

Qualitative analysis of the use of nonsexist language in higher education: the case of the University of Málaga from the professor's perspective

Análisis cualitativo del uso del lenguaje no sexista en la educación superior: el caso de la Universidad de Málaga desde la perspectiva del profesorado

高等教育中非性别歧视语言使用的定性分析:从马拉加大学教师视角的案例

Качественный анализ использования несексистской лексики в высшем образовании: случай Университета Малаги с точки зрения преподавательского состава

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Abstract

We live in a fast-changing society where social, economic and cultural changes clearly affect language; therefore, language should be faithfully adjusted to reality to continue fulfilling its function: communication. The problem arises when society advances faster than lanquage research. Currently, the feminine gender only designates women, while the masculine gender has a double use: specific, referring to men, and generic, to refer to both men and women. Consequently, we are usually unaware of whether the language we use is sexist or not and of how it can influence our way of constructing realities and thoughts. Accordingly, educational institutions play a key role in the transmission of values and, since the university context is a pivotal point in the professional and personal development of students, both the content and the language used by teachers must be developed with a non-sexist language. This study aims to investigate the attitudes and opinions of professors towards the use of non-sexist language during the development of the teaching and learning process. The methodology was eminently qualitative, using an in-depth semi-structured interview as a data collection instrument. Professors from different Schools of the University of Málaga (*Universidad de Málaga* – UMA), specifically from the fields of knowledge ranging from Engineering and Architecture to Social and Legal Sciences, have participated in this study. To complete the study, branches of knowledge were compared from a gender perspective. The results showed some predisposition towards the use of an egalitarian or non-sexist language although most professors systematically use the generic masculine. perhaps by tradition.

Keywords: coeducation, non-sexist language, professors, higher education, qualitative methodology.

Resumen

Vivimos en una sociedad cambiante y acelerada donde los cambios sociales, económicos y culturales afectan de forma evidente al lenguaje, por lo tanto, éste debería ajustarse fielmente a la realidad para seguir cumpliendo su función, la de comunicar. El problema surge cuando la sociedad avanza más deprisa que las personas que estudian la lengua. Actualmente, podemos afirmar que el género femenino sólo designa mujeres, mientras que el género masculino tiene un doble uso: específico, referido a varones y genérico para referirse tanto a hombres como a mujeres. Por ello, suele ocurrir que normalmente no seamos conscientes de si el lenguaje que utilizamos es sexista o no, y cómo puede influir en nuestra forma de construir realidades y pensamientos. En este sentido, las instituciones educativas juegan un papel primordial en la transmisión de valores y, dado que el contexto universitario es punto neurálgico en el desarrollo profesional y personal del alumnado, es fundamental que tanto los contenidos como el lenguaje utilizado por el profesorado, sean desarrollados con un lenguaje no sexista. En este estudio se indagó en las actitudes y opiniones del profesorado de Educación Superior hacia el uso de un lenguaje no sexista durante el desarrollo del proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. La metodología utilizada es eminentemente cualitativa, como instrumento de recogida de datos se ha utilizado la entrevista semiestructurada en profundidad. Ha participado profesorado de diferentes Facultades de la Universidad de Málaga de las ramas de conocimiento de Ingenierías y Arquitectura, así como de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas. Para completar el estudio, se ha realizado una comparativa entre ramas de conocimiento con perspectiva de género. De los resultados obtenidos se concluye que existe cierta predisposición hacia la utilización de un lenguaje igualitario, aunque la gran mayoría del profesorado utiliza el masculino genérico de manera sistemática, tal vez por tradición.

Palabras clave: coeducación, lenguaje no sexista, profesorado, educación superior, metodología cualitativa.

概要

我们生活在一个不断变化和加速的社会中,社会、经济和文化的变化明显影响语言,因此,语言应该忠实地适应现实,以继续履行其交流的功能。当社会进步快于研究语言的人时,问题就出现了。目前,我们可以肯定,女性的性别只指女性,而男性的性别有双重用途:特指男性,泛指男性和女性。出于这个原因,我们通常不知道我们使用的语言是否是性别歧视的,以及它如何影响我们构建现实和思想的方式。从这个意义上说,教育机构在价值观的传播中发挥着主要作用,鉴于大学环境是学生专业和个人发展的神经中枢,教育机构使用的内容和语言都至关重要。教学人员应使用非性别歧视的语言进行培养。本研究调查了高等教育教师在教学发展过程中对使用非性别歧视语言的态度和意见。所使用的方法是非常定性的,作为一种数据收集工具,我们使用了深入的半结构化访谈。来自马拉加大学不同学院的工程和建筑知识分支以及社会和法律科学的教授参加了该研究。为了完成这项研究,我们从性别视角对知识的分支进行了比较。从所获得的结果可以得出以下结论,在大学里存在使用平等主义语言的某种倾向,尽管绝大多数教师以系统的方式(也许是传统方式)使用通用男性化语言。

关键词:男女同校教育、非性别歧视语言、教师、高等教育、定性方法论。

Резюме

Мы живем в стремительно меняющемся обществе, где социальные, экономические и культурные преобразования явно влияют на язык, поэтому язык должен быть приспособлен к реальности, чтобы продолжать выполнять свою функцию - коммуникацию. Проблема возникает, когда общество развивается быстрее, чем люди, изучающие язык. Сегодня мы можем утверждать, что женский род обозначает только женщин, в то время как мужской род имеет двойное употребление: специфическое, относящееся к мужчинам, и общее, относящееся как к мужчинам, так и к женщинам. По этой причине мы часто не знаем, является ли используемый нами лексикон сексистским или нет, и как он может влиять на то, как мы строим реальность и мысли. В этом смысле учебные заведения играют важную роль в передаче ценностей, и, учитывая, что университетский контекст является невралгической точкой в профессиональном и личностном развитии студентов, важно, чтобы и содержание, и язык, используемый преподавательским составом, были разработаны с использованием несексистских формулировок. В данном исследовании изучалось отношение и мнения преподавательского состава высших учебных заведений относительно использования несексистского языка в процессе преподавания и обучения. Использованная методология является исключительно качественной, а в роли инструмента для сбора данных использовалось полуструктурированное глубинное интервью. В исследовании приняли участие преподаватели различных факультетов Университета Малаги из отраслей наук - инженерных и архитектурных, а также социальных и юридических. Для завершения исследования было проведено сравнение между отраслями знаний с учетом гендерной перспективы. Из полученных результатов можно сделать вывод, что существует определенная предрасположенность к использованию эгалитарного языка, хотя подавляющее большинство учителей систематически используют общий мужской род, возможно, в силу традиции.

Ключевые слова: совместное обучение, несексистский язык, преподаватели, высшее образование, качественная методология.

Introduction

To better understand this research, the concepts of mixed and androcentric education must be distinguished; the latter is understood as the interpretation of advances or changes in society from a purely masculine perspective. First, mixed education is the cultural system that currently predominates in the educational system, which is limited to grouping both men and women in the same classrooms, with the principle of "educational equality for all individuals". Therefore, curricular and pedagogical performance must be equal for both men and women.

In turn, the coeducational model goes beyond the mixed model, supposing an intentional educational process aimed at achieving the full integral development of people, regardless of their gender, enabling each individual to build their own social identity, without roles or obstacles, whilst promoting respect, mutual acceptance and consideration between both sexes.

Among the theories that address coeducation, the authors López and Encabo (2002) stand out for their important evaluations of the influence of professors, within the educational field, since the language that they use can convey sexist roles, perpetuating gender differences, whilst being unaware of how the use of specific linguistic codes can influence student consciousness.

In line with this theory, Freixas (1995) considers that professors play a key role in the process of socialization of the gender identity of students, albeit usually without realising that their form of communication can be discriminatory.

Subirats (2010) states that "the asymmetry between the position of men and women is still perpetuated in mixed schools. School knowledge continues to convey an androcentric culture [...] if anything, our culture suffers from excessive masculinity" (p.156). The author highlights how coeducation primarily aims to continuously extinguish discriminatory mechanisms, not only in the formal structure of educational institutions but also in the ideology and daily practices of professors.

Thus, introducing, in the educational context, a coeducational model which enables both female and male citizens to develop personally and academically through an equitable culture for all without using discriminatory or stereotyped mechanisms entails a daunting task requiring changing not only the structure and formal organisation of educational institutions but also the culture. This culture must be observed in daily practice, and faculty members play a key role in conveying it to their students, promoting an equitable relationship with each other. However, one of the most significant errors in the application of the coeducational model is assuming that this system is clearly intended for women because it also influences the vision and role of men, limiting their development and personal-affective experience by relating them to negative traits.

Similarly, this is not about reducing sexist language by using symbols such as o/a [male/female suffixes] or @ in texts; instead, using non-sexist language implies an awareness of linguistic equality, in which the role or figure of the woman is as recognised as the role or figure of the man. It is about language fulfilling its primary function, that is, effective communication (González & Delgado, 2016).

In some cases, misinterpretations of the concept of coeducation could result from the lack of training or awareness of the true principles on which the coeducational model is based.

Suberviola (2012) indicates three principles that must be considered when developing equality actions in educational contexts:

- Visibility, which consists of recognising the inequality and discrimination that exists due to differences established by being of one sex or the other. The role that women have played in our society must be highlighted, as well as their contribution to achieving social equality through non-sexist language in which students are allowed to reflect on injustices due to gender discrimination.
- Transversality, which refers to the principles that are established to achieve
 equality between men and women. They should be present in the political actions of both administrations and educational institutions, providing a transversal approach for the inclusion of gender perspective in actions which directly or
 indirectly affect the community.
- Inclusion, which is based on the principle that all pedagogical initiatives and actions should include all members of the educational community. Education in equality needs the intervention of both sexes for promoting more equal gender relations.

The analysis of these principles shows that the people involved in guiding the education of students are essential, so the focus of analysis will be the language used by professors at the University of Malaga. In general, sexism is forged in the first years of student life and culturally accepted without being questioned at such young ages. For this reason, Higher Education can be a timely period for helping to change the guidelines that are not based on equality (Mañas & García, 2019).

Terms such as diversity or gender inclusion are increasingly more recognised, but theory is one thing and practice is another. Therefore, a continuous and systematic work in classrooms is required to highlight the contributions of women in history and in different fields of knowledge (García et al., 2013; Pinedo et al., 2018).

Currently, if we only use the generic masculine when the reality is made up of men and women, we are using sexist language by ignoring the representativeness of both genders in conditions of equality in our intended message. Thus, language does not have a purely descriptive use but instead encompasses our perspectives of the world, which may under- or overvalue specific situations according to the grammatical genre used. For this reason, the language used by professors will influence the transmission and internalisation of a specific culture and thought.

In this process, the University, understood as the last educational stage of a person, can enable and encourage educational professionals to develop a co-educational culture that is reflected in their work, in their attitudes towards other people and, above all, in the use of inclusive and egalitarian language. In this regard, we must be aware that both written and verbal language is one of the most relevant means of communication in social relations by conveying various ways of thinking and acting, shaping the culture of our society. Jiménez et al. (2011) states that the University "is configured as an agent of decisive change for the advance towards the reflective and critical use of an inclusive and egalitarian language" (p. 176).

Among the sexist forms of language within the educational field, specifically in teaching practices, the more frequent and consistent use of the masculine gender to refer to circumstances or groups that include people of both sexes stands out. This fact, or continuous abuses of the masculine figure, hides or erases the feminine identity, thereby highlighting the masculine figure.

In turn, aspects that maintain discrimination in the organisation, curriculum and spaces used within an educational centre should also be considered. Therefore, educational institutions must analyse the linguistic behaviour of professors and their interactions with the educational community towards establishing the necessary guidelines for introducing changes if necessary. Combined, these measures will make it possible to achieve a true co-educational model.

As indicated by Calero (1999), the phases of any cognitive and change process are: knowing the problem, learning to detect it, learning to highlight it and trying to solve it. Therefore, to start a true coeducation, teachers must begin to examine their own use of language, focusing on their explanations, on the content of their didactic materials and on the way in which they communicate with male versus female students to avoid, as much as possible, conveying sexist stereotypes and perpetuating female invisibility.

The University, as a prestigious social and educational context, fulfils an important function, similarly to other educational contexts. For this reason, professors must be attentive to both the language and the content of their didactic materials to avoid conveying a sexist culture, that is, as educational agents they must take on the responsibility of developing an approach to teaching with this gender vision to incorporate educational initiatives adapted to the university environment and to the characteristics of their students. This perspective of linguistic equality must be integrated into all aspects of the university curriculum because it is here that professors must be aware of the sexist contents and language that are projected in their daily practice, solving those issues that prevent an egalitarian and permanent development.

Professors also have an important mission within educational centres in learning how to detect, analyse and evaluate situations and manifestations related to androcentrism, which can be the root of gender violence in and outside the classroom (Calvo, 2015; Ferrer et al., 2008; Llorent & Cobano, 2014; Vierna & Ruíz, 2014; Pinedo et al., 2018). For this reason, the methodological and curricular elements must be strengthened to help make schools increasingly more inclusive in relation to gender equality (González & Martín, 2014; Pinedo et al., 2018).

Methodology

The methodology used in this study was eminently qualitative. In total, 29 professors (21 women and 8 men), from various branches of knowledge were selected through random (qualitative) sampling. These professors were interviewed in depth to identify and construct, through their speeches, the way in which they conceive and use non-sexist language in their daily teaching work.

The intent of this study was not to achieve statistical representativeness of the study population but instead to encompass a wide variety of conceptual visions to help us understand in depth how the complex phenomenon of the use of inclusive language is addressed at the University of Malaga; therefore, this is an application-oriented research study.

The study was carried out in accordance with the standards established by the ethics committee of the University of Malaga.

The general objective of this research, carried out in 2020, is to identify the degree of awareness and the opinion of professors at the University of Málaga (*Universidad de Málaga* – UMA) on the use of inclusive language for a coeducational model.

This study had the following specific objectives:

- To assess whether university teachers are aware and mindful of the use of inclusive language in their teaching work.
- To determine whether university teachers have knowledge of what inclusive language actually is.
- To analyse whether sexist language and extensive use of the generic masculine continue to prevail in the teaching discourse of university professors.
- To learn whether female professors are more or less sensitive than their male counterparts to the use of inclusive language.
- To observe whether faculty members are open to change and to using inclusive language in their lectures.
- To identify differences between branches of knowledge regarding coeducation.

Population and sample

The study population included faculty members of the academic community of the University of Málaga (*Universidad de Málaga* – UMA), more specifically, professors.

To conduct the interviews, considering the qualitative design of this research, random sampling was performed, for which purpose all professors of the selected branches of knowledge were contacted by mail, requesting their collaboration to illustrate how the subject is addressed from different perspectives, in this case, in different branches of knowledge.

In total, 29 professors, who voluntarily accepted to participate in this study, were interviewed. The age of the professors ranged from 30 to 65 years, averaging 42.9 years.

Four Schools were involved in this study: School of Education Sciences (*Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación*) (37.9%), School of Psychology (*Facultad de Psicología*) (17.2%), Technical Institute of Computer Engineering (*Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería Informática* – ETSI) (21.3%), and the School of Telecommunications (*Facultad de Telecomunicaciones*) (23.6%) and 12 degrees, including master's degrees.

Data collection instrument

The primary technique and data collection instrument used in this research was the qualitative semi-structured interview based on a flexible script. Most importantly, this script persistently focused on a topic (or several) when investigating that topic, progressing and delving into it until gathering all relevant information (Tójar, 2006).

The script covered a total of 10 questions, which were validated by 6 experts in egalitarian language and research methodology, and completed with information regarding attributive or assigned variables that helped to contextualize the study and completed with information regarding attributive or assigned variables that helped to contextualise the study and to make comparisons: their age and gender, the degrees

that they teach, the centres where they teach and the predominant gender of their students in each subject.

The 10 main questions asked in the initial script were related to four main categories created ad hoc. These categories were: professor awareness, knowledge about non-sexist language, use of egalitarian language and openness to change.

The table below outlines the different dimensions or categories with the script of the questions that were asked in the interview.

Table 1
Categories used in the interview

Category	Script of questions for the interview
Professors' awareness of the use of inclusive language	Do you address students during your classes considering their predominant gender?
	Would you use words such as "estudiante" [student; gender neutral noun] and "personas" [people; female noun], instead of "alumnos" [students; male noun], "todos" [all; male noun] or "algunos" [some; male noun]?
Professors' knowledge of inclusive language	What do you think about the widespread use of the generic male form?
	Do you think it is sometimes used spontaneously?
Professors' use of non- sexist language in their	For your in-class activities and practices, do you usually include gender-neutral forms?
subjects	In teaching resources (videos, images) do you ensure the alternation (woman/ man) and/ or the duplication (woman and man in the same image) of characters?
	When you talk about female authors, do you highlight that they are woman (for example, by indicating her first name)?
Professors' openness to change and to using	Do you think that the habit of not using inclusive language should change?
inclusive language	Would you be willing to use egalitarian (non-sexist) language?

Results

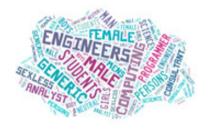
The results were analysed from general to specific issues; thus, we started by creating word clouds using the Tagxedo application, which is a popular strategy in the field of Education Sciences (McNaught & Lam, 2010; Perry, 2012; Fernández et al., 2017).

These word clouds provided preliminary results for a more in-depth analysis of the data.

The analyses initially revealed different teaching profiles in the study sample, characterised by how the professors face the use of an inclusive language as a determinant of a coeducational model, as shown in the following word clouds (Figure 1)

Figure 1
Comparison of word clouds





Schools of Education Sciences and Psychology

ETSI and the School of Telecommunications

The comparison of the word clouds shows differences between the Schools of Education Sciences and Psychology and ETSU and the School of Telecommunications in the professors' degree of awareness and opinion regarding the use of inclusive language for a coeducation model.

Thus, while professors of Education Sciences and Psychology highlight words such as "personas" [people], "profesorado" [professors], epicene terms, "profesionales" [professionals] and "inclusivo" [inclusive], among others [gender-neutral forms], professors of the ETSI and School of Telecommunications talk about "ingenieros" [engineers], "programadores" [programmers] and "alumnos" [students], among others [generic male forms], albeit with some exceptions.

The analysis of the data collected in this study made it possible to select phrases, terms or excerpts with their own meaning, which have been systematically catalogued and numbered to easily locate them, inclusively by School, using the software Atlas.ti v.8

Table 2Summary of the category system used in the analysis with excerpts of the dimension 'Teacher awareness towards the use of inclusive language'

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
Professors' awareness of the use of inclusive language	CU	ETSI and School of Telecommunications (1)	CUI, 1: When I speak in the plural, which is almost always, I use the word that, in Spanish, encompasses both genders, which means that I use the words "alumnus" [pupils] and "estudiantes" [students], among others. No, I usually use the generic male form.
			CUI,2: Normally I usually use the generic male form such as "vosostros" [formal generic male form of you], which is what is stipulated, as always.

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
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CUI,3: I have never thought about how I should address my students; I usually use the second person plural. I usually omit the subject. If I have to use a term, I usually use "vosostros" [you].

CUI,4: I explain, I do not know, as always, I say "alumnus" [pupils], "estudiantes" [students], "people" [students], and they understand me.

CUI,5: Well, I always use the male form because most students in class are men, and I do not pay attention to word gender. I do not repeat the same phrase to say students "alumnos" [male pupils].

CU1,6: There is no reason to stop using "alumnos" [pupils] or "hombres" [men]. Both words can be used appropriately depending on the context, similarly to "estudiantes" [students] or "personas" [people].

CU1,7: It is absurd not to be use the generic male form and to reduce "Torquemadas" language.

School of Economics and Business (Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales -CCEE)/ School of Psychology (2) CU2, 1: I always combine female and male forms, and sometimes, to avoid repetitions, I use epicene words.

CU2,2: Usually, I use the pronoun "vosostros" [you] as a generic male form. If I address a group made up exclusively of female students, for example, a small group in a practical class, I address them as "vosostras" [female plural of you in Spanish].

CU2,3: I usually indicate it with "ustedes" [gender-neutral, informal plural you] and, sometimes, I employ (literally) "vosotros" [formal plural male you] and "vosotras" [formal plural female you], and for words without pronoun, I use "estudiantes" [students], in phrases such as you are students.

CU2,4: I usually speak in female form because my class only has one boy in a group of 63 students.

CU2,5: I always use the fem ale form because almost all my students are female, and it does not seem fair to me to use the generic male form, [which is misnamed], in my opinion.

CU2,6: I usually use inclusive language, that is, gender-neutral [words] such as "estudiantes" [students], "alguien" [someone], "profesionales de la Educación Infantil" [Early Childhood Education professionals].

CU2,7: Sometimes I use the generic male form, sometimes the male form and the female form and sometimes gender-neutral words. For example: "Como podéis ver" [As you see], "qué pensáis..." [what do you think?], "vosotras" [formal, plural female form of you], "vosotros" [formal, plural male form of you], "el grupo" [the group], "alumnado" [the pupils].

CU2,8: I always try to use the term "alumno" [male pupil] or "alumna" [female pupil], although I must admit that sometimes it is not easy; tradition is a very heavy burden, and it is more difficult to control that in spoken language.

CU2,9: I had never fallen into the trap of discrimination against women through language, but I did a Teaching and Research Staff (personal docente e investigador – PDI) course on "PDI" and since then I usually use "personas" [people]. I use "Estudiantes" [students] as a synonym for "alumnus" [pupils].

CU2,10: I already use "el estudiante" [the student] "los estudiantes" [the students], "la estudiante" [the female student] and "las estudiantes" [the female students] because the article clearly specifies to who I am referring.

CU2,11: I also use "personas" [people] when referring to students who are not in the classroom, in phrases such as "the people enrolled in this degree" but never when I am referring to "los alumnos" [the male pupils] or to "las alumnas" [the female pupils] present in the classroom because it breaks personalized communication

Table 3Summary of the category system used in the analysis with excerpts of the dimension 'Teacher knowledge about inclusive language'

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
Professors' knowledge of inclusive language	СО	ETSI and School of Telecommunications (1)	CO1,1: I understand that the generic male form is neutral; It does not bother me; I have always used it, and that is how they taught us. For me, it does not exclude any gender.
			COl,2: I see no problem as long as the term includes both genders.
			COI,3: The Spanish language uses the generic male form to refer to both women and men equally. Therefore, I am fine with using it is because it is according to the RAE, and it is correct.
			COI,4: I think we place too much importance on trifle things. Our language is like this.
			COI,5: The generic male form is the form accepted by the RAE for word economy. That was not a problem before, and we women did not feel excluded, but the young people of today do because the schools have forced them to use the suffix -a. Much time and effort are devoted to it when there are many other issues in which we are more discriminated and would be more urgent to resolve, such as caring for elderly women and young girls or violence against us.
			COI,6: The generic male form is grammatically correct and, as such, facilitates communication.
			COI,7: I always use the generic male form. For example, the word "hombre" [man] has the same root as "humus", which means coming from the earth, not male sex. Incidentally, both terms share roots with the word humility.
			COl,8: I consider that the generic male form should be avoided, using terms applicable to both genders but without resorting to circumlocutions that hinder communication.
			COI,9: It could be considered discrimination against men, but I accept it because I am not offended.

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
			COI,10: If extended refers to exclusive, it seems wrong to me, but the double [male and female] form is equally bad and sometimes strikes me as more male chauvinism by creating a situation in which no adjective applies to both sexes if it is not explicitly mentioned. I think that there should be an easier and more natural alternative that does not make communication less effective or more cumbersome. I would accept that solution even if it were invented especially for the purpose of inclusive language.
			CO1,11: It is something that we have leaned since we were little in school, and we have intenalized it. It is used out of habit. It is always used spontaneously, just as all other language elements.
			COI,12: Yes. Sometimes the alternatives are very artificial and get in the way of smooth communication; not every time; not even that many, but they occur.
		CCEE/School of Psychology (2)	C02, 1: The generic male form seems correct to me when most of them are boys.
			C02,2: In my opinion, the generic male form is a sexist scourge, which should not be used on all occasions, but the generic feminine form should also be used more normally.
			C02,3: I consider it correct as long as it does not involve an assault or attack on a person, regardless of their gender.
			C02,4: I consider that the generic male form is an error. I think that it is time to change the generic male form and look for inclusive forms.
			C02,5: We must avoid it as much as possible. It is necessary to change its use to the inclusion of the feminine and inclusive language because it is not adequate since it does not reflect or highlight the difference, the sexual or gender diversity itself.
			C02,6: I believe that the generic male form is used intentionally but because gender perspective is disregarded. I think that inclusive and non-sexist language is used

more naturally. The problem is that some people trivialize it, and that is negative.

Table 4Summary of the category system used in the analysis with excerpts of the dimension 'Use of non-sexist language by teachers in their subjects'.

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
Professors' use of non-sexist language in their subjects	UL	ETSI and School of Telecommunications (1)	UL 1,1 When I address my pupils, I tell them that we will all be engineers or I will talk about the subject, that is, Engineering. For example: when you finish your degree, you will be able to work in professions as a consultant, computer scientist, programmer, engineer, programmer data analyst
			UL 1,2: I use the generic male form when I speak in general because our language is like that. But that does not mean that I do not encourage girls to pursue engineering careers, and I give my example since I am a girl and an engineer.
			UL 1,3: I use the name of the subject: Informatics, Engineering, Computer Science.
			UL 1,4: You are going to be the "ingenieros" [generic male form of engineers] that will sustain the country in the future.
			UL 1,5: I use both terms, "ingenieros" (male plural form of engineers] and "ingenieras" (female plural form of engineers]. This is what I say most often, but it bothers me not to have a more efficient form, and I use the at sign in my messages when I write "alumnos" [pupils].
			UL 1,6: I say "ingenieros" [generic male form of engineers]; I think that it silly to use gender inflection.
			UL 1,7: I use them interchangeably; I do not pay attention to word gender.
			UL 1,8: They will seem sexist to you. I think you have a problem, considering it sexist, not me. It is a totally inclusive language, and the one who has a problem is the one who interprets the generic male form as exclusively addressing men. I have always interpreted it for what it is, everyone, regardless of gender.
			UL 1,9: I do not usually use pictures of people. In the event that the discoverer of something was a woman, I would use her photo, just as I would if it had been a man.

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
Dimensions	code	SCHOOLS	Excerpt

- UL 1,10: I do not pay much attention to these things. I think that it is more important to be natural and not obsess about it. Naturally, all cases in which men and women appear are highlighted.
- UL1,11: Anthropomorphic figures do not usually appear in the teaching materials, but when they do, they are gender-neutral forms.
- UL 1,12: I do not pay attention to it. Precisely because that is egalitarian. To be honest, I tend to put more women because it is more pleasant for me. I am straight, but I usually notice it and I correct it. What I do usually do is to include characters of all sorts of nationalities, and not just Anglo-Saxons.
- UL 1,13: I do not emphasize that she is a woman; I simply mention her name. They must be mentioned equally, not distinguishing between women and men. I do not comment on the sexual condition of the authors.
- UL1,14: If it is a point in favor of women, because they had to overcome difficulties typical of the time, I do emphasize it. I would do the same in other circumstances when referring to people who excelled despite their circumstances (economic and political, among others).
- UL 1,15: That would be discrimination and discriminating, in any case, is bad. For example, positive sex discrimination is an aberration as much talking about a positive Ku Klux Klan, which was probably well liked somewhere at some point. Now that we talk about the Newspeak of 1984, similarly, zero tolerance is clearly the same intolerant. For me, language is at my service and not yours.

CCEE/School of Psychology (2)

- UL2,1: "Maestras de Infantil"(female plural form of Preschool because almost all of them are girls; I only have one male student
- UL 2,2: Normally, I try to say professional of pedagogy or Environmental Education
- UL 2,3: I always say "maestras" (female teachers] and "maestros" (male teachers], or "orientadoras" [female counsellors] and "orientadores" [male counsellors]. Sometimes I use education professionals.

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
			UL 2,4: Yes, I usually include non-sexist forms in the activities that I propose in class, as well as in my teaching and work.
			UL 2,5: I always use inclusive terms, I also use them in research, but there are journals that directly address these issues. In any case, fortunately, I already see some improvements in some journals that include the need to include inclusive and non-sexist language, but they are the minority.
			UL 2,6: I always strive for non-sexist works and activities formulated and stated as such.
			UL 2,7: Yes, moreover, I try to prioritize the use of female characters, as well as those of diverse ethnic backgrounds.
			UL 2,8: I try to do it, but it is true that afterwards I realize that I manage it sometimes, and other times I use male models. In any case, I am changing.
			UL 2,9: Yes, whenever I speak of any author, I try to give details of who they are, apart from the name.
			UL 2,10: Yes, it is true that I emphasize it more, I do not know, I think it is important. In the case of my line of research, there are more and more women experts in inclusive education.

Table 5Summary of the category system used in the analysis with excerpts of the dimension 'Teacher predisposition towards the change and use of inclusive language'

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
Professors' use of non-sexist language in their subjects	UL	ETSI and School of Telecommunications (1)	PC 1,1: As long as the use involves both genders equally, why not.
			PC 1,2: It do not care. I follow the RAE rules, and as long as [the generic male form] is valid, I can use it. Likewise, if feminine were or were established as the generic form, I would use it without any problem, but I think that it is absurd to be constantly mentioning the same word in fem nine and masculine.

- PC 1,3: I think that a lot of things should change, but I do not think that the way of speaking helps equality.
- PC 1,4: I am not sure. Before it was not a problem, but now it seems to be, and some women take offense at not feeling included.
- PC 1,5: It is not a habit, but an objective grammatical norm, and if it changes, it will be naturally, as the language evolves.
- PC 1,6: No, should chairs have five legs? Time and effort should be directed to useful things. It bothers me that in the movies the bad guys always wear red... and in this case. I am sure that there is an obvious reason...
- PC 1,7: Yes, but [we should be] looking for better alternatives than duplicating sentence elements [gender inflection]. I see no need [for that].
- PC 1,8: Why not, unless there is a global term for both genders
- PC 1,9: It depends on how that egalitarian language is. If the RAE determines that there is a generic male or female, I can use it, although I will always try to use nonsexist forms. But I find it very tedious to use both versions of a word such as "alumnos" [male pupils] and "alumnas" [female pupils].
- PC 1,10: Not now. I really think that there are differences between men and women, and sexism, but I do not blame the language for it.
- PC 1,11: I think I use egalitarian language and do not discriminate in any way, at least that is my intention. I do not think that using male and female forms to highlight that I am referring to both genders is equalitarian.
- PC 1,12: When I deem it appropriate to avoid offending or excluding anyone. In written texts, I try to use terms such as "profesorado" [faculty members] instead of "profesores" [generic male form of professors], and I add a footnote indicating that I use the generic male form, as recommended by the RAE.

PC 1,13: I use non-sexist language. I do not speak differently to any student because of their sex, nor do I despise or discriminate against anyone for that or any other reason. And of course, I use the generic male form, because it is the correct way to refer to groups made up of people of both sexes in Spanish.

PC 1,14: I do not use sexist forms. Neither do I use unnecessary grammatical constructions or periphrasis. I guess that means the answer is no, despite the semantic load implicit in the question by presenting non-sexist and egalitarian language as equivalents.

PC1,15: I already use it; the problem But the attitudes. Your concept of egalitarianism was recently coined and is not equivalent to mine. Definitions change. Have you ever checked the definitions of words, such as anarchy on the RAE dictionary? Have you compared it with the political moment of each era?

CCEE/School of Psychology (2)

PC 2, 1: No, I think that in general this use of language is appropriate and that no one should be offended.

PC 2,2: I do not see why. The generic male form can be seen as macho, it makes women invisible or not. Men have to share terminology; we do not have an exclusive right. I think that if the truly important equality issues are solved, the generic male form will not worry anyone.

PC 2,3: I do not consider [using] it unless the language is simplified and the meaning of what is transmitted is not lost.

PC 2,4: Yes, I think that it is important to advance non-sexist language. In times of some uncertainty, and even denial of gender equality, it is very relevant to promote the use of inclusive language that respects diversity.

PC 2,5: Not if egalitarian language means replacing the generic male form with neutral

PC 2,6: I am willing to use neutral forms as much as possible, but I am not willing to use the term "alumnos "[pupils] with @, with X or "alumnos" [male pupils] and "alumnas" [female pupils], and so on. I find these solutions worse than the original problem.

Dimensions	Code	Schools	Excerpts
			PC 2,7: I do not think that the language that I use is sexist, but I generally do not like language normalization. I just think that there are bigger problems than this.

The first dimension of the interview and the responses to the interviews with the professors at the ETSI and at the School of Telecommunications showed little awareness of the use of an inclusive language that highlights women in their subjects. Despite some exceptions, most professors choose to use the generic male form and justify it in statements such as "includes both genders" (CU1,1), "is the grammar rule; in addition, it has always been done as such" (CU1,2), "I use the male form because most of my students are men and I do not pay attention to word gender" (CU1,5) or "it is absurd not to use the generic male form" (CU1,7).

Some have not even considered that there are other alternatives, with statements such as "I have never thought about how I should address my students" or "I explain, I do not know, as always ..." (CU1,3 / CU1,4).

In turn, the professors at the Schools of Education Sciences and Psychology show a higher awareness of the use of inclusive language with slight differences between fields of study. This is reflected in statements such as "I use epicene words" (CU2,1), "I use "estudiantes" [students]" (CU2,3), "I usually use inclusive language, that is, gender-neutral terms such as "estudiantes" [students]..." (CU2,6), or "I use "estudiantes" [students] as a synonym for "alumnos" [pupils]" (CU2,9).

Regarding the category Professor's knowledge of inclusive language, the analyses show that the professors at the ETSI and at the School of Telecommunications have little knowledge of what inclusive language is, mentioning only the generic male form as neutral and they hardly give any importance to considering alternatives, sometimes hiding behind the Royal Spanish Academy (*Real Academia Española* – RAE) rules, with comments such as "this is determined by the RAE and is correct" (CO1,3) or "the generic male form is accepted by the RAE" (CO1,5). They always refer to word economy, highlighting great ignorance because sometimes inclusive language is, linguistically speaking, more economic.

Conversely, the professors at the Schools of Science Education and Psychology show a homogeneous set of responses regarding the knowledge of inclusive language. This fact denotes that they understand not only what inclusive language is but also the implications that its non-use can entail, as shown by some of their answers, such as "the feminine form and inclusive language must be used because it is not adequate to reflect or highlight sexual or gender differences," (CO2,5), "I consider that the generic male form is an error. I believe that it is time to change the generic male form and to search for inclusive alternatives" (CO2,4) or "I think that inclusive and non-sexist language is used more naturally" (CO2,6).

In relation to the third dimension of the interview regarding the use of inclusive language by professors, at ETSI and at the School of Telecommunications, the professors usually use the generic male form to refer to students; a female professor of the sample even stated "I use the generic male form when I speak in general because our language is like that. But that does not mean that [I would encourage] girls to pursue engineering careers [otherwise]" (UL1,2), "I say engineers, it seems silly to use gen-

der inflection" (UL1,6) or "I use them interchangeably, I do not pay attention to word gender" (UL1,7).

Similarly, when they have to use teaching resources such as videos or images, they fail to ensure the alternation between female and male characters and the duplication of woman and man in the same image or do not usually include non-sexist formulas, as demonstrated in responses such as "I do not usually use pictures of people. In the event that the discoverer of something was a woman, I would use her photo, just as I would if it had been a man" (UL1,9), "I do not pay much attention to these things. I think that it is more important to be natural and not obsess about it. Naturally, all cases in which men and women appear are highlighted" (UL1,10) or "I do not pay attention to it, precisely because that is egalitarian" (UL1,12).

In turn, most professors at the School of Education Sciences and Psychology use, curiously, the female form because, as some interviewees state "they are almost all women" (UL2,1). Other times they choose to name the field and even the inclusive term "professional of pedagogy or Environmental Education" (UL2,2). They also complain that scientific journals do not have that gender awareness when publishing articles.

They also comment that they try to include non-sexist materials and even female authors in their teaching activities, which is reflected in the following statements: "I always strive for non-sexist works and activities formulated and stated as such" (UL2,6), "Furthermore, I try to prioritise the use of female characters, as well as diverse ethnic backgrounds" (UL2,7) or "Whenever I speak of any author, I try to give details of who it is. in addition to the name" (UL2,9).

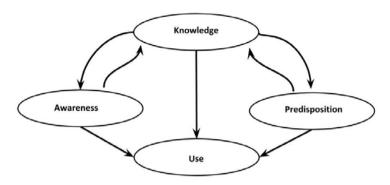
The last dimension of the interview is aimed at knowing the professors' openness to change regarding the use of inclusive language; in this regard, faculty members at the ETSI and at the School of Telecommunications are not very open to the use of this type of language, as shown in responses such as: "as long as the use [of the generic male form] involves both genders equally, I do not see why" (PC1,1), "It do not care. I follow the RAE rules, and as long as [the generic male form] is valid, I can use it" (PC1,2) or "I think that many things should change, but I do not think that the way of speaking contributes to equality" (PC1,3).

In this dimension, the professors at the Schools of Education Sciences and Psychology are apparently not overtly open to change either. For the professors, it is more important to solve other equality problems than inclusive language, except for one professor who argues that "Yes, I think that it is important to advance non-sexist language. In times of some uncertainty, and even denial of gender equality, it is very relevant to promote the use of inclusive language that respects diversity" (PC2,4).

The figure below shows the relationships between the dimensions after analysing the interview responses.

As shown in Figure 2, awareness is related to knowledge of inclusive language, and this relationship is bidirectional because the greater the knowledge of inclusive language is, the higher the awareness of its use will be. The same goes for the openness and knowledge dimensions. The interview responses showed a direct relationship between these two dimensions since the greater the knowledge of what inclusive language implies professors have, the more open to change they will be.

Figure 2 *Relationship between the interview dimensions.*



In turn, in order to use inclusive language, first of all, professors must realise and be aware of it, in addition to having some knowledge, not only of what inclusive language is but also of the implications that its use entail, and hence they must be open to change, so this dimension is related to the previous three.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to learn more about what a coeducational model entails in educational institutions and to analyse the stance of professors on coeducational culture. As stated by Colás and Jiménez (2004): "Integrating the gender perspective in education and in the school curriculum and training professors in gender issues are key educational challenges and needs to achieve desirable social transformations" (p.418).

The transcripts of the interviews to the teaching staff provided an overview of how they conceive and treat egalitarian language in their teaching work within a coeducational model.

In reference to the first specific objective of this research, which was to assess whether university professors are aware and mindful of the use of inclusive language, in their teaching work, in almost the entire sample of the two branches of knowledge, despite their awareness of the use of inclusive language, they do not put it into practice in their teaching work because their answers showed that they are not aware of the use or the implications that such use have in a society where values such as equity between people should be promoted.

This notion is supported by other studies and by claims by authors such as García et al. (2011) who indicate that, the educational context displays strong resistance to using non-sexist language for reasons ranging from defending the use of the generic male form, through searching for the use of a neutral model, to considering this type of language "inelegant and uneconomical". These authors also consider that the lack of training may be one of the main reasons for the lack of awareness and use of inclusive language.

Accordingly, Díaz and Carvajal (2010) state that "Universities do not consider the gender perspective in a transversal way; moreover, there are hardly any subjects in their curriculum that reflect the work of women throughout history and their contribution to science, among other issues" (p. 39).

Assessing whether professors know what inclusive language actually is was the second specific objective of this study. The analyses showed that the knowledge of inclusive language was very poor among the professors of the technical branches, in contrast to those of Education and Psychology degrees, who did show a greater knowledge of inclusive language and of its cognitive and social implications. The greater knowledge of these professors may have resulted from their training, from the object of study of each branch of knowledge and from specificities of their Schools; in technical degrees, male students prevail and, therefore, the professors see no need to use inclusive language.

Our context is typically, in principle, non-neutral and non-egalitarian: These aspects are thus reflected in educational and university settings. Therefore, both students and teachers must be trained in values such as equality, tolerance, dialogue and practical conflict resolution, in addition to introducing them to educational curricula through specific titles related to gender, in specific subjects of equality, or through a transversal approach (González et al., 2019).

The third specific objective of this study was to assess whether professors predominantly use sexist language and the generic male form in their teaching discourse. Accordingly, the data show that the use of the generic male form has been perpetuated in society and is perceived as such. Since feminism, the role of language in the reproduction and legitimisation of gender inequalities has been emphasized (Cameron, 2005). In general, most professors assume that equality between the two genders has already been achieved; thus, they do not analyse other aspects that may continue to influence and maintain that inequality in a more subtle way, thereby highlighting the importance of progressing and advancing from a patriarchal society to a true egalitarian society. For this purpose, we must consider that, in the context of a patriarchal society, language reproduces the androcentric and sexist structures of thought and social organisation, depicting men as the only actors and references and women as dependent and subordinate (Instituto Vasco De La Mujer, 1998). Sexual roles imposed by a society that shapes our way of thinking and understanding the world are inevitably internalised. Since childhood (and perhaps long before birth), we have been overwhelmed with sexist messages in all areas of life, which is why some attitudes and behaviours seem natural to us. Also "androcentrism is the reason behind the majority of sexist constructions, as well as the resistance that exists to incorporate inclusive solutions" (Álvarez & González, 2011, p. 69).

Regarding the use of the generic male form as universal to refer to both genders, professors have valued such a use, albeit using it spontaneously, also highlighting the lack of awareness of gender equality or the use of non-sexist language at the University. In addition, the professors are somewhat in agreement that the university culture continues to perpetuate gender differences (Gómez et al., 2018).

Regarding the results of our fourth objective of assessing whether female professors are more or less sensitive to the use of an inclusive language than male professors, our research does not highlight differences between both genders, perhaps because of what authors such as Rebollo et al. (2011) argue when they indicate that "professors are less aware of teaching practices and especially of the use of non-sexist language"

(p. 542). However, the transcripts show that these female professors are more open to change than their male counterparts, possible because "there is some awareness and openness to the culture of equality, more markedly so in women than in men" (Rebollo et al., 2011, p. 542). This greater awareness of female professors of social sciences was not observed among the female professors of technical branches in our study because, although they recognise that the trend must be changed, they assured that they do not to put it into practice, perhaps because these teachers do not feel the appeal of what Martínez (2018) terms gender consciousness, that is, when "groups of speakers feel the need to bring about a change in society and, in that fight, question the language" (p.2).

Regarding the fifth specific objective of this research, to assess whether the professors are open to change and to use of inclusive language in their teaching, the results showed that Engineering and Architecture professors (Informatics and Engineering), are more resistant to the use of egalitarian language and that only the affected people observe inequality and, in this case, most students were male due not only to the gender bias in those degree but also to society, which values tradition more than rationality. In turn, the branch of Social and Legal Sciences (Education and Psychology), shows a greater openness to not only change but also the use of inclusive language, perhaps due to the humanistic training of the degrees taught at these two Schools and to the efforts made by the deans of said Schools, accordingly, because most of their students are female. A greater effort in training professors must be made, both initially and continuously, so that, as stated by Heir (2019) "women are highlighted through academic curricula, not only using inclusive language, but also exposing the contributions that women have made to different fields of knowledge" (p.3), thereby advance towards change to achieve a more democratic and egalitarian society. For this purpose, the educational administration must also contribute to seeking a balance between both genders, providing strategies and tasks for gender equality detection and diagnosis (Pallarés, 2012).

Systematically, the results from this study have clearly shown differences in coeducation between the different branches of knowledge that have been analysed in this study, as intended in the last specific objective. Data analysis revealed completely different assessments, and the Schools of Informatics and Engineering stood out for their lower degree of agreement with the coeducational model or with the use of non-sexist language in their activities. This difference may have resulted from all the factors that have been discussed throughout this study.

Having more information about the real situation in our University regarding the use of language by professors and by the institution itself opens up the possibility of designing actions and interventions specifically for improving those aspects detected in the study. Considering the results from our analysis, educational agents must appropriately use language, analysing those aspects that may have a sexist content and modify them.

We must take advantage of the versatility and adaptability that our language has in those situations and in facing our needs. We must know how to use language as an instrument, adapting it to our various ways of relating to others and to reality. Although changing or modifying the use of language takes time, it should not mean breaking with the rules of communication but instead knowing how to use and take advantage of its flexibility so that it truly represents and highlights both genders.

As a final conclusion, we consider that, first and foremost, the existing measures regarding gender, in international agreements and even in Spanish legislation, must be redesigned and applied. Second, university bodies responsible for academic policies, such as the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (*Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación* – ANECA), must establish criteria that clearly include the gender perspective, including in processes of accreditation, such as the evaluation of their degrees, thereby ensuring compliance with the law and widespread inclusion of all university degrees in this perspective.

People with political responsibilities, both public and academic, must also commit to fostering effective equality between both genders throughout the university structure.

Last but not least, real equality plans must be developed, with specific budgets and personnel trained in gender equality, and promoted in the entire university community, through awareness and training programmes.

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