

International Research Networking Project

“Language and Gender: Academic Research and Practical Implementation”

May 31st. Conference 2:
“Language and Gender: Research and Desiderata”

“GFL in Spanish: where we are and where we’re headed”

Lenguaje inclusivo en español: estado actual y pasos futuros

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Outline

1. Looking back to January 19th... **Where were we?**
2. Research areas within GFL in Spanish. **Where are we?**
 - I. Our contribution to the field
3. Desiderata: **what's next?**

Not-so-fair GFL in Spanish

- i. Linguistic associations that refer to **women = weak, passive**, home and care, childish (*señorito/señorita; nenaza*)
- ii. Reference to **women only in their role as mothers or wives “of”** (*alcaldesa*)
- iii. **Hierarchical order to refer to men and then women** (*padre y madre, hermanos y hermanas, os/as...*)
- iv. **Assymetry** when referring to men and women **in the same context/rol** (*jugadoras; Sánchez e Irene Montero*)
- v. **Abscence** of nouns to refer to **jobs in the female** form (*pilot, architect, technician, soldier...*)
- vi. So-called **masculine ‘generics’** in grammatical gender languages and RAE’s stand → *male = humanity*

GFL alternatives in Spanish

Double forms (masc AND fem)

Los alumnos y alumnas que hayan terminado la tarea pueden salir del aula [The students who have finished may leave the classroom]

Slash form (masc/fem)

Querido/a lector/a de nuestra revista... [Dear journal reader...]

Collective forms, epicens, metonymics...

los médicos y las enfermeras; los profesores y los estudiantes → **el equipo médico, el profesorado y estudiantado**... [the medical and nursing team/body ; the teaching / student body]
El director de la empresa → *La dirección de la empresa* [The company's office]

Feminine generics (Bengoechea 2015)

Consejo de Ministras, ¡CAMPEONAS!...

'New' forms: @, *

*l@s español@s, l@s estudiant*s,*

Newest forms: - x & -e

Lxs niñxs, les estudiantes, mes amigas...

Formal language:
administration, journalism,
education, politics...

Specific language:
Majority of women
Sports & journalism

Digital language: social
media, advertising,
university, activism...

Such splitting is contrived and linguistically unnecessary.

[...]

It is therefore incorrect to use the feminine to refer to both sexes together, regardless of the number of individuals of each sex in the group. Thus, alumnos is the only correct way of referring to a mixed group, even if the number of female pupils is greater than the number of male pupils



REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA

La institución Académicos Obras Biblioteca Archivo Boletines Comu

ESPAÑOL AL DÍA

«Los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas», «los niños y las niñas»

Este tipo de desdoblamientos son artificiosos e innecesarios desde el punto de vista lingüístico. En los sustantivos que designan seres animados existe la posibilidad del uso genérico del masculino para designar la clase, es decir, a todos los individuos de la especie, sin distinción de sexos: *Todos los ciudadanos mayores de edad tienen derecho a voto.*

La mención explícita del femenino solo se justifica cuando la oposición de sexos es relevante en el contexto: *El desarrollo evolutivo es similar en los niños y las niñas de esa edad.* La actual tendencia al desdoblamiento indiscriminado del sustantivo en su forma masculina y femenina va contra el principio de economía del lenguaje y se funda en razones extralingüísticas. Por tanto, deben evitarse estas repeticiones, que generan dificultades sintácticas y de concordancia, y complican innecesariamente la redacción y lectura de los textos.

El uso genérico del masculino se basa en su condición de término no marcado en la oposición masculino/femenino. Por ello, es incorrecto emplear el femenino para aludir conjuntamente a ambos sexos, con independencia del número de individuos de cada sexo que formen parte del conjunto. Así, *los alumnos* es la única forma correcta de referirse a un grupo mixto, aunque el número de alumnas sea superior al de alumnos varones.

Resistance towards GFL

BUT!!!

“Psychological studies have provided compelling evidence in GGLs showing that the usage of the masculine plural form intended as a generic interpretation evokes less female representations than its female counterparts as well as other gender neutral forms by **favoring stronger associations with the male gender**” (Sato et al. 2013).

German: Braun, Sczesny & Stahlberg, 2005; Irmen & Köhncke, 1996; Stahlberg et al., 2001;
French: Brauer & Landry, 2008; Gabriel, Gyax, Sarrasin, Garnham & Oakhill, 2008;
Norwegian: Gabriel & Gyax, 2008).

WHAT IS THE SITUATION NOW?

Inclusive language arrives at the Congress of Deputies (masc.plu): it will be called just 'Congress'.

PP y Vox se oponen

El lenguaje inclusivo llega al Congreso de los Diputados: pasará a llamarse solo 'Congreso'

PSOE y Sumar apuestan por eliminar el masculino genérico y por incluir términos neutros, como "Presidencia" en lugar de "el presidente" para erradicar las "expresiones sexistas". Vox y PP han votado en contra.

▼ EN BREVE

- [La importancia del lenguaje inclusivo para dar visibilidad a las mujeres: "No se habla de soldada o capitana del Ejército"](#)



≡ EL PAÍS

Cultura

SUSCRÍBETE

INICIAR SESIÓN

‘Les amigas’ del lenguaje inclusivo

Del activismo a la universidad o la política, crecen las voces que apuestan, pese a la oposición de la RAE, por el uso del morfema -e como forma de visibilizar las políticas de género en el español

*‘The friends’ (-e inclusive) of inclusive language’.
From activism to university and politics, support of the use of inclusive –e grows, in spite of RAE’s demands...*

BUT!!

Argentina's Milei bans gender-inclusive language in official documents

By Tara John and Sahar Akbarzai, CNN, and Veronica Calderon, CNNE
2 minute read · Updated 7:02 PM EST, Wed March 6, 2024



En Andalucía pretenden vetar el lenguaje inclusivo en la Junta

18 septiembre

Andalusian (government) wants to ban inclusive language in the regional congress.

FROM AFP NEWS

Argentina Broadens Ban On Gender-inclusive Language

By AFP - Agence France Presse February 27, 2024

Research foci and challenges nowadays

1. **GFL alternatives and their current status:** Lledó-Cunil 1992, Bengoechea 2015, Grijelmo 2019, Acosta Matos 2016; Cabello-Pino 2020; Parra & Ellen 2021; Slemp et al. 2021, Papadopoulos 2022...
 - I. **Binary and Non-binary language** (debate around –e & -x)
2. **Opinions towards GFL:** Pallarés 2012, Bonilla 2019; Reales Gil 2020, Guerrero-Salazar 2020; García-Holgado et al 2021, Magagna 2021, Cremades et al 2022;...
3. **GFL processing (psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics):** Molinaro 2016, Solbe-Canales et al. 2020, Yeaton et al. 2023, Muelas-Gil forthcoming,...
4. **GFL in:**
 - I. **Communication:** Andion Linares 2020, Guerrero-Salazar 2021, Cabello Pino 2022...
 - II. **Education:** Lledó-Cunil 2016, Sevilla-Vallejo 2021, Conde 2022, Muelas-Gil & Cano 2024...
5. **GFL and AI:** Ahn et al. 2021, López Medel 2021, Nur Fitria 2021, Kotek et al. 2023...

This project: An interdisciplinary approach

Study 1: a 200-item survey to update stereotypes (Muelas-Gil, forthcoming)

Study 2: a 60-item, 3 option survey on “generic” masculine

- **Study 3: GFL and computational modelling** (Yeaton, Muelas-Gil & Scontras 2023)

Study 4: a translation task English > Spanish (Muelas-Gil, forthcoming)

Study 5: Eye – Tracking & EEG with data from Study 1

Study 6: GFL and machine translation

Study 1

- **Likert scale** (1 = mainly male / 9 = mainly female)
- **200 items** (previous studies + MTAS dictionary of Jobs)
- **93 university students, L1 Spanish** (age 22.6)

➤ Results:

- Updated database for subsequent studies
- A tendency towards neutralization is observed in certain traditionally stereotypical ones:

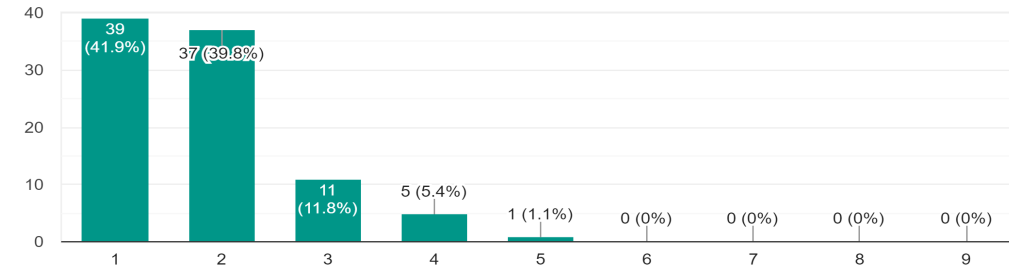
optician	4,817
biologist	4,753
TV anchor	4,699
doctor	4,688
meteorologist	4,667

- Some stereotypes remain

assistant	8,161	const. worker	1,763
matron	8,000	truck driver	1,656
beautician	7,892	bodyguard	1,548
caregiver	7,774	miner	1,548
cleaner	7,699	bullfighter	1,376

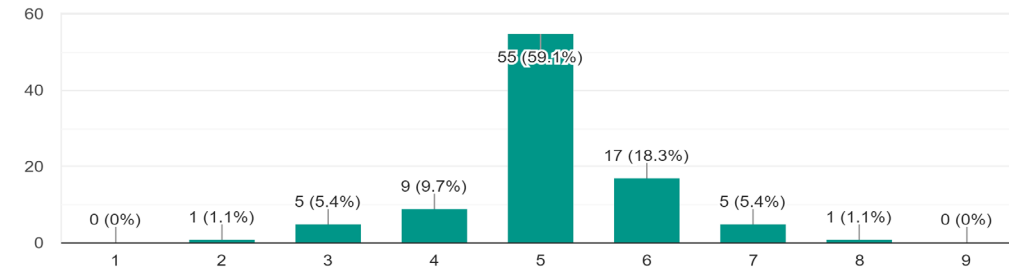
fontanero/a

93 responses



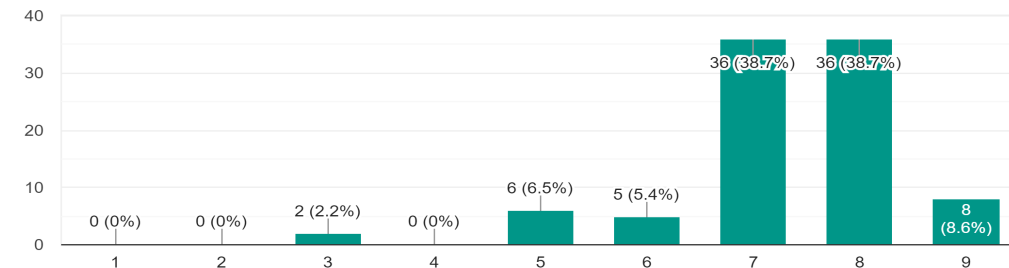
escritor/a

93 responses



maestro/a (Educación Infantil y Primaria)

93 responses



Study 2

➤ **Likert scale** (1 = male / 9 = female)

A: “generic” masculine: *abogados*

B: generic + fem: *abogados/as*

C: feminine & masculine: *abogadas o abogados*

➤ **60** items (from study 1)

➤ **117** participants (age 20.2)

A: 45

B: 46

C: 28

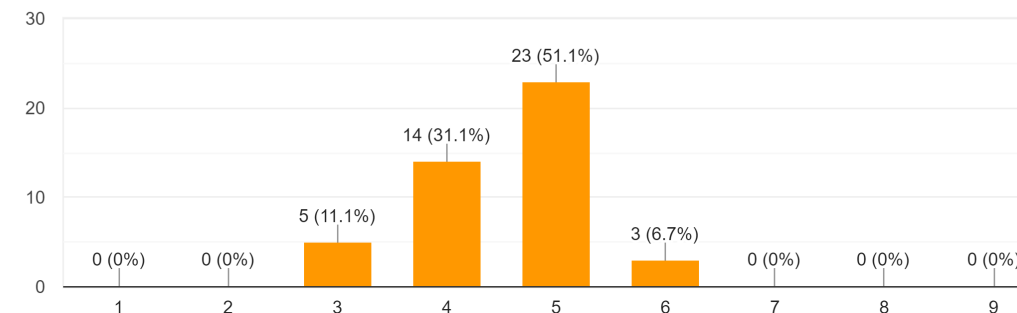
➤ **Purpose:**

➤ To check amount of women depicted in A/B/C option

- To compare stereotypical values with the different GFL options versus masculine generics

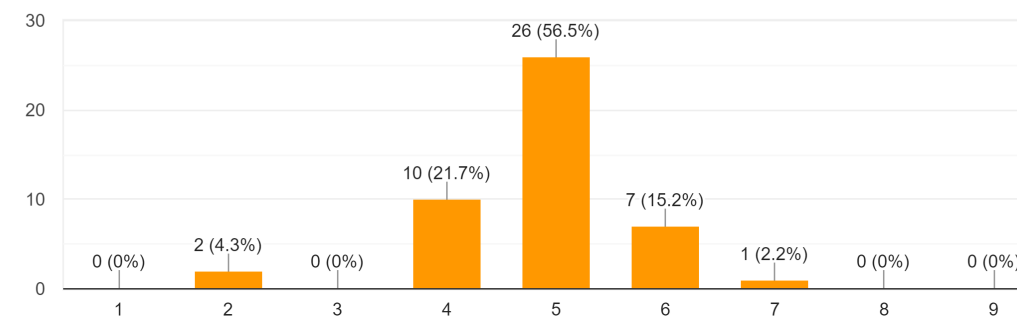
fotógrafos

45 responses



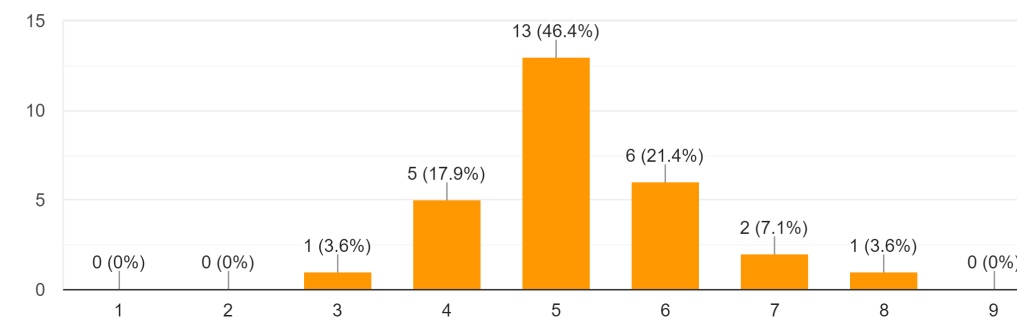
fotógrafo/a

46 responses



fotógrafa o fotógrafo

28 responses



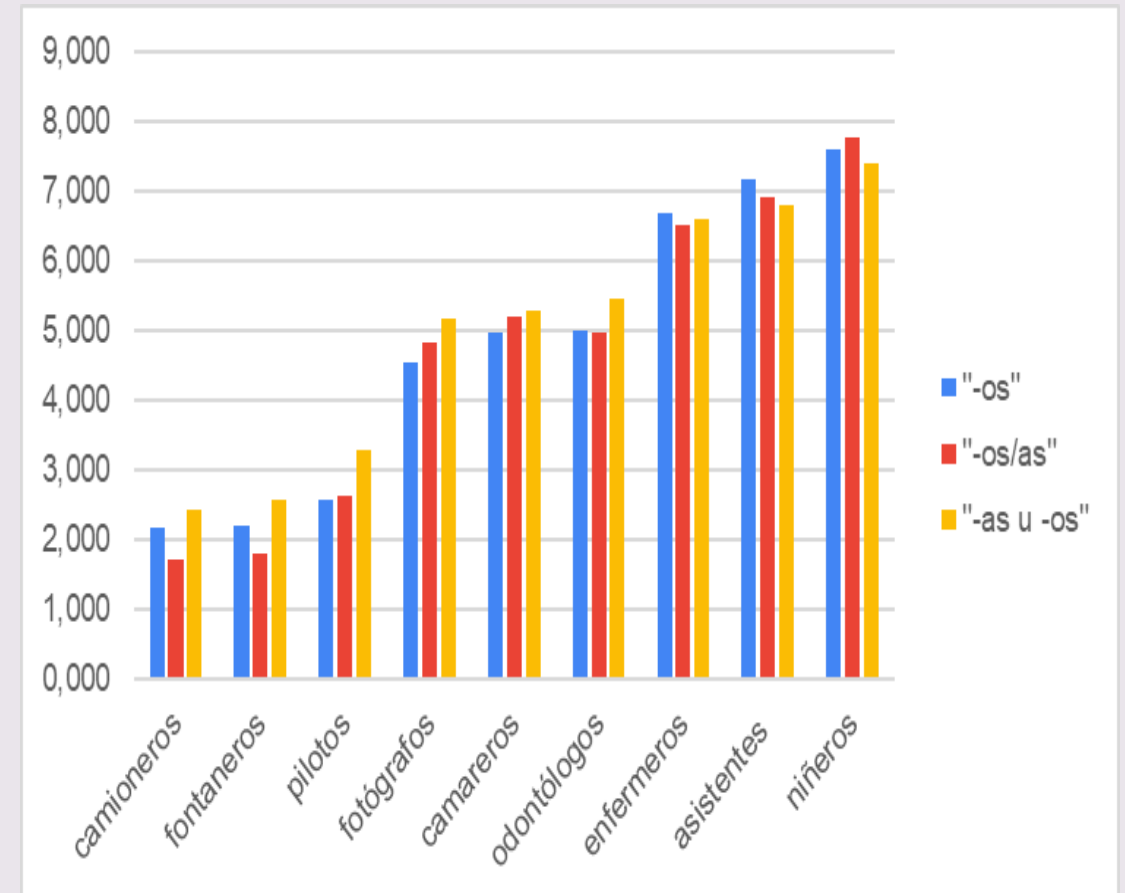
Study 2

RESULTS:

- ✓ Values tend to be the highest when using complete form of “-as and -os” in **stereotypically male and neutral jobs**
- ✓ For **stereotypically female jobs**, the value decreases

?? In line with prev. views: higher acceptance of women doing stereotypically male jobs than the other way round

- More men are included in the stereotypically females jobs with the double form (inclusive both ways)



Study 4 (translation task)

➤ **Translation** task: 24 sentences English to Spanish doing a “review of tenses task” with stereotypical jobs ‘hidden’.

- 1-2 ESO: 177 answers
- 3-4 ESO: 93 answers
- 1 Bach: 46 answers

There is a new doctor at the hospital

They have always wanted to be firefighters

I am going to ask the secretary if the librarian is working today, I need to return this book

➤ Purpose:

- To see whether they rely on masculine generic or on the stereotype when translating.
- To observe alternatives (@, x, e, ...) use among teenagers

➤ RESULTS:

- Students rely on the **masc. generic** almost 100% when it’s **stereotypically male and neutral**
- When **stereotypically female**, wider **variety**, tendency to use **femenine** form or **o/a**

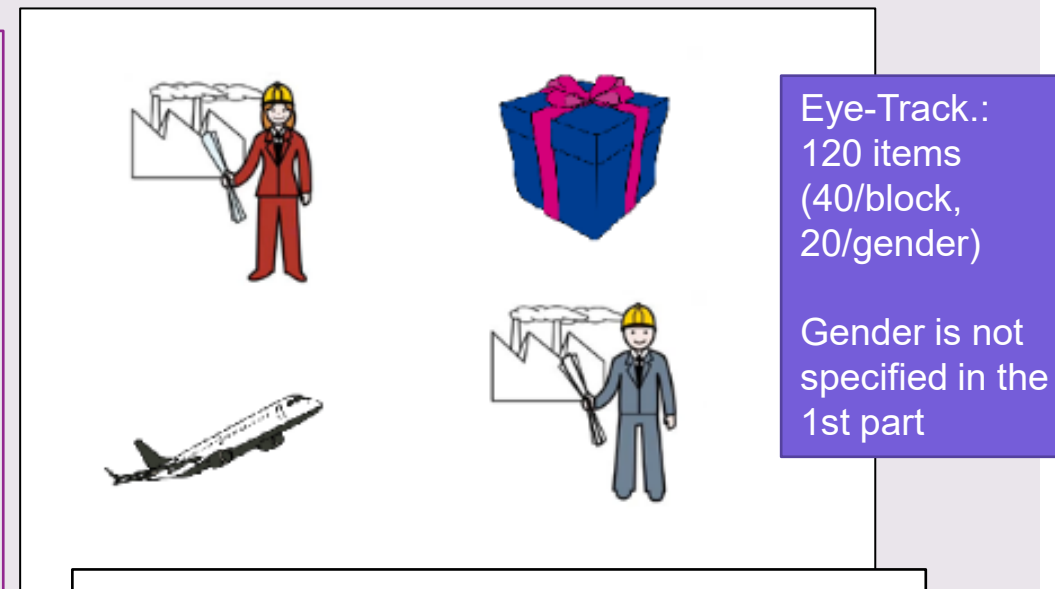
1-2 ESO	MASC	FEM	O/A	OTHER
new doctor	173	0	4	0
PE teacher	155	14	8	0
secretary	88	65	24	0
ballet dancer	147	17	13	0

3-4 ESO	MASC	FEM	O/A	OTHER
police officer	83	10	0	0
engineer	92	1	0	0
manager	92	1	0	0
firefighters	93	0	0	0

Bach.	MASC	FEM	O/A	OTHER
architect	46	0	0	0
secretary	17	27	1	1
librarian	23	10	3	10
nanny	0	46	0	0
doctors	43	0	3	0
nurses	18	21	1	6
scientists	44	0	1	1

Study 5: EEG & eye-tracking

- Data: stereotypical jobs taken from **Study 1**.
- **Two experiments** designed in the BCBL (San Sebastián) with Prof. Molinaro & Kapnoula
 - **EEG + Eye-Tracking** (Visual World Paradigm)
- **Bilingual & Monolingual** participants:
 - G1: **L1 Spanish / L2 English** (items both in Sp & En)
 - G2: **L1 English / L2 Spanish** (items both in En & Sp)
 - G3: **monolingual Spanish** (items only in Spanish)
 - G4: **monolingual English** (items only in English)
- Purpose:
 - To look closely at stereotype processing and resolution when listening and seeing stereotypical / neutral jobs in L1 and L2
 - To see whether L2 has any effect on fixation times, processing times, mismatch resolution...
 - To compare crosslinguistic and intralinguistic results
 - To contrast with previous studies



*Después de revisar el funcionamiento de la nueva fábrica, **la ingeniera** se fue a coger un avión a Barcelona.*

*After reviewing the new factory's operation, **the engineer (FEM)** left to catch a plane to Barcelona.*

Study 6: GFL and machine translation

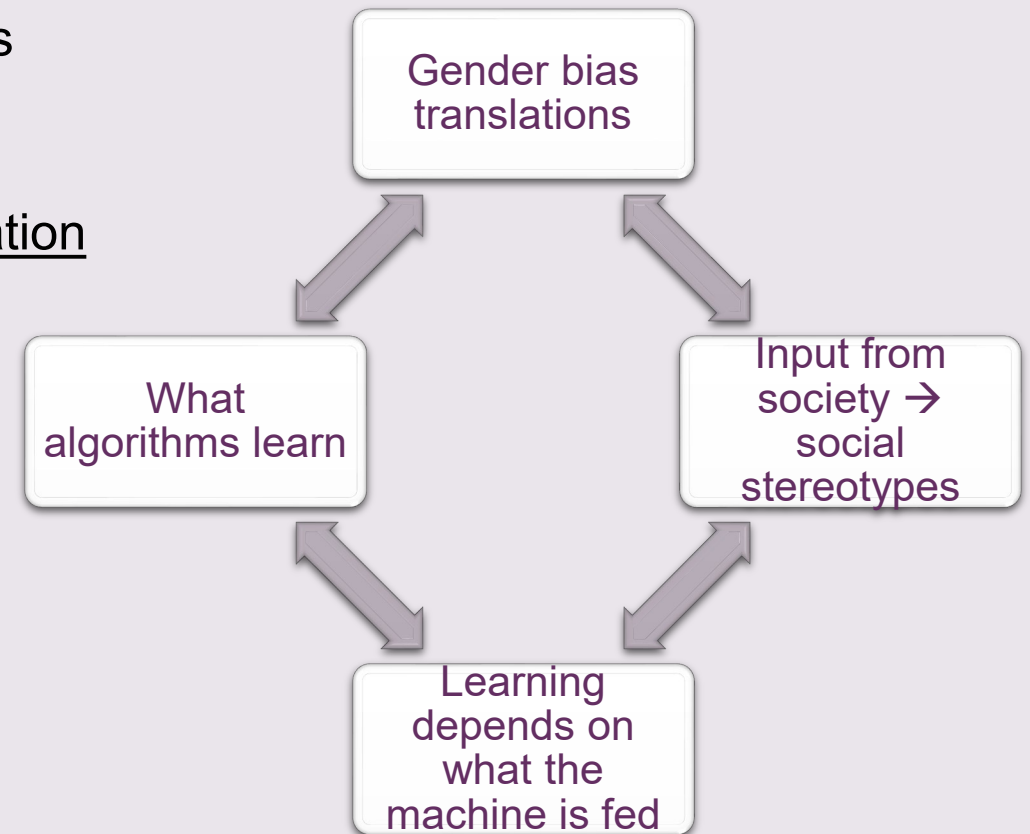
- Machine translations **have improved** a lot in the last years (Monti 2020, López-Medel 2021)
- BUT!! There are still gender bias traces in machine translation such as Google Translate.

➤ **WHAT**

- 20 unmarked nouns (rols and jobs) from study 1
- 20 stereotypical activities/schemas with unmarked gender

➤ **WHY**

- To compare with previous studies/improvements
- To compare translators



(Ariño Bizarro, forthcoming)



Google Translate interface showing the translation of "the doctor told me to rest" from English to Spanish. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Inglés" and "Español", a close button (X), and two suggested translations: "La doctora me dijo que descansara (femenino)" and "El doctor me dijo que descansara (masculino)". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "the nurse told me to rest" from English to Spanish. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Inglés" and "Español", a close button (X), and two suggested translations: "La enfermera me dijo que descansara (femenino)" and "El enfermero me dijo que descansara (masculino)". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "le encanta cuidarse" from Spanish to English. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Español" and "Inglés", a close button (X), and the translation "he loves to take care of himself". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "le encanta cuidarse y hacer ejercicio" from Spanish to English. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Español" and "Inglés", a close button (X), and the translation "he loves taking care of himself and exercising". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "le encanta cuidarse y comprar ropa" from Spanish to English. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Español" and "Inglés", a close button (X), and the translation "she loves taking care of herself and buying clothes". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "le encanta cuidarse y comprar ropa con su mujer" from Spanish to English. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Español" and "Inglés", a close button (X), and the translation "He loves taking care of himself and shopping for clothes with his wife." It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "le encanta cuidarse y cocinar" from Spanish to English. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Español" and "Inglés", a close button (X), and the translation "he loves taking care of himself and cooking". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "le encanta cuidarse y cocinar para" from Spanish to English. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Español" and "Inglés", a close button (X), and the translation "she loves taking care of herself and cooking for". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "I'm the boss" from English to Spanish. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Inglés" and "Español", a close button (X), and two suggested translations: "Soy la jefa (femenino)" and "Soy el jefe (masculino)". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.

Google Translate interface showing the translation of "I'm the boss!!" from English to Spanish. The interface includes language selection dropdowns for "Inglés" and "Español", a close button (X), and the translation "¡¡Yo soy el jefe!!". It also features microphone and speaker icons, a copy icon, a "Verificada" badge, and a "Sugerencias" link at the bottom.



inglés ↕ español automático Glosario

The doctor told me to rest El médico me dijo que descansara

Alternativas:
El doctor me dijo que descansara

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

the nurse told me to rest la enfermera me dijo que descansara

Alternativas:
la enfermera me ha dicho que descanse
la enfermera me dijo que descansase

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

I want to be a pilot when I'm older Quiero ser piloto cuando sea mayor

Alternativas:
De mayor quiero ser piloto
Cuando sea mayor quiero ser piloto

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

I want to be a librarian when I'm older De mayor quiero ser bibliotecaria

Alternativas:
Quiero ser bibliotecaria cuando sea mayor
Quiero ser bibliotecario cuando sea mayor

🎤 ↶ ↷ 🔊 📄 🗑️ 🔗

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

I love going shopping with my friends Me encanta ir de compras con mis amigas

Alternativas:
Me encanta ir de compras con mis amigos
Me encanta salir de compras con mis amigas

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

I love going to the gym with my friends Me encanta ir al gimnasio con mis amigos

Alternativas:
Me encanta ir al gimnasio con mis amigas
Me encanta ir al gimnasio con los amigos

🎤 ↶ ↷ 🔊 📄 🗑️ 🔗

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

my kid loves playing with toys a mi hijo le encanta jugar con juguetes

Alternativas:
a mi hijo le encanta jugar con los juguetes

inglés (detectado) ↕ español automático Glosario

my kid loves playing with dolls a mi hija le encanta jugar con muñecas

Alternativas:
a mi hijo le encanta jugar con muñecas
a mi niña le encanta jugar con muñecas
a mi niño le encanta jugar con muñecas

🎤 ↶ ↷ 🔊 📄 🗑️ 🔗

In a nutshell...

- GFL has already found its niche in Spanish society and in different spheres
 - Myriad of GFL guidelines available for 25 years now (improved and updated yearly)
- Legislation and oficial guidelines support its use
 - Language-norm dictating sides advice against it but do not forbid it
- Different GFL alternatives, different degrees of acceptance (on-going debate)
- Research and science still have much to do and much to offer
 - A growing school of researchers interested in the field!!

**“AWARENESS IS THE FIRST STEP
TOWARDS CHANGE”**

Some references

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“Language and Gender: Academic Research and Practical Implementation”

2023/2024

THANK YOU for your attention, feedback and ideas!

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS por vuestra atención,
comentarios e ideas!

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