent for a suitable linguistically satisfactory gender-neutral form" (Barroso, 2009). It has always been left to common sense and sensitivity of the authors. Some EU documents, such as those from the Translation Service or the Interinstitutional guide, provide useful recommendations for the use of gender-neutral terms.

The analysis of some of their own texts such as their rules of procedure, however, reveals that although these supranational organisations have been active over the last 20 years in the promotion of non-biased language and the formulation of non-sexist guidelines, there is no consistency of application in their reference texts. Only the European Union has made a more serious attempt at eliminating the generic masculine in its texts. However, both UNESCO and the Council of Europe, which have issued guidelines and recommendations to encourage non-sexist language, have not applied these to their own texts.

The inclusion of a disclaimer or note to the reader to justify the use of the generic masculine in two of the three texts is unclear: it can be misguided as to what constitutes gender-neutral language if there is no consistency within the same text. The literature shows that the use of disclaimers concerning sexist language is not recommended as an alternative to revision (Schwartz, 1995) because it does not address the serious problems of inequity, imprecision and ambiguity that sexist usage creates. The present analysis reveals that disclaimers are not systematically implemented in these organisations and for all official languages. Although the European Union is the body which uses more gender-inclusive language in the form of gender abstractions and dual personal pronouns, this is not consistent throughout the text. It is as if many different people were involved in the drafting process and there is no information as to what constitutes gender-

neutral language. However, as already mentioned, it is also true that no guidelines on how to avoid sexist uses have been published at EU level.

From a linguistic perspective, in the case of grammatical gender languages such as French and Spanish, the predominant use of the masculine as generic reveals the complexity of the issue. It may well be that the masculine has been adopted as generic because of the lack of gender-neutral forms in these languages and in the interest of legibility of the text to avoid repetitive and cumbersome sentences. However, another reason to use the masculine is because of the socio-cultural influences which have always tended to use the masculine as generic.

Despite the possible socio-cultural explanations, there is clear evidence from the small sample analysed that these international bodies are not practising the recommendations issued within their own organisations. Yet it is important to highlight their potential role at influencing policies at other levels. What is relevant is the fact that the recommendations at supranational level have constituted the framework within which some European countries are attempting to eliminate sexist practices from language. This has been done by means of parliamentary, government or other administrative actions.

In the next chapter, the initiatives taken in four European countries regarding the elimination of linguistic sexism have been analysed. The sociolinguistic analysis has focused on the challenges and problems which have arisen in each country's attempts to eliminate discrimination against women in language. The four countries of the study are: France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom and the specific linguistic and social issues for each language have been analysed.

## CHAPTER 5

### A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE LINGUISTIC SEXISM IN FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

#### 5.1 Overview

Having identified the recommendations made by supranational organisations regarding the elimination of sexism from language, the aim of this chapter is to identify the recommendations of four European countries to avoid sexist usages in their own languages. The four countries selected for analysis are: France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. A sociolinguistic analysis of the four different languages has been carried out taking into account the different socio-cultural as well as linguistic contexts. The debate surrounding the issue of the avoidance and elimination of sexism in each of the four countries of the study as well as references to the relevant literature in each of the four languages studied has been reviewed.

#### 5.2 Sexism in Language: The French experience

##### 5.2.1 Introduction

The fact that over the last 20 years women have entered professions that were traditionally occupied by men has caused considerable linguistic debate in France because some names of professions did not have feminine equivalents. Gervais (1993) claims that this problem is not intrinsically linguistic but social in nature. In a country which loves disputes about language (Jospin, 1999)<sup>24</sup>, and with a history of national policies of linguistic interventionism, the feminisation of occupational nouns is just one of the various linguistic debates which have taken place in recent years and it has been considered as the most spectacular case of linguistic change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lamothe, 2000). In this section, three different aspects are analysed:

- 1) the linguistic resources the French language has for the feminisation of names of occupations as well as the linguistic constraints facing language users,

---

<sup>24</sup> "Notre pays aime les querelles qui tourment autour de sa langue" 1999, introduction to *Femme: J'écris ton nom*

- 2) the debate that has taken place on the feminisation of language in France over the last three decades and the different arguments in favour and against feminisation of language, and
- 3) the morphological and syntactical features of some of the guidelines that have been issued in France regarding non-sexist usages.

As French is also spoken in other countries and the literature has revealed different approaches to the feminisation of French, a brief review of guidelines in other Francophone regions has been carried out in order to establish similarities or differences in their approach to non-sexist language reform.

### **5.2.2 Gender in French**

This section focuses on the linguistic resources that French language has for the formation of feminine nouns. As a Romance language, French distinguishes between two grammatical genders: masculine and feminine. This gender distribution is mainly an inheritance from Latin. All traces of the Latin neuter have disappeared in French and nearly all Latin neuters have become masculine. Grammatical gender in French also affects the pattern of agreement with articles, adjectives and past participles.

Suffixation in French is a common morphological process to obtain a change of gender. The most common type of suffixation to form the feminine is to add the feminine suffix ‘-e’ to the masculine noun:

e.g.    ‘*un ami/une amie*’ [a male friend/a female friend]  
          ‘*un commerçant/une commerçante*’ [a male/female shopkeeper]

Moreover, there are other ways to form a feminine term in French, depending on the ending of the masculine noun and the morphological rules governing the language (see section 5.2.4). The situation regarding gender in French is further complicated by the fact that a number of occupational labels do not have a well-established (or recognised) feminine form. In these cases, language users might encounter a great deal of confusion when referring to different professions and occupations in the masculine and feminine forms. Fleischman (1997: 835) refers to the “linguistic trauma” that French language users

experience when using the feminine<sup>25</sup>. Another complication within the French gender system is that when used generically the masculine has tended to include the feminine. This is also a characteristic of other Romance languages such as Spanish where a masculine noun such as *los niños* ([masc. plural] the children), includes boys and girls, whereas the feminine noun is the marked form and it does only refer to females (e.g. *las niñas*, the girls).

In the following sections, the sociolinguistic background to the feminisation of language and the debate that has taken place in France and other French-speaking languages on the topic are discussed.

### **5.2.3 The debate on the feminisation of language in France**

The debate on the feminisation of French language was inspired by the USA feminist movement in the early 1970s and the study of the feminisation of language became significant in France and in other French-speaking regions such as Canada or Belgium.

Over the last 20 years several recommendations on how to avoid discrimination in language have been published in France and other French-speaking countries, although these have been the result of different types of consultations and have been issued by different bodies. In France, the formulation of language guidelines has been mainly the result of legislative measures ensuring equal employment opportunities for women. Canada, Belgium and Switzerland, on the other hand, have led the way in the elaboration and adoption of non-sexist language guidelines (Pauwels, 1998: 148). As the issue of feminisation in French has caused a great deal of discussion in the public sphere and the media, an account of the debate in France is provided in order to understand the main issues.

Linguistic intervention in France is not new. In French there is a long tradition of attempts by the authorities to influence linguistic developments (Ball, 1997:188). Some examples of state intervention in linguistic matters include the spelling

---

<sup>25</sup> This is discussed below in section 5.2.3

reform which the socialist government proposed in 1989 and the creation of official neologisms to provide alternatives to English terms already in common use in French. One of the early attempts of linguistic intervention by the State was the elimination of English words “invading” the French vocabulary was in 1975 (Loi Bas-Lauriol)<sup>26</sup> when there was an unsuccessful attempt to legislate against anglicisms in French.

Unlike the other countries in the present study, in France terminology committees created by the State are common. There have been numerous “*commissions ministérielles de terminologie*” (terminology commissions) since 1972, which were first created under the direction of the *Comité de Défense de la langue française* when Pompidou was Prime Minister. The role of these terminology committees is to study specialised languages, for example, the language of computer technology, and to propose new terms in specific domains in order to designate the new reality in French. They are in charge of creating neologisms, for example, *logiciel* for hardware or *ludiciel* for game software, in place of the English term. There have been several *commissions de terminologie* concerning the vocabulary in different fields such as that of transport, oil, computer science, economy and finances. A *Commission générale de terminologie et neologie*, which reports to the Prime Minister and collaborates with the *Académie Française*, coordinates the work of all the specialised commissions, which are usually part of a ministerial office.

The *Académie Française* has also contributed to the various linguistic debates in France including the feminisation of language. Since its creation in 1635, its role has been to preserve and maintain the purity of French language. Although the *Académie* has no official power, it plays a significant role in influencing attitudes and linguistic representations in France. The linguistic debates deal primarily with the protection of the *génie* (the spirit) of the French language whilst at the same time adapting it to the new social reality.

---

<sup>26</sup> Hordern, B (2005) Occitan: The plight of a regional language, Mphil thesis, LJMU p. 23



As another example of state intervention in linguistic matters, the debate on the feminisation of French language started in the early 1980s, especially at governmental level. The linguistic issue of the feminisation of job titles and occupations in France has been seen as a social problem and not merely a linguistic one. It is highly significant that France was one of the first countries in Europe to adopt political measures in favour of a less gender-biased language use (Burr, 2003). However, it was lagging behind other Francophone areas such as French-speaking Canada.

The debate regarding feminisation of French language started when it was claimed that the absence of certain feminine forms in the language was a sign of oppression and an obstacle to social change. After Yvette Roudy became Minister for Women's Rights in May 1981, she raised the linguistic question of the feminisation of job titles and declared that the equality of individuals established in the French Constitution and in subsequent legislation was not being respected when it came to the advertising of job vacancies (Houdebine, 1987:17). Roudy argued that the absence of feminine forms to designate female job titles constituted a real obstacle to social progress and the emancipation of French women (Gervais-Le Garff, 2002). As language changes to keep pace with the evolution of society (Houdebine, 1987:16), given the higher presence of women in the labour market in France, the argument was that the language would gradually change to reflect this new situation. In fact, women's employment rates in France have risen steadily since the late 1960s and in 2007 the rate of employment for women reached 60%, a higher level than in other European countries and the enlarged EU average which in 2007 was 58.3% (Eurostat, 2009). As rates of activity among French women continue to increase, a recurrent issue has been to pay attention to the way women are named in their occupations.

As a result of Roudy's declarations in 1983 and following from the 1976 European directive on equal treatment of men and women in the labour market, a law regarding professional equality between women and men was passed in July 1983. The law made the preference for one sex or the other in job advertisements illegal. This meant that job vacancies had to be cast in terms

that would apply to both sexes and that would not discriminate against either men or women. In practice this translated as the use of masculine forms followed by the feminine derivational suffix in brackets (e), for example, *employé(e)s*, or the addition of *h/f* (*homme/femme* [male/female]) after the masculine term.

The law was easily applied when both masculine and feminine forms were already available (e.g. *vendeur/vendeuse* [salesman/saleswoman]), but the main issue was with certain job titles which were not traditionally used in the feminine form (e.g. *professeur*, *chef*, *ingénieur* [lecturer, director, engineer]). Gervais-Le Garff (2002:2) argues that it was a clear contradiction to encourage women to enter the professions when there could be no linguistic recognition of their success in entering jobs that had been traditionally male preserves. It was as if language were precluding women from gaining access to certain jobs. She also claims that women occupying senior posts were divided on the question on how they should be referred to (Gervais-Le Garff: 2002: 2). The social rather than the morphological rigidity of the French language reinforced this situation. The occupations mentioned above (*professeur*, *ingénieur*) are high status occupations and there seems to be a higher reluctance to feminise terms like these, whereas the names of occupations which are readily feminised seem to be lower status occupations (*vendeuse* – saleswoman).

With this evidence in mind, in 1983 Roudy set up a preliminary committee with the aim to establish acceptable rules for the formation of feminine occupational nouns, to determine the linguistic constraints, to identify problem areas, and to propose neologisms where necessary. In 1984 this committee became the *Commission de terminologie "relative au vocabulaire concernant les activités des femmes"* (the terminology commission for the vocabulary concerning the activities of women) known as the "Roudy Commission". Although it was one of many terminology commissions in France, it was the first of its kind in Europe. There were eight members in total, chaired by the *écrivaine* (writer) Benoîte

Groult<sup>27</sup>. According to the official records, the terminology commission was charged to:

“répondre à la demande en matière de féminisation des noms de professions, afin d’éviter le sexisme dans les offres d’emploi, et, d’une manière générale, de faire des propositions nécessaires pour éviter que la langue française ne soit porteuse de discriminations fondées sur le sexe”<sup>28</sup>

[respond to a demand for the feminisation of occupational titles in order to avoid sexism in job advertisements, and more generally making proposals which would ensure that the French language would not carry elements of discrimination based on sex]

The main objective of the “Commission Roudy” was to fill in the semantic gaps in the French vocabulary without disregarding the morphological structures of French. The major difficulty the Commission had to contend with was not the lack of feminine forms in French but rather the different possibilities to consider and choose from (Gervais, 1993:133). The members of the Commission wanted to emphasise that the main obstacle to the feminisation of French was not of a linguistic but mainly social nature. In fact, feminisation was already well established for the so-called ‘petits métiers’ or manual jobs (e.g. *coiffeur* – male hairdresser, *coiffeuse* – female hairdresser) and for those professions which had been occupied by women for a considerable time (e.g. *vendeuse*, saleswoman). The problem was with professions which had not been traditionally occupied by women such as *ingénieur* (engineer) where the masculine form prevailed.

The Roudy *Commission* did some preliminary work consulting dictionaries and grammar books and examining written and oral sources in the media. They also carried out surveys of attitudes and noticed a certain resistance to feminisation in professions which had, until very recently, been male preserves such as the army, the judiciary, the stock exchange and even the medical profession. They noticed a strong reluctance to use feminine forms (like *magistrate*, *avocate*, *chirurgienne*, *médecine*, etc. - female magistrate, lawyer, surgeon, doctor) by

---

<sup>27</sup> Members of the Commission were André Martinet, Michelle Bourgoïn, Nina Catach, Edwige Khaznadar, Josette Rey Debove, Jackie Schön, Anne-Marie Houdebine, and Benoîte Groult.

<sup>28</sup> Décret du 29 février 1984, Journal Officiel du 3 mars 1984

both men and women in those professions which indicated a certain reluctance in French society regarding the feminisation of high status occupations.

The terminology commission suggested two strategies for feminising job titles in order to increase the visibility of women:

- 1) the systematic use of the feminine articles for sex-specific referents (what was called '*féminisation minimale*' – minimal feminisation) with a masculine or neutral form (e.g. *la directeur; une ministre*); and
- 2) the use of the feminine derivational suffix (for example, *le infirmier* (male nurse), *la infirmière* (female nurse) or *le chercheur* (male researcher), *la chercheuse* (female researcher) wherever the feminine suffix existed.

These two strategies have been seen as a cautious and rather conventional approach, probably the result of the criticisms the commission was subjected to. Gervais (1993:134) suggests that perhaps this emanated from a desire not to be seen to emulate other French-speaking areas, such as Québec, where linguistic matters had tended to evolve more rapidly and which were less constrained by institutions like the *Académie Française*. Gervais (1993:134) also suggests that perhaps it was thought that feminisation would have a greater impact if it were not perceived as a policy of feminist linguistic reform.

As a result of the work of the Roudy *Commission*, the *Journal Officiel* (official record of Parliamentary proceedings) published a circular about the feminisation of names of occupations, posts, grades or titles (*Circulaire relative à la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre*) on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1986. In this circular the then Prime Minister, Laurent Fabius, recommended the use of feminine terms in all forms of ministerial directives, documents, contracts, among others and included rules for the feminisation of job titles (see below).

It is surprising that in a country used to terminology commissions since the 1970s there was a general outcry when the so-called "Roudy Commission" was set up. It provoked radical reactions in the media and there were attacks on the Commission and its members (Gervais, 1993). The recommendations published in the Prime Minister's circular also met with great opposition and outrage,

especially from the *Académie Française*, which for four centuries has had the role of “watching over” the French language, of defending it against foreign influences and acting as a patron of the arts. Their criticisms as well as the defence of the work of the Commission are well documented by Houdebine (1987), herself a member of the Commission. The *Académie Française* criticised the creation of the Commission because, they claimed that, as the consultative body for linguistic matters, they were not represented nor consulted by the Commission. The *Académie’s* linguistic argument against the feminisation of occupational names was that French has two genders, feminine and masculine, but these two terms were in fact incorrect. In their view the only satisfactory way to define the two genders in French is to distinguish between marked and unmarked genders. The gender which is commonly known as masculine is the unmarked gender which is also called *extensif* in the sense that it has the capacity to represent the elements of both genders. According to the *Académie*, in the sentence *Tous les candidats ont été reçus à l’examen* (All the candidates passed their exam) the unmarked term (*les candidats*), which is a masculine term, refers indistinctly to men and women. On the other hand, the gender commonly referred to as feminine is the marked gender or *intensif* because it marks a limitation as it only includes the feminine<sup>29</sup>.

The members of the *Académie* also argued that there was a long tradition in French language that the masculine had always included the feminine (“*Le masculin l’emporte sur le féminin*” (Vaugelas, 1647)) and that it was too difficult to change such a long-standing tradition. Their opposition was not just linguistic but also political, for example, they criticised the cost of setting up the *Commission* as an attack against the socialist government of the time.

Following the criticisms of the work by the Roudy Commission, it took almost two months for the recommendations to appear in the *Journal Officiel*. The Commission handed the report in January but it was not published until March. Furthermore the Commission members were disappointed when the recommendations were published in the form of a *circulaire* and not of an

---

<sup>29</sup> Declaration of the Académie Française on féminisation on 14 June 1984

*arrêté*<sup>30</sup> (Evans, 1987). This meant that two years after the creation of the Commission, the issue had lost momentum. In fact, the Prime Minister's circular, or letter, to the members of the French Administration in March 1986 received little publicity, probably due to the fact that it was published in the middle of the electoral campaign. It was never applied as the government changed after the election. It should also be noted that the government which had created the Roudy Commission and therefore started the debate on the feminisation of occupational names in France was a socialist government whereas the new government elected in 1986 was a conservative one.

The same sort of debate on the subject of occupational names took place in 1991 when Edith Cresson became the first female Prime Minister in France. Up until that time, most job titles at the highest levels within the French government and the public administration had been used in the masculine form even when they referred to women. In 1991 the debate, mainly in the press, revolved around the use of the feminine title for the prime minister of *Madame la première ministre* (feminine article and adjective) or the existing *Madame le premier ministre* (masculine form) to refer to Edith Cresson. However, it was not until 1998 when, for the first time in the political history of France, the title *Madame LE ministre*, which had been a point of debate ever since Yvette Roudy was appointed in the early 80s, was replaced by *Madame LA ministre* (my emphasis). The latter feminised form had already been used by some women ministers and it is commonplace nowadays. Once again, there were negative reactions from the press, several linguists as well as the *Académie Française*, all opposing the new feminine title. The opinions and arguments in favour and against are well documented in the French press (*Le Figaro*, 9 January 1998, "*L'Académie française veut laisser les ministres au masculin*" [The French Académie wants to keep minister titles in the masculine form] and *Le Monde*, 14 January 1998, "*Madame la ministre*") which were both derogatory and sarcastic newspaper articles. The arguments to explain the reluctance to adopt feminised terms in French have been analysed by Fleischman (1997) who claims that one of the reasons is that there is a tendency for feminine titles

---

<sup>30</sup> A *circulaire* is directed to the ministries and public administration whereas an *arrêté* or law is intended to be binding to all citizens

to undergo pejoration and be devalued. In fact, reluctance to use feminine denominations has always been strongest with respect to high level professions. Burr (2003) says that women who reach the top of the hierarchy are usually among the fiercest opponents of feminisation.

The debate about the feminisation of language was reopened more than 10 years after the first circular of 1986 when the French Council of Ministers adopted a recommendation to use feminine terms for all administrative titles (17 December 1997) following the appointment of many women to high positions within the French Administration (there were four female cabinet ministers at that time). Following on from this recommendation, on 8th March 1998 and coinciding with International Women's Day, the then French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, reopened the feminisation controversy with the publication of a new circular (*Circulaire du 6 mars 1998 relative à la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre*) which revived all the issues from 1986, albeit in a much more timid way. For example, the 1998 circular does not include the descriptive rules for the feminisation of titles that the first one had, but it contains a proposal to draw up a users' guide<sup>31</sup>. In this circular the Prime Minister invited all members of the French Administration to use feminine forms for occupations, titles, grades and posts while at the same time asking the *Commission générale de terminologie et de néologie* to carry out a study of the topic. As a result, in October 1998 the *Commission générale* published a report<sup>32</sup> which reveals the *Commission's* reservations concerning the circular of March 1998. Similar to the *Académie's* declarations, the report states that government intervention on linguistic matters would very quickly run into obstacles of a legal and practical nature. According to the *Commission générale*, feminisation can be difficult because French does not have a unique suffix which allows for masculine forms to become feminine. For the *Commission générale*, masculine forms confer a generic value, especially in terms of the rules for the plural. Since French language does not have a neutral form, the tradition and codification of the language, it was argued, has meant that the masculine is used as the generic gender.

---

<sup>31</sup> This was later prepared by the Institut National de la Langue Française (INALF) in 1999.

<sup>32</sup> *Rapport sur la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre*, October 1998

The *Commission générale* claimed that official and public administration texts had to reflect the rule of the neutrality of posts. They agreed with the feminisation of occupational nouns but not of posts. According to them, there is a clear differentiation between an occupation or *métier* (e.g. an architect) and a post or *fonction* (e.g. a Secretary of State). This explains the difference between *une directrice d'école* (a headmistress, which is an occupation, when the holder is a woman, is normally in the feminine form) and *un/une directeur de cabinet* (a director, a position, which usually can be found in generic masculine). The feminisation of professional titles has been accepted in France because there is no resistance to the principle of identification of the individual with the activity that he or she carries out. However, this is not the case for titles, grades or posts which, according to the *Commission générale*, belong to the public sphere. The *Commission générale* firmly opposed any reformulation of public norms which govern certain professions in the public sector such as civil servants (1998:40-42). For posts, titles and grades within the civil service, the *Commission générale* declared that the unmarked masculine had to be used<sup>33</sup>.

Aware that the feminisation of language had also been debated in other languages, the *Commission générale's* report compared the French situation with that in other languages such as English, German and Italian. According to the Commission, Germanic languages such as English or German do not pose as many problems as French with regards to the feminisation of their titles; for instance, they claimed that in German the feminisation of names of occupations can easily be achieved as there is one feminine derivational suffix (*-in*), unlike the great variety of possibilities in French. On the other hand, they claimed that although Italian poses a similar problem to French as they both originate from Latin, according to the Commission Italians are not concerned with this issue because the debate on the feminisation of Italian language is not part of the (Italian) political agenda, mainly due to memories of earlier linguistic intervention. There is a long tradition of linguistic prescriptivism in Italian history. Since the Renaissance, the lack of political unity has been accompanied by an attempt to impose a model of language based on archaic Tuscan and there

---

<sup>33</sup> The report is available at <http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/994000415/0000.pdf> [accessed on 11.7.06]



have been many campaigns to preserve this model from other influences from abroad (from English and French mainly) and from Italian dialects. During Mussolini's fascist regime there was an attempt to introduce legislation designed to regulate language use. As a consequence, any attempt to impose a language policy in Italy is looked at with scepticism and suspicion by the Italians, it was claimed.

Following from the 1998 Circular which stipulated the drafting of a guide to feminisation, in June 1999 the *Institut National de la Langue Française* (INaLF) published a set of non-sexist language guidelines entitled *Femme, j'écris ton nom: Guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms de métiers, titres, grades et fonctions* which establishes the grammatical rules of formation of the feminine, lists the difficulties that might be encountered, and provides a list of feminine nouns. A database of more than 2000 entries has been developed which allows searching for specific feminine terms online according to the rules proposed in the guide. The analysis of this guide to feminisation is provided in section 5.2.5.

In response to the Prime Minister's circular, the Ministry for Education, Research and Technology circulated a memorandum to all educational establishments explaining how to feminise masculine titles. This Ministry was in fact the first public body to adopt the recommendations made by the Prime Minister in his 1998 circular. This was once again criticised by some of the members of the *Académie Française* (Marshall, 1998).

#### **5.2.4 The debate in other Francophone countries**

The feminisation of French in other French-speaking countries has evolved differently to France. In fact they lead the way in feminisation matters. Québec (Canada) was the pioneer in the feminisation of occupational nouns among the Francophone countries. Québec's recommendations to avoid sexist language date back to 1979 when the *Gazette Officielle du Québec* published the first recommendations concerning non-sexist language; guidelines for their implementation were published in 1986 by the Canadian *Office de la Langue française*. These were revised in 1991 (*Au Féminin: guide de féminisation des titres de fonction et des textes* [In feminine: Guidelines for the feminisation of

names of functions and texts]). The Québec guidelines recommend the use of feminine forms (gender-specification) to make women visible through language. This involves the creation of neologisms, for example, in the case of occupational nouns ending in *-eur*, the recommendation is to add an *-e* to the masculine form, for example, *la professeure*, *la ingénieure*. This strategy has not been well received in France and it is not used frequently.

In Switzerland the Gender Equality Act, which made it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of gender when recruiting workers, came into effect in 1996. Guidelines have also been published in French-speaking Switzerland to this effect in the format of a dictionary (*Dictionnaire féminin-masculin des professions des titres et des fonctions* [Feminine-Masculine dictionary of professions and names of posts]) in 1991.

Unlike France, in the French community of Belgium, the introduction of measures for the feminisation of names of occupation was carried out by means of a decree (1993)<sup>34</sup>. Following from this decree, the Belgian *Conseil supérieur de la Langue Française* published a set of guidelines to avoid sexist usages in 1994 (*Mettre au féminin: guide de féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre* [Express in the feminine: guidelines to the feminisation of job titles]) and reedited it in 2005. These guidelines to avoid sexist linguistic usages must be applied in all administrative texts as well as in all publications by official institutions, including job advertisements. The aim of the decree was to ensure the visibility of women in language.

Conrick (2002:210) suggests that although in these regions the adoption of the guidelines for non-sexist language may have received criticisms as in France, the general success of feminisation there contrasts sharply with the relative lack of success in France. A possible explanation is that the other French-speaking countries do not think that the *Académie Française* has the right to tell them the way to achieve linguistic feminisation.

---

<sup>34</sup> Décret de la Communauté française du 21 juin 1993 relatif à la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre

### 5.2.5 Guidelines for non-sexist language in French

The present section focuses on the guidelines for non-sexist language issued in France. The term normally used in French to refer to non-sexist/gender-inclusive language is *féminisation*. Conrick (2002:207) explains that the term *féminisation* applies to the creation and addition of feminine forms which contribute to the visibility of women in language but can also be used as a sort of umbrella term with the wider meaning of inclusive language.

The guidelines analysed here are from *Femme, j'écris ton nom... Guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms de métiers, titres, grades et fonctions* (1999) [Woman, I write your name... Guide to the feminisation of names of occupations, titles, grades and posts] published by the *Institut National de la Langue Française* whose work builds on the earlier work carried out by the Roudy Commission (1986). According to these guidelines, the rules of feminisation in French are as follows:

1. the systematic use of a feminine determiner: *une, la, cette* (a/an, the, this) for all female occupational terms when the incumbent is female

2. a. Nouns ending in silent 'e' (epicene nouns) have the same masculine and feminine forms:

e.g.     *un/une architecte*                      *un/une comptable*

According to this rule, the differentiation for gender in French epicene nouns is in the use of the masculine and feminine articles. The feminine suffix *-esse*, although grammatically possible, is no longer used in modern French because it has acquired negative connotations over a long period of time. Consequently, it is recommended to use the masculine term as epicene as in the example below:

e.g.     *un/une poète* (instead of the traditional use of the feminine term *poétesse*)

2. b. Masculine nouns ending in a vowel other than silent 'e' have the feminine form by adding the feminine suffix *-e*:

e.g.     *un chargé de mission* (masculine)  
          *une chargée de mission* (feminine)

3. a. Masculine terms ending in a consonant, except terms ending in *-eur*, have:

- a feminine form identical to the masculine:  
e.g. *un médecin, une médecin* (a doctor)
- a feminine ending in 'e' with the necessary morphological changes,  
e.g. *une huissière, une mécanicienne* (in these cases, the morphological changes are the use of an acute è and the double 'n', respectively)

3. b. Nouns ending in *-eur* (except *-teur*) have the feminine ending in *-euse*:

e.g. *un chercheur      une chercheuse* (a researcher)

However, when the noun does not have a corresponding verb, the choice is between using the epicene term (e.g. *une professeur*) or by adding an *-e* at the end of the masculine form (e.g. *une ingénieure*).

3.c. Masculine terms ending in *-teur* have different feminine endings according to the following rules:

- if the "t" belongs to the base verb, a feminine form in *-teuse*:

e.g. *un acheteur* (m.)      *une acheteuse* (f.)

- if the "t" does not belong to the base verb, they will have a feminine form in *-trice*:

e.g. *un animateur* (m.)      *une animatrice* (f.)

Current usage tends to render a feminine in *-trice* even when the "t" belongs to the root verb: e.g. *une éditrice*

However, in certain cases, forms ending in *-trice* are no longer accepted: in this case, an identical form to the masculine is used:

e.g. *une auteur* (but not *une autrice*) or *une auteur(e)* (cf. 3.b)

The list of options offered in the above guidelines reveals the variety of morphological suffixes in French that can be used to form the feminine. It is this variety and the social rather than linguistic rigidity of French which has caused a great deal of debate in French-speaking countries.

The guide also includes a section on the difficulties which might be encountered as well as comparisons with solutions offered in other Francophone countries.

Finally, an alphabetical list of professions and occupations in the masculine and feminine forms is included.

Other forms of feminisation which can be found in French include the addition of the descriptor words *homme ou femme* (or the abbreviated form *h/f*) after a masculine occupational term: for example, *directeur (homme ou femme)* or *directeur (h/f)*. This strategy involves no morphological feminisation and although some French linguists have considered this form as a type of feminisation (for example, Houdebine, 1998), this strategy has surprisingly not been found in any of the recommendations discussed here.

The analysis of the French recommendations reveals that while gender-neutralisation seems to prevail in other languages such as English (for example, “the *chair* of the committee”), French, as a grammatical gender language, has actually emphasised sexual difference through language. One of the reasons is that, as a grammatical gender language, no neutral form exists in French although there is a tendency to identify the masculine gender as the neutral one. This has caused a great deal of debate in Francophone culture and new forms have been created to avoid the use of the masculine as the gender-neutral term. This is even more so in French-speaking Canada where words ending in *-eure*, that is, adding the feminine suffix *-e* to the masculine term (*professeur*) are commonly used: e.g. *la professeure* (female lecturer).

There appears to be no satisfactory reason why masculine/feminine pairs should exist for some occupations but not for others. Conrick (2002) argues that the obvious historical explanation is that the terms did not exist because women were traditionally not represented in certain professions. Furthermore the existence and acceptance of feminine terms seems to correlate with low status occupations which were normally open to women whereas high status occupations were not. Conrick claims that the higher up the social scale an occupation is, the less likely it is to have a feminine title. It is therefore plausible to assume that the status of a job is a key factor in the use of a masculine or feminine term. An example is provided by the French term for director:

e.g. *Une directrice d'école* (a head mistress) but

Also revealing is the fact that in French not only the job title ending but the gender of the article also can be a source of debate. Traditionally the article remained in the masculine even for female incumbents, something that does not happen in other Romance languages such as Spanish where even if the occupational term remains in the masculine for females, the article always corresponds to the gender of the incumbent: for example, *la médico* [the female doctor].

### **5.2.6 Conclusion from the French experience**

Feminisation of the French language has focused mainly on occupational terminology. Those in favour of feminisation in French point out that distinctive feminine forms (or gender-specification) give women a clear social and professional identity. On the other hand, those against feminisation argue that in French the masculine is the unmarked form and consequently it can be used for either sex.

There is no doubt that language is a political topic in France. The feminisation of language is still a matter of debate, and this is reflected in the many different publications and articles on the subject that have appeared over the last 20 years. The heyday of the debate was the 1990s but whilst still relevant, at present (first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) there is a backtracking of this trend in the sense that there seems to be certain reluctance in French society regarding the feminisation of occupational nouns. Many women in high positions are now using the masculine term instead of the feminine one because of the prestige factor.

Unlike other Francophone countries, the feminisation of language has encountered a great deal of resistance in France. The move to feminise nouns referring to professions and occupations has proceeded at a "snail's pace" (Fleischman, 1997). In fact, France seems to be quite slow to reflect social changes in language compared to other French-speaking countries. According to Gervais-Le Garff (2002:2) there are three main factors for this: 1) the

unwillingness of change which is presented as a morphological obstacle in itself; 2) the social resistance to linguistic change on the part of the language community, and 3) the deliberate obstruction on the part of regulatory bodies like the *Académie Française*. Two opposing views have emerged regarding the feminisation of job titles in France: one is that changing the language alone cannot lead to equality between men and women; the other is that the feminisation of the language is a necessary means to achieve equality between the sexes.

Two approaches to feminisation have been observed in France: what it is called 'minimal feminisation' which entails the use of the feminine article with a generic masculine form (e.g. *une député*) and the other is called 'maximal feminisation' which involves the use of feminine suffixes: e.g. *une députée*.

The guidelines or recommendations to avoid linguistic discrimination in France have been the result of specific legislation to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex in the labour market. The French guidelines have been published mainly by official institutions and are the result of work by institutionalised terminology committees. Another point to take into account is that there has not been any consultation of the public either by the Roudy Commission in the 1980s, the *Commission Générale* in the 1990s or the *Académie Française*. Therefore the feminisation of language in France could be seen as a top-down model of linguistic legislation and the question is whether this model of interventionism in linguistic matters can lead to any real change. Gervais-Le Garff (2007) argues that usage ends up prevailing over the norm and that the prescriptivism of organisations such as the *Académie Française* will fail given the uses attested in the press and in dictionaries.

### **5.3 Sexism in Language: The German experience**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

The debate regarding linguistic sexism in German has taken place since the 1970s and several proposals to avoid it have been put forward since then. German is a widely spoken language in Europe; there are around 82 million speakers in Germany alone (CEDAW, 2007). However, there is no linguistic

reference point or precedent for German as there was for French (Canadian Belgian or Swiss varieties of French). Although German is also the official language of Austria and parts of Switzerland, the three countries have followed a similar evolution in the feminisation of language. As an EU country, Germany has also introduced legislation for the equal treatment of women and men as well as measures with relevance in terms of policy on equal rights for women and men. Article 611a of the German Civil Code provides for the equal treatment between the sexes in recruitment and at work. According to the German Civil Code, an employer must establish gender-neutral selection criteria before recruiting staff. Job advertising which is biased in favour of one sex is contrary to German legislation. The Federal Equal Treatment Act of 2001 stipulates that jobs may not be advertised as referring to men only or women only.

This section deals with the gender system in German, the debate surrounding the issue of linguistic sexism in German as well as the recommendations to avoid it; it analyses the changes that have taken place in recent years as well as the different strategies to achieve inclusive language and the characteristics of the language from the experience of the Federal Republic of Germany.

### **5.3.2 Gender in German**

This section deals with the gender system in German and the morphological resources the language has to form the feminine. German is a grammatical gender language with three genders: masculine, feminine and neuter. For most words, the grammatical gender is not based on natural gender, even though the distribution of nouns in three categories is not completely fortuitous. In contrast to English, processes of derivation of feminine human nouns are deeply embedded in German word formation. Hellinger and Bussmann (2001) provide a comprehensive review of word formation and gender assignment in German. In terms of feminine formation, feminine human nouns are almost exclusively formed by the derivational suffix *-in*. This suffix is highly productive and well established in German word-formation since it does not have any other use and is always applicable. It does not carry negative connotations and it can easily be attached to most personal nouns, including loan words, e.g. *Cheerleaderin*,



*Punkerin*. It is therefore an almost universal tool to form the feminine, something lacking in other languages, especially in French or Italian which are languages with several feminine suffixes. This means that, at least in theory, linguistically the German language does not pose many problems for the feminisation of occupational titles. Other feminine suffixes exist but they are few and they are normally borrowed from other languages, especially from French, such as *-euse* and *-ette*: e.g. *Souffleuse*, *Chansonette*. In the case of occupational terms which contain the suffix *-mann* (-man), the feminine form tends to end in *-frau* (-woman): e.g. *Kauffmann/Kauffrau* (salesman/saleswoman). Hellinger and Bussmann (2001:153) argue that none of these suffixes is equivalent to *-in*, either in terms of productivity or in terms of semantic specification. This suffix – as well as compounds with *frau-* has contributed to the visibility of women in current German because they have created new feminine words which had not existed before: e.g. *Boxerin* (female boxer), *Bankerin* (female banker), *Bischöfin* (female bishop), *Landsfrau* (female compatriot), *Torfrau* (female goalkeeper).

However, there are areas of German language which could lead to the invisibility of women in language and have therefore been the subject of debate in German-speaking countries. The most salient case is the use of the masculine as generic. Like French, Italian and Spanish, the masculine form has traditionally been applied to a mixed sex group even if there is only one man. This is most prominent in the plural, for example, *die Deutsch* (the Germans), *die Lehrer* (the lecturers), etc.

Another area of criticism in German is the fact that these new feminine derivational forms are based on the existing masculine ones and not vice versa. Conversely, when masculine terms have had to be devised from an original feminine term, the term has often changed: e.g. *Krankenschwester* (female nurse) but *Krankenpfleger* (male nurse) not *\*Krankenbruder*, which would have been the obvious parallel term.

A review of the different proposals to avoid gender bias in German as well as the debate on the feminisation of the language is carried out below.

### 5.3.3 The debate on the feminisation of language in Germany

Since the late 1970s the debate on the feminisation of German language has inspired a number of recommendations to avoid sexist usages in language. The first German recommendations for the equal treatment of the sexes in language were published in 1980 (Guentherodt et al. (1980), *Richtlinien zur Vermeidung sexistischen Sprachgebrauchs* – Guidelines for the avoidance of non-sexist language). These guidelines concerned the feminisation of certain professional denominations and the avoidance of the distinction based on marital status in terms of forms of address. Since their publication, numerous organisations and institutions, ministries and authorities have published their own guidelines. As many other recommendations published in English and other European languages, the role of the first German guidelines published in 1980 was to raise awareness of discriminatory uses of the language. In fact they were never formally adopted but they became the reference point for many others which were published later.

In 1989 feminist linguists Hellinger, Kremer and Schräpel published the *Empfehlungen zur Vermeidung von sexistischen Sprachgebrauch in öffentlicher Sprache* (Recommendations for the avoidance of sexist language in public language), which are also known as the “*Hannover guidelines*”. These recommendations, similarly to other guidelines in other languages, list sexist uses and provide a non-sexist alternative as well as a commentary. These recommendations deal with several issues:

Firstly, regarding the use of names and courtesy titles, the *Hannover guidelines* argued that the use of *Fräulein* (Miss) is no longer acceptable in German society. All women, regardless of marital status, should be addressed as *Frau* (Mrs). Also in common with other recommendations, the Hannover guidelines deal with the avoidance of the representation of women as belonging to men. Expressions such as *Ex-Bundespräsident Scheel und Ehefrau Mildred* (Ex president Scheel and wife Mildred) are condemned because they are not symmetrical and therefore the use of expressions such as *Ex-Budespräsident Scheel und Dr Mildred Scheel* (Ex President Scheel and Dr Mildred Scheel) is recommended.

Secondly, these authors endorse the need to make women visible in language by explicitly mentioning them (for example, *liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen* – dear female and male colleagues). The gender-splitting strategy which is recommended in these guidelines involves the use of the feminine suffix *-in* (or *-innen* in the plural) for the feminine noun. These recommendations also deal extensively with personal designations in job occupations as well as official designations. In this respect the guidelines promote the avoidance of the masculine form only; in its place the use of splitting, or the systematic use of masculine and feminine forms, is encouraged.

Thirdly, they also deal with the use of indefinite pronouns such as *man* (one). In the following example, they suggest replacing *man* altogether as the question is clearly directed to women: *Wie kann man sich als Frau im Taxi verteidigen?* (How can one defend oneself as a woman in a taxi?) and suggest a much more direct and less sexist alternative *Wie kann sich eine Frau im Taxi verteidigen?* (How can a woman defend herself in a taxi?). They also recommend the replacement of the indefinite pronoun *man* with *Sie* (you), the use of indirect address, or the introduction of a new impersonal pronoun, *frau*, to replace the generic use of the impersonal pronoun *man* in contexts only referring to women. The following example *Soll man die Pille absetzen* (Should one stop taking the pill?) could be rephrased as *Soll frau die Pille absetzen* (Should women stop taking the pill?). Finally this set of recommendations deals with idioms and certain expressions which are ingrained in the language and which can be considered sexist. For example, it is recommended to avoid expressions such as *das starke Geschlecht* (the strong sex) and replace it with *Männer* (men).

Building on the earlier 1989 work, in 1993 German feminist linguists Hellinger and Bierbach wrote the UNESCO German guidelines entitled *Eine Sprache für beide Geschlechter: Richtlinien für einen nicht-sexistischen Sprachgebrauch* (One language for both genders: Guidelines for non-sexist language). These guidelines are based on the 1989 UNESCO guidelines published in English and French and are very similar in content to the Hannover guidelines. The German UNESCO guidelines propose the systematic use of feminine forms for female incumbents. They also recommend the visibility of women in language by the

systematic use of full feminine and masculine forms when the referent is not known, what is called *Paarformulierungen* (or Long Splitting). The use of truncated graphic abbreviations such as *Lehrer/in*, or *Lehrer(innen)* is not recommended because, it is claimed, the feminine tends to appear as a secondary form to the masculine. However, the use of the capitalised *I* within the word is only recommended in short texts, especially in job advertisements where the legibility of the text is not impaired. The recommendation is to use full forms in most cases.

There has also been a great deal of interest on the issue of linguistic sexism at institutional level; for instance, in 1991 the federal committee on legal language published a set of recommendations specifically aimed at legal language (*Maskuline und feminine Personenbezeichnungen in der Rechtssprache* [Masculine and feminine person designations in legal language]) which are discussed below. More recently in 2002 the German Federal ministry for Public administration published another set of guidelines entitled *Sprachliche Gleichbehandlung von Frauen und Männern* (Equal treatment for women and men in language) which builds on the work carried out earlier.

Although most of the guidelines and recommendations have come from official bodies, a great deal of debate has come from feminist linguists. Pusch (1984, 1990), for instance, became extremely influential in Germany both in the field of academic and public discourse. She was one of the first feminists to recommend the need to reform the German gender system in order to make women visible in language. She has proposed a more radical change of the traditional system, what has been called 'total feminisation', that is, the systematic use of feminine forms as generics where the generic masculine would traditionally been used. She also proposed the elimination of all feminine forms derived by suffixation and a gender reassignment. According to Pusch, a solution to the assignment of gender in German language involves the German neuter gender being used for generic reference: for example, *das Professor* [the lecturer] adding an *-s* to form the plural (e.g., *Die Professors*) (Pauwels, 1997).

Another German linguist who has studied sexism in German is Hellinger (1993, 1995, and 2001) who concentrates on four major areas in the field of feminist linguistics. One of them is language change under the influence of the women's movement. She takes a contrastive approach, comparing German and English in terms of the strategies employed in the two languages to avoid sexist usages. Hellinger (1995) argues that German is not a sexist language or more sexist than other languages. However, she claims that the risk of linguistic sexism is higher due to the fact that the markers of grammatical gender naturally lead to gender-specification. She also notes that the development of non-sexist alternatives requires more effort in German than in English. A discussion of two sets of guidelines as well as the different strategies used in German to avoid sexist language follows.

#### **5.3.4 Guidelines for non-sexist language in German**

The main contention most feminists have with the German language is the indiscriminate use of masculine nominal and pronominal forms as generic forms, for example, *der Lehrer* (the (male) teacher). The generic use of the masculine form is for many speakers of German too easily interpreted as a basically masculine and thus female-excluding form. This is common in other grammatical gender languages such as French and Spanish.

In German, the influence of the feminist movement on gender-based language reform is particularly prominent in the area of terms for human referents, especially in cases of mixed-sex references; Hellinger (1995) illustrates the great variety of ways which are currently used to represent the term "teachers" as follows:

- *Lehrer* (male teachers), used as generic to refer to both male and female teachers
- *Lehrerinnen und Lehrer* (female and male teachers), explicitly mentioning both men and women teachers
- *LehrerInnen* (female and male teachers) with the use of the innovative capital *I*
- *Lehrer/innen* (female and male teachers), by using the truncated form to avoid repetition of the whole word

- *Lehrpersonen* (abstract word using the neutral word *personen*) literally meaning “person who teaches”
- *Lehrende* (teaching staff), gender abstraction
- *Lehrkräfte* (teaching personnel) gender abstraction

This variability of the German language to form gender-inclusive forms arguably reflects serious challenges regarding the generic interpretation of masculine human nouns, which Hellinger (1995) suggests is becoming increasingly unacceptable since the 1970s as the referential range of masculine human nouns is becoming narrower and there is now a tendency towards agreement between the grammatical gender and the sex of the referent.

Most sets of guidelines in German promote the visibility of women in language by means of dual expressions or *Paarformulierungen*, that is, the systematic use of masculine and feminine forms (e.g. *Die Bürgerinnen und Bürger* –female and male inhabitants; *Alle Teilnehmer und Teilnehmerinnen* – all male and female participants). This applies even to epicene nouns such as nominalised past participles which are unmarked for gender, for example, *Die oder der Vorsitzende* (the female or male chairperson). What is common to all German guidelines for non-sexist language is that the principle of visibility has the highest priority followed by the principles of symmetry and avoidance of stereotyping. According to most guidelines, the principle of symmetry of masculine and feminine forms must be observed in cases where sex-specification is required and many studies have revealed that this is the norm rather than the exception in German. The gender-specification approach in German can consist of 1) the so-called long splitting (*Paarformulierungen*), which refers to the strategy of explicitly mentioning both the masculine and feminine forms of human agent nouns, for example, *Lehrerinnen und Lehrer* (female and male teachers); 2) the so-called *Sparformen*, or economy forms, which are marked by various orthographical symbols such as slashes, for instance *Lehrer/innen* or brackets, e.g. *Lehrer (in)*; and 3) the use of the capital *I* within the word. The latter is a new form created in feminist circles on the basis of the feminine plural (in the previous example *die Lehrerinnen*) with a capitalised *I* which is meant to highlight the generic function. The resulting form, *LehrerInnen*, closely resembles the feminine plural form (*Lehrerinnen*) and

replaces the masculine generic form. Braun et al (2005) argue that capital / forms are associated with left-wing feminist attitudes but not usually accepted for official language.

Although gender-specification appears to be the norm in German, avoidance of sexist language in German may also include gender-neutralisation. This strategy may include: 1) the use of neuter nouns such as *das Individuum* (the individual); 2) the use of non-differentiating forms, usually in the plural form instead of the masculine generic form: for example, *die Angestellten* (the employees); 3) the use of epicene nouns, for example, *die Person, der Mensch* (the human being); or 4) collective or gender-indefinite nouns such as *das Personal* (the staff) or *Lehrkräfte* (teaching staff).

Two sets of German guidelines have been analysed here. Firstly, at institutional level, the German Federal Government (*Bundestag*) set up a working group on legal language, the *Arbeitsgruppe Rechtssprache*, which in 1991 published the Federal Republic report entitled *Maskuline und feminine Personenbezeichnungen in der Rechtssprache*. [Masculine and feminine personal designations in legal language]. The guidelines developed by this working group on legal language differ considerably from other German guidelines (Hellinger, 1995). One of the reasons of this difference is that the *Bundestag* report deals only with legal language, i.e., a variety of German for specific purposes. Of fundamental importance is the Federal committee's differentiation of *Rechtssprache* (legal language) into two categories: the so-called *Amtssprache* (official language) and the *Vorschriftensprache* (legislative language). Administrative communication, judicial decisions, forms, etc. are written in the *Amtssprache* while laws and decrees are formulated in the *Vorschriftensprache*. As far as official language is concerned, the working party supports the principle of visibility of women. This is also suggested in the German UNESCO guidelines. According to the Federal working group, reports, forms, personal documents, educational programmes, examinations regulations, etc. need to be revised to include feminine occupational titles and terms of address.

The Federal Government report recommends the use of non-sex-specific wording or the avoidance of human nouns altogether; for example, *der Minister* (masculine) can be replaced by *das Ministerium* (gender abstraction). It is argued that the use of *Paarformeln* (nominal splitting), for instance in a headline, need not exclude the use of generic masculine terms further in the text. One of the reasons behind this is that no discrepancy between old and new constitutional texts would be created.

In contrast, the federal report on legal language excluded the second category of legal language (the *Vorschriftensprache* or legislative language) from any changes. Visibility of the female in legal texts is rejected on several grounds. The working party believed that the occurrence of (sex-specific) feminine and masculine human nouns in revised or newly formulated texts will cause inconsistencies with the traditional usage (generic use of the masculine) of older texts. It was argued that since the law must conform to the Constitution, it will necessarily relate to both sexes (no matter which wording was used).

The second argument against the principle of visibility in legislative texts is a practical one: it would take too much time, money and effort to revise the entire legal code. Consequently changes would have to be made gradually, which means that only new laws and revisions of existing texts would have to adhere to the principle of visibility.

Thirdly, the working party warned that ugly formulations would be created, for instance, by too much nominal or pronominal splitting. In an analysis of arguments against non-sexist language, Hellinger & Schräpel (1983) pointed out that the criterion of stylistic elegance and economy must be weighed against the socially and psychologically more salient criterion of visibility.

In summary, the Federal Government report on legal language acknowledges tendencies of language change which are considered normal usage in increasingly more domains of public communication. Yet for legislative language, the report defends the prescription of the generic masculine.



In contrast to the federal report, the increasing reluctance to use - or accept - the masculine form as non-gender specific marker in German has led to the widespread use of 'splitting', i.e., the systematic use of masculine and feminine forms together; for instance, *Leiter/Leiterin* (Manager/manageress), sometimes inverting the order of the masculine and feminine forms: e.g. *Direktorin/Direktor* or by means of using the feminine endings in brackets, e.g. *ein (e) Lektor (in)* (a lecturer).

This multiplicity of forms is a natural result of the relative newness of splitting. There is not yet agreement as to what form it should eventually take (Grannis, 1992). The application of these strategies has been tested in the case study in chapter 6. A recurrent argument regarding the systematic use of gender-splitting is that the majority of the above forms are only possible as written forms. The spoken form in all cases would be something like: *Wir suchen eine Leiterin oder einen Leiter* [We need a manageress or a manager].

The second set of German guidelines for non-sexist language discussed here are those from the UNESCO German division. An analysis of the UNESCO German guidelines (*Eine Sprache für beide Geschlechter*- One language for both genders) published in 1993 by UNESCO's German Commission) shows that there is a clear tendency towards gender-specification in German. The UNESCO guidelines recommend the principles of symmetry and visibility. These guidelines recommend the principle of symmetry by means of the systematic and consistent use of masculine and feminine forms in all contexts. This feminisation strategy involves gender-splitting. There are several forms splitting can take:

- a. Long splitting: The nouns (or pronouns) may be coordinated by conjunctions such as *und* (and), *oder* (or) or *beziehungsweise*, often abbreviated to *bzw.* (and/or):

e.g.    - *Kolleginnen und Kollegen* (female and male colleagues)  
          - *Jede Wählerin bzw. jeder Wähler* (each male and female voter)  
          - *Wir suchen eine Fachfrau oder einen Fachmann* (female or male specialist sought)

b. Abbreviated splitting: The splitting is achieved by means of orthographic symbols:

- e.g. - *Lehrer/innen* (male/female teachers)
- *Lehrer (innen)*
- *LehrerInnen*

This latter form, the capital *I*, is a new orthographical representation to include males and females in the plural form. Hellinger (2001:155) argues that the use of the capital *I* has become an important focus of reactions against language reform in German. The main argument against the use of this innovative grapheme is that it distorts orthographic continuity and that words cannot be pronounced. However, as a response to these criticisms, two proposals have been made in terms of pronunciation of the capital *I*: 1) It can be realised by a glottal stop or 2) by zero. The latter will make gender-indefinite *LeserInnen* (male and female readers) identical with the feminine plural *Leserinnen* (female readers) which has inevitably been the object of criticism and adverse reactions. Regarding the principle of visibility of women in language, the feminisation of existing masculine forms is preferred even if it involves the creation of a new word: e.g. *Bundestagspräsidentin* (female federal president), *Bischöfin* (female bishop), *Industriekauffrau* (female industrialist). Although there are few empirical studies on the effect of gender-splitting in German, Stahlberg, Sczesny and Braun (2001) document that splitting promotes the recall of females to a significant degree.

Another strategy to achieve the principle of symmetry is called gender-abstraction; this strategy involves abstraction from referential gender by means of a gender-neutral abstract form: Instead of masculine terms such as *Der Minister*, *Präsident*, *Arbeiter* (worker), the following collective nouns are possible alternatives: *das Ministerium* (the Ministry), *das Präsidium* (the presidency), *die Belegschaft* (the staff, the work force).

At present non-sexist language guidelines are common in Germany and other German-speaking countries where they have been adopted by many public sector bodies from government departments to local councils. Since the late

1980s a number of German federal states (*Länder*) have started to introduce changes to the wording of laws and have published provisions regarding gender-inclusive language as well as work aids enabling statutes to be drafted according to the principle of linguistic equality between men and women. Some of these federal states include Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Thuringia (December 1997). According to an amendment of the Rules of Procedure of German federal ministries (September 2000), all of the German federation's legal and administrative provisions as well as written correspondence are to be written in gender-neutral language.

### **5.3.5 Conclusion from the German experience**

The analysis of the recommendations to avoid sexist language in German shows an overall compliance with the various recommendations, although criticism is also expressed. Although the debate on the feminisation of German has been taking place over the last 30 years, there have not been so many criticisms as in, for instance, France. Arguments against the gender-specification strategy in German include the fact that the constant use of gender-splitting form (long splitting) or the use of graphic symbols such as slashes or brackets (abbreviated splitting) destroys the flow of the text. This is similar to the arguments which have been put forward in other languages with a grammatical gender system (such as French, Italian or Spanish). Another argument is that it would be too difficult to change the entire legal code. As a result, the enforcement of gender-neutralisation in German (generally preferred in the Federal Government report) conflicts with the principle of women's visibility (gender specification) promoted in other German guidelines.

Despite some of the criticisms, the principle of symmetry and visibility or gender-specification is generally applied in Germany. Most guidelines recommend splitting of masculine and feminine forms and this practice is widely used in most contexts. The review of the guidelines reveals a tendency to an increased use of juxtaposition of the feminine and masculine forms (splitting) which is particularly evident in job advertisements. Splitting is therefore a phenomenon to be found in virtually every form of public or institutional communication in German. For example, at university students are normally

addressed as *Studentinnen und Studenten* (female and male students). However, critics of the gender splitting strategy argue that it can lead to stylistically repetitive and ugly sentences, both in oral and written contexts. It seems that in German mentioning both sexes explicitly seems to be the only way to promote equality. The case study in Chapter 6 tests whether the recommendations are implemented in practice in the context of occupational terminology.

## **5.4 Sexism in language: The Spanish experience**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

Proposals to change language to avoid sexist uses have also been made in Spain since the 1990s; the aim of these proposals is to achieve equality of the sexes in all areas of social life, including language. Spain has recently introduced legislation to reinforce the constitutional principle of equal treatment of women and men as well as the promotion of women in all spheres of public life. This investigation deals with the issue of sexism in Spanish language and it focuses on Spain and in particular on Peninsular (or Castilian) Spanish. Although Spanish is spoken in 18 Latin American countries, the strategies for non-sexist language in other Spanish-speaking countries is outside the scope of the study and the focus here is on Spanish recommendations regarding the avoidance of linguistic sexism. However, references to other official regional languages of Spain such as Catalan or Galician are made.

This section deals with the morphological and syntactical features of gender formation in Spanish as well as the linguistic resources used to avoid gender bias in language. It also looks at the various proposals which have been made to avoid linguistic discrimination against women; these proposals are illustrated with concrete examples of its implementation. The main promoters of non-sexist language in Spain are also identified.

### **5.4.2 Gender in Spanish**

Spanish is a grammatical gender language and as such all nouns are marked for gender. There are two genders in Spanish, masculine and feminine. As

other Romance languages, Spanish has inherited from Latin the need for gender agreement of articles, adjectives and past participles.

In terms of feminine word formation, the predominant productive suffix is *-a*, although other suffixes exist (for example, *-isa*, *-esa*, *-iz*, *-ina*, *-sa*). The feminine form is mostly derived from the masculine one. Unlike English, Spanish has no masculine derivational suffix (for example, *widower*). Gender-marking by means of compounding does not exist (while it is productive in English and German, for example, *salesman*, *Kaufmann*).

Similarly to other grammatical gender languages, the masculine form has traditionally functioned as the unmarked form. Therefore when reference is made to a mixed-sex group, the masculine form has to be used. This is one area of debate that has already been identified for other grammatical gender languages such as French and German. In this respect, a strategy to avoid the use of the generic masculine in Spanish is the use of abstract nouns. There are two types of abstract nouns in Spanish: collective nouns (e.g. *gente*, *población*, *profesorado*, people, population, teaching staff) and non-collective (e.g. *persona*, *individuo*). There are consequently different ways to obtain a language which is free of masculine bias in Spanish.

The next sections analyse the main areas of study regarding linguistic sexism in Spanish and the content for the various guidelines for non-sexist language in Spain.

#### **5.4.3 The debate on the feminisation of language in Spain**

As it has already been identified in the literature review, the debate about linguistic sexism in Spanish started slightly later than in other countries mainly due to the socio-political situation of the country, but since the 1990s it has become an important topic of debate. Spanish, however, has not been the subject of studies on sexism in the language to the extent of English or French. At the same time the debate in Spain has not encountered as strong opposition as in France, for example.

The following are the main areas of study with regard to sexism in Spanish and which have caused a lively debate in academic and feminist circles. Firstly, the main concern for feminists and language planners alike has been the use of the generic masculine as the unmarked form. Spanish tends to use the masculine form as the universal gender, that is, the generic masculine to refer to both men and women. This is much more frequent in the plural forms and in fact if a single male appears in a group of several women the masculine form is used. Promoters of language change in Spain have claimed that the use of the masculine as the universal gender hinders the role played by women in Spanish society. For them what is not named does not exist. This is especially important in offers of employment, for example. If only the masculine form is used, this can be seen as a form of discrimination against women who may be capable of occupying this position. As a result, there have been different proposals to avoid the use of the masculine as the unmarked form. Guidelines for non-sexist language in Spanish have proposed that the generic masculine (e.g. *los alumnos* [the students [masc.]]) be substituted by other more inclusive expressions such as gender-neutral terms (e.g. *el alumnado* [the student population]) or by gender-specific terms by means of the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine forms (e.g. *los alumnos y las alumnas* [male and female students]). The assumption is that generic masculine forms lead to associations primarily to men whereas gender-neutral or gender specific terms will evoke a generic association (Nissen, 2006). The following are the recommendations from one of the earliest publications on non-sexist language proposals in Spain: *Propuestas para evitar el sexismo en el lenguaje*, published in the form of a short booklet in 1989 by the Spanish Equal Opportunities body (the *Instituto de la Mujer*):

1) When reference is made to a mixed group, then both the masculine and feminine forms should be used (gender-splitting). Instead of *Los españoles* (the male Spaniards), the recommendation is to use both genders: *Los españoles y las españolas* (male and female Spaniards).

This proposal falls under the gender-specification approach because it involves the explicit mentioning of both sexes, thus avoiding the masculine as the

generic unmarked form. The splitting approach is quite simple and straightforward with nouns and articles only, but it becomes more complicated when adjectives or past participles are used:

e.g. *Los españoles trabajadores y las españolas trabajadoras*  
(male Spanish workers and female Spanish workers)

*Los parados españoles y las paradas españolas*  
(male Spanish unemployed and female Spanish unemployed)

As already discussed in the sections regarding French and German, this strategy of gender-splitting has been criticised -and even ridiculed- also in Spanish because it can be long-winded and complicated when many adjectives and past participles are involved.

2) The use of non-marked collective nouns such as *la persona*, *el personal*, *funcionario*, *el vecindario*, *el profesorado*, etc. (person, civil service staff, neighbourhood, teaching staff) which do not intrinsically refer to a specific gender has been recommended: for instance, instead of

e.g.	<i>los profesores</i> (male teachers)	<i>el profesorado/el personal docente</i> (teaching staff)
	<i>los alumnos</i> (the students)	<i>el alumnado</i> (the student population)
	<i>los administrativos</i> (male administrators)	<i>el personal administrativo</i> (administrative staff)
	<i>los clientes</i> (the clients)	<i>la clientela</i> (clients)

This technique, also called gender abstraction, is widely used nowadays in educational texts and other documents and it has the advantage that it can be used in spoken language as well.

3) The use of a slash or brackets with the feminine suffix is also recommended, although preferably in shorter texts:

e.g. *los/as candidatos/as*  
*los (as) trabajadores (as)*  
*los-as alumnos-as*

This proposal can be seen often in short written forms, job advertisements and letters, for example, it is very common to start a letter as *estimado/a socio/a* (dear member (both female and male)). However, it has been observed that in many instances only the noun is split into the two genders while the adjective remains in the masculine form: *estimado socio/a; estimado Sr./Sra.* Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that this technique presents the added complication of the agreement with articles, adjectives and past participles and that is why it is only used in short written texts.

The latest suggestion in these days of computer literacy has been the use of the @ symbol to mark the ending of words in order to avoid the specification of gender. Therefore, proposals to use expressions such as *amig@s, español@s*, have been put forward, especially from feminist circles. This strategy is currently used in some Internet fora and electronic communication, but it has been criticised because, among other things, presents a problem with regards to pronunciation.

4) Another area of controversy in Spanish concerns the order of the feminine and masculine forms. Traditionally the masculine term came first (*Nombre del padre, nombre de la madre*, Father's name, mother's name) but proposals have been made to alternate the order of both sexes. One recent example can be found in the expression *Asociación de madres y padres de alumnos* (AMPA)<sup>35</sup> (Pupils' mothers and fathers association).

5) Another important area of discussion in Spanish has been the feminisation of names of professions, titles and occupations as an increasing of Spanish women nowadays enter traditionally male professions. From the morphological point of view, Spanish language can easily create new feminine forms. The feminine suffix *-a* can replace the masculine suffix *-o* or be added to a final consonant and this does not present a problem.

e.g.	<i>abogado</i>	<i>abogada</i>	(male-female lawyer)
	<i>supervisor</i>	<i>supervisora</i>	(male-female supervisor)

<sup>35</sup> Note here that the word *alumnos* is still used in the generic masculine.



In the case of epicene words ending in *-ista* such as *dentista*, *periodista*, *novelista*, the recommendation is to change the article when the referent is female: e.g. *el dentista*, *la dentista*. However, a rather radical solution (Eisenberg, 1985) proposed that all human agent and occupational nouns ending in *-a* should refer to women. Consequently an alternative form ending in *-o* should be created to refer to men: for example, *el \*dentisto*. This form has not taken on in Spain although there is a similar case in the term *modisto* (couturier); however, there is a change of meaning as *modisto* refers to a (male) designer as opposed to a (female) dressmaker (*modista*). Here we can see the derogatory nature of professions traditionally occupied by women.

Nonetheless, despite the proposals for the feminisation of names of occupations in Spanish, there is still a trend to use masculine occupational forms to refer to women occupying them. It is not uncommon to hear sentences such as *Ana es médico*; *Clara es ingeniero*. (Ana is a [male] doctor; Clara is a [male] engineer). There is a tendency, therefore, to use the same word (in the masculine) for males and females, the only element that changes being the article: *la abogado* [lawyer], *la médico* [doctor], *la juez* [judge]. In the case of *juez* [judge], two different alternative forms for a female judge exist in Spanish: *la juez* or *la jueza*. The two forms have been accepted by the Royal Academy of Language Dictionary and they coexist in the Spanish press where *la juez* is favoured in Spanish newspaper *El País*, and *la jueza* in another daily *El Mundo*.

6) As with the other languages already studied, another area where linguistic discrimination can be found is that of forms of address. However, at present in Spanish, the distinction between women based on their marital status is no longer made in administrative documents. The symmetrical *Sra/Sr* (Mrs/Mr) forms are currently used and the term *Señorita* (Miss) is no longer an option as it is not symmetrical with the masculine form and it discriminates against women by drawing attention to their marital status. However, following the English example of a neutral courtesy title for women which does not specify their marital status, a neologism has been proposed in Spanish, *Sa*. (which is formed by taking the first and last letters of the word *Señora*) but this new form is rarely found.

In terms of criticisms of non-sexist language proposals in Spanish, several arguments have been put forward against the feminisation of certain occupational terms. One of these is that the feminine forms were traditionally used in familiar language to name the wife of the incumbent: for instance, *la médica* was used to refer to the wife of *el médico* (the doctor). This can explain why nowadays there is certain reluctance to use the feminine form for women who occupy these positions. The question of prestige is also a factor, although not to the extent of the situation in France. It is usually those professions of prestige which are more likely to remain in the masculine when applied to women.

Another argument supporting the use of the masculine form for both males and females comes from the fact that in Spanish certain words have another meaning in the feminine: e.g. *el cartero* (postman) vs *la cartera* (wallet, briefcase). So, the many female post carriers (this can also be a problem in English) are usually referred to as *la cartero*. Another argument put forward in favour of the masculine is that some words in the feminine form sound “strange”, such as *pilota* (female pilot), because people have not been accustomed to it as it is only recently that women began to occupy this position. The argument central to language reformers in Spain is that when there are more women in this profession, there is no reason why the term *pilota* should sound “strange”. Another example is provided from the field of politics; when recently two women were appointed as leaders of the two chambers of the Spanish Parliament they were addressed as *la Presidenta del Congreso* and *la Presidenta del Senado* respectively. However, the feminine ending in -a has not taken hold for other words with the same ending as *Presidenta*, such as *estudiante* (student) and *gerente* (manager), which remain epicene words. Also in the field of politics, there have been *ministras* [female ministers] for a few years now and the feminine term has not presented a problem in Spanish unlike in French where until very recently a female minister was *Madame le ministre*. The resistance to change, that is, to feminise occupational nouns, comes mainly from professions of prestige, traditionally associated with men. The resistance here is not linguistic but social and does not come only from men but from women too.

Although the masculine form can be found to name women who carry out certain jobs, when men enter occupations traditionally identified with women, there is a trend to quickly find a masculine term for them. An example is the word *enfermera* (female nurse) which has become ATS (*Ayudante Técnico Sanitario*) for both males and females, instead of using the simple masculine term *enfermero* (male nurse). Another profession traditionally identified with women which has changed the term following the greater presence of men is that of flight attendant. The original term (used for females) was *azafata*, but there is a certain reluctance to use *azafato* for a male air steward, so a new expression has been found, *tripulante de cabina de pasajeros* (cabin crew). Here, a gender-neutral expression has been created to name both male and female flight attendants.

Consequently, there seem to be three factors that block a consistent and rapid innovation in the area of feminine word formation in Spanish:

1) the existence of terms with ambiguous connotations:

e.g. *registrador/registradora* (inspector/cash register)  
e.g. *cartero/cartera* (postman/wallet)

2) the derogatory nature of some feminine nouns,

e.g. *la mujer pública* (a prostitute)  
e.g. *el hombre público* (public man)

3) the fact that a feminine title has traditionally meant the “wife of” the masculine holder: e.g. *la médica* (the wife of the doctor).

These factors have led some linguists (Meseguer, 1977; Fuertes Olivera, 1992) to conclude that Spanish women are best served using the masculine term for their job titles in order to avoid negative connotations. Most female linguists, however, disagree with this statement from (male linguists) Meseguer and Fuertes Olivera, because the tendency in Spanish is to feminise.

The next section analyses the main initiatives regarding linguistic sexism and the content of some of the guidelines for non-sexist language in Spain.

#### 5.4.4 Guidelines for non-sexist language in Spanish

This section introduces the main promoters of non-sexist language in Spain and the guidelines which have been published on the elimination of sexist language. Unlike some of the other countries of study where women's groups and professional bodies have fought for gender-inclusive language reform, in Spain there has been a great deal of institutional interest in linguistic sexism since the 1990s. Most of the initiatives to eliminate linguistic sexism have come from institutions at three governmental levels: central, autonomous and local governments. Central government organisations such as the *Instituto de la Mujer* (the central government's equal opportunities body) have commissioned many studies on the position of Spanish women in society including studies on language. In accordance with the recommendations at international level analysed earlier in Chapter 4, the *Instituto de la Mujer* was urged to promote the use of non-sexist language to reflect the principle of equality enshrined in the Spanish Constitution as it was noted that nothing had been done at institutional level until the early 1980s. Since its creation in 1983, the *Instituto de la Mujer* has been working towards equality of men and women in all fields, including language. Together with other regional equal opportunities bodies, it has become one of the main promoters of linguistic change in Spain. Their concern to eliminate sexist uses from language was reflected in the First Plan for Equal Opportunities (1988-1990) which was the first plan of its kind. It tried to boost legislative reforms to promote equal opportunities for Spanish women at legislative level. It was the starting point for the elimination of sexism in language as one of its objectives was to eliminate sexist uses from language, especially in educational texts and in the language of the administration in order to eliminate discrimination and sexist stereotypes. The main aim of the recommendations was also to raise awareness amongst the Spanish population.

As a result of this growing interest, many official guidelines for non-sexist language have been published in a short period, from the early 1990s to the present day. These guidelines mainly stem from recommendations at international level, namely the Council of Europe's 1990 recommendation on the elimination of sexism from language and the UNESCO guidelines for non-sexist language (cf. chapter 4).

The first of these institutional publications appeared in 1988 when the Spanish Ministry for Education published their *Recomendaciones para el uso no sexista de la lengua* [Recommendations for a non-sexist use of language], followed by the publication of two short leaflets entitled *Propuestas para evitar el sexismo en el lenguaje* [Proposals to avoid sexism in language] published in 1989 and *Uso no sexista del lenguaje administrativo* [Non-sexist uses of administrative language] in 1990. These two leaflets published by the *Instituto de la Mujer* include examples of language uses to be avoided and usages recommended. These recommendations take the form of illustrated pages which point out their relevance, especially in the administrative world. These and most of the guidelines published afterwards are based on the 1989 UNESCO guidelines. Also at institutional level, as part of the process of reform and modernisation of the language of the administration the Ministry for Public Administration published the *Manual de Estilo del lenguaje administrativo* [Style Manual on Administrative Language] in 1990. Over the last two decades the Spanish Administration has undertaken an extensive modernisation process designed to renovate its institutional image with the aim to establish better relations between the State and the Spanish public. In the same way that its institutional logos have recently been modified or created sophisticated web pages for each ministry, a fundamental element of this modernisation process has been the reform of the language used in all forms of written communication. The reason behind this reform is that the language of the administration has always been considered highly bureaucratic, obscure and impersonal, and consequently it was necessary to introduce some measures to make it more accessible. The publication of a Style Manual on administrative language was an important step towards the modernisation of the language of the Spanish Administration. The Manual was conceived as a working tool for the employees of the Spanish Administration and as a guide to produce clear, concise language and make it more accessible to the public.

One important aspect of this language reform has been the recommendation to use non-sexist language in the different documents used by the Administration in order to eliminate gender stereotypes. Consequently together with recommendations on matters of style, spelling and grammar, the Style Manual

includes a chapter devoted to the use of non-sexist language which was drafted with the collaboration of the ministries of Education, Culture, Social Affairs and the *Universidad Autónoma* in Madrid. The chapter responded to a study of more than 300 documents used in the Spanish Public Administration which showed that the masculine form prevailed over the feminine; it was argued that, from a social point of view, this practice reinforced the idea of the public administration as a “mundo del varón”, where jobs are carried out by men and men are also the recipients of administrative documents. However, as women were rapidly gaining access to “male” professions and occupations, including the civil service, it was felt that there was a need to name them in order to reflect their presence both as holders of posts and as users of the administration. This is particularly important in the public sector because women now occupy more than half of all posts and at the same time women are also more than half the population to which these documents are addressed. After all, almost half of all civil servants in Spain are women (52.7%)<sup>36</sup>.

The 1990 Manual distinguishes between various types of documents used in the Spanish administration (for example, “open documents”, i.e., when the sex of the addressee is not known, and “closed documents”, when it is). The areas of sexism in language analysed are:

- a) names of administrative posts and titles,
- b) use of forms of address and courtesy titles,
- c) references to the users of the administration in, for example, offers of employment,
- d) order of words

Of special interest is the section about documents related to employment; the main concern is that the use of the masculine as generic can contribute to reinforce the unequal situation of women in the labour market; in fact, linguists such as Lledó (1996) claim that the use of the masculine, whether in singular to refer to a woman, or in the plural to refer to a group of women or mixed group, is undoubtedly a trap which makes women invisible and excludes them. By April 1991 some 1600 types of forms used in the public administration had been reformulated and this process of reform is ongoing.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Boletín estadístico del personal al servicio de las administraciones públicas*, January 2009

As a reflection of the growing concern about sexist language, in 1994 the *Instituto de la Mujer* created an advisory committee on gender and language. It was called NOMBRA (which stands for "*No Omitas Mujeres, Busca Representaciones Adecuadas*" [Don't Omit Women; Find Adequate Representations] but as a word it also means "Name" to reflect the need to make women more visible in language). NOMBRA is made up of several specialists in fields such as education and linguistics. This advisory group on language is not the first of its kind in Europe since there has been a similar terminology committee in France, as seen above. The aim of this advisory group is to study the topic of linguistic discrimination and make recommendations for non-sexist uses of Spanish. One of the areas NOMBRA has been working on is that of the representation of women in Spanish dictionaries. As a result, in 1995 they published *En femenino y masculino. La Representación del femenino y el masculino en el lenguaje* [In feminine and masculine. The Representation of feminine and masculine in language] (Alario et al., 1995) which in 1999 was summarised in an educational booklet entitled *En femenino y masculino*. The work of NOMBRA has revolved around the use of feminine and masculine forms in the Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy of Language (*Real Academia de la Lengua*), the so-called "guardian" of the Spanish language. The *Real Academia de la Lengua* was founded in 1713 with the aim of regulating the Spanish language and it was modelled on the Italian *Accademia della Crusca* and the French *Académie Française*. Its role in preserving Spanish language is similar to these two institutions. Furthermore the *Real Academia de la Lengua* is a major publisher of dictionaries and has a formal procedure for admitting words to its publications. It has been criticised because of its conservatism and reluctance to change. Plans were made to carry out a study of the Real Academia's Dictionary of the Spanish Language to ascertain whether or not it needed modifying. The result of this study was a book called *Lo femenino y lo masculino en el Diccionario de la Lengua de la Real Academia Española* (Vargas et al, 1998) [Feminines and masculines in the Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy]. The aim of this book was to open the debate regarding the representation of males and females in Spanish dictionaries and more specifically to influence the subsequent re-editions of the Spanish Royal Academy's Dictionary with the aim to modify sexist usages in the Spanish language.

At regional level, the various regional governments have also published guidelines for the use of non-sexist language. The first of these was published in Catalonia, in Catalan, by the autonomous government, the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (1992): *Indicacions per evitar la discriminació per raó de sexe en el llenguatge administratiu* [Proposals to avoid sex discrimination in administrative language]. Guidelines in the Basque Country were published by the Basque equal opportunities body (*Emakunde*) in 1998: *El lenguaje, más que palabras. Propuestas para un uso no sexista del lenguaje* [Language is more than words. Proposals for a non-sexist use of language]. Apart from guidelines for non-sexist language, legislation at regional level has also addressed the need to eradicate sexism from language. Thus from 2002 the regional Catalan government has introduced the compulsory use of non-sexist language in its documents. Similar measures have been introduced in Galicia (2004) and Andalucía (2005). Statutory texts have been amended to introduce non-sexist language, usually by means of gender-splitting, that is, by replacing the original masculine form with both the masculine and feminine forms.

At local level, some city councils have too published proposals to disseminate the practice of non-sexist uses of language among their staff; an early example of these is the leaflet published in 1999 by the Madrid City Council (Ayuntamiento de Madrid (1999) *Recomendaciones para un uso no sexista del lenguaje* [Recommendations for a non-sexist use of language] or more recently the Granada city council (2007) *Propuestas para un uso no sexista del lenguaje administrativo* [Proposals for a non-sexist use of administrative language].

The majority of publications on non-sexist language which have been identified above have only taken the form of recommendations, and their aim has been to raise public awareness. Yet in 1992 there was a formal initiative at institutional level with the aim to eliminate sexist language from administrative documents. This was promoted by the *Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer*, one of Spain's regional equal opportunities bodies. It was the first institutional "decree" in Spain with the aim to eliminate gender bias in language. At regional level, Andalucía was therefore the first autonomous region to publish recommendations for non-sexist use of language in administrative documents. These were published on



5<sup>th</sup> December 1992 and similarly to the recommendations issued in the 1990 Style Manual, these recommendations advocate the visibility of women in language through explicit naming; therefore, in “open” documents, that is, those publicly available, the use of the masculine and feminine forms together is recommended (art. 2). A recommendation specifically aimed at the wording of offers of employment can be found in article 3:

Las ofertas de empleo, relación de puestos de trabajo, convocatoria de becas y ayudas y cualquier cuestión relativa a la Función Pública así como la publicidad que de ellas se realice, se redactarán de tal forma que hombres y mujeres se encuentren reflejados sin ambigüedad.

[Job advertisements, job lists, grants announcements and any issue related to Public administration as well as their publicity will be drafted in a way that men and women are included without any ambiguity]

In order to avoid ambiguity, it is recommended that the gender-splitting formula “*hombres y mujeres*” (men and women) should appear together with the specification of the job, grant, etc. being advertised (art. 4.B). More recently, the regional government of Andalucía issued an instruction (March 2005) to the members of the regional government concerning very detailed drafting and style rules to avoid sexist uses in regional government documents.

Andalucía has not been the only autonomous region to issue non-sexist language guidelines within its administration. In 1994 the president of the Basque regional government circulated an instruction to the Basque administrative personnel urging them to avoid sexist language in all Basque administrative documents. This was elaborated in collaboration with the Basque equal opportunities body (*Emakunde*). A year later, the autonomous region of Aragón also published a circular recommending the avoidance of sexist terminology in administrative documents. The same kind of recommendation was issued within the context of Madrid City council. The Recommendations by the Mayor of Madrid were distributed to 18,000 staff in January 2000. These three sets of recommendations at regional level are very similar in content. Firstly the use of the masculine as the unmarked gender is condemned and it is recommended to use both masculine and feminine forms to refer to the incumbent of a position or title whose sex is not known. Also the use of abstract or collective words should be used where appropriate. The following list shows

a few examples of the recommendations to avoid generic masculines in these guidelines:

<u>recommended</u>	<u>Translation</u>	<u>not recommended</u>	<u>Translation</u>
<i>personas</i>	people	<i>hombres</i>	men
<i>personal municipal</i>	council staff	<i>trabajadores</i>	[male]workers
<i>funcionariado</i>	civil service	<i>funcionarios</i>	civil servants
<i>ciudadanía</i>	citizenry	<i>ciudadanos</i>	citizens
<i>personal de limpieza</i>	cleaning staff	<i>limpiadoras</i>	female cleaners

Also at institutional level, one of the most relevant initiatives was taken in 1995 by the Ministry of Education and Science which passed specific legislation to systematically include the feminine form in all official academic degree certificates if the recipient is a woman, that is, all official academic titles should reflect the gender of the holder. Consequently, professional titles to refer to women, such as *ingeniera* [female engineer], *doctora* [female doctor], *médica* [female doctor], are recommended in their feminine form, thus avoiding the use of the masculine form for both as had been the practice previously. This has undoubtedly set a precedent at national level as this is the first time legislation has been passed to this effect.

It is relevant to highlight that these are proposals at institutional level, mainly through equal opportunities bodies such as the *Instituto de la Mujer* and its regional counterparts, but also during the 1990s, there have been an increasing number of publications in the field of sexism in language in Spanish from Women Studies departments in Spanish universities. Although recent, the literature in Spanish is extensive and highlights the concern for the topic in Spain. Other Spanish-speaking countries have also addressed the issue and followed similar strategies to those proposed in Spain.

The guidelines which have been discussed in the present study are the latest guidelines published in 2006 by the Spanish equal opportunities body, the *Instituto de la Mujer*. They are called *En femenino y en masculino: Las profesiones de la A a la Z* (In masculine and in feminine: Professions from A to Z). This work by feminist linguist Eulalia Lledó Cunill is a revised edition of the

work published in 1996: *De la A a la Z. Profesiones en femenino* (From A to Z. Professions in the feminine) also written by Lledó. The 1996 publication has been considered as a reference point for other publications, for example, *Manual de Lenguaje administrativo no sexista* (2002) among others.

These latest guidelines are very detailed and, as the French guidelines analysed earlier, include a dictionary of feminine and masculine terms and notes in cases of ambiguity. The recommendations include:

1. The elimination of all sexist forms in order to promote women's visibility in language. It is therefore not recommended to use the masculine as generic.
2. In offers of employment, feminine and masculine forms should appear systematically side by side and in its full form (that is, without the use of brackets or slashes): e.g. *Se necesita un mecánico o una mecánica* (male/female mechanic is required) avoiding "economy" sentences of the following type: *Se necesita arquitecto/a*.
3. The introduction of generic abstract expressions such as *el profesorado* (teaching staff), *el alumnado* (student population) are preferred to refer to a collective made up of both women and men.
4. In relation to terms of address, the recommendation is to always use *señora* (Mrs) regardless of marital status.

These guidelines are highly representative of many other guidelines which in Spain have been appearing recently mainly at local government level. They can not be considered very radical as they do not aim to upset the current linguistic state of affairs in Spain.

#### **5.4.5 Conclusion from the Spanish experience**

The review of the Spanish situation reveals that the feminisation of the Spanish language is slowly taking place and a great deal of effort has been made to establish different ways of avoiding sexist language and stereotypes in order to eliminate linguistic discrimination against women. From the review of the proposals which have been put forward in Spain, it appears that the Spanish language is quite flexible when adapting to the new social reality.

As part of the measures aimed to overcome discrimination based on sex, in Spain, many recommendations have been issued since the 1990s at different levels but most recommendations have originated from public administration bodies such as ministries, equal opportunities bodies and regional and local governments. The latest legislation regarding the elimination of gender-based discrimination in Spain also includes references to the elimination of sexist usages in language (see for example, the Law on equal opportunities for women and men in the autonomous region of Valencia (2003) or the latest Law of effective equal opportunities for women and men (March 2007) which include a section of the implementation of non-sexist language in the public administration as well as its promotion in all social, cultural and artistic relationships (article 14).

Guidelines for non-sexist language in Spanish tend to recommend the visibility of women through explicit naming. For occupational nouns with only a masculine form, the recommendation is to create a feminine form by means of the existing derivational suffixes. This falls within the gender-specification or feminisation strategy analysed earlier. However, this is not the only strategy proposed. The gender-neutralisation approach has also been recommended by means of gender abstraction (for example, the use of an abstract form such as *el alumnado* (student population) instead of the generic masculine (*los alumnos*). At the same time recommendations on gender-inclusive language in Spanish seem to evolve rapidly. One of the most noticeable changes is the avoidance of the splitting of articles, determiners and past participles. If no other solution is found, the recommendation is therefore the splitting of the noun only for the sake of the legibility of the text: e.g. *los funcionarios y funcionarias andaluces*.

There is generally no problem about the morphology of the feminine in Spanish (Nissen, 1986, Collins Bilingual Dictionary, 1993). However, usage often runs counter to the logical and automatic feminine forms. For example, some women in the professions may prefer to use the masculine form as a mark of status (for example, *la arquitecto* [female architect], with a feminine article but masculine noun ending). Despite this trend, many linguists and feminists claim that as the

presence of women increases in positions originally held only by men, then the feminine form will become more widely used and consequently acceptable. In this respect, the feminisation of language is not only a linguistic issue but has social consequences (Bengoechea, 2006). Some experts have concluded that women are normally more willing to change language than men and this makes women important agents of linguistic change

Once the recommendations have been identified, it is revealing to ascertain whether they have had any effect on the language used by the Spanish administration and in newspapers. The case study in Chapter 6 will try to prove whether this is case.

## **5.5 Sexism in language: The United Kingdom experience**

### **5.5.1 Introduction**

The topic of sexism in language has been debated in English since the beginnings of the feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Ager (2003:95) argues that gender-based language planning in Britain has reflected action and opinion elsewhere in the English-speaking world. He argues that in Britain the most successful pressure group in campaigning for non-sexist language has been the feminist group. Although English is now a global language with approximately 700 million speakers worldwide, both native speakers and second language speakers, for the purpose of this study references are made predominantly to UK English. References to the state of affairs in the United States and Australia have also been made as these two countries have led the way in introducing legislation regarding non-sexist language. The next sections address the characteristics of gender in English, the main areas of debate in relation to sexist language in English and review the recommendations put forward to avoid linguistic sexism in the United Kingdom.

### **5.5.2 Gender in English**

English has no grammatical gender and consequently in English gender is primarily a semantic category. The majority of English human referents are unspecified for gender and can therefore be used to refer to both female and male referents: *person, neighbour, drug addict*. These nouns can be

pronominalised by either *she* or *he* or in neutral, non-specific contexts, by singular *they*.

Many of the masculine terms in use today originated as gender-neutral terms in Old English. For example, the word *man* was originally gender-neutral and was used to specify male or female. While male qualification died out, the female *wif* (which produced *woman*) survived, leaving 'man' with both its original gender-neutral meaning (people) and its gender-specific meaning (male).

Singular "they" and "their" pronouns have been used in English since the time of Chaucer in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The usage of these pronouns was common before 1850. Since then, however, prescriptive grammarians have traditionally recommended the use of the masculine pronoun as generic: e.g. *Everyone was blowing his nose*. In 1926, the British lexicographer Fowler wrote in his *Dictionary of Modern English Usage* that singular "they" had an "old-fashioned sound [...]; few good modern writers would flout the grammarians so conspicuously." Some grammarians since Fowler have claimed that the use of *they* or *their* in the singular is ungrammatical. It is still a controversial issue amongst English grammarians. According to Fowler, however, its future adoption seems irreversible. In fact in recent decades, singular "*they*" has been gaining popularity as a result of the move towards gender-neutral language: for example, *Each student must pick up their books*.

In terms of occupational nouns, English has no productive word-formation pattern for the derivation of feminine terms. The few formations ending in *-ess* have additional denotational or connotational features (for example, *governess*, *mistress*). Some occupational nouns form the masculine with the suffix *-man*, for example, *salesman*, *fireman*. Hellinger (2001) argues that although English lacks lexical gender, the semantics of a large number of English personal nouns shows a clear gender bias. Many high status occupational terms such as *lawyer*, *scientist*, etc tend to be pronominalised by the masculine pronoun *he* in contexts where the gender of the referent is not known or is irrelevant. On the other hand, low-status occupational terms such as *secretary*, *nurse*, *teacher*, will often be followed by the feminine pronoun *she*. Even for indefinite pronouns

(*somebody, anybody*) the masculine pronoun is preferred in neutral contexts which illustrates the non-linguistic category of social gender in English reflecting stereotypical assumptions about what the appropriate social roles for men and women are. Deviations from such stereotypical assumptions require marking which in English is done by means of adjectival modification: *female doctor, lady doctor, male nurse*.

### **5.5.3 The debate on non-sexist language in the United Kingdom**

One of the main areas of debate in English regarding sexist language has been the use of masculine nouns and third person pronouns as generics. In fact the generic use of the masculine pronoun goes back to the Interpretation Act of 1889 which stated that “words importing the masculine gender include the feminine”. This has been called the “masculine rule” (Petersson, 1999) and constitutes the legislative authority to use words denoting males when referring to both sexes. This practice has been criticised as sexist and consequently the act was amended almost 100 years later in 1978. A subsection to allow feminine terms to include men was added in the new Act: “In any Act, unless the contrary intention appears, a) words importing the masculine gender include the feminine and b) words importing the feminine gender include the masculine”. This has been called the “two-way rule” (Petersson, 1999). Despite the amendment to the Interpretation Act, Petersson (1999) argues that given that the two way rule was about how to read statutes and not about how to write them, it did not require a change in drafting styles. It neither discourages the use of masculine terms nor encourages the use of the feminine. Although it appears to offer a neutral solution, Petersson argues that it was an inadequate response to the problem of sexist language because it is not neutral as it still retains the masculine. This has been cause for debate in the United Kingdom and other English speaking countries because, it has been argued, the generic masculine makes women invisible.

In 1995 another amendment to the Interpretation Act was proposed in order to eliminate sexism in the language of future Acts of Parliament and other instruments (amendment to the Interpretation Act of 1978). The proposal included the following: “In any Act or instrument subsequent to the entry into

force of the Interpretation Act 1995, (1) words importing the masculine gender shall include only the masculine, and (2) words importing the feminine gender shall include only the feminine". The argument to bring in such a bill was that all legislation passed by parliament was usually drafted in a way that assumed that the masculine gender defines humanity. This amendment therefore demands a change in drafting style. The effect of this bill would be that personal pronouns (*he* and *she*) would only be used when specific reference was made to a man or a woman. All other legislation would be drafted in gender-neutral language which would mean that the neutral word *person* should be used when appropriate. Recently (8<sup>th</sup> March 2007) the Leader of the House of Commons, Jack Straw, proposed to avoid using the masculine (third person pronouns and compound words (such as *chairman*) in legislative texts. As a result, calls have been made to adopt the gender-neutral drafting of parliamentary papers and government bills.

In terms of job advertisements, in the UK it is illegal to publish a job vacancy which could be construed as discriminatory on the basis of race or gender. Gender-neutral language must therefore be used. This comes from the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 which outlaws discrimination on the grounds of sex. The Sex Discrimination Act makes sex discrimination unlawful in employment, training, education, management and the exercise of public functions. It is highly relevant that the Sex Discrimination Act makes a number of points about language: "A job advertisement which uses a job description with a sexual connotation, for instance, *waitress*, *salesgirl* or *stewardess*, is taken to indicate an intention to discriminate". Job advertisements must be worded to avoid presenting men and women in stereotyped roles. Following the Sex Discrimination Act, an Equal Opportunities Commission was set up in 1975 in order to monitor the situation, to work to eliminate sex discrimination and to promote equality. Although this Commission has not issued guidelines for non-sexist language, it has recently published a discussion paper entitled *The Language of equality* (2008). This paper proposes to replace politically correct language with ethically sensitive language which works with the principle of visibility. The aim is "to make people aware of the inherent bias of English, the



discriminatory nature of certain words and phrases and the importance of language in promoting community cohesion” (Sardar, 2008).

A recent recommendation in September 2005 by the Fawcett Society, which campaigns for equality between women and men in the UK on pay, pensions, poverty, justice and politics, encourages gender-neutral or gender-free language in legal and official documents. A new approach to reflect the population as a whole will demand the introduction of strictly gender-neutral language to provide a standard of impersonal expression which is appropriate for legal and official documents.

The next section deals with the aim and content of the guidelines which have been issued in the United Kingdom to avoid sexist language. It additionally identifies the promoters of these guidelines and the support they have received.

#### **5.5.4 Guidelines for non-sexist language in UK English**

The literature review has revealed that most of the guidelines for non-sexist uses of English were first published in the United States by professional associations such as the National Council of Teachers of English in 1975, followed shortly in 1977 by the American Psychological Association and the American Philosophical Association in February 1986. UK guidelines draw extensively on the guidelines published in the United States. As in other English-speaking countries, many scholarly works as well as guidelines have been written to bring to attention the need to employ non-sexist language in many contexts. The primary aim of these guidelines has been to raise awareness and to act as a guide to promote good practice.

It is relevant to point out that non-sexist guidelines in the UK now go side by side with non-discriminatory language which implies a language that does not discriminate on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Thus there has been a move from gender inclusive language to general inclusive language. Recommendations on inclusive or non-discriminatory language are usually part of an organisation's equal opportunities policy, for

instance, the British Council. Unlike the other three languages studied here, recommendations in guidelines or style manuals in the UK often make little difference between discrimination against women, disability, age or race (Ager, 2003). An example of this can be seen in the latest TUC on the appropriate use of language which has sections on language and 1) sex, 2) race, colour, nationality and ethnicity, 3) disability, 4) sexual orientation, 5) religion and belief, and 6) age.

Amongst the many organisations which have published guidelines to avoid gender-specific language in the United Kingdom are universities. Many British higher education institutions have now published guidelines for non-sexist use of language in essays, in correspondence, appointments system, etc. Gender-neutral language is often a section on style or part of equal opportunities policies (examples can be found in the Universities of Derby, Liverpool and University of Wales Institute Cardiff, among others).

British trade unions have also published guidelines for their members to avoid gender specific language. The first union to publish guidelines to avoid sexist language was the National Association of Local Government Offices (NALGO) which in 1983 published "Watch your language: Non-sexist language. A guide for NALGO members". Similarly NATFHE, the academic union, was one of the first professional British unions to publish recommendations for gender-neutral language ("An Equal Opportunities Guide to Language", 1993). More recently the TUC has published a *Guide to the appropriate use of language. Diversity in Diction- Equality in Action*<sup>37</sup>, which constitutes the most recent publication from the largest UK union (TUC) in June 2005.

Apart from universities and trade unions, UK official government bodies, too, have issued recommendations to avoid gender bias in language. For example, the Assembly for Wales in May 2001<sup>38</sup> recommended to the Council General that gender-neutral language should be used in all Assembly legislation in

---

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/equalities-social-justice/a-guide-to-the-appropriate-use-of-language-diversity-in-diction-equality-in-action>

<sup>38</sup> [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

future (November 1999) in the interest of the clarity of Assembly legislation: “members of the legislation committee are encouraged the use of succinct, plain and gender-neutral language”. Similarly, the Scottish Parliament also recommends “that Standing Orders require inclusive language, avoiding gender-specific words in the spoken and written business of the Parliament” (December 1998). Likewise the House of Keys, the Isle of Man’s Parliament, implemented the use of gender-neutral language in Bills coming before the House from the Session 2004-05 onwards. Other government bodies which have encouraged gender-neutral language are the Inland Revenue and various Police Constabularies.

At local government level, guidelines for non-sexist use of language in local councils’ publications have been widely issued. One of the examples of this kind of guidelines is provided by Glasgow City Council whose guide for staff on the use of non-sexist language (*“Language Matters. A Guide of Good Practice”*) contains examples of sexist usages to avoid and suggests some suitable alternatives<sup>39</sup>. Their equality policy (November 2001) strives to ensure that the language used within and by the Council is inclusive.

Publishing companies, for instance Sage Publications, Taylor and Francis, and Blackwell Publishing, among others, have also issued guidelines for authors of their books or journals to use language that does not discriminate. Professional bodies, such as the British Sociological Association (BSA), have published policies on non-sexist language to be used in their journals and conference papers. A representative example is that of the British Sociological Association’s policy on non-sexist language entitled *Language and the BSA: Sex and Gender* (April 2004). One of the aims of these guidelines is to encourage respect for women and to make women visible.

The content of most guidelines is very similar. Guidelines in English such as those from the BSA usually deal with the use of the generic masculine to refer to all human beings. They recommend the replacement of these words by more

---

<sup>39</sup> [www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/YourCouncil/PolicyPlanning\\_Strategy/Corporate/Equalities/Women](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/YourCouncil/PolicyPlanning_Strategy/Corporate/Equalities/Women)

precise non-sexist alternatives. They include suggestions on the avoidance of the use of sex-specific forms in the generic sense. Strategies to avoid gender specific references include using the singular plural (*they/them*) and using both masculine and feminine pronouns. Many guidelines recommend reconstructing sentences in order to avoid generic specific words. The implementation of this strategy can be achieved in several ways: 1) by omitting the pronoun, 2) references to people in the singular can be turned into the plural (e.g. the sentence *Each student should bring his book* could be replaced by *All students should bring their books*); 3) neutral non-specific terms such as *one*, *individual*, or *person* can be adopted to avoid sex-specific pronouns; 4) by using plural pronouns (*they*, *them*, *their*) with single referents.

Guidelines also typically focus on the avoidance of making sex-stereotyped assumptions, for instance, the sentence *Conference delegates and their wives* could imply that all delegates are men. The suggested replacement could be *Conference delegates and their spouses*. Recommendations also include the avoidance of words with positive and negative connotations.

English guidelines also deal with the terminology employed for occupational nouns. In this respect, the use of new gender-neutral terms is recommended, for example, the gender abstraction *Chair* in order to avoid gender-specific expressions such as *Chairman* or *Chairwoman*, or a new term such as *firefighter* instead of the sex-specific *fireman*.

In terms of the preferred strategy for English, most guidelines recommend the gender- neutralisation strategy which means the avoidance of false generics, especially the use of *man* as generic. This strategy also recommends to avoid gender-marked terms for female recipients, especially derivations ending in *-ess* and *-ette* because of their pejorative tone: e.g. *actor* (for males and females). Finally the recommendations suggest the avoidance of marked forms such as *female doctor* or *lady doctor* where no parallel masculine forms would be used (male doctor).

Consequently gender-neutralisation in English includes the visibility of female referents by means of pronominal splitting: e.g. *a patient....he/she*. This strategy can take several formats, for example, *she/he*, the graphemic innovation *s/he*, *she or he* (and vice versa). Within the gender-neutralisation strategy, symmetric uses are preferred because they make women more visible: *female and male athletes*, *chairman/chairwoman*.

Another strategy which is extensively used to make the language gender-neutral is the use of pronouns *they* or *their* in singular contexts: e.g. *The caller withheld their number*. Although *they* is morphologically and syntactically plural, it can be used as singular in order to avoid third person gender-specific pronouns. However, this has been the subject of a great deal of controversy because for many linguists singular *they* is not grammatically correct. Finally the last aspect that guidelines deal with is that of forms of address and courtesy titles. Most guidelines condemn the asymmetrical practice of naming women in relation to men or specifying their marital status.

Recently and as a result of the statement of the Leader of the House of Commons in March 2007, the UK government introduced a policy on gender-neutral drafting. The aim of the paper<sup>40</sup> (December 2008) is “to illustrate possible ways of achieving gender-neutral drafting. The approaches discussed are not exhaustive and should not be taken as “recommended approaches””. The drafting techniques paper states that the examples provided “are not being held up as examples to be followed: they are just examples of techniques that have in fact been used. Readers should form their own judgement about them”. The examples revolve around the avoidance of gender-specific pronouns and more specifically nominative and possessive masculine pronouns. The paper provides examples from UK acts of parliament together with a comment about the particular technique. These are some of the most detailed guidelines in English. A total of 14 techniques which can be found in the drafting of UK legislation can be found, without a specific recommendation for one or another. The common arguments to previously analysed guidelines are the need to use

---

<sup>40</sup> *Gender-neutral drafting techniques*, [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/190043/gnd.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/190043/gnd.pdf) [accessed 22.6.09]

“plain English”, avoiding expressions which might detract from readability but at the same time making sure that the term does not cause any ambiguity. The “natural solution” is the juxtaposition of the masculine and feminine pronouns, although it can lead to awkwardness when dual pronouns such as ‘*he or she*’ are used frequently.

### **5.5.5 Conclusion from the UK experience**

Since the 1970s UK feminist linguists, publishing companies, unions, educational establishments and government bodies have been concerned with the non-discriminatory nature of language. Many guidelines to address the issue of discrimination in language have been issued. At the same time, guidelines to avoid discriminatory uses usually include the recommendation to avoid such uses on the basis of race, age, incapacity or sexual orientation. This is very different to the other three countries of the study which concentrate on the discrimination of women in language. This could be explained by the fact that English, as a natural gender language, does not pose the same obstacles that the other three languages have encountered in their way to make language less discriminatory for women.

In 1975 the United Kingdom introduced legislation to promote equality between the sexes, namely, the Sex Discrimination Act, which made it unlawful to discriminate against women and men. Also in terms of legislation, the Gender Equality Duty is the latest sex equality legislation which has been introduced in the UK. It came into force in 2007 and established that from April 2007 public authorities must take action to eliminate sex discrimination and to promote sex equality. There is no mention of language specifically but it could be construed as another example of reinforcing the existing equal opportunities policies in Britain.

In terms of strategies to obtain gender-inclusive language, in English the emphasis has been placed on the avoidance of gender marking in the third person pronouns and in occupational terminology. As a semantic (or natural) gender language, the preferred strategy is gender-neutralisation, in contrast with the other three languages of the study. A review of the latest guidelines

published by the UK government (December 2008) reveals that the issue of gender-neutral drafting is not straightforward –even in English- and that a flexible approach is necessary.

### **5.6 An evaluation of non-sexist language strategies across the four countries**

The main finding of the sociolinguistic analysis in the four countries of study is that language has been modified to various degrees in order to reflect the changing role of women in society. Considerable efforts have been deployed in all four countries to remove gender bias from language in diverse types of language: official language, in the media, in dictionaries, in textbooks, etc. The four countries, especially at governmental level, have promoted linguistic research to introduce a greater awareness towards gender-inclusive language (for example, in France, ministerial committees on the feminisation of language; in Spain the Comisión NOMBRA, among others). Efforts have also been made to combat negative images of women by establishing professional guidelines encouraging a fair portrayal of women as well as the use of non-sexist language. One of the most representative examples is the introduction in Spain of a free telephone number for reporting offensive advertisements (*Observatorio de la Publicidad Sexista*) in order to combat negative images of women. Similarly in France the *Observatoire de la parité entre les femmes et les hommes* (Observatory for Gender Parity) was set up in 1995 to help promote gender equality. The common intention in all four countries has been to make the language of public communication free of gender bias in order to a) make women more visible; b) to break down the stereotypes which traditionally associated certain positions and occupations with men only, and 3) to widen the range of job opportunities for women.

The study of guidelines on non-sexist language in each sociolinguistic context has also revealed the different strategies which have been put forward in the four languages, mainly based on the morphological and grammatical structure of each language. In grammatical gender languages such as French, German and Spanish, the common tendency is to recommend the gender-specification strategy, whereas English as a natural gender language tends to use gender-



neutralisation. The following table illustrates some of the main recommendations of each set of guidelines in the four countries:

Summary of Guidelines for non-sexist language across the four countries			
France	Germany	Spain	United Kingdom
<i>Femme, j'écris ton nom</i> (1999)	<i>Eine Sprache für beide Geschlechter:</i> (1993)	<i>Las profesiones de la A a la Z</i> (2006)	<i>Language and the BSA: Sex and gender</i> (2004)
Use of feminine articles with nouns referring to women	Systematic juxtaposition of feminine and masculine forms (gender-splitting)	Avoidance of generic masculines	Avoid generic masculines: nouns and pronouns
Use of feminine suffixes according to feminine formation rules: 1. Masc. ending in é = femin in ée: e.g. <i>député; députée</i> 2.masc. ending in consonant = fem in -e: e.g. <i>hussière</i> 3.masc. ending in -eur, fem in -euse 4.masc. ending in -teur, fem in -trice 5.if noun does not have a corresponding verb, a choice between epicene term or adding an -e: e.g. <i>la professeur/professeure</i>	Feminine suffixes: -in/-innen Compounds with -frau Use of capital I	Systematic use of masculine and feminine forms (gender-splitting)	Both feminine and masculine pronouns can be used: he/she, s/he, his/her
	Use of collective compounds with -kraft, or -personen	Feminine formation: adding fem suffix -a e.g. <i>abogado/abogada</i>	Alternatively, use plurals or omit pronouns entirely
	Use of new generic abstractions: e.g. <i>Studierenden</i> (student body)	Use of collective nouns: e.g. <i>persona, personal</i>	Use gender-neutral terms: <i>chair</i> or <i>chairperson</i>
		Use of generic abstractions, e.g. <i>profesorado</i> (teaching staff)	

Table 5.1 Summary of guidelines for non sexist language in four countries

These guidelines on non-sexist language are some of the most representative in each language as the majority of guidelines are very similar in content. An exhaustive compilation of all guidelines for non-sexist language in each country is outside the scope of the present study. The guidelines selected have been published at different stages, from as early as 1993 as it is the case with the German UNESCO guidelines and as recently as the Spanish ones in 2006; this may be misleading in the sense that it may seem that some countries have introduced guidelines before others, therefore they are more “advanced” in the issue of feminisation. However, this is not the case. Regarding the Spanish guidelines, for example, it may seem that the recommendations in Spain have



been published recently when in fact this is a re-edition of the earlier version of 1996. Similarly, in Germany, there have been more recent guidelines such as the ones published in 2002 by the Ministry of Public Administration (*Sprachliche Gleichbehandlung von Frauen und Männern* [Linguistic equal treatment of women and men] which are based on the UNESCO guidelines.

The review of recommendations has also revealed different stages of implementation across the four countries. Although some countries started to adopt gender-based language reform earlier than others, one common thing is that the publication of guidelines is still ongoing. This is reflected in the re-editions of earlier guidelines as well as the publications of new ones by different organisations. In addition, the analysis has revealed that there is a growing trend towards prescribing the use of non sexist language. This is the case in the Spanish Junta de Andalucía's government whereby the regional government has recently instructed its personnel in the use of non-sexist language. A top-down model of linguistic intervention is therefore emerging as the preferred solution as governments at local, regional and national level are urging their members to use a language which is free of gender-bias. However, there seems to be no uniformity regarding non-sexist language policies. It is also true that recommendations and instructions are becoming more and more sophisticated in their strategies to avoid sexist usages. The systematic repetition of masculine and feminine forms in nouns, articles and determiners as well as the use of truncated forms such as in the Spanish term *profesor/a* (male/female teacher) are now being discouraged because the emphasis is on the legibility of the text. Other solutions have therefore been proposed in all languages to avoid lengthy and cumbersome phrases or abbreviated forms which can only be used in written forms but not in spoken language.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The chapter has reviewed the situation regarding sexism in language in the four countries of study. It has revealed that since the 1970s all four countries have made serious attempts at the elimination of sexist linguistic usages. However, the analysis also reveals that the debate is by no means over and that there are still issues to be resolved. The strategies used in the four languages also point

to opposite directions. Whereas English tends towards gender-neutral designations in personal nouns and a tendency to avoid masculine pronouns, in German the tendency is explicit gender-specification for both females and males. The fact that German has the category of grammatical gender in the area of human nouns (and English does not) facilitates explicit gender-specification rather than gender-neutralisation (Hellinger, 1995:292). However, it may be argued that the achievement of equal linguistic treatment requires more effort in grammatical gender languages than in natural or semantic gender languages such as English.

In the following chapter, a case study analysing offers of employment both in the private and the public sectors has been undertaken in order to illustrate whether officially recommended forms have entered usage and how these recommendations have been implemented in practice in each country. This will in turn allow a comparison of implementation of non-sexist language guidelines across the four linguistic contexts over a five year period. The aim of the longitudinal study is to identify if there have been any changes.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF JOB TITLE CATEGORIES IN FRANCE, GERMANY, SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM (2001-02, 2007-08)**

#### **6.1 Overview**

The current chapter describes the findings of the linguistic analysis carried out for each of the four countries of study. In order to test the practical application of the recommendations which have been identified in Chapter 5 for each sociolinguistic context, a linguistic analysis of a sample of the language used in the four languages of the study has been carried out. The case study entailed an analysis of the language used in four European countries to advertise offers of employment. A total of 1675 job advertisements published in four European countries were collected from two sources of data: 1) from the four public administrations which advertise civil service jobs (1037 job vacancies in total) and 2) from newspapers (638 job vacancies) which advertise mainly private sector jobs. The aim of the analysis of this sample is to illustrate patterns of language usage in the four linguistic contexts and to ascertain the application of the recommendations on the avoidance of sexist language. The data was taken at random in a six month period in 2001-2001 and five years later in the period 2007-2008. The aim of this longitudinal study is to determine whether a change has taken place over this time.

The sample is exploratory and it is not meant to be representative of a country. Nevertheless, the analysis of this sample will allow a comparison of the situation regarding the elimination of sexist language practices from across the four linguistic contexts. The different gender designations in each dataset for each country have been quantified into five job title categories

The chapter is divided into two sections: Section one presents the results of the linguistic analysis of job vacancy announcements in terms of frequencies of job title categories, and section two constitutes a longitudinal study where results over the five year period are presented. The aim of the longitudinal study is to ascertain whether a change has taken place in each of the linguistic contexts

after a period of approximately five years. This will in turn allow the researcher to determine tendencies of usage as well as application of the recommendations.

The grammatical analysis of job titles in the four linguistic contexts has entailed the use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. However, because dictionaries are not always the most up-to-date sources of reference, the following rules of feminisation or guidelines to avoid sexist usages have also been taken into account: (These have been analysed in detail in Chapter 5)

The French set of recommendations which has been consulted is from *Femme, j'écris ton nom. Guide d'aide a la féminisation des noms de métiers, titres, grades et fonctions*<sup>41</sup>. These recommendations include a glossary of names of occupations which have helped to determine the gender of several ambiguous job title categories of French titles.

In German, the recommendations for non-sexist language which have been selected are the German UNESCO Commission's recommendations *Eine Sprache für beide Geschlechter. Richtlinien für einen nicht- sexistischen Sprachgebrauch* [One language for both genders. Guidelines for non-sexist language] published in 1993. Most subsequent German guidelines are based on these recommendations<sup>42</sup>.

The Spanish recommendations consulted are the most recent edition of *Las profesiones de la A a la Z* [Professions from A to Z] published by the Spanish Equal Opportunities body (*Instituto de la Mujer*) in 2006. This publication is based on the earlier repertoire of occupational nomenclature which was published in 1996 as a result of the work of the NOMBRA Commission (see chapter 5.4).

Although a wide variety of guidelines are available in English, most are very similar in content and structure. Unlike the countries above, the United Kingdom

---

<sup>41</sup> For details see Chapter 5.2, pages 122-125

<sup>42</sup> For details see Chapter 5.3, pages 132-138

has only recently issued guidelines on gender-neutral language at the government level (see the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel's Policy on gender-neutral drafting, December 2008). Here the guidelines selected have been issued by a professional organization, the British Sociological Association (BSA): *Language and the BSA: Sex and Gender* published in April 2004.

In terms of categorisation of the data, five job title categories have been used in the linguistic analysis: 1) masculine terms, i.e., those which follow the morphological rules of the masculine nouns (M), 2) feminine terms or those which follow the morphological rules of feminine noun formation (F), 3) epicene which are those terms unmarked for gender (E), 4) masculine AND feminine terms or the systematic and explicit use of both genders; in this category terms which are not grammatically marked for gender, or are masculine, but which have a gender-specification marker such as *m/f* (male/female) have been included (M/F), and 5) unspecified/abstract category (O). In this fifth category job titles expressed by a generic collective term such as *personnel* are included together with abstract expressions such as *el profesorado* [the teaching staff], as well as those which only indicate the qualification or level required instead of the job title, or are cast in a foreign language.

6.2 Civil service results

A sample of naturally occurring data has been taken from the civil service recruitment webpages in each of the countries of study which were published in a single issue within a six month period in 2001-2002 and again in 2007-2008. Firstly, the distribution of frequencies of job title categories was analysed across the four countries of study for the civil service data set. First an overview of the results from the analysis of the 2001-2002 data set is presented. The following table shows the overall distribution of job title categories within the civil service data:

Job title classification: Civil service (2001-2002)						
Gender Categories	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Total	191	1	104	266	24	586
	32.6%	0.2%	17.7%	45.4%	4.1%	100%

Table 6.1 Job title classification in the civil service (2001-2002)



The findings of this sample reveal that the majority of job titles (45.4%) in the civil service data set fell within the category of gender-splitting (M/F) followed by the masculine (M) (32.6%) and epicene (E) categories. A small percentage (4.1%) falls within the unspecified category (O) and only 0.2% of job advertisements across the four languages were expressed in the feminine (F).

The analysis of job title frequencies was carried out from a sample of job advertisements collected at a random single point in a six month period five years later. The overall distribution of frequencies of job titles categories in the civil service for the 2007-2008 dataset is shown in the following table:

Job title classification: Civil service (2007-2008)						
Gender Categories	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Total	170	1	120	127	33	451
	37.7%	0.2%	26.6%	28.2%	7.3%	100%

**Table 6.2 Job title classification in the civil service (2007-2008)**

These preliminary findings reveal some changes in the distribution of job title categories over a five year period. Whereas the fourth category (masculine and feminine splitting, M/F) has decreased (-17.2%), the number of masculine job titles (M) has increased slightly (to 37.7%). No changes have taken place in the feminine gender designation (F), but a slight increase has been noted in the fifth category (O) (+3.2%).

A linguistic analysis of job titles has been carried out for each country for each context (civil service/newspapers) and for each period. The next sections present the results of the study for each country.

**6.2.1 French civil service**

A total of 145 job advertisements from November 2002 and 117 from March 2007 published in the French official record of parliamentary proceedings, the *Journal Officiel*, have been collected and analysed. This sample includes public appointments in three different job categories: Category A corresponds to graduate jobs, Category B to secondary education jobs and finally Category C



includes jobs for which primary education is the only requirement. The analysis of distribution of job title categories across these three levels, although important, is outside the scope of the present study. The sample includes jobs in the armed forces, the national police and the local police.

### 6.2.1.1 Results from the 2002 corpus

The investigation involved the analysis of 44 different occupational titles. The following table lists a selection of French civil service job titles in the sample classified into the five job title categories.

Masculine (M)	Fem (F)	Epicene (E)	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
conseiller		ingénieur	infirmier de la commune: adjoint(e)s aux directeurs (trices) de crèches	corps de soutien technique
directeur		professeur	ingénieurs des études d'armement (candidats féminins et masculins)	
inspecteur		médecin généraliste	officiers du corps technique (candidates féminins et masculins)	
attaché		médecin oncologue	sous-officiers (candidats féminins et masculins)	
assistant technique		élève ingénieur	commissaires de la marine (candidats féminins et masculins)	
technicien		psychologue	personnel non navigant (candidats féminins et masculins)	
élèves techniciens		commissaire de police	administrateurs des affaires maritimes (candidats féminins et masculins)	
secrétaire administratif		chef de services	convoyeurs de l'air (candidats féminins et masculins)	
manipulateur		militaires		
conducteur		volontaires		
surveillant		secrétaire		
adjoint administratif		equipages de la flotte		
officiers				
contrôleur				
aspirants de gendarmerie				
lieutenant de police				
gardien de la paix				
attaché de police				
maître de conference				
agent				

**Table 6.3 List of selected job titles in the French civil service (2002)**

The following table shows the results of the percentage distribution in each job title category:

2002	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
France (civil service)	67	0	44	33	1	145
Percentage	46.2%	0	30.3%	22.8%	0.7%	100%

**Table 6.4: Distribution of job title categories -French civil service sample (2002)**

Most job advertisements in this dataset are cast in the masculine (M) job title category (46.2%) followed by the epicene job title with 30.3%. The epicene category (E) includes those terms which are unmarked for gender in French such as *secrétaire* (secretary). Also included in this category (epicene) are occupational terms such as *professeur* (teacher) and *ingénieur* (engineer). These terms are some of the most controversial ones in the sense that the masculine has been used traditionally as the generic form, and there has not been a recognised feminine form in reference works. For instance, the Larousse online dictionary considers these terms as masculine, but indicates that they can apply to both males and females. The most common use of terms like these is therefore the unmarked form for both males and females. The argument is that a term such as *professeur* may be a masculine word but it does not have to imply a male referent (Burr, 2003). However, the Larousse dictionary recommends the use of the gender marker *femme* (female) when it is necessary to specify the gender: e.g. *femme ingénieur* or *ingénieur femme* (female engineer). This means that no feminine form of the term *ingénieur* is recognised in French dictionaries, although the new feminine form *ingénieure* (formed by adding the feminine suffix –e) has a high incidence in other Francophone countries, especially French-speaking Canada. The French guidelines (1999) suggest a certain degree of flexibility of use regarding these two terms. On the one hand, they recommend the use of these terms as epicene by adding the corresponding feminine or masculine determiners: *le/la professeur*, *le/la ingénieur*. On the other hand, they suggest that these terms can be feminised by adding the feminine suffix –e at the end of the word which is the solution proposed in other Francophone regions such as Canada. Not surprisingly the *Académie Française* does not accept the use of forms such as *une professeure* or *une auteure*. Because the present sample only includes the job title but no determiner, it was difficult to know whether these two terms were in fact epicenes or masculine. Consequently, although the terms *professeur* and *ingénieur* are masculine in grammatical terms, in the light of the authoritative reference works, usage as well as the recommendations, they have been considered as epicenes here.

Regarding the feminine and unspecified categories, no cases of feminine job



titles (F) and only one case of unspecified job title (O) have been found (*corps de soutien technique et administrative de la gendarmerie nationale* [technical and administrative support team to the national police]). Metonymy has been used in this case whereby the name of the department or section is used (“support team”) instead of the job title.

With regard to the gender splitting category, 22.8% of job titles in the data set involve gender-splitting (M/F) or the explicit mentioning of feminine and masculine markers. Two approaches to achieve the gender-splitting strategy have been observed in the French data. The first one involves adding the feminine suffix in brackets at the end of the masculine noun. Only one case has been found in this category:

*Infirmier de la commune: adjoint (e) aux directeurs (trices) de crèches*  
[community nurse (m.): assistant (m. and f.) to nursery managers (m. and f.)]

In this example, the job title starts with the masculine noun *infirmier* (male nurse). However, when more detail is given about the position within the same job title, the gender-splitting formula masculine/feminine is used (with the feminine ending in brackets): *adjoint (e)* (male/ female assistant) *aux directeurs (trices)* (to the male/female directors). This entry is highly significant because of its lack of consistency. Three occupational nouns are used in this entry, of which two are cast both in the masculine and feminine but one, the actual job title, is cast in the masculine form only. The vacancy advertisement comes from the Paris City Council (*Mairie de Paris*). The use of gender splitting would have been explained if the City Council had a policy of using splitting systematically. However, there are other cases (25 in total) of job vacancies within the Paris City Council in the data set which are cast exclusively in the masculine or epicene, including another example of *adjoint administratif* (male administrative assistant) with no morphological marking of feminine in either the noun or the adjective.

The second strategy used is the addition of a gender-specification descriptor such as *candidats féminins et masculins* (female and male candidates) to the job title whether in the masculine (e.g. *administrateurs des affaires maritimes*

(*candidats féminins et masculins*)) or a generic collective noun (e.g. *personnel non navigant (candidats féminins et masculins)*). A relevant finding is that this clause (*candidats féminins et masculins*) is only used in offers of employment within the armed forces. Out of 60 job vacancies in the different bodies of the army and the police, 31 position advertisements (which represent 51.7% of the total) include the explanation in brackets. These job advertisements have therefore been included in the masculine/feminine job title category (M/F) because they explicitly indicate that the job is open to female and male candidates even though the job title per se may be in the masculine form. This feature occurs in all the bodies of the armed forces and the *Gendarmerie* (police force) but not in a consistent manner. This means that some positions are advertised using the gender marker *candidats féminins et masculins* but not others.

A controversy arose in the analysis of the French sample corpus because some words which have been considered epicene such as *ingénieur* sometimes are modified by a masculine adjective, e.g. *ingénieur électronicien*; *professeur agrégé*, *secrétaire administratif*, *maître ouvrier*. The French guidelines (1999) which are used in the analysis of the data include a section on the role of the adjective in the terminology of occupations. Their recommendation is to apply the principle of feminisation, which means that the adjective (or past participle) needs to be feminised too: e.g. *une chef adjointe*, where the determiners and adjectives are in the feminine although the occupational term (*chef*) is epicene. Although here the term *ingénieur* has been considered epicene, in the light of the recommendations, in the cases where a masculine adjective has been used with an epicene term, the job title has been classified as masculine (e.g. *professeur agrégé*).

#### **6.2.1.2 Results from the 2007 corpus**

A linguistic analysis of 117 job titles advertised by the civil service in France in March 2007 has been carried out. The sample included 27 different occupational titles, a selection of which is listed in the following table:

Masculine (M)	Fem(F)	Epicene (E)	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	(O)
administrateur		ingénieurs	infirmier/infirmière	
médecin inspecteur		secrétaire	assistant ou assistante de service social	
officiers		professeur		
inspecteur		chef		
directeur		secrétaire d'administration		
chargé de recherche				
attaché d'administration				
conseillers				
contrôleur				
secrétaire administratif				
technicien supérieur				
gardien de la paix				
bibliothécaire adjoint spécialisé				
ouvrier professionnel				
adjoint administratif				
magasiniers				
agent des services techniques				
maître ouvrier				
ouvrier				
adjoint				

**Table 6.5 List of selected job title categories in the French civil service (2007)**

Only three job title categories have been observed in this dataset. There are no job titles in the feminine or unspecified categories. The following table shows the percentage distribution across the five job title categories:

2007	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
France (civil service)	82	0	33	2	0	117
Percentage	70.1%	0	28.2%	1.7%	0	100%

**Table 6.6: Distribution of job title categories in the French civil service sample (2007)**

Regarding the 2007 French data set, the majority of job advertisements were cast in the masculine (M) (70.1%) followed by epicene (E) gender designations (28.2%). No occurrences of feminine job titles (F) or the unspecified category (O) have been found in the sample and only a small percentage (1.7%) used the gender-splitting strategy (M/F):

- 1) *infirmier/infirmière* (male/female nurse)
- 2) *assistant ou assistante de service social* (male or female social work assistant)

These two job titles are morphologically marked for feminine by the addition of

the feminine suffix –e. Both entries come from the *Ministère de l'éducation nationale* (State department for education) which is one of the first French ministries which published, in March 2000, a recommendation inviting all its members to follow the 1998 feminisation circular and the 1999 guide published by INALF (*Institut de la Langue Française*). Despite this, however, the Education Ministry seems to have ignored the guidelines to use masculine and feminine terminology in all the other job advertisements published in this issue (13 out of the total sample of 15) using instead either the masculine (e.g. *technicien*) or epicene (e.g. *secrétaire*).

Similarly to the 2002 sample, the 2007 data set includes jobs from the armed and the police forces. However, there is no specification for female and male candidates (*candidats féminins et masculins*) in this dataset as was the case in the 2002 data set. This explains the low percentage of job titles in the gender-splitting (M/F) category and the significant increase in the masculine (M) one.

### **6.2.2 German civil service**

A total of 255 job advertisements published in August 2002 and a total of 140 in July 2007 have been collected. There is a discrepancy in the source of job advertisements from the civil service in Germany. The first set of job vacancy announcements were advertised in the German Federal Ministry for Work's publication *Markt + Chance*. This publication includes job vacancies in the civil service as well as the private sector. The criterion for selection of this publication is due to the fact that a civil service source of data for 2002 could not be found online. However, there was an online public administration website in 2007 which constitutes the second source of data.

#### **6.2.2.1 Results from the 2002 corpus**

A linguistic analysis of 255 job titles has been carried out. The following table lists a selection of job titles from the German civil service 2002 sample:



Masc. (M)	Fem( F)	Epi(E )	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	Unspecified(O)
Küchenchef			Maschinenbediener/in	Fachkraft
Souschef			Maler/innen und Lackierer/innen	Fachkräfte
Chef de partie			Energieanlagenelektroniker/innen	Praxistraining
Commis de cuisine			Manager/in	Management-Trainee-Programm
			Fachkaufmann/-frau Personal	Bürofachkraft
			Steuerfachangestellte/r	Call-Center-Agents
			Reiseverkehrskauffrau/-mann	ProEngineer
			Reiseverkehrskaufmann/-frau	Pflegerische Leitung
			Technische/r Zeichner/in	E-Consulting Marketing und Projektmanagement
			Facharzt/-ärztin	Database Developer Oracle
			Arzt/Ärztin	Certified DV-Professional
			Ärzte/Ärztinnen	IT-Consultant
			Fachärzte/-ärztinnen	Wirtschaftsrecht/Medienrecht
			Physiotherapeut/in	Steuerrecht
			Krankenpfleger/-schwester	Buffetkraft
			Krankenschwester/-pfleger	Servicefachkräfte
			Internet-ApplikationsentwicklerIn (IAE)	Empfangsfachkräfte
			Zimmermädchen/Roomboys	Servicefachkraft
			Souschefs (m/w)	Servicekräfte
			Küchenchef/in	

**Table 6.7 List of selected job titles in the German civil service sample (2002)**

The majority of job titles in the German data set fall within the masculine/feminine category (M/F) (a total of 91%). Table 6.8 shows the percentage distribution of the job title categories from the German sample from 2002:

2002	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
<b>Germany (civil service)</b>	4	0	0	232	19	255
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6.8: Distribution of job title categories in the German civil service sample (2002)**

Four cases of masculine job titles have been found: *Küchenchef*, *Souschef*, *Chef de partie*, *Commis de cuisine*. These four cases (which represent just 1.5% of the total) come from the same employer and they relate to the hierarchy of kitchen jobs. Additionally these terms come from French where they are also masculine. In German these job titles usually stay in the masculine and the marker *m/w* or *w/m* (*männlich/weiblich*- male and female) is added to indicate that the position is open to women and men. No instances of feminine (F) or epicene (E) job titles have been found in this sample.

An overwhelming majority of job advertisements examined (91%) were cast in both the masculine and feminine forms; several strategies have been used for gender-splitting:

- The most common strategy in gender-splitting is the use of the masculine form followed by the feminine form by means of the ubiquitous feminine suffix *-in*. As seen in the literature review, this is the most productive feminine suffix in German and it can always be applied. Even an English derived word such as *Manager* can be followed by the feminine suffix *-in* (e.g. *Manager/in*).
- The feminine suffix (*-in*) is also systematically applied in the plural forms by adding the plural feminine suffix *-innen*:  
e.g. *Maler/innen* (male/female painters).
- Compounds with *mann/-frau* (-man/woman) have also been found:  
e.g. *Fachkaufmann/-frau* (male/female sales manager)
- Compound words such as *Krankenpfleger/-schwester* (male/female nurse) appear alongside the reversed order version as in *Krankenschwester/-pfleger* (female/male nurse)
- Another feminine/masculine form has been found in two cases:  
e.g. *Steuerfachangestellte/r* (female/male assistant tax consultant)
- Splitting also occurs when adjectives are involved whereby both the noun and the adjective have dual forms:  
e.g. *Technische/r Zeichner/in* (female/male draftsperson)
- When a change of spelling is involved, the whole of a word as well as part of the word has been found:  
e.g. *Facharzt/-ärztin* (male/female consultant) or *Arzt/ärztin* (male/female doctor), *Koch/Köchin* (male/female cook)
- Use of capital *I* inside the word. There is only one case of this strategy:  
e.g. *Internet-ApplikationsentwicklerIn* (internet applications developer)
- An unusual case has been found in *Zimmermädchen/Roomboys* where the first form is in German (chambermaids) and it is actually a neuter word although used to refer to young women, and the other is in the masculine in (an unusual) English expression (*room boys*). The logical solution would have been to use the masculine version of *Zimmermädchen*, but as

this does not exist in German, the preferred solution has been to find an English equivalent.

- Only one case of the use of gender descriptor *m/w* (*männlich/weiblich* – male/female) in brackets after the job title to indicate that both women and men can apply has also been found as in:

e.g. *Souschefs (m/w)*

In the fifth category (O), 19 cases of unspecified or abstract job titles have been found, which represent 7.5% of the total sample. In this category two types of job title forms have been found:

- compound words which use a generic word such as *-kraft* in the singular or *-kräfte* in the plural (employee/s, worker/s): *Fachkraft* (trained assistant), *Bürofachkraft* (office employee), *Servicekräfte* (service staff). Also included here are generic words such as *Pflegerische Leitung* (nursing management) which are gender abstractions and therefore unmarked for gender; metonymy is also employed in job advertisements such as *Wirtschaftsrecht* (Business Law), *Medienrecht* (Media Law) and *Steuerrecht* (Tax Law) which are the profession names rather than the job title of the employee.
- The other cases within this category of unspecified job titles derive from English words (8 examples or 3.13% of the total sample): *Praxistraining*, *Management Trainee Programm*, *Call-Center Agents*, *ProEngineer*, *E-Consulting Marketing und Projectmanagement*, *Database Developer Oracle*, *Certified DV-Professional* and *IT-Consultant mit Irlandpraktikum*.

The use of English in German occupational terminology seems quite common nowadays and combines full English job titles with German terminology (e.g. *IT-Consultant mit Irlandpraktikum* [IT Consultant with Irish placement]).

#### **6.2.2.2 Results from the 2007 corpus**

An analysis of job vacancies within the public sector published in the Federal government's Ministry for work online database in July 2007 has been carried out. A total of 140 job advertisements from the German civil service were collected. The following table lists a selection of the job titles:



Masc. (M)	Fem (F)	Epi (E)	Masculine/feminine(M/F)	Unspecified (O)
Anwendungsbetreuer SAP			Wissenschaftliche/r Mitarbeiter/in	Stellenausschreibung
Einstellung eines Nautikers in der seemännischen Reserve			Seelotsenanwärterinnen Seelotsenanwärtern	und Stellenausschreibung Programmassistenz
Bauingenieur			Justizfachangestellte/r	Dipl.-Ing (FH) Elektrotechnik
Projektingenieur			Facharzt/-ärztin	Dipl.Ing. (Uni) - Bau
			Diplo.-Sozialpädagoge/-pädagogin	Studentische Hilfskraft
			Dipl.-Informatiker/in	Dipl.-Ing (FH) -Bau
			Referent/in	Fachkraft
			Referent/Referentin	
			Leiter/in	
			Heilerziehungspfleger/in	
			Sachbearbeiterin/Sachbearbeiter	
			Krankenschwester/-pfleger	
			Beamtin/Beamter	
			Leiterin/Leiter	
			Physiklaborant/in bzw. Techniker/in	
			Verwaltungsangestellte/r	
			Sachbearbeiterin/Sachbearbeiter	
			Informatikkaufmann/ Informatikkauffrau	
			Referentin/Referent	
			Erzieher/in	

**Table 6.9: List of selected job titles in the German civil service sample (2007)**

Three out of the five job title categories have been identified in this set of data. No cases of feminine (F) or epicene (E) job titles have been found in the sample. The following table shows the percentage distribution of job titles for the German civil service data set:

2007	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
<b>Germany (civil service)</b>	6	0	0	125	9	140
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>89.3%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6.10: Distribution of job title categories in the German civil service sample (2007)**

The results of the 2007 set of data show similar results to those of 2002. Most of the German job advertisements in the sample (89.3%) are cast using the gender-splitting strategy (M/F), that is, the systematic use of both masculine and feminine terms. As in the 2002 sample, different ways to apply this strategy have been employed. The most common technique is to use the singular masculine followed by the singular feminine ending in *-in* (e.g. *Mitarbeiter/in*). There are also cases when the feminine form appears first, for example, *Seelotsenanwärterinnen und Seelotsenanwärtern* (female and male sea pilot



candidates), *Referentin/Referent* (female/male advisor). These two examples use full words for both the feminine and the masculine although the most common form is to use truncated forms with a slash as in *Referent/in*.

Another example of gender-splitting can be found in compound nouns such as *Krankenschwester/-pfleger* (female/male nurse) as well as *Informatikkaufmann/Informatikkauffrau* (computer salesman/woman). Two different strategies for these terms have been used: The first term uses a truncated masculine form (*Krankenpfleger*) whereas the latter example is written in full. No cases of gender specification by means of the *m/w* marker (*männlich/weiblich* – male/female) have been found in this set of data. This may indicate that this is not a strategy employed within the German civil service.

There are six cases (4.3%) of masculine gender designations (M). Of these, four involve compound words with *Ingenieur* ([male] engineer) (for example, *Bauingenieur* – civil engineer). The other two cases of masculine job titles are *Anwendungsbetreuer* (application supervisor) and *Einstellung eines Nautikers in der seemännischen Reserve* [Recruitment of marines for the Naval reserve]. In this case both the noun *Nautiker* (marine) and the adjective *seemännischen* (nautical, naval) are clearly masculine terms. This is perhaps due to the fact that this occupation has traditionally been fulfilled by men.

In the unspecified/abstract category (O), nine cases (6.4%) of occupational terms have been found. These follow one of the patterns below:

- where the name of the qualification required is used instead of the job title: e.g. *Dipl.-Ing (FH) – Bau* (degree in architecture)
- generic compounds with *-kraft* (staff): e.g. *Fachkraft*
- generic words such as *Stellenausschreibung Programmassistenz* (Programme Assistance)

No foreign terminology has been found in the 2007 German set of data except for the term *Manager/in* which is now widely used in German.

### 6.2.3 Spanish civil service

A sample of offers of employment which appeared in the official bulletin (*Boletín de Ofertas de empleo público*) published by the Spain's *Ministerio de*

*Administraciones Públicas* in a single issue selected at random in August 2002 and another issue five years later in July 2007 has been analysed. Similarly to the French civil service, this publication includes all categories of jobs distributed according to the educational level required.

### 6.2.3.1 Results from the 2002 corpus

A total of 155 job advertisements which appeared in the Spanish civil service appointment web pages in August 2002 were collected and analysed. The analysis revealed 70 different occupational titles. A selection of the job titles analysed is shown in the following table:

Masculine (M)	Fem (F)	Epicene (E)	Masculine/fem (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
técnicos	limpiadoras	agente superior	juristas lingüistas (M/F)	personal de mantenimiento
inspector		subgerente		personal de oficios
titulados		gerente		
ingenieros y arquitectos		responsable		
médicos forenses		ATS		
psicólogo clínico		analista funcional		
administradores		auxiliares de justicia		
traductor intérprete		guardia		
director		auxiliar de archivo		
profesor de canto		policía local		
analista programador		agente de la Policía local		
trabajador social		auxiliar de administración		
mecanógrafos		conserje		
educador		socorrista		
peón		agentes de justicia		
oficial		ordenanza		
fontanero				
oficiales de justicia				
oficiales adjuntos				
monitor ocupacional				

**Table 6.11** List of selected job titles in the Spanish civil service sample (2002)

All job title categories have been found in this dataset, although the vast majority of the Spanish civil service job announcements fall within the masculine category with a very low incidence in the other four categories. The following table shows the percentage distribution:



2002	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
<b>Spain(civil service)</b>	120	1	29	1	4	155
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>77.4</b> %	<b>0.65</b> %	<b>18.7</b> %	<b>0.65</b> %	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6.12: Distribution of job title categories in the Spanish civil service sample (2002)**

Most of the jobs advertised within the Spanish civil service in 2002 fall within the masculine (M) gender category (77.4%). This is followed by the epicene (E) job title category (18.7%). Occupational nouns such as *agente*, *gerente*, *responsable*, *analista* (agent, manager, person in charge, analyst), among others, have been assigned to the epicene (E) job title category. Very few cases of the other three categories have been found. Only one case of feminine gender designation (F) has been found in the Spanish data set from 2002: *Limpiadoras* (female cleaners). According to the DRAE (2001) the masculine term *limpiador* also refers to someone who cleans but specifically in merchant ships and in this meaning it is a masculine word only. By using the feminine term, that is, the marked form, this job advertisement makes it obvious that this vacancy only applies to women.

Similarly only one case of gender-splitting (M/F) has been found in the Spanish set of data: *Juristas lingüistas (M/F)* [lawyer-linguists (M/F)]. Although the term *jurista* is actually epicene, that is, unmarked for gender, the specific marking of both genders by means of the gender descriptor M/F (male /female) has been added. This advertisement comes from the European Union but there is a lack of consistency in the wording of job advertisements from the EU since the use of the gender-splitting marker *M/F* for other job vacancies from the European Union has not been found in the present data. It is also significant that although the job title is in Spanish, the gender descriptor *M/F* is in fact in English, as the Spanish one would be *h/m (hombre/mujer)*.

Finally, four job advertisements (2.6%) have been assigned to the unspecified job title category (O). All of them include the generic word *personal* (staff): e.g. *personal de oficios*. No foreign job titles have been found in the Spanish civil service dataset.

When analysing the Spanish set of data, an ambiguity arose regarding the job title descriptor. In Spanish the word used is *cuerpo* (body) which is a masculine word and only agrees with masculine singular adjectives and determiners. For example, the following could have been read in two different ways:

*Cuerpo: Técnico*

Reading a) Technical body/level

Reading b) Area: [male] technician

The second reading has been applied to all the cases where an ambiguity could have arisen. Therefore all job titles after the heading *Cuerpo* have been treated as nouns and not as possible adjectives which could have agreed with *Cuerpo*. This is because it was obvious from other entries that the job title was being advertised after *cuerpo*: e.g. *Cuerpo: Médicos forenses*. In this case the job title is not open to ambiguity as the noun *médicos* [masculine plural] does not agree with *cuerpo* [masculine singular].

Another point to note in the Spanish set of data is those words which on their own are epicene (for example, *auxiliar*, an assistant) but are qualified by a masculine adjective (for example, *auxiliar administrativo*). These cases have been assigned to the masculine category (M) given that the Spanish guidelines recommend that adjectives need to agree with the gender of the noun. In the case above, the gender-inclusive form would have been *auxiliar administrativo/a*, or *auxiliar de administración*.

**6.2.3.2 Results from the 2007 corpus**

A total of 134 job advertisements were collected from the Spanish civil service online portal (*Boletín de Ofertas de Empleo Público*) in July 2007. The investigation revealed 71 different occupational titles. The following table shows a selection of the results for the Spanish 2007 dataset:



Masculine (M)	Feminine (F)	Epicene (E)	Masc./Fem (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
titulados	comadrona	ATS/DUE		Escala técnica-administración especial
técnicos		fisioterapeuta		Escala superior facultativa
investigadores		DUI-ATS		Escala técnica superior
médicos inspectores		ayudantes de investigación		Administración especial subescala técnica
notarios		agentes de la policía local		Escala de gestión
superior facultativo		policía local		Escala técnica de grado medio
adjunto		analista de laboratorio		Escala técnica básica de investigación
administrador		ayudantes de oficios		Escala oficial de oficios
enfermeros-subinspectores		auxiliar administración general		Escala administrativa
ayudantes técnicos		agente de la policía local		Escala técnica de auxiliar de bibliotecas
oficial administrativo		ayudantes de cocina		Escala técnica auxiliar de informática
patrón		auxiliar de enfermería		Personal de oficios
monitor de vela		ordenanza		Escala auxiliar administrativa
técnico especialista		auxiliar de apoyo		Servicios generales
auxiliar administrativo		socorrista		Personal de servicios auxiliares
arrumbador		auxiliar de biblioteca		Personal especializado de servicios domésticos
subalterno		policía local		Administración especial subescala servicios especiales
peón especializado		ayudante de oficios		
mozo de apoyo				
limpiador				

**Table 6.13 List of selected job titles in the Spanish civil service sample (2007)**

The table above reveals only four job title categories in this data as no entries in the M/F category have been found. A majority of job titles are in the masculine (M) category although a marked increase in the unspecified (O) category has occurred. The following table shows the percentage distribution of the job titles in the Spanish sample:

2007	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
<b>Spain (civil service)</b>	82	1	27	0	24	134
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6.14: Distribution of job title categories in the Spanish civil service sample (2007)**

A high percentage of job advertisements (61.2%) in the Spanish sample fall within the masculine job title category (M). These include job titles which in

principle may look as unspecified, e.g. *escala de técnicos especialistas*. In this instance, the word *escala* refers to the professional level required and there are other instances where this strategy has been employed; however, it is modified by a masculine term (*de técnicos especialistas*) hence the masculine classification. The term *oficial* (skilled worker) has also been classified as masculine. According to the Spanish dictionary of the Real Academia (DRAE), some meanings of this word are epicene or unmarked for gender and apply to both males and females. However, the feminine *oficiala* also appears in the Spanish language dictionary. Lledó (2006) and other guidelines suggest that for the purpose of symmetry, the masculine form *oficial* should only refer to males and the feminine term *oficiala* for females. Hence the term *oficial* has been assigned to the masculine category because the job descriptor makes it clear that it is masculine:

- e.g. *oficial primera/Descripción: jardinero* (male gardener)
- oficial segunda/Descripción: modisto* (male designer)

In the second category, that of epicene nouns (E), 20.1% job advertisements have been found which include *ATS/DUE* (nurse), *fisioterapeuta* (physiotherapist), *ayudante* (assistant), *analista* (analyst). In the case of *ayudante*, there is a tendency nowadays to form the feminine in *-anta* for words ending in *-ante*: e.g. *gobernanta*. Although Lledó (2006) admits both the feminine form *ayudanta* and *ayudante*, the present study has considered terms ending in *-ente* and *-ante* such as *agente* or *ayudante* as epicenes. In relation to the use of *gerente* (manager) here this term has been classified as a common gender form, or epicene, although the literature on the subject has revealed that there is an increasing number of words ending in *-ente* which are used for male referents only and in *-enta* for female referents. Lledó (2006) gives two frequent examples of this derivational process:

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
<i>dependiente</i>	<i>dependienta</i>
[male shop assistant]	[female shop assistant]
 <i>presidente</i>	 <i>presidenta</i>
[male president]	[female president]

Drawing from this example, the terms *gerente/gerenta* [masc./fem.] are being used increasingly more frequently. In fact the term *gerenta* in the feminine appears in the DRAE, although there is a note indicating that the term is normally used in the masculine to designate the feminine: e.g. *Ana es gerente*. Lledó (2006) claims that if language advances in this direction we will have feminine terms such as *agente*, *dirigente*, or *tratante*, for an originally epicene term ending in *-ente*. However, Lledó also claims that the use of the epicene ending *-ente* for women is also a question of prestige and social value. She illustrates this idea with the following example:

Masculine	Feminine
<i>Asistente (al gobierno, etc)</i> [government assistant]	<i>asistentta</i> [house cleaner]

where the feminine term does not have the same connotational value as the masculine one and it has come to designate an occupational of a lower status and the derogation of female terminology.

Only one case of feminine gender designation (F) (0.8%) has been found: *comadrona* (midwife) which clearly indicates that the position is open only to women. In fact, the DRAE admits the word *comadrón* (in the masculine) although this is rarely used. It is more frequent to find the masculine word *partero* for a male midwife. In this example, it is rather surprising that the qualification descriptor required for this job specifies a degree requiring an *enfermero especialista en enfermería* ([male] specialist in nursing), clearly in the masculine.

No occurrences of job vacancies in the gender-splitting category (M/F) have been found in this dataset. On the other hand, 17.9% job titles fall within the unspecified category (O). Here the level of the post, rather than the job title, has been used: *escala técnica*; *escala superior facultativa*; *administración especial*; *servicios generales*. Some of the job titles in this category also use a collective noun such as *personal* (staff): e.g. *personal de oficios*. Compared to the 2002 dataset, therefore, there is a tendency in the 2007 sample to avoid the generic masculine in the job title (a shift from 77.4% down to 61.2%) and this has as a result influenced the higher number of unspecified job titles.



The Spanish job vacancy advertisements in the sample include a description of the type of qualification required. In most cases this is cast in the masculine: *doctor, licenciado, ingeniero, arquitecto*. However, the trend in 2007 is to move away from the marked masculine qualifications and use metonymy by means of abstract terms such as *titulación universitaria superior* (higher education qualification) with or without a specification of the type of degree required (e.g. *Titulación universitaria superior en ingeniería*, (higher education degree in engineering)).

6.2.4 British civil service

A total of 31 job advertisements published in the UK’s Civil Service recruitment website were collected in August 2002 and 60 job advertisements in July 2007. The results reveal that all job titles in the UK sample data were found to be unmarked for gender (E). The following table shows a selection of the job titles found in the sample:

UK civil service	
Senior ecological adviser	Principal Veterinary officer
Senior development control engineers	Cataloguing assistant
Veterinary and technical director	Assistant technical investigations officer
Project manager	Facilities manager
Assistant librarian	Facilities executive
Senior personal secretary	Senior archivist
Head of procurement	Information officer
	Administrative officer

Table 6.15 List of selected job titles in the UK civil service (2002 and 2007)

Given that all job titles were unmarked for gender in the English corpus, the job description and terms of employment have been analysed for other markers of gender such as the use of third person pronouns. No occurrences of third person pronouns have been found, either in the masculine or by means of the juxtaposition of both masculine and feminine pronouns (gender-splitting *he/she*). However, three strategies to avoid third person personal pronouns have been observed:

- 1) the use of second person pronoun *you*:  
e.g. *you will have....you must be....*
- 2) the use of the plural form:  
e.g. *candidates must be able to....and*
- 3) the use of singular *they*:



e.g. “A vacancy has arisen for an Administrative officer who will provide administrative support to the Head of Policy, although they will receive work requests from other members of the division”

e.g. “....whilst the post holder will normally have a Principal as a formal line manager, they may work on a day-to-day basis....” (my emphasis)

### 6.3 Newspaper results

An analysis of job advertisements taken from a random issue of a national daily newspaper in each of the four linguistic contexts has been carried out. The aim of this analysis is to compare the job advertisements published by the public administration with those which appear in the daily press. The following are the preliminary general results of the analysis from the 2001-2002 dataset:

Job title classification: Newspapers (2001-2)						
Categories	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Total	60	6	78	139	29	312
	19.2%	1.9%	25%	44.6%	9.3%	100%

**Table 6.16** Job title classification in selected newspapers (2001-2002)

The table above shows that the majority of job titles in this sample fall within the masculine and feminine (M/F) category (44.6%). In order to compare the results, an analysis of offers of employment over a five year period has been carried out. The following table shows the job title categories for all four countries for the 2007-2008 period:

Job title classification: Newspapers (2007-2008)						
Categories	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Total	55	5	96	142	29	327
	16.8%	1.5%	29.4%	43.4%	8.9%	100%

**Table 6.17** Job title classification in selected newspapers (2007-2008)

**Table 6.18** List of selected job titles in French newspaper Le Monde (2002)

The findings reveal a very similar number of occurrences over a five year period, with a majority of jobs advertised (43.4%) which use the gender-splitting strategy (M/F). No significant differences have been found between the two sets of newspaper data.

The following table shows the percentage distribution of job title

The next sections present the results of the linguistic analysis of job titles found



in the newspaper corpus for each individual country.

### 6.3.1 France – Newspaper sample

A sample of job advertisements taken at random from a single issue of the French national daily newspaper *Le Monde* was collected in October 2002 and in March 2008. *Le Monde* advertises a variety of jobs, predominantly managerial and professional.

#### 6.3.1.1 Results from 2002

A total of 67 job vacancy announcements were collected and analysed. The following table shows the distribution of a selection of job titles into the five job title categories:

Masculine (M)	Fem (F)	Epicene (E)	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
directeur		chef	directeur (h/f)	euromanagers
ingénieur électricien		responsable	directeurs h-f	Supply chain management analyst
contrôleur de gestion		chef de project	secrétaire général (e)	International project control manager (s)
traducteur francophone		juriste d’entreprise	ingénieur chargé h/f	Expert human factors
médecins territoriaux		2 ingénieurs d’études	2 cadres de catégorie A (f/h)	consultant
président		jurist	directeur h/f	
agents			chargé d’affaires h/f	
adjoint			animateur conseil h/f	
redacteurs territoriaux			directeur general h/f	
			directeur d’activité industriel h/f	
			directeur general adjoint (h/f)	
			directeur de la police municipal (h/f)	
			attaché(e) de presse	
			attaché ou rédacteur confirmé (h/f)	
			chargé d’études (h/f)	
			responsable du développement commercial h/f	
			assistant(e)s techniques	
			chef de projet (h/f)	
			jurist droit privé (h/f)	
			consultants seniors h/f	

**Table 6.18** List of selected job titles in French newspaper *Le Monde* (2002)

Four gender categories have been identified as no feminine job titles have been found in this sample. Most job advertisements from *Le Monde* (64.2%) fall within the gender-splitting category (M/F), that is, they have a form marking both genders. The following table shows the percentage distribution of job title categories:



2002	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
France (newspapers)	11	0	9	43	4	67
Percentage	16.4%	0	13.4%	64.2%	6%	100%

**Table 6.19: Distribution of job title categories in *Le Monde* (2002)**

As regards the gender-splitting category, two main strategies have been employed. Most job titles in this category (90.7%) appear in the masculine or epicene form followed by the gender marker *h/f* (*homme/femme*, equivalent to male/female): e.g. *directeur (h/f)*. In one of these, the feminine marker (f.) appears first: *2 cadres de catégorie A (f/h)*. The rest, that is, three of the job advertisements in the category M/F, are morphologically marked by adding the feminine suffix *-e*: *secrétaire général (e)*, *attaché (e) de presse*, *assistant(e)s techniques*. In the case of *secrétaire*, this is an epicene noun but as the adjective *général* is masculine, the feminine suffix (e) has been added to the adjective in order to specify the feminine form.

Regarding the other job title categories, 11 cases of masculine job titles (M) have been found in this sample: e.g. *directeur* (director). In the epicene job title category (E), the sample includes nine terms such as *ingénieur*, *chef*, *jurist* (engineer, head, jurist), among others. No job titles in the feminine category (F) have been found. In the fifth category (O), four cases have been observed which are all cast in English: for example, *euromanagers*, or *supply chain management analyst*, although the job description in the majority of these is written in French.

### 6.3.1.2 Results from 2008

A sample of job vacancy advertisements from a single issue of *Le Monde* published in March 2008 was collected at random and a total of 72 job vacancies were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of the job title categorisation of this data set:



Masc (M)	Fem (F)	Epicene (E)	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
directeur		ingénieurs scientifiques et	responsable développement commercial h/f	short-term interpreter/ translator
consultant formateur		2 professeurs des universités	responsable essais cliniques h/f	legal counsel
coordonateur technique		pediatre neonatologue	ingénieur applications h/f	postes de titulaires de l'education national
Directeur operations		ingénieur spéc	veilleur-analyste scientifique h/f	postes en contract local
2 maîtres des conferences		responsable	technicien de laboratoire h/f	consultant solutions
		ingénieur	cadre formulation h/f	
		médecin	médecin h/f	
		chef	radiologue h/f	
			contrôleur de gestion h/f	
			directeur d'établissement h/f	
			consultant h/f	
			traducteur/trice	
			contrôleur(se)s de gestion h/f	
			enseignant en mercatique (h/f)	
			chef de projet h/f	
			un chargé de mission (h/f)	
			secrétaire général h/f	
			pharmacien h/f	
			business developer h/f	
			sales analysts h/f	

Table 6.20 List of selected job titles in *Le Monde* (2008)

Similarly to the previous dataset, no cases of feminine job titles have been observed in the 2007-2008 sample. The percentage distribution of these job titles is as follows:

2008	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
France (newspaper)	10	0	16	41	5	72
Percentage	13.9%	0	22.2%	56.9%	7%	100%

Table 6.21: Distribution of job title categories in *Le Monde* (2008)

The results reveal that there are just nine cases (13.9%) of masculine job titles (M) such as *directeur* and *coordonateur*. No feminine job titles (F) have been found and 17 examples of epicene job titles (E) including *responsable* and *ingénieur* have been observed.

The majority of the job titles (56.9%) in this set have been assigned to the gender-splitting category (M/F). Most of these (40) do so by adding the gender-splitting marker *h/f* to the masculine title or even following epicene words such as *radiologue (h/f)* or English terminology (e.g. *business developer h/f*). In one case the gender marker *h/f* follows a job title which had already been



morphologically marked for gender: *contrôleur(se)s de gestion h/f*. Only one job title explicitly uses the masculine and feminine forms, albeit in a truncated form: *traducteur/trice* (male/female translator).

A total of five job titles have been assigned to the unspecified category (O). Three of these jobs are advertised in English (*short-term interpreter/translator, legal counsel, consultant solutions*). The other two indicate the position rather than the name of the occupation: *postes de titulaires de l'education national* and *postes en contract local* (positions of state education and positions with local contract).

It is salient to point out that a note to the readers has been inserted in this newspaper issue: “*Nous rappelons à nos lecteurs que tous ces postes sont accessibles sans discrimination notamment de sexe ou d’âge*” (We would like to remind our readers that all these posts are open without discrimination based on sex or age). This note is new as the 2002 dataset did not include it.

### 6.3.2 Germany- newspaper sample

A sample of job advertisements taken at random from the German daily newspaper *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* in October 2002 and March 2008 was collected and analysed. This newspaper advertises a wide variety of jobs. The next two sections present the results of the findings for each dataset.

#### 6.3.2.1 Results from 2002

A total of 123 occupational titles taken from a single issue of *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* published in October 2002 were collected and analysed into the five job title categories. The table below shows the percentage distribution of German job titles for this dataset:

2002	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Germany (newspaper)	11	3	0	93	16	123
Percentage	9%	2.4%	0	75.6%	13%	100%

Table 6.22: Distribution of job title categories in *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (2002)



The following table shows a selection of the job title distribution from the October 2002 dataset:

Masc (M)	Fem (F)	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
Junior -Projektingenieur	Vertriebs- /Verkaufsmanagerin	Key Account manager Automotive (m/w)	Career opportunities for Bankers and IT-experts
Mitarbeiter im Außendienst	Wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiterin(s)	Agentin/Agent	Aussendienstmitarbeiter Projektgeschäft
Ingenieur/Techniker	Fremdsprachensekr etärin	Messtechniker (m/w)	Führungskräfte
Prozessingenieur		Systemingenieur/in	Human Resources Associate
Schuhtechniker/ Meister		Teamassisten/in	Professur für Maschinenbauinformatik
Vertriebsmitarbeiter		Leiter (in) Finanzen	Verwaltungsfachkraft
Vertriebsrepräsentanten		Technische (r) Planer/in	IT Project manager
Konstrukteur		Patentanwalt (w/m)	Schreibkraft
Vertriebsingenieur		Volljuristin/Volljuristen	Versicherungskaufleute
Berater Verkaufleiter		Leiter(in) Vertrieb/Marketing	Senior European Account Manager
Technischen Niederlassungsleiter		Dipl.-Ing.Feinwerktechnik (w/m)	Fachkraft Einkauf/Secretariat
		Servicetechniker (m/w)	Leitung
		Unternehmer (-innen)	Clinical Research Associates
		Marketing Manager (in)	Finanzverwaltung/Kämmerei
		Leiter/Leiterin	Sekretariat der Geschäftsstelle
		Pharma-Ingenieur m/w	Außendienst
		Dozent (m/w)	Fachkräfte
		Leiterin/Leiter	
		Fertigungsleiter m/w	
		Speditionskaufmann/-frau	

Table 6.23: List of selected job titles in *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (2002)

The results from the October 2002 dataset reveal 11 job vacancies (9%) which are cast in the masculine (M). These include masculine job titles such as *Junior-Projektingenieur* (junior project engineer). In this example, the masculine form only appears in the heading of the job title but the job description is written with gender-splitting formulas as *Ingenieur/-in*. Three cases of feminine job titles (F) have been found: *Wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeiterin* (supervisory female staff), *Fremdsprachensekretärin* (foreign languages female secretary) and *Vertriebs-/Verkaufsmanagerin* (female sales manager).

Similarly to the other German datasets, no cases of epicene job titles (E) have been found as in German all nouns are marked for gender. The majority of the job vacancies fall within the M/F category (75.6%). The strategies employed are varied and similar to those already described for the civil service dataset: 1) by means of explicitly mentioning both masculine and feminine forms, for example, *Agentin/Agent*, alternating the order of the masculine and feminine nouns; 2) by



means of compound words such as *Speditionskaufmann/-frau*; or 3) by adding the descriptor *m/w* [*männlich/weiblich*] (or in reverse order with the feminine form first, *w/m*) to a German (normally) masculine word or to an English term. The first strategy is by far the most common one in this dataset and it is necessary to distinguish those entries which systematically mention masculine and feminine forms either in full (*Paarformulierungen*): e.g. *Leiterin/Leiter*, or in a variety of truncated forms or economy forms (*Sparformen*): e.g. *Teamassisten/in*; *Marketing Manager (in)*. The majority of job advertisements (47%) employ this strategy which indicates that when space is at a premium as it is in a newspaper job section, economy forms are preferred. The rest use the gender descriptor *m/w* following normally the masculine form, e.g. *Dozent (m/w)*.

Finally 16 occurrences of unspecified job title (O) advertisements have been observed; these take a variety of formats:

- a) generic abstract compounds with *-kraft* or *-kräfte*, (e.g. *Schreibkraft* – typist; *Führungskräfte*- executive personnel) and compounds with *-leute* (for example, *Versicherungskaufleute*- underwriters),
- b) generic words such as *Leitung* (management) or *Finanzverwaltung* (financial management) or *Außendienst* (sales representatives);
- c) English terms such as *Career Opportunities for bankers and IT-Experts* or *Senior European Account Manager*
- d) metonymy as in the case of *Professur* (professorship, chair)

6.3.2.2 Results from 2008

A sample of 118 job advertisements from the same German newspaper was taken in March 2008. The table below shows the percentage distribution of German job titles in the 2008 data:

2008	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Germany (newspaper)	7	6	0	93	12	118
Percentage	5.9%	5.1%	0%	78.8%	10.2%	100%

Table 6.24 Distribution of job title categories in *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (2008)



The following table shows a selection of results form the 2008 dataset:

Masc (M)	Fem (F)	Masculine/feminine (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
Produktmanager/ Produkttechniker	Sekretärin/ Sachbearbeiterin	Leiter/in	Top-Ingenieur-Talente
Leiter Finanzabteilung	Bürokauffrau	Technischen Leiter (m/w)	Fachkraft für Kulturmanagement
Leiter Marketing	Sekretärin/ Assistentin	Assisten/-in	Commercial Manager
Leiter ERP	Privatlehrerin	Sachbearbeiter/in	Marketing Manager
Ingenieure	Professionalle Haushälterin	Contract manager Execution w/m	Leitung des Referants
Präsident	Haushälterin	FinanzbuchhalterIn	Artbuying
		Mitarbeiter(in)	IT-Anwendungsentwicklung
		Mitarbeiter/in	Supply Chain Manager
		Empfangssekretäre/innen	Vorstand/CEO
		Financial Controller (m/f)	Personal-und Rechnungswesen
		Vorstandsassistentz (m/w)	Patentanwalts-bzw. Rechtsanwaltsfachangestellte
		Versicherungskaufmänner/-frauen	Pflegefachkraft
		Personalmanager (in)	Hausmeisterehepaar
		IT-Administratorin/IT-Administrator	
		Bürokauffrau/-mann	
		Programmiererin/Programmierer	
		Technische Revisorin/Technischen Revisor	
		Ärztin/Arzt	
		Pflegefachkraft (m/w)	
		SekundarlehrerInnen	
		Hausdame (m/w)	

**Table 6.25** List of selected job titles in *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (2008)

The analysis reveals a low incidence (5.9%) of masculine job titles (M). These include *Produktmanager/Produkttechniker*, *Leiter* (manager), *Ingenieure* (male engineers) and *Präsident* (president). The sample also includes six cases (5.1%) of feminine job titles (F): for example, *Sekretärin/Sachbearbeiterin* (female secretary/advisor), *Bürokauffrau* (female office administrator), *Privatlehrerin* (private female tutor) and *Professionelle Haushälterin* (female housekeeper).

Similarly to the 2002 dataset, the majority of job vacancies fall within the gender-splitting job title category (78.8%). A variety of strategies have been employed here. The majority of job titles in the M/F category (58%) use the splitting of masculine and feminine forms either in economy (e.g. *Assisten/in*) or full forms.(e.g. *Programmiererin/Programmierer*). 36 offers of employment (or 38.7%) include the dual gender marker *m/w* (equivalent of the English m/f), e.g. *Pflegefachkraft (m/w)*. It is pertinent to note that most of the forms which employ *m/w* follow a generic abstract word such as *Vorstandassistentz (m/w)* or even an



English term (e.g. *Contract Manager Execution w/m*). One curious case has been found in this sample in the term *Hausdame* (governess) which traditionally implied a woman's position. However, in the sample, this term is followed by the gender marker *m/w* implying that a traditionally feminine position can also be open to a man. Finally in this category, three instances of the capitalised *I* inside the word (3.2%) have also been found: one in singular *FinanzbuchhalterIn* and two in plural: *PrimarlehrerInnen* and *SekundarlehrerInnen*.

In the last unspecified category (O), similar to the 2002 dataset, a mixture of English job titles (7 in total) and gender abstract terms such as *Leitung* (management) or *Fachkraft* (specialist) have been found.

6.3.3 Spain- Newspaper sample

A sample of job advertisements taken from a single issue of the Spanish daily newspaper *El País* was collected from November 2002 and March 2008. *El País* advertises a wide variety of jobs from directors to bus drivers. A total of 63 job advertisements for each period have been analysed following the *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua* (2001) and in the light of the recommendations as published in *Las profesiones de la A a la Z* (2006).

6.3.3.1 Results from 2002

A total of 63 job vacancies advertised in a single issue of *El País* in November 2002 were collected and analysed into the five job title categories. The table below shows the percentage distribution of Spanish job titles:

2002	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Spain (newspaper)	37	2	12	4	8	63
Percentage	58.8%	3.2%	19%	6.3%	12.7%	100%

Table 6.26: Distribution of job title categories in *El País* (2002)

The following table shows a selection of job vacancy announcements in this sample:

Masc (M)	Fem (F)	Epicene (E)	Masculine/fem (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
controlador aéreo	azafatas de vuelo	responsable	azafatas/vendedores	technical services engineer
jefe de taller	teleoperadora	comerciales	diseñador/a senior de moda joven	service and production manager
aparejadores		representantes	contratos de médicos m/f	international area manager
asesor financiero		agentes comerciales	encargado/a de tienda	manager
director		comercial		senior sales representative
delegado comercial		anestésistas		personal nativo japonés
consultores		gerente		digitalización documentos
profesionales				key account managers
licenciados				
ingeniero				
titulados				
gestor				
coordinador				
vendedores				
teleoperadores				
médico adjunto				
topógrafo				
técnico comercial				
conductores de autobús				
actores y bailarines				

**Table 6.27 List of selected job titles in *El País* (2002)**

The Spanish data set findings reveal that most job advertisements are cast in the masculine gender designation (M) (58.8%), followed by the common gender category (E) (19%) and the unspecified category (O) (12.7%). Two out of the 63 advertisements (3.2%) are cast in the feminine (F): *azafatas de vuelo* (air hostesses), and *teleoperadoras* (female teleoperators). Only four job advertisements are cast in the gender-spitting form (M/F):

- *Azafatas/vendedores* (stewardesses/salesmen).
- *Diseñador/a senior de moda joven* (male/female designer)
- *Contrato de médicos m/f* (doctors' contract m/f)
- *Encargado/a de tienda* (male/female shop manager)

Only two out of four job titles in this category are morphologically marked for masculine and feminine: *diseñador/a* (designer) and *encargado/a* (manager). However, in the first example of this category (*azafatas/vendedores*), although both genders are explicitly mentioned, the feminine and masculine forms are not exactly the same. As the masculine of *azafata* (steward) is not normally used (*azafato*) and until recently (amendments to the 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2008) the



Dictionary of the Real Academia (DRAE) did not accept the term *azafato* (and only in the sense of cabin crew), the solution has been to use an existing masculine word to designate the male job title (*vendedores*). This lack of parallelism between masculine and feminine occupational nouns has been condemned in the literature because it seems to imply a different status.

The remaining job title in this category, *contratos de médicos m/f*, is the only example of this type of strategy (the addition of *m/f*) in the whole of the Spanish corpus. Although it seems highly productive in other languages such as French and German as already seen, it presents a very low incidence in Spanish. In this case it is somehow strange that the gender descriptor *m/f* seems to be in English when in Spanish would normally be *h/m* (*hombre/mujer*). This strategy has not been found in any of the recommendations studied here and seems to be used very sparingly.

Eight job advertisements have been assigned to the unspecified category (O), including a mixture of English job titles (e.g. *Technical Services Engineer*), collective expressions (e.g. *personal nativo japonés*) or the use of metonymy by means of the name of the activity rather than the job title (e.g. *digitalización documentos*).

6.3.3.2 Results from 2007

A total of 63 job vacancy advertisements taken at random from a single issue of *El País* published in November 2007 were collected and analysed. The table below shows the percentage distribution of the Spanish job titles:

2008	M	F	E	M/F	O	Total
Spain (newspaper)	36	0	14	3	10	63
Percentage	57.1%	0	22.2%	4.8%	15.9%	100%

Table 6.28 Distribution of job title categories in *El País* (2008)

The following table shows a selection of job titles:

Masc (M)	Fem (F)	Epicene (E)	Masc/fem (M/F)	Unspecified (O)
veterinario		profesionales	director/a	editor for Secondary Marketing Professional
ingenieros		responsable comercial	consultor/a	research manager
director		comerciales	delegado/a	international junior internal auditor
facultativos		especialista		insurance specialist
técnicos comerciales		contable		cabin crew
ingeniero naval		agentes de booking		brand manager
delegado de ventas		representantes		data services manager
jefes de arquitectura		gerente		ELT editors
gestor senior				office manager
redactor				group product manager
abogado				
ejecutivo comercial				
consultor/ negociador comercial				
delegado comercial				
director de proyecto				
encargado de obra				
ingeniero aeronáutico				
televendedores				
editor				
programador WEB				

**Table 6.29** List of selected job titles in *El País* (2007)

Similarly to the 2002 dataset, the results reveal a majority of job advertisements in the masculine category (M) (57.1%). These include terms such as *director*, *programador*, *delegado* ([male] director, promoter, delegate). Fourteen cases of epicene nouns have been observed (22.2%), including *especialista*, *gerente*, *responsable* (specialist, manager, person in charge). Only three cases of gender-splitting (M/F) have been found: *director/a*; *consultor/a*; *delegado/a*. All three cases have employed the same strategy which is the gender splitting of masculine and feminine forms in a truncated form by means of a slash.

Ten job advertisements (15.9%) of the sample have been assigned to the unspecified category (O). All of them are job titles in English (e.g. *data services manager*). Finally, no feminine job titles (F) have been found in this sample.



**6.3.4 United Kingdom - Newspaper sample**

A total of 58 job advertisements published in *The Sunday Times* in November 2002 were collected and analysed. *The Sunday Times* publishes middle management positions and executive positions including the public sector weekly. The majority (89.6%) are epicene forms (E), that is, there is no mark of gender: e.g. *chief technical architect; head of information technology, sales director, chief technology officer*. Only 10.4% belong to the fifth category of unspecified job titles (O): e.g. *Consulting opportunities, SVP-International sales, HR Management-Europe, Hedge fund graduate programme, Appointments to the Health and safety commission*, which consists of expressions which avoid the job title.

No other mark of gender has been found in the job descriptions, although a few strategies have been employed to avoid third person pronouns, such as the use of second person pronoun *you*: e.g. *you will....* or the use of plural forms: e.g. *candidates will...*

The findings of the analysis of the sample from February 2008 show similar results to those from November 2002. The sample included 74 job advertisements of which the majority (96%) are epicene (E), or unmarked for gender. Three cases (4%) of unspecified job titles (O) have been found including *Senior IT Opportunity, Executive management positions* and *Management consulting*. The following table shows some of the job titles found in the English newspaper sample:

<i>director</i>	<i>officer</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>Chief executive</i>
<i>financial controller</i>	<i>chief economist</i>	<i>consultants</i>	<i>managers</i>
<i>board member</i>	<i>chair</i>	<i>trustees</i>	<i>bursar</i>

**Table 6.30 List of selected job titles from *The Sunday Times* (2008)**

Both sets of data from British newspaper *The Sunday Times* include a number of vacancy advertisements with a note about equal opportunities, e.g. “Our client is committed to being an equal opportunities employer”, “BUPA promotes equality of opportunity”, amongst others. The analysis shows that 11 out of 58

job advertisements from 2002 and 13 out of 74 from 2008 include such a statement. It is relevant to mention that the concept of equal opportunities in this context includes non-discrimination not only in terms of sex, but also age, race, sexual orientation and disability. This corresponds to the findings of the literature review which indicated that gender-inclusive language recommendations in the UK are increasingly part of a wider equal opportunities framework. However, this kind of statement relating to equal opportunities has not been observed in other countries' samples.

**6.4 Results of longitudinal study**

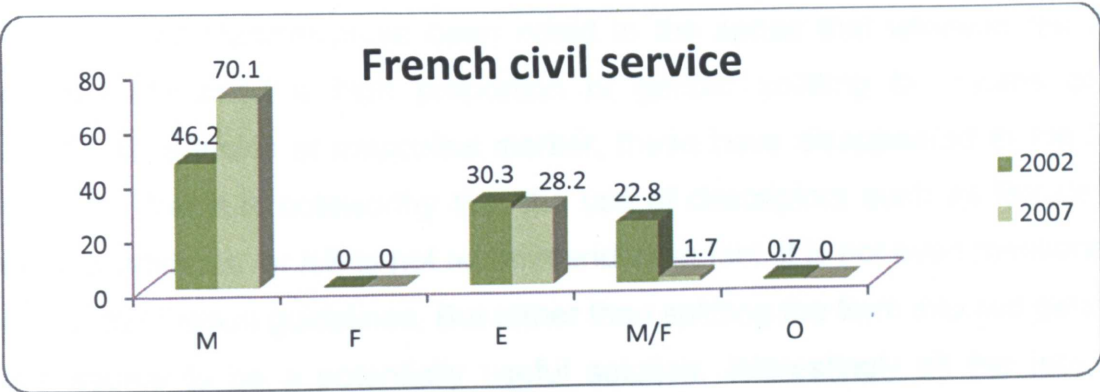
The aim of this section is to provide a longitudinal analysis of the results of the case study in order to evaluate whether there has been a change in the drafting of job offers in the two domains over five years. This diachronic analysis, which regards a phenomenon through time, will allow the researcher to see patterns of language use and to establish whether gender-based language reform policies have been implemented in practice over a period of time. The comparison of the findings of the results from the two sets of data at two points in time in 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 aims to illustrate whether a change has taken place over a five year period. This in turn will allow the researcher to ascertain tendencies of usage in the four linguistic contexts.

**6.4.1 Longitudinal analysis of civil service results**

The next section presents the results of the longitudinal analysis of the civil service results for each country. The aim of this analysis is to see tendencies of usage over the five year period. At the same time the application of the recommendations for non-sexist language is evaluated.

**6.4.1.1 French Civil Service**

The following table illustrate the results of the French civil service data for the two datasets (2002 and 2007).



**Figure 6.1: French civil service corpus (2002- 2007)**

The figure shows that over the five year period there has been a marked increase in the masculine category (M) whereas the gender-splitting category (M/F) has gone down dramatically over the five year period (-21.1%). This is due to the fact that in the 2002 dataset there was a high percentage of job vacancy announcements in the armed forces which included the marker of feminine and masculine candidates (by adding *candidats féminins et masculins*); however, this gender marker does not appear in the 2007 set although armed forces jobs were advertised in the 2007 sample. This might imply that the inclusion of the marker (*candidats féminins et masculins*) is not consistently implemented. There has also been a slight drop in the use of epicene terms (E) in 2007. The remaining job title categories remain very similar for the two sets of data.

**Figure 6.2: German civil service corpus (2002-2007)**

From the sample analysed it appears that the preferred strategy in the French civil service job announcements is the use of the masculine as the unmarked form. Despite the recommendations to avoid the masculine form as generic, the data shows that the tradition of using the masculine or epicene forms for job advertisements in the French civil service is on the increase again. However, the question is whether this masculine form is actually used generically in which case the use of the masculine would constitute the gender-neutral strategy whereby the sex of the person carrying out the job is irrelevant, or what has been called taking the gender out of the function. It could also be argued that the use of the masculine for both men and women is the easiest solution to the feminisation of language: one form for all.

French also complies with the German non-sexist guidelines which recommend the visibility of women in language by



Some inconsistencies have been noted in the sense that whereas the 2002 dataset contained a high proportion of gender splitting by means of the *candidats féminins et masculins* marker, these have disappeared in the 2007 data set. Yet it is noteworthy that the use of descriptors such as female and male candidates -or *h/f*- is not recommended, in fact, it is not even mentioned in any of the French guidelines. But rather than splitting the term into two genders, this seems to be a potentially useful solution. Interestingly all the jobs that contain the female/male descriptor (*candidats féminins et masculins*) come from different bodies within the armed forces and the police but not from other French ministries.

6.4.1.2 German Civil service

The following table illustrates the results of the longitudinal study of the German civil service samples (2002-2007):

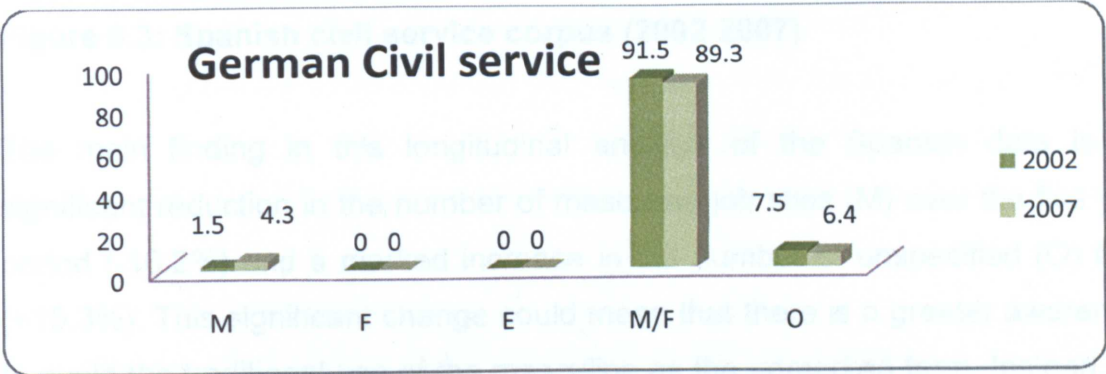


Figure 6.2: German civil service corpus (2002-2007)

The breakdown of job advertisements into the five job title categories reveals very similar results for the two German civil service datasets. The preferred strategy identified in the German data is the systematic use of gender-splitting forms; this is done in two different ways: 1) either by means of the juxtaposition of full forms in both the masculine and feminine (e.g. *Artz/Ärtzin*) or in reversed order with the feminine form first (*Referentin/Referent*), or 2) by means of abbreviated forms (e.g. *Florist/in*). The high incidence of the splitting strategy in the sample corpus implies that the gender-specification approach is deeply ingrained in the German language, although some isolated cases of masculine terms have also been observed. This approach also complies with the German non-sexist guidelines which recommend the visibility of women in language by

explicit naming. Furthermore, the variety of forms that have been observed to obtain gender-splitting -for instance, *Referent/Referentin*, *Referent/in*, *Referentin/Referent*- indicates the high degree of flexibility of the approach.

6.4.1.3 Spanish civil service

The following table shows the results for the Spanish civil service analysis over the five year period:

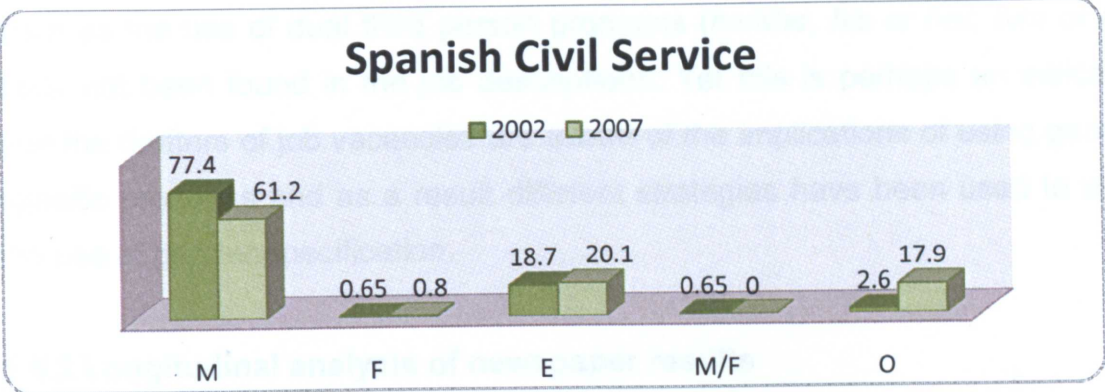


Figure 6.3: Spanish civil service corpus (2002-2007)

The main finding in this longitudinal analysis of the Spanish data is the significant reduction in the number of masculine job titles (M) over the five year period (-16.2%) and a marked increase in the number of unspecified (O) titles (+15.3%). This significant change could mean that there is a greater awareness to avoid the traditional use of the masculine as the unmarked form. Instead, the trend is to use more abstract and collective nouns as well as metonymy in order to avoid the masculine gender construction. This seems to be the preferred strategy in Spanish: the avoidance of the generic masculine and its replacement with collective nouns such as *personal*, or with metonymy whereby the name of the area of work or the qualification is used rather than the job title. Despite this welcomed trend, it seems that the Spanish civil service is not implementing the guidelines on non-sexist language which recommend the avoidance of the masculine as generic and the explicit use of both masculine and feminine forms when possible. In effect, the study has provided evidence of a very low number (0 and 0.65% respectively) of job titles which fall within the gender-splitting category (M/F).



6.4.1.4 British civil service

The results of the analysis of the civil service job vacancy announcements in the UK reveal very similar patterns over the five year period. In English most job advertisements are epicene in the sense that they are unmarked for gender. In fact the issues to avoid sexism in language in a natural gender language such as English are slightly different from those in grammatical gender languages such as the languages analysed above. Other markers of gender in English such as the use of dual third person pronouns (*he/she, his or her, him or her*) have not been found in the job descriptions. Yet this is perhaps an indication that the drafters of job vacancies are aware of the implications of using gender-specific pronouns and as a result different strategies have been used to avoid the use of gender-specification.

6.4.2 Longitudinal analysis of newspaper results

The next section analyses the newspaper job advertisement sample over the five year period for each country. No evidence has been found of editorial policies on the use of gender-neutral language in the four newspapers of study. For the purpose of the research, the data has been considered at face value.

6.4.2.1 French newspaper

The following chart compares the results of the French newspaper (*Le Monde*) data sets for 2002 and 2008:

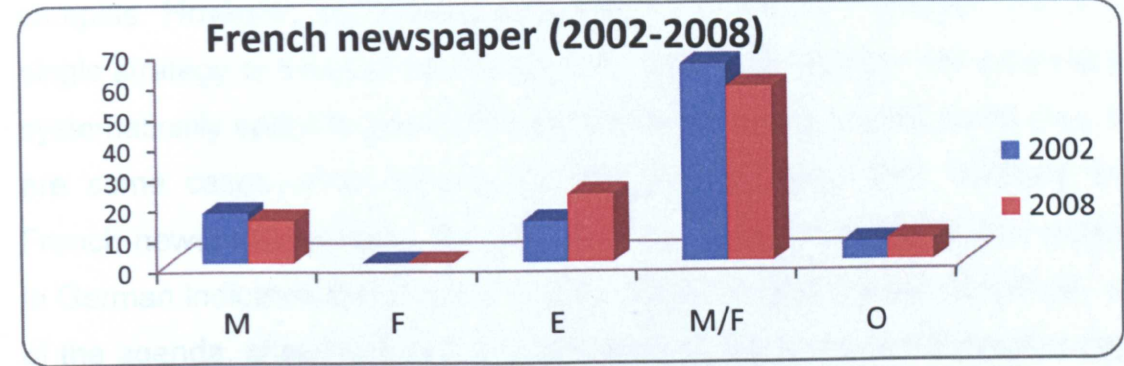


Figure 6.4: French newspaper corpus (2002-2008)

The results of this analysis show a very similar pattern for the two datasets over the five year period. In both sets of data the majority of job titles fall within the gender splitting category (M/F). This seems to be the preferred strategy in the French newspaper corpus. However, it is relevant to highlight the method used

to explicitly mention the two genders which involve the addition of a gender descriptor such as *h/f* (*homme/femme*) to the masculine job title to specify that the offer of employment is open to both males and females. What is surprising is that given that it seems so widely used in contemporary French, the French guidelines for non-sexist uses of language do not at any time recommend this strategy.

6.4.2.2 German newspaper

The following chart compares the results of the sample from German newspaper *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* taken at two points between 2002 and 2007:

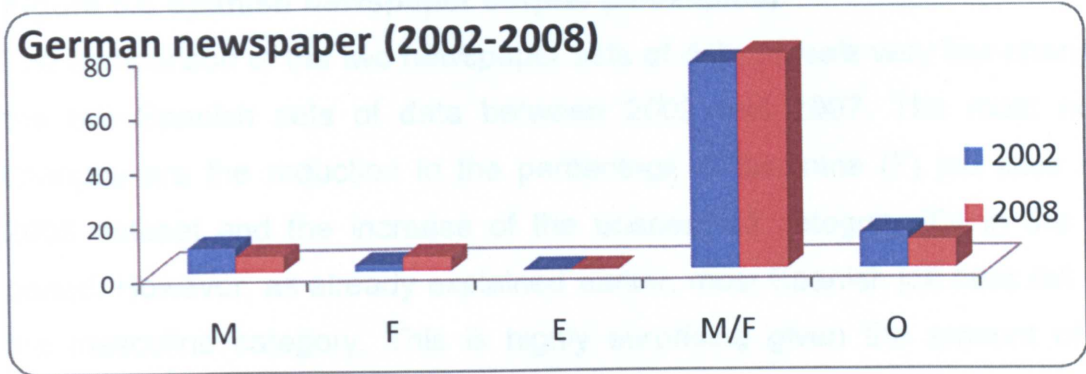


Figure 6.5 German newspaper corpus (2002-2008)

The longitudinal study of the German newspaper sample reveals very few changes from 2002 to 2008. The majority of job advertisements published are cast in the masculine and feminine gender-splitting form (M/F) in both data samples. However, as already identified in the linguistic analysis, there is no single strategy to the approach of gender-splitting in German. Most job titles are systematically split into masculine and feminine forms. At the same time there are some cases which employ the gender descriptor *m/w*, similarly to the French newspaper corpus. The variety of strategies to advertise job vacancies in German indicates that the issue of non-discrimination based on gender is top of the agenda, showing that a conscious effort has been made to some degree to make the language of occupational terminology free of gender bias.

A surprising result is the higher percentage of feminine (F) only job titles in the 2008 sample. This is perplexing as both the current German legislation and the guidelines discourage the use of gender-specific job titles.



6.4.2.3 Spanish newspaper

The following chart shows the results of the longitudinal study of newspaper job advertisements in Spain:

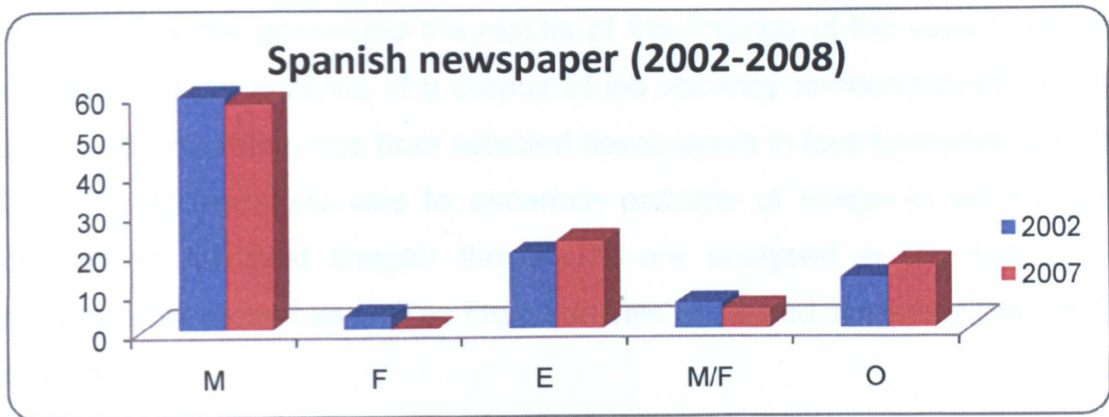


Figure 6.6 Spanish newspaper corpus (2002-2008)

The comparison of the two newspaper sets of data reveals very few changes in the two Spanish sets of data between 2002 and 2007. The most notable changes are the reduction in the percentage of feminine (F) job titles in the 2008 dataset and the increase of the unspecified category (O) in the same period. However, as already explained earlier, most Spanish job titles fall within the masculine category. This is highly surprising given the amount of work which has been done in the area of non-sexist language in Spain.

It is also highly relevant that one of the preferred strategies to achieve gender-specification which have been found in the other two grammatical gender languages of the study (the use of a gender marker such as *m/f*) is not being used in Spain. A short analysis of offers of employment in a multinational job recruiting online company, *www.monster.com*, has revealed that gender markers such as *m/f* for English, *h/f* for French and *m/w* for German are extensively used whereas they are not in the Spanish website.

6.4.2.4 UK newspaper

The analysis of the UK newspaper sample does not reveal any changes in occupational terminology over the five year period that the present study covers. The fact that all job titles found are epicene, that is, unmarked for gender, and that the drafters have been careful not to insert any sex-specific reference in the job description shows that English does not face the issues that the other

languages have presented.

### **6.5 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has presented the results of the findings of the case study which consisted of the analysis of a corpus of job vacancy announcements from the public administration and from selected newspapers in four European countries. The aim of the study was to ascertain patterns of usage in each linguistic context. In the next chapter the results are analysed in the light of each sociocultural context as well as the guidelines published in each of the countries of study.

7.1 Overview

The previous chapter has presented the results of the analysis of civil service and newspaper job advertisements in each of the four countries over the five year period. This chapter analyses those results across the four linguistic contexts in order to identify usage trends which in turn will make it possible to establish patterns of language practice and to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations.

7.2 Results across the four countries

This section compares the results of the linguistic analysis of the job vacancy advertisements in the civil service and in newspapers across the four linguistic contexts. The aim is to see any similarities and/or differences in the two domains in each of the four languages over a five year period. Firstly, a comparison of the results of data from the four linguistic contexts in the civil service has been carried out.

7.2.1 Civil service results across the four linguistic contexts

The following chart shows the results of the findings from the civil service data from 2001-2002 across the four countries of study:

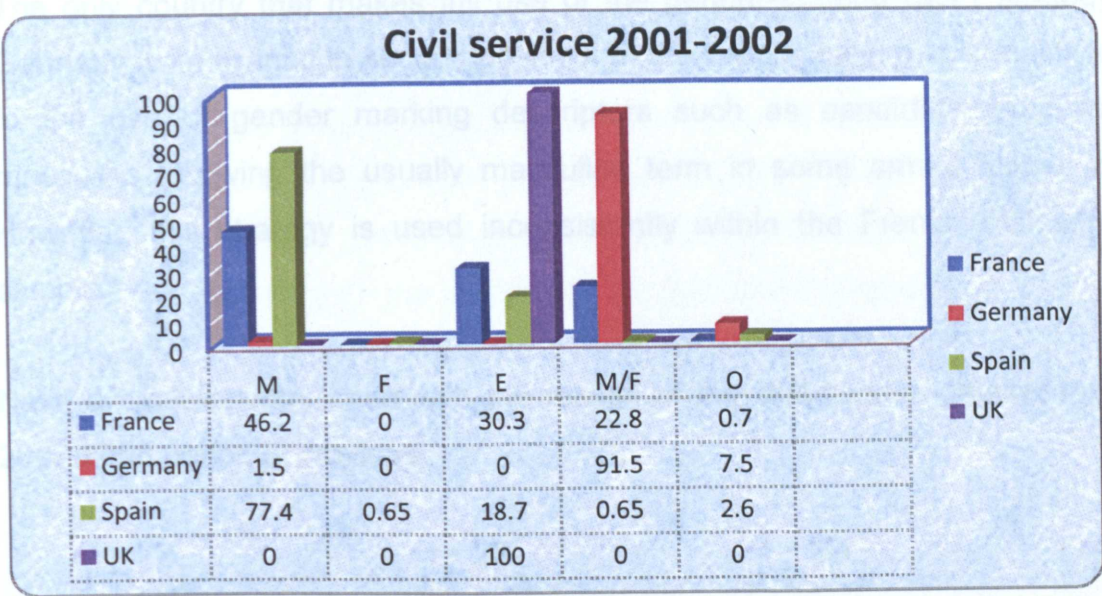


Figure 7.1: Results of the civil service dataset across four languages (2001-2002)

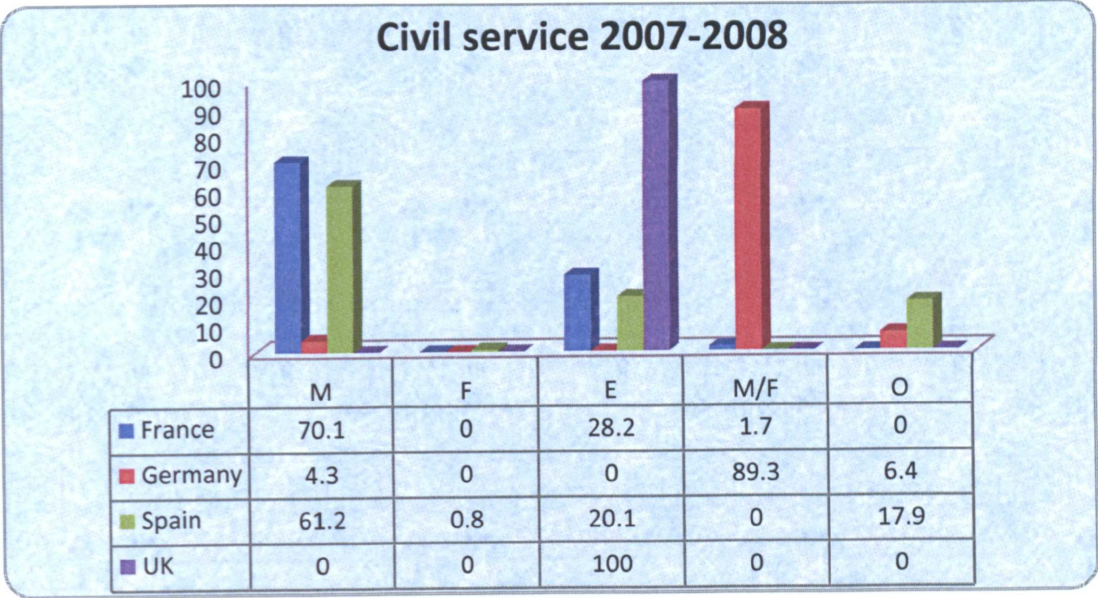


The trends revealed by the linguistic analysis indicate that in two grammatical gender languages (French and Spanish) the tendency is to use the masculine form (M). This could indicate that the masculine form is being used as the unmarked generic form to refer to both males and females. However, this contradicts the content of the French and Spanish guidelines analysed earlier which recommend the visibility of women in language by explicitly mentioning them. On the other hand, the trend in German is to make systematic use of gender-splitting. In this sense German appears to apply in a systematic way the guidelines on non-sexist language which were identified in the literature. Furthermore the variety of strategies identified in the study to achieve gender-splitting in German highlights the flexibility of this approach.

In terms of distribution of job title categories, on the whole there is a very low incidence of job advertisements which fall within the feminine (F) or unspecified (O) categories across the four countries. In fact, the only country data that presents an advertisement cast in the feminine is the Spanish civil service (*limpiadoras* [female cleaners]). With regard to the unspecified category, although there is also a small incidence, most of the job titles found in the German and Spanish samples employ collective or abstract nouns, for example, *Buffetkraft* and *personal de mantenimiento*.

The only country that makes full use of the gender-splitting (M/F) strategy is Germany, with France in second position. In the French case this is mainly due to the use of gender marking descriptors such as *candidats féminins et masculins* following the usually masculine term in some armed forces jobs. However, this strategy is used inconsistently within the French civil service sample.

Next, a cross-country chart with the results of the civil service dataset for the 2007-2008 period is provided.



**Figure 7.2: Results of the civil service dataset across four languages (2007-08)**

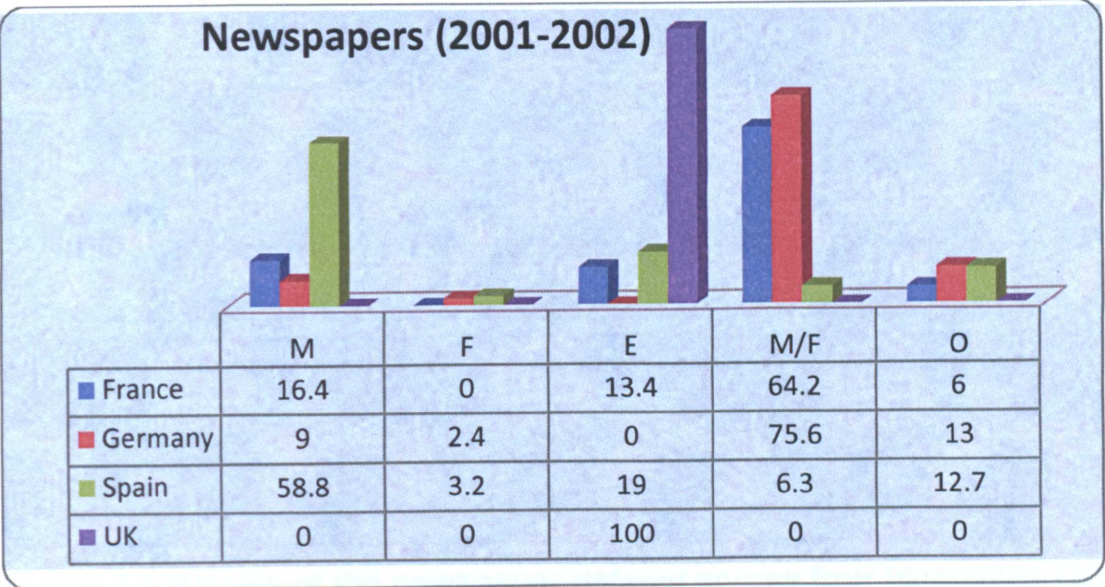
The analysis of this dataset reveals similar patterns of use across the four languages. The two Romance languages, French and Spanish, reveal a predominant use of the masculine in occupational nomenclature within the civil service, whereas Germany is the only country with a consistent approach as 89.3% of all job titles analysed fall within the gender-splitting category. The diversity of forms this strategy entails shows that there is no uniform approach but the commitment to equal opportunities is there.

The most significant change is the higher percentage of job titles in the unspecified category in the Spanish sample. This indicates that the preferred solution in Spanish to avoid masculine forms as generic seems to be the use of expressions such as collective or abstract nouns instead of the specific masculine job title (e.g. *personal de oficios*) or the use of metonymy (e.g. *escala técnica*). The literature on the topic has also revealed this trend (see Ministerio de Educación, 1989; Lledó, 2006, amongst others).

### 7.2.2 Newspaper results across the four linguistic contexts

The following figure shows the distribution of job title categories across the four countries in the newspaper data from 2001-2002.





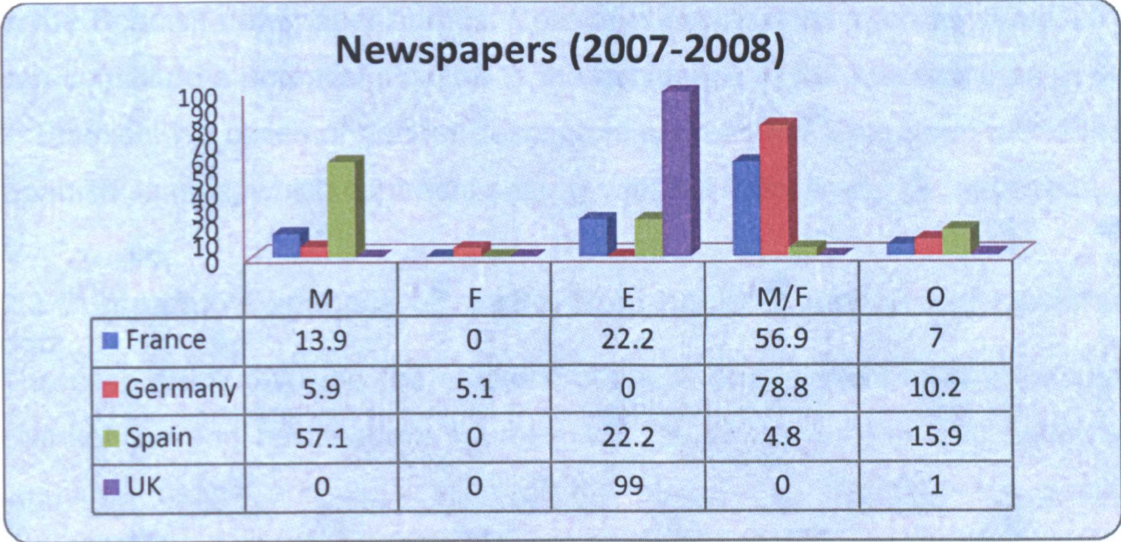
**Figure 7.3. Results of the newspaper dataset across four languages (2001-2002)**

The chart above shows an overview of the findings of the newspaper dataset across the four linguistic contexts. The main finding is that in two of the four newspapers (*Le Monde* and *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*) a majority of gender-splitting job titles has been observed (64.2% and 75.6% respectively). In the Spanish newspaper *El País*, however, the predominant tendency to use the masculine (M) which was observed in the civil service dataset remains, although there is an increase in the masculine and feminine (M/F) and unspecified (O) categories in the Spanish newspaper sample.

As no editorial policy on the drafting of job vacancies has been found in any of the four newspapers, it may be concluded that this task is the company's responsibility and not the newspaper's. The variety of forms observed in the sample analysed points at this direction.

The following chart reveals an overview of the analysis of the newspaper corpus in the four countries for the 2007-2008 period.





**Figure 7.4 Results of the newspaper dataset across four languages (2007-2008)**

Figure 7.4 shows that the corpus of job advertisements that uses the masculine (M) job title category the most corresponds to Spain (57.1%), followed by France (13.9%) with Germany in last position (5.9%). This is similar to the earlier newspaper sample. Curiously the only country that makes use of feminine job titles is Germany with 5.1% whereas no occurrences of feminine occupational nouns have been found in any of the other three countries. In the fourth job title category (M/F), Germany shows a high incidence of job titles cast in both the masculine and the feminine (78.8%). France is the second country in this category (56.9%). Most of the French job titles in this category include the gender descriptor *h/f* (*homme/femme*) - the equivalent of *m/f*- although the job title normally remains in the masculine or epicene genders. Surprisingly the guidelines for non-sexist language reviewed in the present study do not recommend the use of the *h/f* descriptor as a solution to the avoidance of gender-biased language. It does not seem to solve the issue of the masculine as generic which is what the guidelines recommended. It does, however, imply that jobs are open to both sexes, with sometimes the feminine form appearing first (*f/h*).

There is a growing trend in the corpus to use unspecified expressions (O) such as collective nouns, abstract expressions and metonymy to advertise job vacancies. The highest number of occurrences in this category has been found

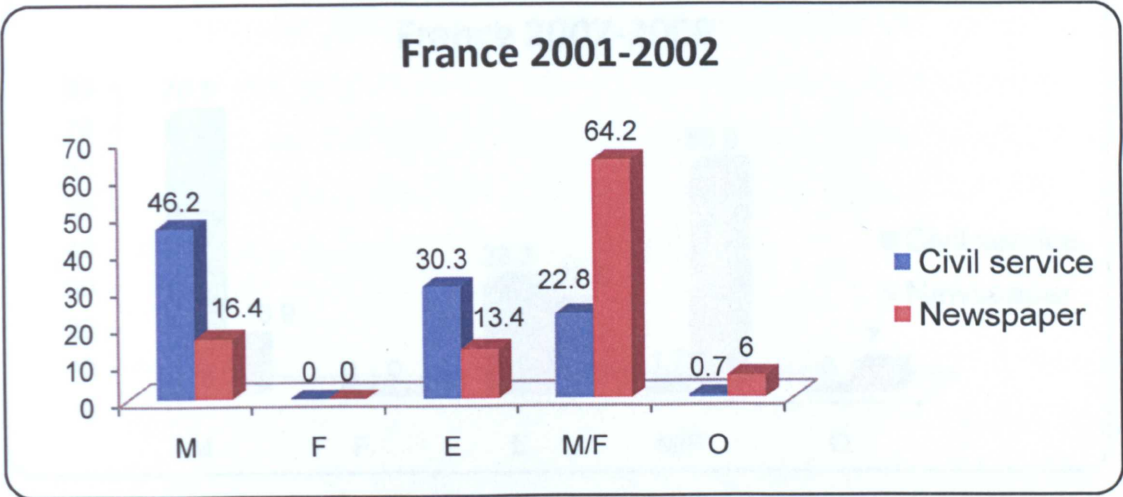


in the Spanish newspaper corpus. Collective expressions such as *personal*, etc can constitute a potential solution to the avoidance of the masculine as generic in Spanish. No cases of gender descriptors such as *m/f* have been found in the Spanish sample, which contrasts sharply with the French and German corpora.

**7.3 Comparative analysis of results from the civil service and newspaper data**

The case study involved the study of offers of employment from a sample of civil service and newspapers sources with the aim of establishing patterns of language usage and application of the guidelines. The following sections present a comparative analysis of the two sources of data per country.

**7.3.1.1 France (2001-2002)**



**Figure 7.5 France: Results 2001-2002**

The analysis of the two samples shows many significant differences in the results between the civil service and the newspaper corpora. The most relevant difference between the two areas is the marked reduction in the number of masculine job titles (M) and the increase in the number of gender-splitting cases (M/F) in the newspaper corpus. This is relevant because although most of the guidelines in French come from governmental institutions, when it comes to their implementation, the civil service does not seem to take into consideration any of the recommendations. On the other hand, the job advertisements in the selected French newspaper constitute an attempt to provide a greater female visibility in language by means of the inclusion of the descriptor *h/f* (male/female). It is, however, still debatable whether the inclusion of the

masculine/feminine descriptor (*h/f*) following a masculine word constitutes a case of feminisation. For some it may be considered as a solution to the morphological marking of gender in grammatical gender languages. There is, however, the opposite argument that states that the masculine form is still predominant. Nonetheless, the fact that feminisation has not been achieved by means of the recommended strategies, namely splitting of masculine and feminine terms and the use of generic abstract expressions, indicates that although guidelines may have provided a greater awareness towards non-sexist language, the principle of economy and legibility of texts is perhaps more important.

7.3.1.2 France (2007-2008)

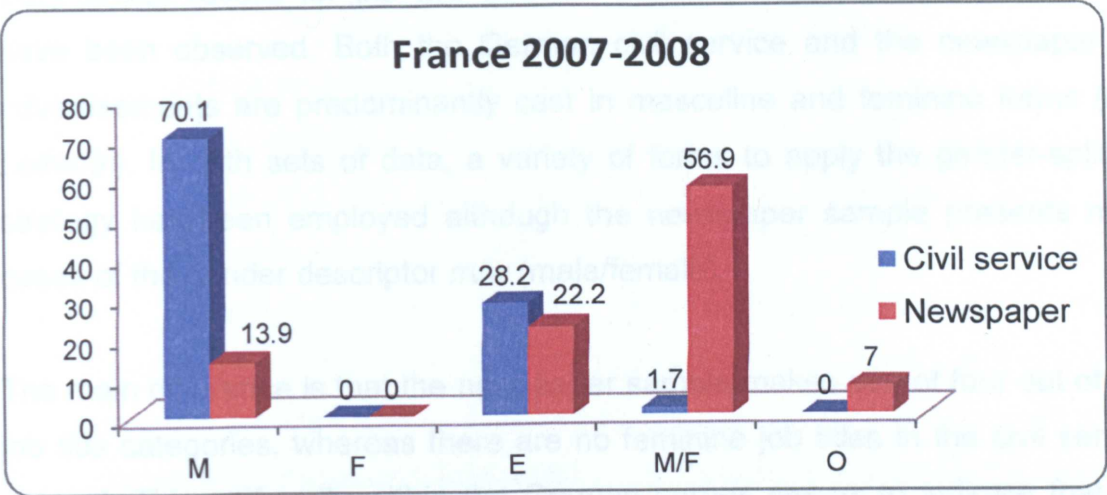


Figure 7.6 France: Results 2007-2008

Similarly to the previous chart for 2001-2002, there is a marked difference between the two datasets in terms of the categorisation of job titles. Whereas in the civil service there is a majority of masculine job titles (70.1%) and a very small number of M/F job titles, in the newspaper sample the opposite is the case in the sense that only 13.9% are cast in the masculine but the majority are cast in the gender-splitting category (56.9%). Yet again it is worth noting that the most of the job titles classified here as M/F involve the use of the dual gender descriptor *h/f* normally in brackets (*h/f*) following the job title to indicate that the position is available to either men or women. However, despite its high incidence in the newspaper sample, the French guidelines do not recommend this strategy.



7.3.2.1 Germany (2001-2002)

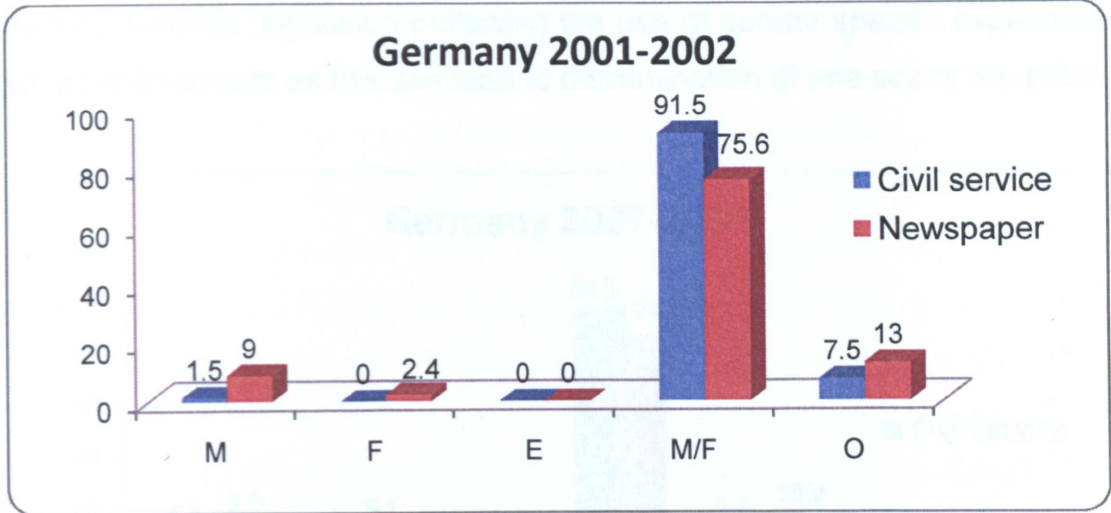


Figure 7.7 Germany: Results 2001-2002

Very similar results for the two German datasets from the 2001-2002 period have been observed. Both the German civil service and the newspaper job advertisements are predominantly cast in masculine and feminine forms (e.g. *Leiter/in*). In both sets of data, a variety of forms to apply the gender-splitting strategy has been employed although the newspaper sample presents more cases of the gender descriptor *m/w* (male/female).

The main difference is that the newspaper sample makes use of four out of five job title categories, whereas there are no feminine job titles in the civil service dataset. This uniformity within the German corpus seems to indicate that the gender-specification strategy with the systematic use of both the masculine and feminine forms in German is well established and consistent in most contexts, especially within the civil service data (91.5%). This seems to comply with the German guidelines for non-sexist language as identified in Chapter 5.

7.3.2.2 Germany (2007-2008)

The table shows a higher percentage of masculine job titles in the newspaper corpus than in the civil service. Similarly there are more feminine job titles in the newspaper corpus than in the civil service one. At the same time there are fewer cases of gender-splitting in the newspaper sample. This may be due to a more committed endorsement of the guidelines on non-sexist language within the civil service whereas newspapers do not have this commitment and are

“freer” to publish job advertisements which in theory do not comply with the existing German legislation outlawing the use of gender specific expressions in job advertisements as this can lead to discrimination of one sex or the other.

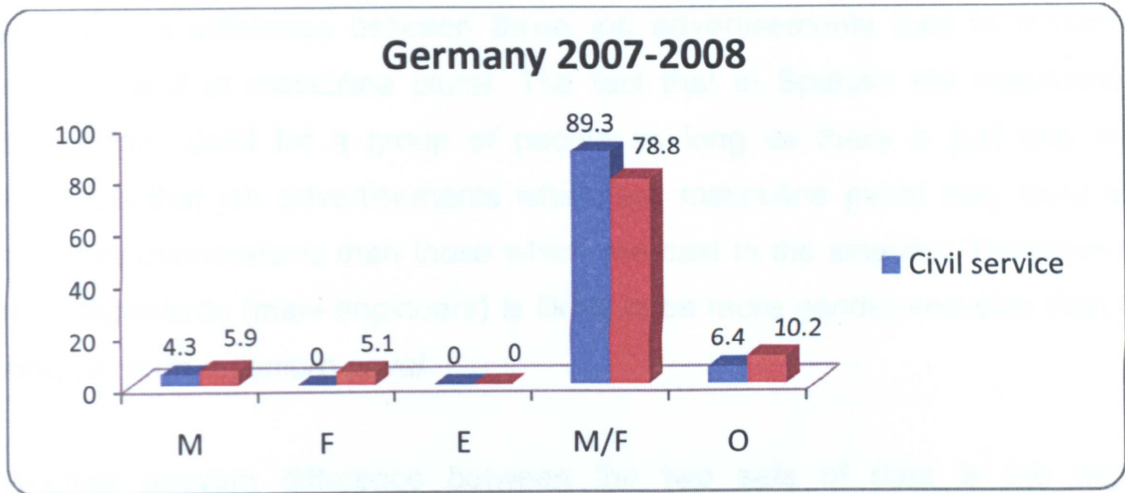


Figure 7.8 Germany: Results 2007-2008

More English terminology has been found in the German newspaper sample, probably due to the fact that some of the jobs advertised come from multinationals which advertise positions in English (and not just in the job title but also in the job description). Amongst the reasons for the use of English job titles instead of job titles in the language of that particular country is that English job titles are often considered to be gender-neutral, unlike German ones which are necessarily morphologically marked for gender. In this respect, the literature has revealed that the use of English job titles may reduce the need to use masculine and feminine specific job titles.

7.3.3.1 Spain (2001-2002)

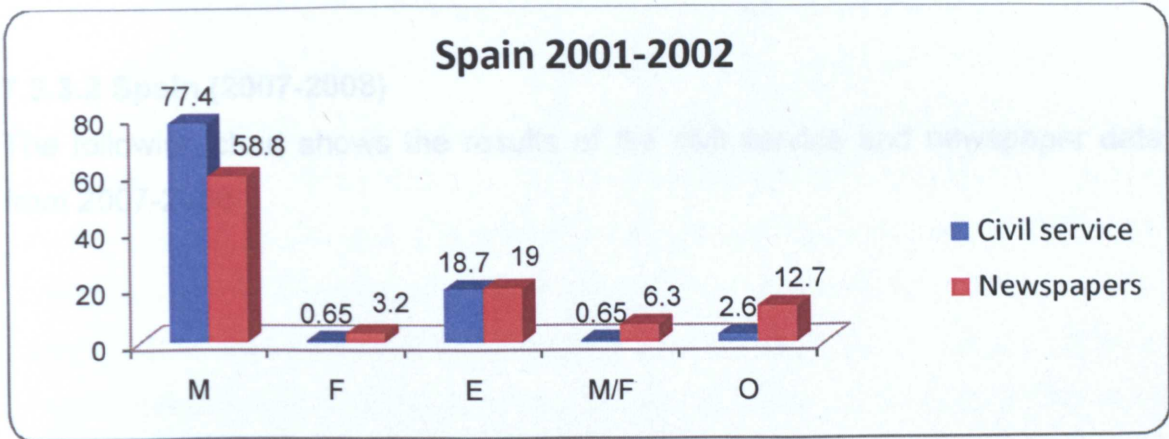


Figure 7.9 Spain: Results 2001-2002

The most significant difference between these sets of data is the higher number of masculine job titles in the Spanish civil service (-18.6%). Yet most job titles in the newspaper corpus are also masculine (58.8%). This indicates that in Spanish the masculine is extensively used to advertise job vacancies. There is, however, a difference between those job advertisements cast in masculine singular and in masculine plural. The fact that in Spanish the masculine is traditionally used for a group of people as long as there is just one male indicates that job advertisements which are masculine plural may have less negative connotations than those which are cast in the singular. Therefore the term *ingenieros* (male engineers) is likely to be more gender-inclusive than the singular term *ingeniero naval*.

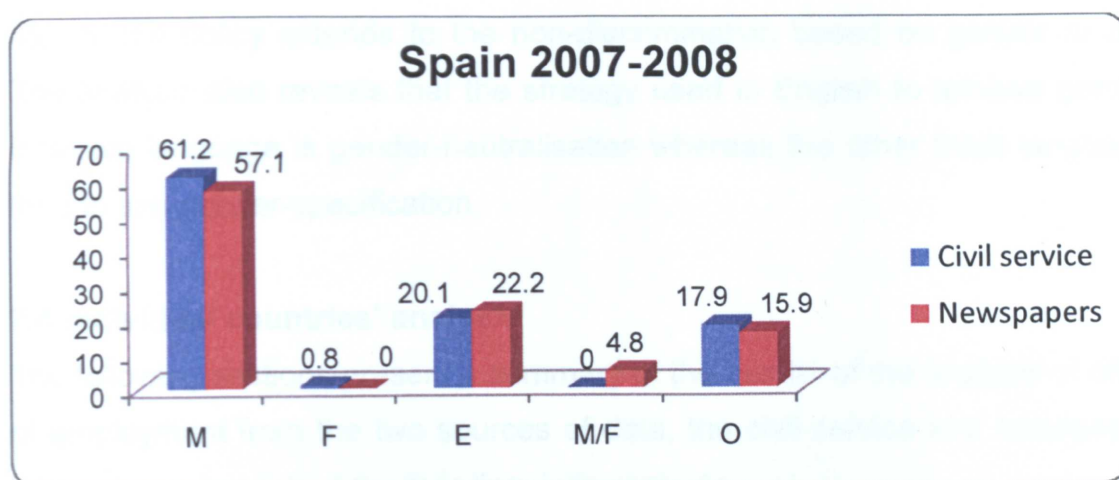
Another relevant difference between the two sets of data is the higher proportion of unspecified job titles in the newspaper dataset, which mainly include English job titles. It has already been noted that the strategy of using unspecified collective or abstract terminology in Spanish has been revealed as the preferred strategy to avoid the generic masculine. The inclusion of English job titles in the newspaper data also contrasts with the civil service data where no foreign job titles have been observed.

On the other hand, the distribution of Spanish newspaper job advertisements fall within all five job title categories. Still, the predominant use of the masculine gender in both sets of data and the very low incidence of job titles in the gender-splitting category points at the disregard of the guidelines which have been issued in Spain over the last twenty years.

#### **7.3.3.2 Spain (2007-2008)**

The following chart shows the results of the civil service and newspaper data from 2007-2008:





**Figure 7.10 Spain: Results 2007-2008**

The results of the comparative analysis of the Spanish civil service and newspaper samples for the 2007-2008 period show no significant differences in the masculine, feminine and epicene categories, yet it is significant in the unspecified category (O) for both sets of data. The latter seems to be the preferred strategy to replace the generic masculine. Also welcomed is the increase (+4.8%) in the number of job titles which fall within the M/F job title category in the Spanish newspaper data. Although still small, it indicates that this is a strategy which is increasingly used in order to avoid the generic masculine in Spanish.

### 7.3.4 United Kingdom (2002-2008)

The analysis of civil service and newspaper offers of employment in the UK has yielded no significant differences between the two sources of data as in English, as a natural gender language, most job titles are unmarked for gender. The analysis of the job description for any mark of gender in third person pronouns, for instance, has shown that other strategies have been employed to avoid gender-specification. These strategies include the use of plural nouns, the use of singular they and their and the use of passive constructions which are widely used in English nowadays. The insertion of an equal opportunities statement in newspaper advertisements is also an indication of the commitment to equality, although this also refers to other areas such as age, race, religion or even sexual orientation. It is significant that this is not common practice in the other three linguistic contexts, although in the case of the French newspaper *Le*

*Monde* the policy extends to the non-discrimination based on gender or age. The analysis also reveals that the strategy used in English to achieve gender-inclusive language is gender-neutralisation whereas the other three languages tend to use gender-specification.

**7.4 Individual countries’ analysis**

The following sections present a summary of the results of the analysis of offers of employment from the two sources of data, the civil service and newspapers job sections, in each of the four linguistic contexts.

**7.4.1 France**

The analysis of the two French sets of data has produced very different results. On the one hand, the civil service data present a high incidence of masculine job titles whereas on the other, this trend is reversed in the newspaper data with a higher proportion of job titles assigned to the gender-splitting category. The conclusion could be that the French civil service is still lagging behind in the implementation of the recommendations whereas newspapers show a higher degree of flexibility to advertise jobs despite the fact that no editorial policy on the use of gender-inclusive terminology has been found.

The following charts show the distribution of job title categories for the French civil service and newspaper samples for the 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 periods:

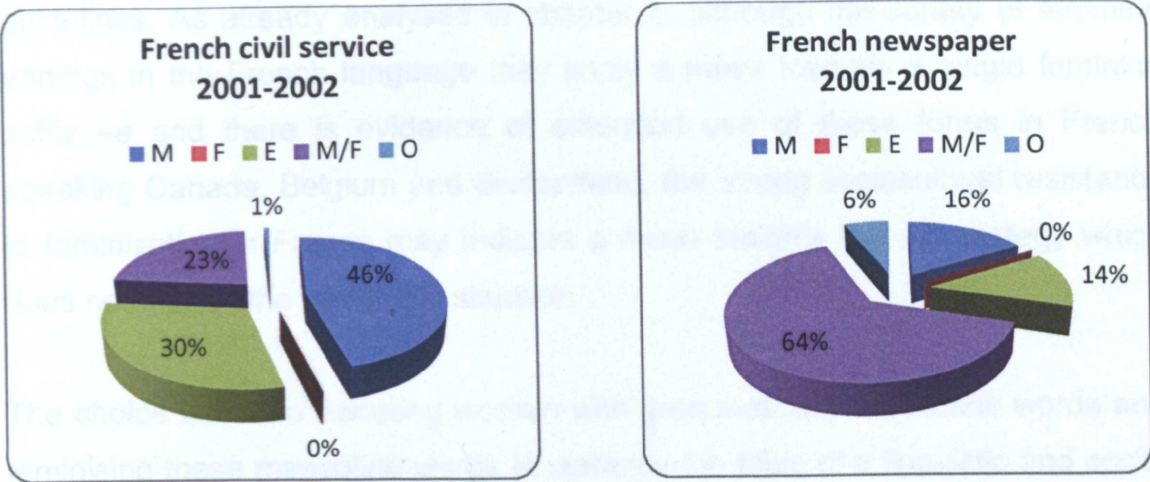


FIGURE 7.11: FRANCE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE AND NEWSPAPER DATA (2001-2002)



The following charts present a comparison of the civil service and newspaper results from 2007-2008:

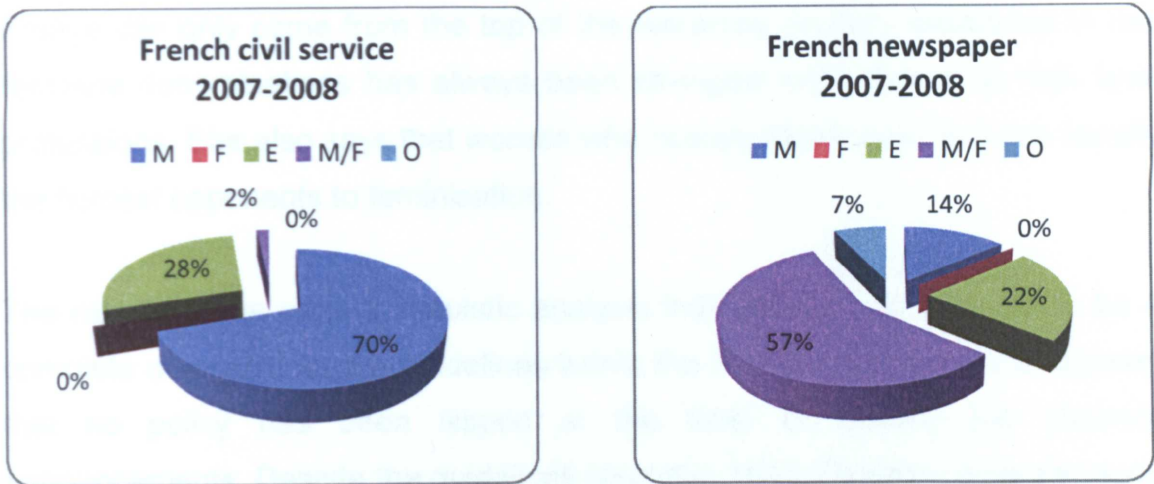


FIGURE 7.12: FRANCE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE AND NEWSPAPER DATA (2007-2008)

Although the majority of French newspaper job advertisements have been assigned to the gender-splitting category, the fact that feminisation in the newspaper sample has been achieved mainly by means of the addition of the gender descriptor *h/f* is also highly significant. This strategy could presumably be construed as a simple way to include males and females whereby there is no morphological change to the job title which, as already observed in the literature, could pose linguistic dilemmas for French speakers (*une chercheure* or *une chercheuse*?). However, this strategy is not recommended in any of the French guidelines. As already analysed in chapter 5, although the variety of feminine endings in the French language may imply a move towards a single feminine suffix *-e* and there is evidence of extended use of these forms in French speaking Canada, Belgium and Switzerland, the strong sociocultural resistance to feminisation in France may indicate a move towards the *h/f* strategy which does not disrupt the traditional situation.

The choice between denoting women with grammatically masculine words and feminising these masculine words is currently the topic of a linguistic and social controversy in France as well as in other French-speaking countries. Many people, including women, feel that using a word which is morphologically marked for feminine devalues their professional status. Some studies have



shown that many women tend to retain the masculine job title of their profession in order to retain the higher status. Burr (2003) argues that linguistic change in France can only come from the top of the hierarchy. In fact, reluctance to use feminine denominations has always been strongest with respect to high level professions. She also says that women who occupy higher positions are usually the fiercest opponents to feminisation.

The results of the current linguistic analysis indicate that there seems to be a complete disregard for the guidelines within the French civil service. It appears that no policy has been issued at the level of drafting job vacancy announcements. Despite the guidelines issued in 1999 (*Femme j'écris ton nom*) there does not seem to be a uniform approach from the different government departments with regard to non-sexist language. The most illustrative example of this is the use of the non-sexist gender descriptor *candidats féminins et masculins* in one data set but not in the other one five years later. The fact that most French civil service job vacancies use the masculine form is even more surprising in the light of the recommendations on the avoidance of linguistic sexism in French which were drafted as a result of the Prime Minister's circular to all members of the government in 1998 and therefore represent an institutional attempt to introduce non-sexist language usages.

#### 7.4.2 Germany

The analysis of the German corpus has yielded very similar results for both datasets over the five year period. The preferred strategy, which is fairly consistent in the two domains, is the systematic use of masculine and feminine forms (or gender-specification). Germany is therefore the country where guidelines on non-sexist language have been applied most consistently over a five year period. The fact that gender-splitting is applied in both German sets of data means that this strategy is well established and implemented consistently. However, the tendency to use the gender descriptor *m/w* (*männlich/weiblich* [male/female]) in the later set of data points at the similarities with the French newspaper data. Perhaps this is being perceived as a simpler way for gender-inclusiveness rather than the systematic repetition of both masculine and

feminine forms. The following charts show a comparison of the distribution of job title categories for the 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 periods respectively:

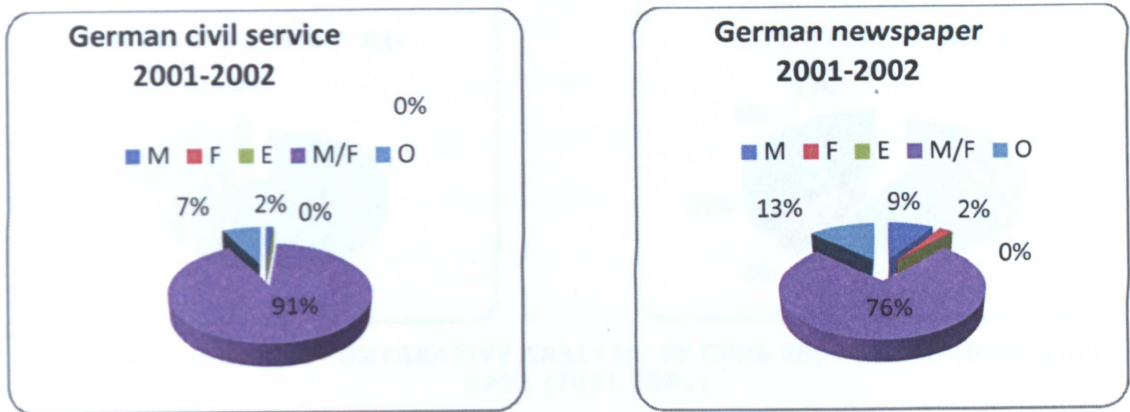


FIGURE 7.13: GERMANY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE AND NEWSPAPER DATA (2001-2002)

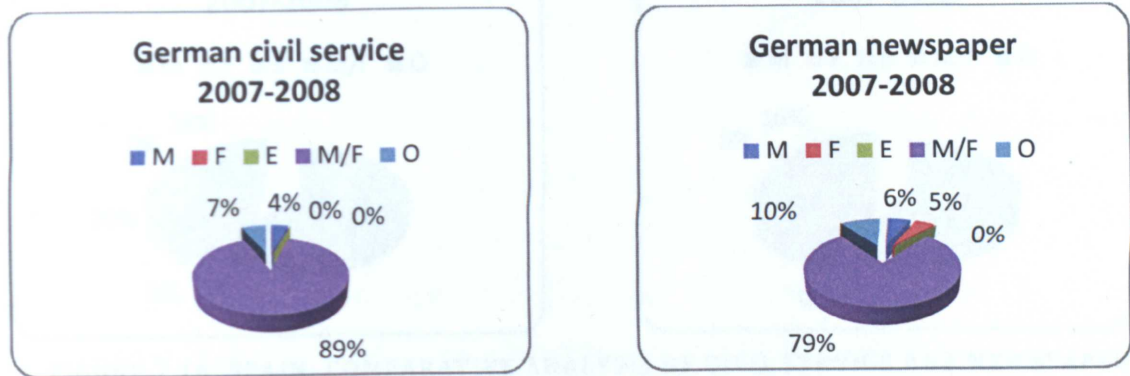


FIGURE 7.14: GERMANY: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE AND NEWSPAPER DATA (2007-2008)

### 7.4.3 Spain

This investigation has shown a very high incidence of the use of masculine terms in the Spanish sample. It has also revealed very similar results in terms of job title classification for both the civil service and newspaper data across the five year period. The analysis has confirmed earlier research which concluded that, although a series of recommendations to avoid sexist usages was issued in the late 1980s and during the 1990s (see, for example, Nissen, 2002), no major changes in language have been found. Nevertheless there is increasing evidence of the practice of gender abstraction in Spanish which seems to be the preferred solution to the issue of gender-inclusiveness. The following charts show a comparison of the results from the two periods of time:

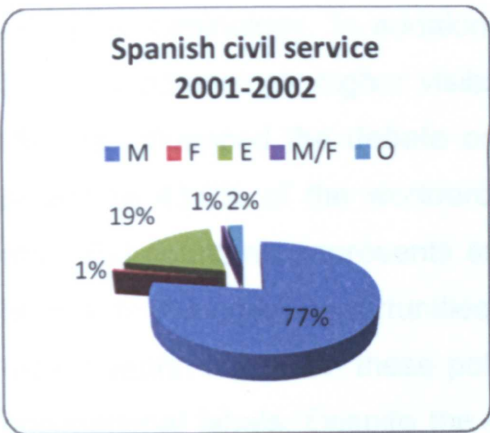


FIGURE 7.15: SPAIN: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE AND NEWSPAPER DATA (2001-2002)

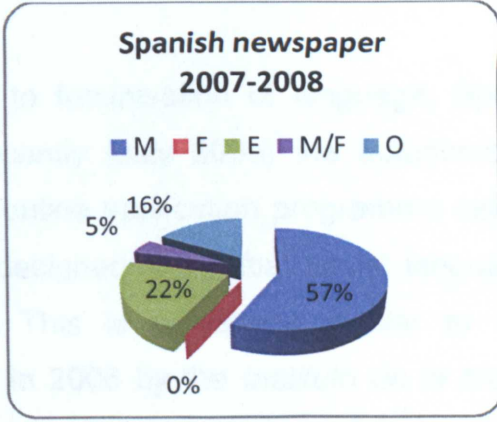
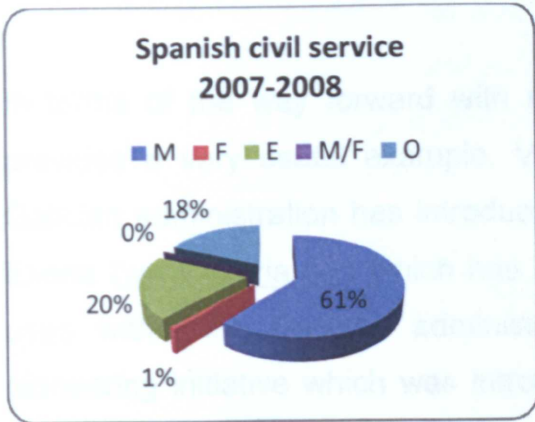


FIGURE 7.16: SPAIN: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SERVICE AND NEWSPAPER DATA (2007-2008)

Although the results of the present analysis show that application of the recommendations in Spain is slow, lagging behind the other countries of the study and do not seem to present a positive picture regarding the Spanish corpus, the review of the literature has revealed that the elimination of sexist language usages has become an important part of measures to overcome discrimination based on sex in Spain. A great deal of commitment to gender equality has emerged in Spain in the last ten years which has included the use of a language that does not discriminate against women. For example, in 2003 the regional government of Valencia passed a law on equal opportunities for men and women which specifically included an article on non-sexist language in administrative documents (Ley 9/2003 de la Generalitat Valenciana). More recently in 2007 the central government passed the *Ley de igualdad efectiva* (law on effective equality) which also specifies the issue of using gender-



inclusive terminology. In addition the fact that in the last five years there has been an increasingly higher visibility of Spanish women in all spheres of public life has influenced the debate on non-sexist language. Women in Spain now constitute 43.6% of the workforce (INE, 2008) which, although lower than in other EU countries, represents an increase over previous decades. This could be due to the equal opportunities policies which have been passed in Spain in recent years. However, these policies are not fully reflected in the language of occupational labels. Despite the institutional efforts to remove sexist language uses, the analysis of the corpus of job titles in the civil service and a national newspaper shows that the masculine is predominantly used in most domains.

In terms of the way forward with regard to feminisation of language, Spain provides a very useful example. Very recently (July 2009) the autonomous Galician administration has introduced an online application programme called Exeria ([www.exeria.net](http://www.exeria.net)) which has been designed to combat sexist language uses within the Galician administration. This is something similar to the pioneering initiative which was introduced in 2006 by the *Instituto de la Mujer* ([nombra.en.red](http://nombra.en.red)), although Exeria identifies sexist usages in one of the regional languages of Spain, gallego (Galician). The application allows for the linguistic revision of texts and offers non-sexist alternatives. For example, if a text includes the term *bibliotecario* ([masc.] librarian), Exeria offers three non-sexist alternatives:

1. The juxtaposition of masculine and feminine forms: *bibliotecario o bibliotecaria*
2. The reverse order so that the masculine does not always appear first: *bibliotecaria o bibliotecario*
3. *Bibliotecario/a*: use of graphic symbols such as the slash.

Up to five alternatives are provided for any given expression. The programme detects terms and expressions which are potentially discriminatory and offers solutions and alternatives. As far as the researcher knows, this type of online application to detect sexist uses and suggest non-sexist alternatives is exclusive to Spain. No electronic programmes of this sort have been found in

any of the languages of the study. Perhaps this is an indication that the Spanish administration is taking the issue of feminisation of language seriously and has invested a great amount of time and money to develop such a programme. It seems that in order to address the issue of sexism in Spanish language, the way forward is the creation of online software to detect sexist uses and offer alternatives.

#### **7.4.4 United Kingdom**

The analysis of the UK corpus has produced a similar pattern for both the civil service and the newspaper data. This is mainly due to the fact that English, as a natural gender language, does not pose the linguistic problems that the other languages of the study have encountered on the road to feminisation. However, it has been found that some strategies to avoid the use of generic masculine pronouns have been employed (such as the use of the plural forms or singular *they/their*). The addition of a note which indicates that employers are committed to equal opportunities is also a reflection of the endorsement to gender equality.

#### **7.5 Final conclusions**

This chapter has analysed the results of the case study and compared the data across languages and over the five year period to ascertain tendencies of usage. The linguistic analysis of job offers in four languages has helped to identify patterns of language use across the four socio-linguistic settings as well as the preferred strategy in each language.

The main finding of the linguistic analysis is that there is no uniform strategy for the feminisation of occupational nomenclature across the four languages of study. At the same time, there is no uniformity within each language. The longitudinal study has revealed a few differences in the two sets of data (civil service/newspapers) between 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 although these are not highly significant. What is relevant are the differences between the two sets of data. The civil service in France and Spain seem to continue with the traditional practice of using the masculine and epicene forms for most job titles, which indicates a low application of the recommendations for non-sexist

language. This seems to correspond to the concern regarding the lack of gender-neutral forms in French and Spanish. The systematic use of both masculine and feminine forms in these languages seems to be frowned upon in the interest of the legibility of the texts. The most practicable solution in these grammatical gender languages seems to be the use of the masculine as generic, which, at the same time, has also been the object of many criticisms as revealed in the literature.

On the other hand, the analysis has revealed that the gender-splitting strategy has been systematically applied in both German contexts. This indicates that gender-splitting is a possible and viable way to feminise language. The main form of feminisation identified in the analysis is the use of feminine markers by means of the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine forms or other less formal markers. This type of feminisation is the preferred strategy in both the German civil service and newspaper corpus data. Yet other forms of feminisation are also used, despite the fact that they are not recommended by any set of guidelines. In French they include the addition of the words *homme ou femme*, *candidats féminins et masculins* or the abbreviation *h/f* added to the job title: e.g. *Directeur (h/f)*. In German it involves the addition of *m/w* to the job title. The use of this gender descriptor which has no morphological mark as opposed to the morphological marking of feminine could be considered as a type of feminisation. This strategy mixes gender-neutralisation by using just a job title (and usually in the masculine) and gender-specification by including the *m/f* descriptor. However, Conrick (1997:225) considers that the use of *h/f* is a sloppy attempt at inclusiveness. Moreover, the addition of the gender descriptor *h/f* is often redundant when used with epicene nouns such as *analyste (h/f)* or with foreign titles, e.g. *business developer (h/f)*. It is also obvious that there is no linguistic reason why these job titles could not have been feminised (Conrick, 1997:226): e.g. *un chargé de mission (h/f)* vs. *un (e) chargé(e) de mission*. It is significant that only two of the four countries of study appear to use this method: France and Germany. Yet, it is not a strategy frequently used in the Spanish or British data. A possible explanation is that in English most job titles are gender-neutral anyway, so the inclusion of *m/f* after the job title may seem as redundant.



The indication is that in English *m/f* seems to be used mainly for job titles in international settings.

It is also highly pertinent to note that this form of feminisation has not been found in any recommendations for non-sexist language. However, it could be argued that feminisation of this sort could circumvent the dilemmas which grammatical gender language users face in the formation of feminine nouns and it is easy to understand the use of this strategy in newspaper job advertisements because space, and most likely, costs are at a premium.

Apart from the gender-splitting strategy, the analysis has also revealed another strategy to avoid sexist language: gender abstraction. This approach is more evident in German (for example, *Bürohilfe* [office help] or *Professur* [professorship]) and Spanish (for example, *personal de oficios*; *escala de gestión*). In fact, there is evidence that this technique is widely used in everyday Spanish to replace the masculine as generic. Promoters of this strategy claim that it is less repetitive than the explicit mentioning of masculine and feminine which in other contexts (apart from offers of employment) has been criticised.

The fact that the German corpus reveals a preference for the gender-splitting strategy and that there are increasing signs of this trend in France too is an indication that feminisation is a possible attainable goal. Promoters of non-sexist language in these countries may adopt this strategy to obtain a language which is inclusive of women and men. On the other hand, opponents of non-sexist language reform can claim that German has a single feminine suffix which simplifies things as opposed to Romance languages such as French or Spanish which have different morphological resources to form the feminine. Despite the arguments in favour and against gender-based language reform, the main finding is that both at international and national level language has been modified to various degrees to reflect the changing role of women in society. The common intention in all four countries has been to make the language of public communication free of gender bias.

## **CHAPTER 8            CONCLUSION**

### **8.1 Overview**

This final chapter aims to evaluate the research process from a critical perspective. The following section examines the success of the research aims and objectives. It also identifies the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are discussed with reference to language policies in public communication at international level and in four European countries. The investigation has been updated constantly in order to incorporate new developments in the field of non-sexist language reform. This updating process contributes to the current debate and informs further research into the topic.

### **8.2 Aims and objectives**

The present research has sought to identify and evaluate the different strategies that have been adopted in order to eliminate discrimination of women and men from language and to achieve linguistic equality in a European context. The individual responses in four languages highlight the possible strategies showing the similarities and/or differences between languages and some of the implications and outcomes of the different approaches. It has been identified that most initiatives for gender-based linguistic reform have been conceived in the context of equal opportunities policies, mainly from government bodies following national and supranational legislation prohibiting sex discrimination in the workplace. The detailed analysis of various guidelines for non-sexist language in each of the four sociolinguistic contexts, as well as the testing of their practical application, has therefore sought to contribute to both theory and practice. The value of the current study lies in the potentially beneficial applications which can be derived from the linguistic analysis of employment vacancies. These can include, for instance, recommendations for professional practice on a practical level which could constitute an important issue in recruitment procedures and selection of applicants. At the same time this can encourage the development of training programmes for staff involved in these processes.

The research has identified that the preferred approach to the avoidance of sexist language is that of gender-specification in grammatical gender languages, whereas in English the preferred approach is gender-neutralisation. The main gender-specification strategy is that of gender-splitting as observed in the sample data from Germany and from the French newspaper data. This strategy involves primarily the splitting of job titles in both the masculine and the feminine forms which has been considered as a contributing factor for a greater visibility of women in language (Pauwels, 1998). At the same time, this technique also involves the inclusion of a gender descriptor such as *m/f* (male/female) following the (usually masculine) job title. The latter strategy mixes the gender-neutralisation and gender-specification approaches in order to imply that the position is open to all without any preference for one sex or the other. However, the fact that feminisation has not been exclusively achieved by means of the recommended strategies, which is the systematic use of both masculine and feminine words, emphasizes that the main role of the guidelines is to raise awareness on the topic and therefore a certain degree of flexibility is appropriate.

In order to carry out the main aim, the research has had four supporting objectives:

1. To identify the general recommendations issued by international and European organizations on the avoidance and elimination of sexism in language
2. To identify and analyse the recommendations that four European countries have adopted to apply the principle of equal treatment in reference to language use
3. To evaluate whether the recommendations to avoid sexist language have been implemented in practice, and
4. To compare and contrast the different approaches in order to identify current usage trends

First, it has been identified that the issue of gender equality has a strong international dimension and most supranational organisations, such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union have shown a great deal of interest in the use of non-sexist language. The three international organisations which were selected for study have endeavoured to issue recommendations to avoid gender bias in their documents as part of their

gender equality commitment. For instance, the guidelines on gender-neutral language which were published by UNESCO in 1999 in three of the six official UN languages have become key reference documents for other gender-inclusive guidelines at national level. Similarly, the Council of Europe's 1990 recommendation to member states on the avoidance of sexist language has also been a valuable reference for European countries to work on in the field of linguistic sexism. Equally one of the European Union's objectives has been to ensure equal opportunities for women and men and to combat any discrimination on the grounds of sex. A brief analysis of some of these organisations' basic texts, however, has shown a different picture as, despite these institutional efforts there is a predominance of the masculine used as generic both in occupational terminology and in third person pronouns. However, it is important to highlight the role of these supranational organisations in influencing member states' policies and to raise awareness at international level.

The second objective was to identify the recommendations on the elimination of sexist language in four socio-linguistic contexts. The investigation has revealed that since the 1980s the four countries of the study have made various attempts to avoid sexist language and that linguistic changes are gradually taking place. The main instrument to modify language has been the issuing of guidelines on how to avoid sexist language. Most of these guidelines have originated in equal opportunities bodies, for example in Spain where the central government's *Instituto de la Mujer* has been highly active in the study of linguistic sexism in Spain. Yet, although the guidelines have been sponsored or issued by governmental bodies, the aim of the guidelines has been mainly to raise awareness and they are not meant to be prescriptive. The idea behind this seems to be that linguistic changes are difficult to legislate and this is the reason why they take the form of recommendations.

The third objective was to evaluate the implementation of the guidelines in practice. To this end, a corpus of job vacancy announcements has been analysed into different job title categories. The aim of the analysis was to examine whether the recommendations and the changes suggested have influenced linguistic usage. The analysis of a corpus of occupational

nomenclature in the public service and in a national newspaper has been very informative in the sense that it has revealed a lack of uniformity across the four countries and within the countries themselves. The civil services in France and Spain, for instance, seem to be rather slow in making progress in the area of gender-inclusive occupational nomenclature. It may well be that as grammatical gender languages, there are more obstacles, social as well as linguistic, to introduce a language which is free of sexist bias. This leads to the conclusion that the controversy over the feminisation of language has to be considered largely a social issue and not merely a linguistic one (Houdebine, 1998). This coincides with the literature which has pointed out that many institutional linguistic reforms only focus on the linguistic aspects, ignoring the “context sensitivity” of language use (Speer, 2005).

The analysis of the corpus of occupational terminology has revealed that the country that seems to have made the most progress in this area of feminisation of language is Germany. The investigation has shown a very high incidence of the gender splitting strategy in occupational nomenclature both in the German civil service and in the newspaper data. Both in the 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 samples a vast majority of advertisements were cast in both the masculine and the feminine forms (75.6% in the first period and 78.8% during the second). This seems a marked improvement since the 1980s as previous studies of German occupational nomenclature have showed that the practice of using the generic masculine to advertise jobs was commonplace. For example, Fleischhauer (1983, quoted in Pauwels, 1998) reports that 77% of advertisements in the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine* were cast in the masculine in 1983.

The final objective of comparing and contrasting trends in the four languages has revealed that both at international and national level language has been modified to various degrees to reflect the changing role of women in society. The common intention in all four countries has been to make the language of public communication free of gender bias. There is evidence that language change is taking place; however, linguistic change is gradual and linguistic reform does not necessarily indicate social change. Hence it seems reasonable to presume that there is still a long way to go to obtain total linguistic

feminisation and that the full effect of the recommendations is yet to be revealed. The analysis has also explored how the different strategies to achieve gender-inclusive language which were identified in the literature (Pauwels (1998) and Mucchi-Faina (2005)) are being implemented in practice, and consequently it is unclear what shape the feminisation of language will take in future.

### **8.3 Limitations**

The researcher acknowledges some limitations of the present study. The case study data was taken from a single issue of job advertisements over a five year period which may not be representative of all sites where jobs are advertised. However, the sample provides a flavour of how job vacancies are being advertised in four languages of various morphological and syntactic characteristics and in two different domains (civil service and newspapers). Despite the limited sample size, the researcher feels that the chosen sample of job vacancy announcements in two different areas was sufficient as it became clearer that there was a pattern of usage. Consequently it was felt that there was no need for a larger sample. In future, however, a larger exploratory study which could quantify an extensive corpus of data from a broader variety of sources could be carried out.

Another limitation is the range of dates in the longitudinal study. The present study has analysed whether job advertisements in two domains have changed over a five year period. This period of time may be considered short for a diachronic study of this nature. However, evidence of changes has been revealed in this short period. In future, a longitudinal study over a 10 year period or longer will perhaps reveal different trends in the application of non-sexist language reform.

### **8.4 Areas of further research**

The current study contributes to the existing work in the area of cross-cultural research by offering a basis upon which to develop further investigations of a similar nature in other languages. While it is acknowledged that there is considerable scope for future interdisciplinary work of this nature, the present



research offers a comprehensive account of the recommendations which have been formulated in four national contexts to avoid sexist language.

One possible area of research is the study of feminisation of language by sector of activity to ascertain whether some occupations use more feminine titles than others, as well as the reasons behind this. One of the arguments analysed in the literature is that some sectors of the economy are heavily feminised such as education, nursing, etc (horizontal gender segregation). A possible research idea is to ascertain whether it is easier to find feminine job titles in those “feminine” sectors whereas in sectors traditionally occupied by men, there is a reluctance to feminise.

Another avenue to explore is the effect of non-sexist language, and by extension of any linguistic change, on the workforce. Although it is obvious that the feminisation of language cannot guarantee non-discrimination in the workplace, the question is whether more women are recruited because of the non-sexist language policy of the employer.

Another area of further research is the impact of online software tools to detect sexist usages. The present study has revealed a trend –specifically in Spain- in the development of software programmes to detect sexist usages of language which offer non-sexist alternatives. The application and effectiveness of these tools together with the identification of the main users of the software would contribute to the body of research.

Finally, the literature has shown that linguistic changes have an important relationship with attitudes towards change. The feminisation of language is not only a linguistic aim but also has social consequences. The consolidation or the weakening of the proposals to avoid sexist language depends largely on the attitude of the speakers, and above all of women themselves. Some people believe that the feminisation of occupational terminology does not address the underlying problem of changing attitudes. As Ehrlich and King (1992) argued, the kind of language change suggested by non-sexist language guidelines can only be provisional because meaning is not fixed. They also suggested that

language reform is more successful when it is part of a wider initiative and has strong support. Although the results of the present analysis have corroborated previous studies, this investigation has also revealed other sociocultural factors which influence the adoption of gender-inclusive forms. In this regard, a qualitative survey of attitudes among native (and non-native) speakers of the four (or more) languages could contribute positively to the debate on linguistic feminisation, especially in grammatical gender languages, and it is therefore an important area for further research.

### **8.5 The future of feminisation**

The present study has identified the emergence of preferred alternatives for non-sexist language in four different linguistic contexts. It has found that in French and German the preferred technique is that of gender-specification (especially in newspapers). In English the main approach is that of gender-neutralisation whereas in Spanish a mixture of both approaches has been noted. The study has also found that in all four countries there has been a great deal of institutional endorsement of non-sexist language mainly through the formulation of guidelines. Also at international level, many organisations which enshrine the principle of equal opportunities have promoted the need to make the language of documents gender-neutral. The formulation of recommendations on the elimination of sexist language seems to be indicative of a commitment to the principle of gender equality. It remains to be seen to what extent the recommendations will be fully implemented in practice and the effects of the guidelines on actual language use.

In this study recommendations on the avoidance of sexist language have been identified at supranational level and in four European countries. The difficulties encountered in each sociolinguistic context together with the reactions to this controversial issue have also been evaluated. It is difficult to determine whether the use of a non-sexist job title will have an effect on the number of appointments given to women, but it is obvious that a sex-specific job title may prevent people applying for it. If, for instance, the job title is for *un ingeniero* (a male engineer), the implication may be that the position is only open to male

applicants whereas if it were cast in dual forms as *ingeniero/ingeniera*, perceptions would be different and more women may apply for it.

The question to bear in mind is to what extent any linguistic change contributes to changes in behaviour or whether changes in society will need to take place first and language will follow. The relationship between language and society goes back to the original feminist debate of whether language mirrors society or language influences society (linguistic determinism). The findings of the present study point at the middle solution that language reflects society but it also influences attitudes. Therefore if more women have access to a wider range of occupations and they are more visible in society, maybe it would be easier to change language.

## REFERENCES

ACADEMIE FRANÇAISE (no date) "La féminisation des noms de métiers, fonctions, grades ou titres: une controverse récente", available online at <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/langue/droite.html> [accessed on 5.3.01]

AGER, D. (1996) *Language policy in Britain and France: the processes of policy*, Cassell

AGER, D. (2003) *Ideology and image: Britain and Language*, Multilingual Matters

ALARIO, C. ET AL., (1995) *En femenino y en masculino: La representación del femenino y el masculino en el lenguaje*, Comisión Asesora sobre Lenguaje del Instituto de la Mujer

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION (1986) *Guidelines for non-sexist use of language*, University of Delaware, available online at <http://www.apaonline.org/publications/texts/nonsexist.aspx>

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (1977) *Guidelines for Nonsexist Language in American Psychological Association Journals*, American Psychologist, pp. 487-94.

AYALA CASTRO, M. & GUERRERO SALAZAR, S. (2002) *Manual de lenguaje administrativo no sexista*, Asociación de Estudios Históricos sobre la Mujer y Ayuntamiento de Málaga

AYUNTAMIENTO DE GRANADA (2007) *Propuestas para un uso no sexista del lenguaje administrativo*, Concejalía de Igualdad de Oportunidades, available online at <http://www.granada.org/inet/wmujer.nsf/0201f041f34b4fc0c1256e360042e785/1a17d6baa6d502acc125740500323303!OpenDocument> [accessed on 12.10.2008]

AYUNTAMIENTO DE MADRID (1999), *Recomendaciones para un uso no sexista del lenguaje*, Concejalía de Promoción de la Igualdad y Empleo, Madrid

BAKER et al. (2008) "A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press", *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 273-306

BALL, R. (1997) *The French-Speaking World: A Practical Introduction to Sociolinguistic Issues*, Routledge

BARON, D. (1986) *Grammar and Gender*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London

BARROSO, J.M. (2009) *Parliamentary questions*, available online at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-2611&language=EN> [accessed 3/07/09]

BATE, B. (1978) "Nonsexist language use in transition", *Journal of Communication*, vol. 28 Issue 1, pages 139-149

BEM, S. and BEM, D. (1973) "Does sex-biased job advertising 'aid and abet' sex discrimination?" *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 3 no. 1, pp. 6-18

BENGOCHEA, M. (1995) "Estado actual de la investigación sobre el sexismo en el discurso", *Jornadas sobre formación inicial del profesorado en la educación no sexista*, Instituto de la Mujer, Madrid

BENGOCHEA, M. (1999) "Nombra en femenino y en masculino: Sugerencias para un uso no sexista del lenguaje en los medios de comunicación", in GARRIDO, J. (ed.) *La lengua y los medios de comunicación*, Tomo 1, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, pp. 267-281

BENGOCHEA, M. (2005) *Sugerencias para evitar el sexismo en el lenguaje administrativo*. Santander: Dirección General de la Mujer, Gobierno de Cantabria.

BENGOCHEA, M. (ed.) (2006) *Nombra. en. red*, Instituto de la Mujer

BLAUBERGS, M. (1978) "Changing the sexist language: The Theory Behind the Practice", *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, vol. 2, pp. 244-261

BLAUBERGS, M. (1980) "An analysis of classic arguments against changing sexist language", *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, vol. 3, pp. 135-147

BODINE, A. (1975) "Androcentism in prescriptive grammar: singular 'they', sex-indefinite 'he', and 'he or she', *Language in society*, vol. 4, pp. 129-46

BRAUN, F. et al. (2005) "Cognitive effects of masculine generics in German: An overview of empirical findings", *Communications*, vol. 30, p. 1-21

BRICK, N. & COLLIE, J., (1991) "Quel genre pour les métiers? Réflexions sur la féminisation des noms de métiers" in CADY, A. (ed.) *Women Teaching French: five papers on language and theory*, European Research Centre, Loughborough

BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (2004) *Equality and diversity: Language and the BSA: Sex and gender*, available online at [http://www.britsoc.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4E70B7F7-58A1-43AB-A414-77F929A954D2/533/EqualityandDiversity\\_LanguageandtheBSA\\_SexandGender.doc](http://www.britsoc.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4E70B7F7-58A1-43AB-A414-77F929A954D2/533/EqualityandDiversity_LanguageandtheBSA_SexandGender.doc)

BUNDESVERWALTUNGSAMT (2002) Sprachliche Gleichbehandlung von Frauen und Männer [Linguistic equal treatment of women and men] available online at [http://www.bva.bund.de/cln\\_115/nn\\_372236/SharedDocs/Publikationen/Verwaltungsmodernisierung/Sprachliche\\_Gleichbehandlung\\_von\\_Frauen\\_und\\_Maennern.templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/Sprachliche\\_Gleichbehandlung\\_von\\_Frauen\\_und\\_Maennern.pdf](http://www.bva.bund.de/cln_115/nn_372236/SharedDocs/Publikationen/Verwaltungsmodernisierung/Sprachliche_Gleichbehandlung_von_Frauen_und_Maennern.templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/Sprachliche_Gleichbehandlung_von_Frauen_und_Maennern.pdf)

BURR, E. (2003) "Gender and language politics in France" in HELLINGER, M. and BUSSMAN, H. (eds.) *Gender across languages. The de/construction of gender through language variation and change*, Volume III, Amsterdam: Benjamins

BUSSMAN, H. & HELLINGER, M. (2003) "Engendering female visibility in German" in *Gender across languages*, Vol. III, Amsterdam: Benjamins

CAMERON, D. (1985) *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*, Macmillan, 1<sup>st</sup> edition

CAMERON, D. (1995) *Verbal Hygiene*, Routledge

CAMERON, D. (1998) "Gender, language and discourse: A Review essay", *Signs*, vol. 23, no.4, pp. 945-973

CAMERON, D. (2003) "Gender issues in language change", *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, vol. 23, part 1, pp. 187-201

CAMERON, D. (2005) "Language, Gender and Sexuality. Current Issues and New Directions", *Applied Linguistics*, Oxford Journals 26(4), pp. 482-502

CAMERON, D. (ed.) (1998) *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*, London: Routledge

CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ETUDES PEDAGOGIQUES (CIEP) (1999) "Madame la Ministre: La féminisation des noms en 10 questions" Available online at <http://www.ciep.fr/chroniq/femi/femi.htm> [accessed on 12.9.98]

COHEN, L. et al (2000) *Research methods in education*, Routledge, 5<sup>th</sup> edition



COLLIER, R. (1994) *Watch your language. A guide to writing in gender-neutral terms*

COLLINS (1993) *Collins Spanish-English dictionary*

COMMISSION GÉNÉRALE DE TERMINOLOGIE ET DE NÉOLOGIE, (1998) *Rapport sur la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre*, October available online at <http://www.culture.fr/culture/dglf/coeter/feminisation/sommaire.html> [accessed on 12.01.99]

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (1995) Expert group meeting on the development of guidelines for the integration of gender perspectives into human rights activities and programmes, United Nations

CONRICK, M. (1997) "Linguistic intervention: Prescriptivism and Purism : Some issues in the non-sexist language debate", *Teangeolas Journal of the Linguistics Institute of Ireland*, 36, pp. 22-28.

CONRICK, M. (2002) "Language policy and gender issues in Contemporary French" in SALHI, K. (ed.) *French in and out of France*, Peter Lang

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE (1998) *Rapport sur la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre*, Québec

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (1990) *Recommendation R (90)4 on the elimination of sexism from language*, Strasbourg, 21<sup>st</sup> February 1990, available online at <https://wcd.coe.int/com.intranet.InstraServlet?command=com.intranet.CmdBlobGet&IntranetImage=1234348&SecMode=1&DocId=590474&Usage=2>

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (1994) *Instruction n° 33 du 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1994 relative à l'emploi d'un langage non sexiste au Conseil de l'Europe*, available online at [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=SG/INST\(1994\)33&Language=lanFrench&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=SG/INST(1994)33&Language=lanFrench&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864) [accessed on 14.8.08]

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (1994) *Recommendation 1229 (1994) on equality of rights between men and women*, available online at <http://assembly.coe.int/main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta94/EREC1229.htm> [accessed on 19.6.08]

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (1997) *4<sup>th</sup> European ministerial conference on equality between women and men*, available online at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=459517&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864>

COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2005) *Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ministers*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition

COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S STEERING COMMITTEE FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN (2007) *Draft Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms*, available online at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1186829&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864> [accessed on 18.8.08]

CRAWFORD, M. & ENGLISH, L. (1984) "Generic versus specific inclusion of women in language. Effects on recall", *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, vol 13 (5) pp. 3737-381

CRAWFORD, M. (2004) "Gender and Language" in UNGER, R. (ed.) *The Handbook of the Psychology of Women and Gender*, John Wiley and Sons, pp. 228-244

CROLLEY, E. & TESO E. (2007) "Gendered Narratives in Spain: The Representation of Female Athletes in *Marca* and *El País*", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol 42 issue 2 pp. 149-166

DARTER, P. (1989) "English as she is written", *Terminologie et Traduction*, European Communities: Office of Official Publications (February 1989), pp.73-79

DAVIS, K. A. (1995) "Qualitative theory and methods in applied linguistics research", *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 29 (3) pp. 427-453

DRAFTING TECHNIQUES GROUP, (2008) *Gender-neutral drafting techniques*, Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, available online at [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/190043/gnd.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/190043/gnd.pdf) [accessed on 26.6.09]

DUBOIS, B. and CROUCH, I. (1987) "Linguistic disruption: He/She, S/He, He or She, He-She" in PENFIELD, J. (ed.) *Women and language in transition*, Albany/N.Y. pp. 28-35

DURON, M. et al, "Féminisation du titre de ministre: L'Académie Française fait appel à Chirac" available online at <http://www.hec.ca> [accessed on 12.01.99]

EHRlich, S. & KING, R. (1998), "Gender-based language reform and the (de)politicization of the lexicon" in CHESHIRE, J. & TRUDGILL, P. (1998) *The Sociolinguistics Reader. Gender and Discourse*, Volume 2, Arnold Linguistics Readers

EISENBERG, D. (1985), "Grammatical sexism in Spanish" in *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, vol. 9 (3), pp. 189-96

EMAKUNDE (1998) *El lenguaje, más que palabras. Propuestas para un uso no sexista del lenguaje*, Instituto Vasco de la Mujer

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2001) *Employment in Europe 2001*, DG Employment and social affairs, July 2001, available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/publications/booklets/employment/pdf/ke3801762\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/booklets/employment/pdf/ke3801762_en.pdf)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2009) *English Style guide: A Handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style\\_guides/english/style\\_guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/style_guides/english/style_guide_en.pdf)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2009) *Guía del Departamento de Lengua Española*, Dirección General de Traducción, available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/translation/language\\_aids/freelance/documents/spanish/dgt\\_spanish\\_styleguide\\_es.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/translation/language_aids/freelance/documents/spanish/dgt_spanish_styleguide_es.pdf)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (2000) *Recruitment and Equal Opportunities System*, available online at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/femm/pdf/110a\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/femm/pdf/110a_en.pdf)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (2003) *Gender mainstreaming in the EP*, Available online at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P5-TA-2003-0098+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (2008) *Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament*, October, 16<sup>th</sup> edition

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (2008) *Informe sobre el lenguaje no sexista en el Parlamento Europeo*, grupo de Alto Nivel sobre Igualdad de Género y Diversidad, 13th February 2008

EUROPEAN WOMEN LOBBY (2000) "Women excluded from the EU Charter: Gender gap and sexist language"

EUROSTAT (2009) *Employment rate by gender*, available online at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

EVANS, H. (1985) "A feminine issue in contemporary French usage", *Modern Languages*, vol. 26 no. 4 (December 1985), pp. 231-236

EVANS, H. (1987) "The Government and Linguistic Change in France. The case of Feminisation", *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 31, pp. 20-26

EVANS, H. (1995) "Une femme professeur, une professeur(e) or une prof?", *All Review*, 12, pp. 42-46

FABIUS, L. (1986) Circulaire du 11 mars 1986 relative à la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre, *Journal Officiel de la République française* (11 March 1986), p. 4267

FASOLD, R. (1987) "Language policy and change: Sexist language in the periodical news media" in LOWENBERG, P. (ed.) *Language Spread and Language Policy*, pp. 187-206

FLEISCHMAN, S. (1997) "The battle of feminism and *bon usage*: Instituting non-sexist usage in French", *The French Review*, vol. 70, no. 6, pp. 834-844

FORREST, A. (1998) "The politics of language in the EU", *European Review*, Cambridge, vol. 6, no. 3 (August 1998), pp. 299-319

FOWLER, H.W. (1926) *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, Oxford

FRANK, F. & TREICHLER, P. (1989) *Language, Gender, and Professional Writing: Theoretical Approaches and Guidelines for Nonsexist usage*, Modern Language Association of America, New York

FRANK, F. (1985) "Language Planning and sexual equality: guidelines for non-sexist usage" in HELLINGER, M. (ed.) *Sprachwandel und feministische Sprachpolitik: Internationale Perspektiven*

FUJIMURA, I. (2005) "Politique de la langue: la féminisation des noms de métiers et des titres dans la presse française" (1988-2001), *Mots*, 78 pp. 37-52.

GARCÍA MESEGUER, A. (1977) *Lenguaje y discriminación sexual*, Barcelona, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

GARCÍA MESEGUER, A. (1994) *¿Es sexista la lengua española? Una investigación sobre el género gramatical*, Paidós, Barcelona

GENDER AND LANGUAGE RESEARCH GROUP (1999) *Gender and genre bibliography*, Lancaster University

GERVAIS, M.M. (1993) "Gender and Language in French" in SANDERS, C. (ed.), *French Today. Language in its social context*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 121-138

GERVAIS-LE GARFF, M.M. (2002) "Liberté, égalité, sororité: A new linguistic order in France?" in *Women and language*, vol. 25, no.2 pp. 1-7

GERVAIS-LE GARFF, M.M. (2007) "Le triomphe de l'usage en matière de féminisation" in FARINA, A. & RAUS, R. *Des mots et des femmes: recontres linguistiques: actes de la journée d'étude tenue à l'Université de Florence*, Firenze University Press

GIBBON, M. (1999), *Feminist Perspectives on Language*, Longman

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL (no date) *Language matters. A guide to good practice*, available online at <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6E29C668-896B-47D3-9591-42809C964019/0/LanguageMatters.doc> [accessed on 24.10.2004]

GRANNIS, O. (1992) "Language change in modern German: Feminism and systematic gap production" in TRACY, R. (ed.) *Who climbs the grammar tree*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, pp. 65-67

GREENE and RUBIN (1991) "Attitudes toward gender inclusive/exclusive language", *Sex Roles*, vol. 24, pp. 391-412

GUENTHERODT, I., HELLINGER, M. PUSCH, L. & TRÖMEL-PLÖTZ, S. (1980) "Richtlinien zur Vermeidung sexistischen Sprachgebrauchs", *Linguistische Berichte*, vol. 69, pp. 15-21

HALL, J. K. (2002) *Teaching and researching Language and Culture*, Longman

HAMILTON, M. (1988) "Using masculine generics. Does generic he increase male bias in the user's imagery?", *Sex Roles*, vol. 19 (11-12) pp. 785-799

HAMPARES, K.J. (1976) "Sexism in Spanish Lexicography", *Hispania* 59, pp. 100-109

HARRIGAN, J, AND LUCIC, K. (1988) "Attitudes about gender bias in language: A reevaluation", *Sex Roles*, vol. 19, nos. 3-4, pp. 129-140

HARRINGTON, K. et al. (eds.) (2008) *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*, Palgrave Macmillan

HELLINGER, M. & BIERBACH, C. (1993) *Eine Sprache für beide Geschlechter: Richtlinien für einen nicht-sexistischen Sprachgebrauch*, German UNESCO Commission, Bonn

HELLINGER, M. & BUSSMANN, H. (eds.) (2001, 2002, 2003) *Gender Across Languages: The Linguistic Representation of Women and Men*, John Benjamins

HELLINGER, M. (1980) "For men must work and women must weep': sexism in English language textbooks used in German schools", *Women's studies International Quarterly* vol. 3, 267-275.

HELLINGER, M. (1990) *Kontrastive feministische Linguistik. Mechanismen sprachlicher Diskriminierung im Englischen und Deutschen*, Ismaning, Hueber

HELLINGER, M. (1993) "Guidelines for the Equal Treatment of the Sexes in German", *Working Papers on Language, Gender and Sexism*, vol. 3(2), pp. 31-42

HELLINGER, M. (1995) "Language and Gender" in STEVENSON, P. (ed.), *The German Language and the Real World. Sociolinguistic, Cultural and Pragmatic Perspectives on Contemporary German*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 304-314

HELLINGER, M. (ed.) (1985) *Sprachwandel und feministische Sprachpolitik: Internationale perspectiven*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag

HELLINGER, M. KREMER, M. & SCHRÄPEL, B. (1989) *Empfehlungen zur Vermeidung von sexistischem Sprachgebrauch in öffentlicher Sprache*, University of Hannover

HENLEY, N & DRAGUN, M. (1983) cited in HENLEY, N. (1987)

HENLEY, N. (1987) "This new species that seeks a new language" in PENFIELD, J. (ed.) *Women and language in transition*, State University of New York Press

HOUDEBINE, A.M. (1987) "Le français au féminin", *La Linguistique*, vol. 23, pp. 13-34

HOUDEBINE, A.M. (1989) "La féminisation des noms de métiers en français contemporain", *Revue de linguistique contrastive* (Octobre 1989), pp. 73-77

HOUDEBINE-GRAVAUD, A. (ed.) (1998) *La féminisation des noms de métiers en français et dans d'autres langues*, L'Harmattan, Paris

ILO (2006) *Manual for drafting ILO instruments*, available online at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/leg/man.pdf> [accessed on 15.08.08]

INALF (Institut National de la Langue Française) (1999) *Femme, j'écris ton nom... Guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms de métiers, titres, grades et fonctions*, available at <http://www.inalf.fr/feminisation> [accessed 27.3.01]

INSTITUTO DE LA MUJER (1989) *Propuestas para evitar el sexismo en el lenguaje*, Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales, Madrid



INSTITUTO DE LA MUJER (1990) *Uso no sexista del lenguaje administrativo*, Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales

INSTITUTO DE LA MUJER (1999), *En femenino y en masculino*, Cuaderno de educación no sexista, no. 8, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales

JOSPIN, L. (1998) Circulaire du 6 mars 1998 relative à la féminisation des noms de métier, fonction, grade ou titre, *Journal Officiel de la République française*

JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA (1992) *Orden sobre la eliminación del lenguaje sexista en los textos documentos administrativos*, BOJA, 5th December

JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA (2005) *Instrucción para evitar un uso sexista del lenguaje en las disposiciones de carácter general de la Junta de Andalucía*, 16<sup>th</sup> March

LAROUSSE ONLINE (no date) *French dictionary*, available online at <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires>

LAZARATON, A. (2000) "Current Trends in Research Methodology and Statistics in Applied Linguistics", *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 1 pp. 175-181

LEUE, E. (2000) "Gender and Language in Germany", *Debatte*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 163-176

LITOSSELITI, L. (2006) *Gender and Language. Theory and practice*, Hodder Arnold

LLEDÓ CUNILL, E. (1996) "Reflexiones sobre el sexismo y el androcentrismo. Sus repercusiones en la lengua" in MARCO, A. (ed.) *Estudios sobre Mujer, Lengua y Literatura*, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria/Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Servicio de Publicacións da Universidade de Santiago, pp. 137-151

LLEDÓ CUNILL, E. (2006) *Las profesiones de la A a la Z. Serie Lenguaje no. 4*, Instituto de la Mujer

MARCO, A. (1996) "Estereotipos de género en el Diccionario de la lengua española", in MARCO, A. (ed.), *Estudios sobre Mujer, Lengua y Literatura*, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria/Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Servicio de Publicacións da Universidade de Santiago, pp. 87-111

MARSHALL, J. (1998) "Women's way with words", *The Times Higher Education*, July 17, p. 7

MARTYNA, W. (1980) "Beyond the 'He/Man' approach: The case for non-sexist language", *Signs*, vol. 5 no. 3, pp. 482-493

MCGRAW-HILL (1974) *Guidelines for equal treatment of the sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Company publications*

MCMINN, M. et al. (1994), "Assessing Recognition of Sexist Language: Development and Use of the Gender-Specific Language Scale", *Sex Roles*, col. 31, nos. 11/12, pp. 741-753

MENENDEZ, M. I (no date) *Language administrativo no sexista*, Instituto Andaluz de la Mujer, available at [http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/institutodelamujer/catalogo/doc/iam/2006/23533\\_contenido.pdf](http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/institutodelamujer/catalogo/doc/iam/2006/23533_contenido.pdf) [accessed 1.5.2009]

MILLER, C. & SWIFT, K. (1972) "De-sexing the English language." *Ms.* Spring 1972, pp. 13-14

MILLER, C. & SWIFT, K. (1976) *Words and women. New Language in New Times*, Gollanz

MILLER, C. & SWIFT, K. (1989) *The Handbook of Non-Sexist Writing for Writers, Editors and Speakers*, Women's Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

MILLS, S. (2003) "Third Wave Feminist Linguistics and the Analysis of Sexism", available at <http://extra.shu.ac.uk/daol/articles.open/2003/001/mills2003001.htm>

MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN Y CIENCIA (1988) *Recomendaciones para el uso no sexista de la lengua*, Madrid

MINISTERIO PARA LAS ADMINISTRACIONES PÚBLICAS (1990) *Manual de Estilo del lenguaje administrativo*, Madrid, pp. 153-161

MOREAU, T. et al (1991) *Dictionnaire féminin-masculin*, Bureau de l'égalité des droits entre hommes et femmes de la République et canton de Genève, Les éditions Métropolis

MUCCHI-FAINA, A. (2005) "Visible or influential? Language reforms and gender (in)equality", *Social Science Information*, vol. 44, no. 1, 185-215

NALGO (1983) *Watch your language: a guide for NALGO members*, London

NATFHE (1993) *An Equal Opportunities Guide to Language*

NATIONAL STATISTICS (2006) *Civil service statistics*, available online at [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_labour/2006CivilServiceStatistics.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/2006CivilServiceStatistics.pdf)

NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS, (1980) *Equality Style Guide*

NCTE (1975) *Guidelines for non-sexist use of Language in NCTE Publications*

NIEDZWIECKI, P. (1993) "Women and Language", *Women of Europe*, vol. 40, European Commission

NIEDZWIECKI, P. (1994) *Au féminin! Code de féminisation à l'usage de la francophonie*, Paris, Nizet

NILSEN, A. (1987) "Guidelines against sexist language. A case history" in PENFIELD, J. (ed.) *Women and language in transition*, State University of New York Press

NILSEN, A. et al. (1977) *Sexism and Language*, National Council of Teachers

NISSSEN, U. (1986) "Sex and Gender Specification in Spanish", *Journal of Pragmatics*, vol. 10 (6), pp. 725-738

NISSSEN, U. (1990) "A review of research on language and sex in the Spanish Language", *Women and Language*, XIII (2), pp. 11-29

NISSSEN, U. K. (2002) "Gender in Spanish. Tradition and innovation" in HELLINGER, M. and BUSSMAN, H. (eds.) *Gender across Languages*

O'LEARY, Z. (2004) *The essential guide to doing research*, Sage

OFFICE DE LA LANGUAGE FRANCAISE (1991) *Au féminin: guide de féminisation des titres, de fonction et des texts*, Canada

Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario, (no date) *Féminisation of documents en français*, available online at [http://www.oct.ca/publications/PDF/fem\\_policy\\_guide\\_f.pdf](http://www.oct.ca/publications/PDF/fem_policy_guide_f.pdf) [accessed on 12.01.99]

OXFORD (2005) *Concise Oxford German Dictionary*  
Available online at  
([http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK\\_SEARCH.html?book=t65a](http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/BOOK_SEARCH.html?book=t65a))

PARKS, J.B. & ROBERTON, M. A. (2000) "Development and Validation of an Instrument to Measure Attitudes Toward Sexist/Nonsexist Language", *Sex Roles*, vol. 42, nos. 5/6, pp. 415-439

PARKS, J.B. & ROBERTON, M. A., (1998) "Contemporary Arguments against non-sexist language: Blaubeurgs (1980) revisited", *Sex Roles*, vol. 39, nos. 5/6

PARKS, J.B. & ROBERTON, M.A. (2001) "Sport Management Students' Views on eliminating sexist language", *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*

PARKS, J.B. & ROBERTON, M.A. (2004) "Attitudes Toward Women Mediate the Gender Effect on Attitudes toward Sexist Language" in *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, vol. 28, pp. 233-239

PAUWELS, A. (1996) "Feminist language planning and titles for women: Some crosslinguistic perspectives" in HELLINGER, M & AMMON, U. (eds.) *Contrastive Sociolinguistics*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin

PAUWELS, A. (1997) "Language, gender and social change: selecting and evaluating strategies for linguistic equality in Dutch and German" in *Language, Gender and Sexism*, vol. 7, Issue 1

PAUWELS, A. (1997) "Of handymen and waitpersons: A linguistic evaluation of job classifieds", *Australian Journal of Communication*, 24 (1), pp. 58-69

PAUWELS, A. (1998) "Feminist Language Planning: Has it been worthwhile?", *Linguistik Online*, available online at [http://www.linguistik-online.de/heft1\\_99/pauwels.htm](http://www.linguistik-online.de/heft1_99/pauwels.htm) [accessed November 2006]

PAUWELS, A. (1998) *Women changing Language*, Longman

PAUWELS, A. (2001) "English. Spreading the feminist word: The case of the new courtesy title *Ms* in Australian English". In Hellinger, M. and Bußmann, H. (eds.), *Gender Across Languages*, 137–151

PAUWELS, A. (2001) "Non-sexist Language reform and generic pronouns in Australian English" *English Worldwide*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 105-119

PAUWELS, A. (2003) "Linguistic sexism and feminist linguistic activism" in HOLMES, J. & MEYERHOFF, M. *The handbook of language and gender*, Blackwell Publishing

PAUWELS, A. (2004) "Globalisation of English and the spread of gender-inclusive language reform", Berlin

PAYNE, G. & PAYNE, J. (2004) *Key Concepts in Social research*, Sage

PETERSSON, S. (1999) "Gender-neutral drafting: Recent Commonwealth Developments", *Statute Law Review*, vol. 20 no 1, pp. 35-65

PORRECA, K. (1984) "Sexism in current ESL textbooks" in *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 18 no. 4 (pp. 705-724)

PUSCH, L. (1990) *Alle Menschen werden Schwestern*, Suhrkamp

REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA (2001) *Diccionario de la Lengua española*, 22nd edition, available online at <http://www.rae.es/rae.html>

REY-DEBOVE, J. (1998) "Madame "la" ministre", *Le Monde*, 14 January 1998, p. 16

ROMAINE, S. (1994) *Language in Society. An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, Oxford University Press

ROMAINE, S. (1998) *Communicating gender*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

ROMAINE, S. (2001) "A corpus-based view of gender in British and American English" In HELLINGER, M. and BUSSMANN, H. (eds.) *Gender Across Languages. The de/construction of gender roles through language variation and change*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 113-135

RUBIN, D. & GREENE, K. (1991) "Effects of Biological and Psychological gender, Age Cohort and Interviewer Gender on Attitudes Toward Gender-Inclusive/Exclusive Language" *Sex Roles*, vol. 24, nos. 7/8, pp. 391-412

SALHI, K. (ed.) (2002) *French in and out of France*, Peter Lang

SARDAR, Z. (2008) *The language of equality*, Equality and Human Rights Commission

SAUNDERS, M. et al. (2003) *Research methods for business students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, FT Prentice Hall

SCHAFROTH, E. (2003) "Gender in French: Structural properties, incongruences and asymmetries", in HELLINGER, M. & BUSSMANN, H. (eds.) *Gender across languages*

SCHULZ, M. (1975) "The semantic derogation of women" in THORNE, B. & HENLEY, N. (eds.), *Language and sex: Difference and dominance*

SCHWARZ, J. (2005) "Bridging the Gap: Linguistic sexism and Third Wave Feminism", paper at AILA Conference 2005, available online at [http://www0.bcu.ac.uk/crq/individual\\_pubs/juliane/ailahandout5.pdf](http://www0.bcu.ac.uk/crq/individual_pubs/juliane/ailahandout5.pdf)

SCHWARZT, M. (1995) *Guidelines for bias-free writing*, Indiana University Press

SPEER, S. (2005) *Gender talk: feminism, discourse and conversation analysis*, Routledge

SPENDER, D. (1985) *Man made language*, Routledge, 2nd edition

STAHLBERG, D., SEZESNY, S. & BRAUN, F. (2001) "Name your favourite musician. Effects of masculine generics and of their alternatives in German", *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, vol. 20 (4) pp. 464-469

SUNDERLAND, J. (2004) *Gendered discourses*, Palgrave Macmillan

SUNDERLAND, J. (2006) *Language and Gender: An Advanced Resource Book*, Routledge

SWANN, J. (2002) "Yes, but is it gender?", in Litosseliti, L. and Sunderland, J. (eds.) *Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins

SCHWARTZ, M. (1995) *Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing*, Indiana University Press

SWIM, J. et al. (1995) "Sexism and Racism: Old-fashioned and modern prejudices", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 68, pp. 199-214

SWIM, J. et al. (2004) "Understanding subtle sexism: Detection and use of sexist language", *Sex Roles*, vol. 51, nos. 3/4, August, pp. 117-128

TANNEN, D. (1986) *That's not what I meant!: How conversational style makes or breaks your relations with others*, New York, Ballantine

TANNEN, D. (1993) *Gender and conversational interaction*, Oxford University Press

TANNEN, D. (1994) *Gender and discourse*, Oxford University Press

TEYSSIER, P. (1998) "Madame La Ministre", *Défense de la Langue française*, (Jan-March 1998)

THE DAILY MAIL (2009) "EU bans use of 'Miss' and 'Mrs' (and sportsmen and statesmen) because it claims they are sexist", 16<sup>th</sup> March

THE TIMES (2003) *The Times Style and Usage Guide*, available online at [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/tools\\_and\\_services/specials/style\\_guide/](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/tools_and_services/specials/style_guide/)

THORNE, B. and HENLEY, N. (1975) *Language and sex: Difference and dominance*, Newbury House



TINSLEY, T. (1993) "El lenguaje administrativo: A Case Study in Sociolinguistic Change", *Association of Contemporary Iberian Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 23-30

TUC (2005) *Diversity in Diction-Equality on Action. A guide to the appropriate use of language*

UNESCO (1998) *Official Correspondence Guide*  
Available at: <http://www.unesco.org> [Accessed 21 February 2001]

UNESCO (1999) *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language*, available online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001149/114950Mo.pdf>

UNESCO (1999) *Recomendaciones para un uso no sexista del lenguaje*, 3rd edition

UNESCO (2005) *Rules of procedure of the Executive Board* (published in English and French only)

UNISON (no date) *A guide to the appropriate use of language*

UNITED NATIONS (1979) *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, available online at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm> [accessed on 22/11/07]

UNITED NATIONS (1984) *United Nations Correspondence Manual: A compendium of rules relating to the drafting, typing and dispatch of official United Nations Communications*, New York

UNITED NATIONS (1998) *Editorial Directive on Gender-Neutral Language*, July

UNITED NATIONS (2000) *United Nations Correspondence Manual: A guide to the drafting, processing and dispatch of official United Nations communications*, New York

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE (1993) *Language and Equal Opportunities Guidelines*

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY (no date) *Equal Opportunities policy. Code of practice for use of language*

Van COMPERNOLLE, R. (2009) "What do women want? Linguistic equality and the feminisation of job titles in contemporary France", *Gender and language*, vol 3 (1) pp. 33-52

VAN MEURS, F. et al (2007) "The effect of English job titles in job advertisements on Dutch respondents", *World Englishes* Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 189–205,

VARGAS, A. et al (1998) *Lo femenino y lo masculino en el Diccionario de la Lengua de la Real Academia Española*, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Instituto de la Mujer

WEATHERALL, A. (2002) *Gender, language and discourse*, Routledge

WILKS, N. & WILKS, C. (1994) "Et Dieu nomma la femme: observations sur la question de la féminisation des noms d'agent et sur les désignations d'Edith Cresson dans la presse", *French Language Studies*, 4, pp. 235-239

WILLIAMS, C. (2008) "The End of the 'Masculine Rule'? Gender-Neutral Legislative Drafting in the United Kingdom and Ireland", *Statute Law Review*, vol. 29 (3), pp. 139-153

WODAK, R. (ed.) (1997) *Gender and discourse*, Sage

WODAK, R. (1987) *Richtlinien zur Vermeidung sexistischen Sprachgebrauchs*. Vienna: Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 1987 (with S.Moosmüller and G. Feistritzer).

YAGUELLO, M. (1978) *Les mots et les femmes*, Payot, Paris

#### UNESCO's Executive Board decisions on the elimination of sexist language

140EX/Decisions, 140th Session, 1992

145EX/24, 145th Session, 1994

147EX/29, 147th Session, 1995

156EX/21, 156th Session, 1999

157EX/INF.3 + ADD, 157th Session, 1999

159EX/4 Part I and II and ADD, 159th Session, 2000

#### UNESCO's General Conference Decisions

24C/14.1, General Conference 24th Session, 1987

25C/109, General Conference, 25th Session, 1989

26C/11.1, General Conference, 26th Session, 1991

27C/34, General Conference, 27th Session, 1993

28C/1.13, 28th Session, 1995

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

BEECHING, K. (2000) "Women and Language" in GREGORY, A. & TIDD, U. (eds.) *Women in Contemporary France*, Berg

BRAUN, F. (1995) "Making men out of people: the MAN principle in translating genderless forms", *Working Papers on Language, Gender and Sexism* 5 (2) pp. 5-38

BRAUN, F & PASERO, U. (1997) *Kommunikation von Geschlecht - Communication of Gender*, Pfaffenweiler, Centaurus

BUCHOLTZ, M. (2003) "Theories of Discourse as Theories of Gender: Discourse Analysis in Language and Gender Studies," in HOLMES, J. and MEYERHOFF, M. (eds.), *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 43-68

BUCHOLTZ, M. (ed.) (2004) *Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries*, original text by Robin Lakoff, revised and expanded edition, New York: Oxford University Press

BUXÓ, M.J. (1978) *Antropología de la mujer: Cognición, lengua e ideología cultural*, Promoción cultural, Barcelona

CATALÀ GONZÁLVIZ, A. (1995) *Ideología sexista y lenguaje*, Octaedro, Madrid

CHESHIRE, J. & TRUDGILL, P. (eds.) (1998) *The Sociolinguistics Reader. Gender and Discourse*, Vol. 2, Arnold Linguistics Readers

CHRISTIE, C. (2000), *Gender and Language: Towards a Feminist Pragmatics*, Edinburgh University Press

CLARK, L. (2000) *The rise of professional women in France: Gender and public administration since 1830*, Cambridge University Press

CLYNE, M. (1995) *The German Language in a changing Europe*, Cambridge University Press

COATES, J. & CAMERON, D. (eds.) (1989) *Women in Their Speech Communities: New Perspectives on Language and Sex*, London: Longman

COATES, J. (1993) *Women, Men and Language* (Second edition), Longman, 1993

COATES, J. (2004) *Women, men and language, A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language*, Harlow, Longman, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

COMUNIDAD DE MADRID (1984) *Manual de Identidad Corporativa*, Madrid

DEMEY, E. (2002) "Leser und Leserinnen gesucht! Zum generischen Gebrauch von Personenbezeichnungen in deutschen Stellenanzeigen und Zeitungsartikeln", *Deutsche Sprache*, vol. 30, part 1, pp. 28-49

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE LA MUJER (1997) *III Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres de la Comunidad de Madrid (1997-2000)*, Madrid

DISTER, A. (2004) "La féminisation des noms de métiers, fonction, grade ou titre en Belgique francophone. Etat des lieux dans un corpus de presse", *7es Journées internationales d'analyse statistique des données textuelles*

DOYLE, M. (1995) *The A- Z of Non-Sexist Language*, The Women's Press

ECKERT, P. & MCCONELL-GINET, S. (2003) *Language and Gender*, Cambridge University Press

ELGIN, S. H. (1988) *A first dictionary and grammar of Láadan*, Madison

EMAKUNDE (1998) *Género y medios de comunicación. Recomendaciones*, Instituto Vasco de la Mujer

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WORKING GROUP (1998) *Language and Equality*, Society of Chief Personnel Officers

FERNÁNDEZ DE LA TORRE, M. D. (ed.), (1999), *El sexismo en el lenguaje*, Centro de Ediciones de la Diputación Provincial de Málaga

FUERTE OLIVERA, P. (1992) *Mujer, lenguaje y sociedad: los estereotipos de género en inglés y español*, Centro Asesor de la Mujer del Ayuntamiento de Alcalá de Henares, Madrid

GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA (1992) *Indicacions per evitar la discriminació per raó de sexe en el llenguatge administratiu*, Comissió Interdepartamental de Promoció de la Dona Barcelona GOBIERNO VASCO (1999) *III Plan de Acción Positiva para las mujeres en la Comunidad Autónoma de Euskadi*, Emakunde

GOMARD, K. (1995) "The (un) equal treatment of women in language: A comparative study of Danish, English and German", *Working Papers on Language, Gender and Sexism*, April pp. 5-26

GRADDOL, D. & SWANN, J. (1989) *Gender Voices*, Oxford: Blackwell

GRAHAM, A. (1975) "The making of a non-sexist dictionary" in THORNE, B. & HENLEY, N. (eds.) *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*

HARTLEY, L. & TRABADA, P. (1997) "Algunas reflexiones sobre el lenguaje, la sociedad y la mujer", *Vida Hispánica*, no. 16, pp. 4-8

HELLINGER, M. & SCHRÄPEL, B. (1983) "Über die sprachliche Gleichbehandlung von Frauen und Männern", *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik*, vol.15, pp. 40-69

HELLINGER, M. & PAUWELS, A. (eds.) (2007) "Language and sexism" in *Handbook of Language and Communication: Diversity and Change*, Berlin, New York (Mouton de Gruyter)

HERBERT, R. AND NYKIEL-HERBERT, B. (1986) "Explorations in Linguistic Sexism: A Contrastive Sketch", *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, vol. 21, pp. 47-85

HERNÁNDEZ, C. (1999) *La llengua també é femenina*, Comissió Obrera Nacional de Catalunya, Barcelona

HOLMES, J. & MEYERHOFF, M. (eds.) (2003) *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, Blackwell Publishing

HOLMES, J. (2001) *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, Longman, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

KASTOVSKY, D. & DALTON-PUFFER, C. (2002) "Sexist German- non-sexist English or non-sexist German–sexist English? Historical observations on a pragmatic question", *Language Sciences*, vol. 24 no. 3, pp. 285-96

INSTITUTO DE LA MUJER (1987) *I Plan para la Igualdad de Oportunidades de las Mujeres (1988-1990)*, Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales

INSTITUTO DE LA MUJER (1993) *II Plan para la Igualdad de Oportunidades de las Mujeres (1993-1995)*, Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales

INSTITUTO DE LA MUJER (1997) *III Plan para la igualdad de oportunidades entre hombres y mujeres (1997-2000)*, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales

JOHNSON, S. & MEINHOFF, U. (1997) *Language and Masculinity*, Oxford, Blackwell

JULE, A. (2008) *A beginner's guide to language and gender*, Multilingual matters

- KEY, M. (1975) *Male/Female Language*, Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press
- KRAMARAE, C. And TREICHLER, P. (1985) *A Feminist Dictionary*, Harpercollins, Canada
- LAKOFF, R. (1975) *Language and Woman's Place*, Harper and Row, New York
- LAMOTHE, J. (2000), *Feminist Research*, 2000, vol. 28, part1/2
- LEPSCHY, G. (1991) "Language and Sexism" in BARANSKI, Z. & VINALL, S. (eds.), *Women and Italy: Essays on Gender, Culture and History*, Macmillan
- LLEDÓ CUNILL, E. (1992) *El sexismo y el androcentrismo en la lengua: análisis y propuestas de cambio*, Institut de Ciències de l'Educació, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Col. Quaderns per la coeducació 3, Institut de Ciències de l'educació
- LLEDÓ CUNILL, E. (1995) "Usos lingüísticos y género", *Textos de Didáctica de la Lengua y Literatura*, no. 6, pp. 29-34
- LÓPEZ GARCÍA, A. & MORANT, R. (1991) *Gramática femenina*, Cátedra, Madrid
- LÓPEZ VALERO, A. (1998) *Lenguaje, sexismo, ideología y educación*, Murcia
- LOZANO DOMINGO, I. (1995) *Lenguaje femenino, lenguaje masculino. ¿Condiciona nuestro sexo la forma de hablar?* Minerva Ediciones, Madrid
- MAÑERU, A. et al. (1995) "El sexismo en el lenguaje", *Mujeres*, 18, p.4-5
- MCELHINNY, B. (2006) *Language and gender (Language in Society)*, Blackwell
- MILLS, S. (1995), *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Longman
- MILLS, S. (2003) *Gender and politeness*, Cambridge University Press
- MILLS, S. (2008) *Language and sexism*, Cambridge University Press
- MOI, T. (1985) *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, Routledge
- MOSCOVICI, C. (1997) "He is the sun, she is the moon: A Feminist Sociolinguistic Approach to Teaching the French Language", *Women and Language*, vol. 20, Part 2, pp. 53-57
- NISSEN, U. (1991) "Sí, primera ministro. ¿Influye la feminización de los títulos de profesión en la interpretación del masculino en sentido extensivo?", in



BERNIS, C. (ed.), *Los estudios sobre la mujer: de la investigación a la docencia*, Universidad Autónoma, Madrid

NISSEN, U. (2006) "Is Spanish more sexist than ten years ago? Towards a cognitive understanding of generic expressions", Igala conference, Valencia

PHILIPS, E. & PUGH, D. (2005) *How to get a PhD*, Open University Press, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Maidenhead

POYNTON, C. (1989) *Language and Gender: Making the Difference*, OUP

PUSCH, L. (1984) *Das Deutsche als Männersprache*, Suhrkamp

RIVERA GARRETAS, M.M., (1994) *Nombrar el mundo en femenino. Pensamiento de las mujeres y teoría feminista*, Icaria, Barcelona

ROLDÁN TAPIA, A. (1996) "El uso sexista de la lengua", *Vida Hispánica*, pp. 15-18

SABATINI, A. (1987) *Il sessismo nella lingua italiana*, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Rome

SANTANER PONS, N. (1999) *Camviem el llenguatge*, Palma de Mallorca

STEVENSON, P. (1997) *The German-Speaking World. A Practical Introduction to Sociolinguistic Issues*, Routledge

SUNDERLAND, J. (1994) "Pedagogical and other filters: The representation of sexism in EFL materials" in SUNDERLAND, J. (ed.) *Exploring Gender: Questions and implications for English language education*, Prentice Hall

SUNDERLAND, J. (1996) "Gender representation in EFL materials: Suggestions for teachers development", *Teacher Development* 32: 21-23

TALBOT, M. (1997) "Randy boss branded a stinker: Coherence and the construction of masculinities in a British tabloid newspaper" in JOHNSON, S. & MEINHOF, U. (1997) *Language and Masculinity*, Oxford, Blackwell

TALBOT, M. (1998) *Language and Gender. An Introduction*, Polity Press

TANNEN, D (1992) *You just don't understand. Women in men in conversation*, Virago

VETTERLING-BRAGGIN, M. (ed.) (1981) *Sexist language: A Modern Philosophical analysis*, Littlefield

WHORF, B. L. (1958) "Language and stereotypes" in: Maccoby, E. E., Newcomb, T. M. and Hartley, E. L., (eds.) *Readings in Social Psychology*, 3rd edition, Holt, New York, pp. 1-9

WILKS, C. & BRICK, N. (1997) "Langue non-sexiste et politique éditoriale", *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol 5 (3), pp. 297-308

YAGUELLO, M. (1989) *Le sexe des mots*, Editions Pierre Belfond, Paris