Non-sexist Language in Vacancy Titles: A Proposal for Drafting and Translation in International Organisations

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By María López Medel[1]

Abstract

Current and past research confirms the existence of a gender gap that prevents women from earning the same salaries as men, having equal access to typically male sectors, and climbing the professional ladder to the highest positions of management. The separation of the sexes often starts at home or at school, with girls being led to choices of gender-stereotypical careers or domestic life. This needs to be tackled from various angles, and one tool for this is non-sexist language. Sexist language makes women invisible and secondary by referring to them in the masculine and has been proven to negatively affect women in different ways, especially in employment.

The United Nations includes best practices and strategies for non-sexist language in the Sustainable Development Goal number 5: "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls." For the EU's European Institute for Gender Equality, the goal of non-sexist language is to eliminate the ambiguous masculine and expressions that discriminate. Despite a concerted but inconsistent effort to eradicate sexist language by governments and international organisations, discrepancies in gender expression between languages do not necessarily require the application of different techniques. In an analysis of job vacancy titles of two international organisations, a variety of gender options was observed, with some languages showing a higher proportion of neutral-language forms.

Our proposal for non-sexist drafting and translation of job advertisements calls for the systematic use of both genders alphabetically with variable profession nouns, and the use of the gender initials (*f/m*) after invariable, collective, and metonymic nouns, also in pronominal-gender languages like English. We believe that making women visible in vacancy titles will encourage female applications and establish mental connections that make women relate to the posts.

Although gender specification of job advertisements might not be the only solution to closing the gender gap, it could contribute to the betterment of women in employment. More studies are necessary to show the advantages of applying non-sexist language in vacancies for the advancement of women in the labour market together with the adoption of simple rules in drafting and translation.

Keywords: Non-sexist language, Translation, Job advertisements, Gender gap, International Organizations

Introduction

The World Economic Forum estimates that it will take another 267.6 years to close the gender gap in economic participation and opportunity (WEF 2021) despite the (negative) impact of the pandemic not having been fully reflected yet.

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Among many actions needed to improve the situation of women at work, one line of research focuses on the drafting of job vacancies since they tend to be written in masculine form and substance, and this is not without impact. Sexist language can be an obstacle to the equal access of women to the labour market and is likely to perpetuate their work segregation by clearly dividing economic sectors based on acquired gender roles. The Council of Europe unequivocally considers sexist language an obstacle for equality:

> Convinced that the sexism characterising current linguistic usage in most Council of Europe member states - whereby the masculine prevails over the feminine - is hindering the establishment of equality between women and men, since it obscures the existence of women as half of humanity, while denying the equality of women and men. (COE 1990: 1)

Nevertheless, the International Labor Organization's 2019 report on gender gaps (Beghini, Cattaneo & Pozzan 2019) omits any reference to neutral-gender language in the list of best practices and bypasses this factor as an obstacle for the access of women to work. In fact, the report is translated into Spanish in the masculine.

The segregation of women at work can take three forms: horizontal, vertical, and diagonal. Women suffer horizontal work segregation (Haro Gómez 2010) that assigns them to jobs tightly linked to their gender roles. The professions where women are a majority are the paid equivalent of the tasks they carry out for free at home (caring, teaching, cleaning). Vertical segregation at work defines a hierarchical structure where women occupy the lower ranks, below the glass ceiling, even in their stereotypical activities mentioned above. And finally, women's diagonal work segregation pervades all sectors and levels with worse conditions than men and pushes them to opt for part-time employment that allows them to assume their caring responsibilities at home and with the family.

An experiment carried out in Madrid and Barcelona (González, Cortina & Rodríguez 2019) observed gender bias in favour of men in the selection process of a fictitious man and woman with identical CVs. The fake male and female candidates sent 5,600 applications to more than 1,000 job offers with varying degrees of qualifications and parenthood status, where only their photo and name changed (María and Mario). The study assessed the probabilities of receiving an appointment for a job interview.

Given the same conditions, María was 30% less likely to be called for an interview than Mario. The candidate less affected by this stereotype-based discrimination was a childless woman with high skills, whose difference with an equally qualified man was statistically insignificant. Meanwhile, a woman with children was penalised twice, as a woman and as a mother. The research provided "strong evidence that this discrimination has a 'statistical' basis, as it is grounded in employers' stereotypes about the potentially lower productivity of female applicants" (González, Cortina & Rodríguez 2019: 196). As a result, mothers can end up withdrawing from the job market.

> Many women also leave their jobs after realizing that they're paying the "motherhood penalty" - they get fewer opportunities and lower wages than childless women or men (even those who are fathers) because they are presumed to be less committed to work. (Ammerman & Groysberg 2021)

Black and minority ethnic women suffer the double discrimination of sexism and racism. Their loss of almost 40 cents per dollar compared with what others earn means

that "(t)he wage gap will typically cost a Black woman nearly $1 million dollars over a lifetime of work and contributes to the racial wealth gap" (Tucker 2020: 4). Disabled women are forced to overcome the generalised stereotype of people with disabilities being less productive at the workplace (Longhi 2017) and this is added to the gender inequalities.

Studies

The scope for non-sexist language in form and content to reduce gender inequalities of women accessing the workplace has been explored with positive results, but what it teaches us is not being put into practice. Also, research focuses mainly on the rate of conversion of vacancy notices to applications by women but disregards the actual selection and promotion stages.

Past research has attempted to establish the effects of gender-biased language in the perpetuation of stereotypes and gender discrimination. For instance, in the information technology sector, the use of gender-biased language is linked to discrimination and harassment at work. Organisations like Accenture include the use of gender-fair language in their culture-resetting instructions (Accenture & Girls who code 2019).

Fifty years ago, Bem & Bem (1973) concluded that female secondary education and university students were less likely to apply to job offers written in masculine, even if the work profile was stereotypically female (Menegatti & Rubini 2012).

More recently, a study of the relationship between gender-neutral language in online job ads in four European countries with different levels of gender equality established that "language use in job advertisements indeed corresponds with linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects and may contribute to the transmission of gender (in)equalities and gender stereotypes" (Hodel, Formanowicz, Sczesny *et al.* 2017: 384). Other studies in the last decade have shown that the content of resumes, job profiles, and letters of recommendation can be gender biased against women through the use of less agentic terms as opposed to men (Stroi 2019).

Junta de Castilla y León analysed 597 job adverts in the press in search of sexist language between 2006 and 2009 (Haro Gómez 2010): 75% of the adverts of the study were found sexist because they did not expressly include both sexes. In higher positions the percentage was even greater. A new category was later created for mixed advertisements using the gender endings separated by a slash, with masculine first (*o/a*).

This effect can be felt in other areas, like education. For example, women decreased their effort when taking a math test written in the masculine in an experiment with 963 Hebrew-speakers:

> (O)ur findings suggest that stereotypes and cultural beliefs about sex are so deeply embedded in languages that they unconsciously impact people's beliefs, efforts, and performance in ways that reinforce gender inequality and thus further legitimize and sustain gender inequality. (Kricheli-Katz & Regev 2021: 6)

Other studies have successfully linked the proportion of English female pronouns included in the Google Books database of American books to the situation of women's status in that country (Twenge et al. 2012).
It is likely that masculine language is seen as a negative factor for female applicants, who are already more reluctant to apply to a job if they do not fulfil 100% of the criteria, as opposed to 60% for men (Ignatova 2019). Job ads that use wording typically associated with masculine stereotypes can be perceived as having less women in the

post and are less appealing to women and more to men, given a lack of feeling of belonging (Gaucher, Friesen & Key 2011).

Gender in Language

As seen in previous research, the prevalence of masculinity over femininity in language perpetuates gender stereotypes and, among other things, promotes the perpetuation of the three types of segregation of women at work (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal). On the contrary, non-sexist language benefits women the most:

> At first glance linguistic gender asymmetries seem to affect mostly women. When masculine forms are used it is women who are seen as less prototypical category exemplars, it is women who feel less adequate or are less preferred as job candidates, and it is women who profit from GFL [gender-fair language]. (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016: 8-9)

In terms of the expression of gender, languages can be divided into three groups: semantic, pronominal, and genderless. The name "grammatical-gender languages" does not reflect the meaningful differences between grammatical gender (assigned to objects and ideas) and semantic gender (related to the sexes, or the biological features of animate subjects). Nonetheless, the differentiation between grammatical and semantic gender is crucial for the study of language inequalities between men and women.

In languages with semantic gender, nouns can show gender differences and the gender of personal nouns can agree with the sex of their antecedent (Spanish, German). Other personal nouns are invariable but sometimes express the sex of the person through the use of gender articles and adjectives. So-called epicene nouns refer to people but have grammatical gender irrespective of the sex of their antecedent. Finally, collective personal nouns and metonyms refer to people without stating their sex and therefore also adopt grammatical gender. Gender personal pronouns can be omitted, while possessive pronouns can agree with the gender of the thing in possession instead of with the sex of its owner.

Pronominal-gender languages express semantic gender mainly through personal and possessive pronouns. Also, personal pronouns are of obligatory use in sentence formation, whereas nouns in these languages (whether referring to objects, ideas or people) tend to adopt a gender-free form (English, Danish). Some personal nouns are composed of gendered particles or endings. Finally, genderless languages express gender through heteronyms or adjectives (Finnish, Turkish).

The likelihood of a connection between the advancement of equality between the sexes and the type of language spoken in terms of gender expression is not clear. While some research interconnects the type of gender-traits in a language with social progression in terms of equality, a glimpse of the World Economic Forum's 2021 gender-gap study of 156 countries (WEF 2021) refutes this hypothesis. In fact, the WEF index shows countries with Spanish as their official or main language in very different positions, and the same for English. This means that a semantic-gender language (Spanish) is not necessarily less prone to be spoken in a more egalitarian society than a pronominal-gender one (English). As a matter of fact, the differences among same-language countries can be immense: from New Zealand (4th in the rank) to Nigeria (139) and from Spain (14) to Guatemala (122). Interestingly, a genderless language does not guarantee a higher position on the list (Finland is number 2 and Turkey is number 133).

Description of the Model Used

We will describe the situation of sexist language at work in two international multilingual organisations (UN and EU) through a look at the vacancy titles posted in their career websites. This way we can compare the use or lack of use of gender-fair strategies in different languages and subsequently propose a homogeneous approach. An overview of non-sexist language guidelines in these institutions draws a landscape of inconsistency, ambiguity, and non-supervision that can affect implementation.

The first pages of these websites in several languages feed our analysis and the titles extracted are assigned a grammatical or semantic gender. The first working hypothesis suggests lack of application and of homogeneity of non-sexist language techniques in these organisations' vacancy notices in different languages, considering their specific expression features.

A second hypothesis suggests negative effects of the incoherent application of non-sexist language techniques for the access of women as employees in these organisations. Research has established the obstacles that masculine language poses to equality at work since women tend to be more self-demanding and will not submit their application unless they are very confident about their chances (for example, if the vacancy seems designed for a man).

This is particularly true in managerial positions. According to Eurostat 2020 data, 37% of managers, 28% of board members, and 18% of executives in EU countries are women. In the Union itself, only four women have headed top institutions after more than sixty years of almost all-male dominance. Within the institutions, the situation of women can be better than in some of the member states but it is still not at parity and the gender gap is wider at higher instances.

The aim of this paper is to develop a set of clear, simple instructions that can be used in all languages and guarantee visibility and equal treatment for women in the drafting of job vacancy titles. We hope that this will entice applications from women and subsequently boost their presence in these institutions, in particular in more senior positions.

Non-sexist Language Guidelines

The numerous gender-fair language guidelines published by all types of governments and organisations, sometimes against the opinion of the official language authorities, suffer from incoherence and heterogeneity. This inhibits their implementation, together with their non-compulsory status. Other times, the use of non-sexist language is endorsed by regulations, but its compliance is not subject to supervision. This can be observed in the EU, where dozens of style guides exist that contain mere recommendations on gender-fair drafting.

The main reference tool for written documents in the EU is the *Interinstitutional Style Guide*. The application of this guide is compulsory for anyone involved in the production of EU documents according to the introduction on its website. Its English version contains a specific section on this matter where it states that "gender-neutral language is nowadays preferred wherever possible." The list of techniques encompassed in section 10.6 ("Gender-neutral language") does not include adding initials (*f/m*) after a neutral noun. There are no specific instructions on non-sexist language drafting of vacancy notices in the EU.

The drafting of this section shows a lower degree of obligation than other sections of the guide if we look at the terms and expressions used (*are preferred, are often used, may be a useful technique, if its use is really necessary*, etc.). The adjective *preferred* is only found in one more section of the guide, devoted to a disregarded term: the EU's

recommendation to write *cent* in all languages was opposed by the Spanish Academy in the correspondent entry of the *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*, where the language authority calls for the use of *céntimo* instead and the latter is the form most widely used.

The UN sets a comparable example with simple rules on gender-inclusive language that can be summarised in using non-discriminatory language (always) and specifying the sex of a person only if or when relevant for communication. These rules are applicable to all departments and official languages.

The different approaches in terms of gender-fair language of both organisations (clear, simple, and uniform in the UN; and vague, optional, and language-specific in the EU) could affect the drafting of job vacancy titles in terms of the universal use of masculine to refer to people indistinctively.

Gender-fair Strategies: Feminisation or Neutralisation

The main strategies for the elimination of sexism in language can be summarised as neutralisation and feminisation. Their effects, techniques, and use can differ, but their common goal is to replace the universal use of masculine gender by feminine or neutral terms.

Neutralisation aims to remove all gender marks and can be considered as harmful for women, who remain hidden behind neutral, instead of masculine terms. This depends largely on the type of language, since pronominal-gender languages are more easily neutralised by omitting their gendered elements (pronouns, gender inflections). On a positive side, neutralisation can be more easily adopted in formal environments.

Feminisation is a flawed term when referring to the addition of female forms, usually after male ones. In fact, if the expression of both genders counteracts each other, the result could simply be qualified as neutralisation or, more precisely, gender specification. After all, pure feminisation (the appearance of only the feminine gender) is seldom used or supported, and when it appears it tends to be restricted to stereotypical roles. Nevertheless, feminisation can be recommended when referring, for example, to a woman who holds a certain office or profession. This is subject to more criticism when it has to do with positions of high status. Neutral language is also more predominant as a replacement for feminisation or when referring to women or female sectors (Hodel, Formanowicz, Sczesny *et al.* 2017).

One technique of neutral language that has become popular is the addition of the initials of both genders separated by a slash (*m/f*) after the (genderless) noun, especially in pronominal-gender languages like English. In semantic-gender languages, like Spanish, we can include this technique in the group of neutralisation strategies, but the predominance of gendered profession and position nouns makes the addition of both initials redundant or incoherent if using only the masculine form. Instead, nouns tend to be spelled in masculine and followed by a slash and their feminine ending.

In this paper, we refer to the mentioning of both genders as gender specification or neutralisation (not feminisation, since feminine is not the only gender displayed) and defend the placement of both gender inflections in alphabetical order only.

The Advantages of Alphabetisation

We believe that the alphabetisation of gender pairs (whichever their part of speech) only poses advantages to other arrangement methods, such as masculinisation, randomisation, or alternation.

Alphabetisation is arguably fairer than male-first order, and the position of the genders is not affected by social, cultural, or personal prejudice (like randomisation).

Also, studies have asserted that when both genders are mentioned, the one placed first is perceived as more highly relevant (Kesebir 2017).

Let us not be mistaken: male-first order is not casual or innocent but directly related to the central and foremost place of men in society. In Spanish, the language academy established the use of male-first order in the 18th century, stating that substance must precede quality (nouns before adjectives), agency must precede action (subjects before verbs), and seniority and dignity must take first place. For that reason, fathers, men, and sons are named before mothers, women, and daughters (RAE 1771). By continuing to prioritise men before women in language, male-first gender pairs can convey and perpetuate discrimination.

Alphabetical arrangement is a millenary custom that democratised the access of knowledge (as opposed to memorisation or subject order) and is not gender biased. Nevertheless, in spite of a dictionary being "a book that contains a list of words in alphabetical order and explains their meanings or gives a word for them in another language" (Cambridge Dictionary), alphabetisation can be superseded by male-first order. Dictionaries can be sexist for other reasons, like their selection of words, definitions, examples of use, inclusion of outdated terms or meanings, presence or absence of notes, and of course the universal use of masculine in their wording, but the alphabetisation of genders in their entries might be one of the easiest and quickest improvements that they could make in this regard (both in the arrangement of gender-inflected terms and of initials. In the Spanish dictionary entry for *lawyer*, the gender variants are ordered with the masculine first instead of alphabetically (*abogada, o*) as well as the gender initials (*f y m*), and the definition is also written in masculine (*licenciado*) instead of an epicene (*persona licenciada*):

> abogado, da
> Del lat. advocātus.
> 1. m. y f. Licenciado en derecho que ofrece profesionalmente asesoramiento jurídico y que ejerce la defensa de las partes en los procesos judiciales o en los procedimientos administrativos. (RAE 2020)

Alphabetical arrangement is an easy system to operate and supervise, unlike randomisation and alternation. Some gender-fair guides suggest alternating the order of genders but the need to keep track of what we have done previously in the text makes it cumbersome and time-consuming. Indeed, alternation could be the fairest of the systems, especially with an even number of pairs, but alphabetisation is a permanent rule that is not dependent on what happened in the previous or subsequent paragraph.

Alphabetisation is a proper arbitrary order that might not be fair or equal in the number of first placements of each gender, but it does not need an automatic random-order generator so that humans are not involved in the randomisation process.

Feminisation, as the permanent placement of feminine before masculine, could be advocated to counteract centuries of masculinisation. The same goes for the use of universal or generic feminine in language. In fact, female-first order could be considered a positive discrimination policy, as implemented in other areas, provided that it was a temporary measure until full compensation was attained. The purpose of positive discrimination is to achieve 50% presence of men and women in employment, education, decision bodies, etc., and one way to fulfil this goal is to favour women until their numbers are equal to men's. Nevertheless, achieving an equal number of male-first and female-first pairs would mean alternating the genders through a text and this has been

shown to be impractical both in drafting and reviewing. In contrast, alphabetisation is a fair and practical method of gender pair sequencing.

Proposals in Drafting and Translation

The two international organisations studied follow different gender language policies in the drafting of vacancy notices. The United Nations' online recruitment platform (careers.un.org) lists job titles in their neutral English form without the addition of *m/f*. In the description of responsibilities, personal pronouns are omitted, and only occasionally the gender pair of a pronoun is used (*him or her*). Despite the neutralisation of UN job advertisements, its career platform states from the start that the organisation strongly encourages women's applications despite neutralisation not necessarily being the most appropriate technique for this purpose.

The French version of the UN site shows a variety of neutralisation techniques in the job title list: full name of the position in both genders separated by a slash (*Directeur/Directrice*, *Réviseur/Réviseuse*), masculine form followed by the feminine ending in brackets (*Directeur(trice), Assistant(e)*), and invariable (neutral) nouns (*Chef, fonctionnaire, spécialiste*). In the French descriptions, gender pronoun pairs are also used (*ils ou elles*), together with gender pairs of nouns (*candidates ou candidats*). In this last instance, the feminine term is placed first. The added feminine ending (*e*) can be placed between brackets in adjectives (*handicapé(e)*). Finally, the feminine article is shown in brackets as in the following sentence: "Le (la) titulaire relève du (de la) Secrétaire général(e) et du (de la) Secrétaire général(e) adjoint(e) de la CNUCED." The recruitment website is only available in English and French, the working languages of the UN Secretariat.

TABLE 1. Gender Specification in the UN's Job Titles List (EN, FR)

EN		FR	
DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	N	Directeur/Directrice (affaires économiques)	m/f
Regional Director, Asia Pacific (Development Coordination Office), Bangkok	N	Directeur(trice) régional(e), Amérique latine et Caraïbes (Panama)	m/f
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICER	N	Fonctionnaire chargé(e) de la gestion des programmes	m/f
Human Rights Officer	N	Spécialiste des droits de l'homme	n (m)

It is worth noting that despite the evident efforts in French to specify both genders in the UN recruitment platform, the noun phrase *droits de l'homme* (rights of man) is still in its masculine form. In 2018, the French Republic's Haut Conseil à l'Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes stated its preference towards the non-sexist expression "human rights" (*droits humaines*) but it is proving hard to implement:

L'utilisation du terme « droits de l'Homme » - même avec une majuscule qui, par ailleurs, ne s'entend pas à l'oral - n'est pas un détail sémantique sans importance. Cette appellation n'est pas neutre, elle s'inscrit dans une Histoire française qui a longtemps exclu et invisibilisé les femmes. (Danielle; Sénac-Slawinsky; Gayraud & Guiraud 2018)

The EU database of current job opportunities (EPSO) is available in the 24 official languages. At the time of writing this paper, no position included the "m/f" element on the English title list. Out of the 50 vacancies listed on the first page of the Spanish version, there is one collective noun (*personal*), 2 gender-specific formulations with the masculine form followed by the feminine ending after a slash (*secretarios/as, traductor/a*), 24 invariable nouns (*responsable, gerente, oficial, agente, especialista*, etc.), some with masculine adjectives, 15 masculine nouns (*correctores, director, experto*, etc.), 8 metonyms (*administración, apoyo, finanzas*, etc.), and no feminine nouns. The French version repeats the choices in Spanish but with only one gender-specific form (*assistant(e)*). German adds gender specification (*m/w*) after masculine nouns on 19 occasions, sometimes after names in English or gender-invariable nouns. The options used are manifold (*Assistent, Assistent (m/w), Assistent/-in*). Interestingly, the collective noun *personal* is also followed by *m/w*, even though it has no semantic gender since it does not refer to the sex of a person. As mentioned before, all cases of gender specification are in male-first order.

TABLE 2. Gender Specification in the EU's Job Titles List (EN, DE, ES, FR)

EN		DE		ES		FR	
National Desk Assistant	n	Assistent/-in des Nationalen Büros	m/f	Asistente de la delegación nacional	n	Assistant(e) du Bureau Français	m/f
Business Analyst	n	Business Analyst (m/w)	m/f	Analista de negocio	n	Analyste fonctionnel	m
Information and communication technology (CAST Permanent)	n	Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologie (CAST Permanent)	n	Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (CAST Permanent)	n	Technologies de l'information et de la communication (CAST Permanent)	n
Childcare staff (CAST Permanent)	n	Kinderbetreuungspersonal (m/w) (CAST Permanent)	m/f	Personal de atención a la infancia (CAST Permanent)	n	Personnel éducatif (CAST Permanent)	n
Team Leader – Communications	n	Teamleiter Kommunikation	n	Jefe del equipo de Comunicaciones	m	Chef d'équipe «Communications»	m
Maltese translator	n	Übersetzer (m/w) für maltesisch	m/f	Traductor/a de maltés	m/f	Traducteur de langue maltaise	m

The inconsistencies observed in the use of non-sexist language techniques may be remedied by specifically stating the required expressions in regulations of compulsory use and through the establishment of specific guidelines and revision processes. The main rule would be to systematically mention both genders, fully spelled and alphabetised. For instance, the addition of the gender initials should follow invariable nouns (or genderless nouns in English), while gendered nouns can be written in full, separated by a slash, and

alphabetically arranged. These techniques can be applied to the examples seen before in the four languages studied.

TABLE 3. Non-sexist Drafting Suggestion of Job Titles (EN)

EN	Gender-fair EN	Technique
National Desk Assistant	National Desk Assistant (f/m)	Gender initials
Business Analyst	Business Analyst (f/m)	Gender initials
Information and communication technology (CAST Permanent)	Information and communication technology (CAST Permanent) (f/m)	Gender initials
Child care staff (CAST Permanent)	Child care staff (CAST Permanent) (f/m)	Gender initials
Team Leader - Communications	Team Leader - Communications (f/m)	Gender initials
Maltese translator	Maltese translator (f/m)	Gender initials
DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS	DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (f/m)	Gender initials
Regional Director, Asia Pacific (Development Coordination Office), Bangkok	Regional Director, Asia Pacific (Development Coordination Office), Bangkok (f/m)	Gender initials
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICER	PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICER (f/m)	Gender initials
Human Rights Officer	Human Rights Officer (f/m)	Gender initials

German, Spanish, and French admit two options in general: the specification of both genders with variable nouns and the addition of gender initials with invariable nouns, metonyms, and collective nouns. As stated before, it is important that the order is always alphabetical. The initials after a genderless (neutral) noun could encourage women's applications as it brings to the (female) candidate's mind an image of a successful women occupying that post.

TABLE 4. Non-sexist Drafting Suggestion of Job Titles (DE)

DE	Gender-fair DE	Technique
Assistent/-in des Nationalen Büros	Assistent/Assistentin des Nationalen Büros	Gender specification
Business Analyst (m/w)	Business Analyst (m/w)	Gender initials
Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologie (CAST Permanent)	Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologie (m/w) (CAST Permanent)	Gender initials
Kinderbetreuungspersonal (m/w) (CAST Permanent)	Kinderbetreuungspersonal (m/w) (CAST Permanent)	Gender initials
Teamleiter Kommunikation	Teamleiter/Teamleiterin Kommunikation	Gender specification

Übersetzer (m/w) für maltesisch	Übersetzer/Übersetzerin für maltesisch	Gender specification

Spanish is a semantic-gender language where these non-sexist techniques can also be applied. Feminine positions should be spelled out and not reduced to an ending of their male counterparts for better visibility of women in language. Otherwise, women would be reduced to a slash or a bracket and a letter stemming from the masculine root.

TABLE 5. Non-sexist Drafting Suggestion of Job Titles (ES)

ES	Gender-fair ES	Technique
Asistente de la delegación nacional	Asistente de la delegación nacional (h/m)	Gender initials
Analista de negocio	Analista de negocio (h/m)	Gender initials
Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (CAST Permanent)	Tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (CAST Permanent) (h/m)	Gender initials
Personal de atención a la infancia (CAST Permanent)	Personal de atención a la infancia (CAST Permanent) (h/m)	Gender initials
Jefe del equipo de Comunicaciones	Jefa/Jefe del equipo de Comunicaciones	Gender specification
Traductor/a de maltés	Traductor/Traductora de maltés	Gender specification

In French, invariable vacancy nouns can be followed by *(h/f)* while variable nouns can be fully spelled in both genders alphabetically. Also, adjectives following invariable nouns need to express the feminine gender. Another gender-fair option used in French is the addition of a midline point to separate both endings (*délégué·e·s*). This technique can be applied to adjectives but not to nouns if it means reducing the female forms to an ending of the male form. The midline point in gender-variable adjectives is a space-saving option that nevertheless implies an improvement from the traditional masculine-only form but vacancy nouns must be written in full in both genders.

TABLE 6. Non-sexist Drafting Suggestion of Job Titles (FR)

FR	Gender-fair FR	Technique
Assistant(e) du Bureau Français	Assistant/Assistante du Bureau Français	Gender specification
Analyste fonctionnel	Analyste fonctionnel·le	Gender specification
Technologies de l'information et de la communication (CAST Permanent)	Technologies de l'information et de la communication (CAST Permanent) (h/f)	Gender initials
Personnel éducatif (CAST Permanent)	Personnel éducatif (CAST Permanent) (h/f)	Gender initials
Chef d'équipe «Communications»	Chef d'équipe «Communications» (h/f)	Gender initials

Traducteur de langue maltaise	Traducteur/Traductrice de langue maltaise	Gender specification
Directeur/Directrice (affaires économiques)	Directeur/Directrice (affaires économiques)	Gender specification
Directeur(trice) régional(e), Amérique latine et Caraïbes (Panama)	Directeur/Directrice régional·e, Amérique latine et Caraïbes (Panama)	Gender specification
Fonctionnaire chargé(e) de la gestion des programmes	Fonctionnaire chargé·e de la gestion des programmes	Gender specification
Spécialiste des droits de l'homme	Spécialiste des droits humaines (h/f)	Gender initials Neutralisation

Conclusion

The disparities in gender expression observed in job vacancy titles, even within the same language, are not reflective of the application of uniform guidelines. French translations are sometimes gender-specific in different forms, with full spelling and a slash or brackets and feminine ending (*éditeur/éditrice, administrateur(trice)*), spelled in masculine (*coordonnateur*) or with a masculine adjective after an invariable noun (*juriste adjoint, chef adjoint*). Only in the first page, out of 10 results, 3 are masculine, 3 neutral, 2 gender-specific, and 2 remain in English. This is representative of an incoherent application of non-sexist language techniques despite a clear and uniform set of rules, perhaps too vague or at least not sufficiently precise in this particular area (titles of vacancy notices).

In English, all nouns in the first page of the UN career website are neutral and what is missing is an attempt to boost female applications by specifying both genders by stating the initials (*f/m*) after each position. Nevertheless, the present analysis only covers the headlines and not the body of the advertisements, which would need to be scanned in search of gender pronouns or to determine the use or absence of gender-fair techniques.

The study of the EU job site is more complex due to a considerably higher number of languages available (twenty-four compared to two in the UN General Secretariat). Given the space limitations of this paper, only four official EU languages were selected: English, French, German, and Spanish. A starting sample of six vacancy titles in four languages contains fourteen neutral, six gender-specific, and four masculine options. The most neutral language is English whereas French is the most masculine. German has the highest number of gender specifications. No feminine-only spellings are found in any of the pages.

The EU vacancy titles are more heterogeneous in the application of non-sexist strategies, perhaps due to the mentioned variety of this institution's guidelines and official languages. The difference between French EU and UN translations of job vacancy titles is critical, from mostly masculine (EU) to more gender-specific (UN).

Research has established the effects of language in job advertisements, especially regarding passive and action terms, and stereotypes of gender roles. In this sense, our proposal aspires to making women visible through language in general, and especially in areas where they are even less represented, such as top managerial positions and stereotypically masculine roles.

The simple set of instructions proposed in this paper has been applied with success in semantic (DE, ES, FR) and pronominal (EN) languages. The rules can be summarised as adding the initials *f/m* in brackets in alphabetical order after invariable or neutral position nouns, and fully specifying both genders also alphabetically, separated by a

slash, with gender variable nouns. These nouns do not need adding initials since they are already gender inflected. Ideally, any adjectives should be invariable (without gender traits) or otherwise be gender-specific, not masculinised.

These rules intend to make women visible already at the selection stage and consequently hope to increase female applications and access to employment. Many studies have observed the effects of sexist and non-sexist language in the appeal of job advertisements to women. Nevertheless, more research is necessary to quantify the importance of gender specification and to research the ratio of women to men that apply to vacancies that have been drafted with equality in mind. This is of particular importance in traditionally male sectors and managerial positions, where the gender gap is even more apparent.

While the techniques suggested are unlikely on their own to close the gender gap in the workplace, the language of job advertisements can be a door to equal participation of women in the job market. Non-sexist language is a tool that can be used in pursuit of feminism as the "social, economic, and political equality of the sexes" (Burkett & Brunell 2021: 1), but it needs simple, clear, and uniform rules for drafting and supervision of its application.

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