



INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE INSTITUT D'ESTUDIS ESPACIALS DE CATALUNYA (IEEC)

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1.- Introduction.

Catalan and Spanish are two working languages used in IEEC communications, both in internal messages and in communications addressed to the public. Given their Romance origins, both have grammatical gender: nouns vary according to whether they are masculine or feminine. Latin had a third gender, neuter, in addition to masculine and feminine, but this gradually disappeared.

From this linguistic perspective, the generic form is therefore masculine. Many texts consequently refer to groups of people using masculine forms, with the intention of giving the message a generic meaning. Although some texts of this kind include a note explaining the use of masculine terms in this generic sense, the final result is text after text that includes any reference to women.

However, we must not confuse gender with sex. Gender is a grammatical category that refers to words. Sex, by contrast, classifies living beings as male or female according to their characteristics. More specifically, the Institut d'Estudis Catalans provides the following definitions for each term:

Gender. **6 1 m.** [FL] A grammatical category that, in some languages, distributes nouns into nominal classes according to a number of formal properties expressed through inflectional affixes, agreement with adjectives or pronominal reference.

6 2 [FL] ambiguous gender The gender assigned by traditional grammar to nouns referring to things that can be used interchangeably in the masculine or feminine gender.

6 3 [FL] feminine gender The gender applied to words denoting female beings or to other words associated with them through their endings or usage.

6 4 [FL] masculine gender The gender applied to words denoting male beings or to other words associated with them through their endings or usage.

6 5 [FL] neuter gender In languages with a three-way gender distinction, the gender applied to words denoting inanimate entities or to other words associated with them through their endings or usage.

Sex: 1 1 m. [LC] [ZOA] [BI] The set of biochemical, physiological and organic characteristics that divide individuals of a species into males and females and enable periodic changes in genetic information through the appropriate processes of conjugation or fertilisation.

The aim of this document is to use the tools offered by language itself to adapt the needs of the text and its message to changes in society, applying common sense without forcing expressions or making them sound artificial.

In addition to the measures detailed below, several factors will affect the drafting of a document:

- a) The length of the text.
- b) The type of document.
- c) Internal consistency.
- d) Authorship of the text.

2.- Resources for using non-sexist language.

The proposed resources aim to address usages that have become established over time and have been accepted by the community as correct, but nevertheless carry sexist connotations. As mentioned above, society evolves, and this evolution must also be reflected in changes to established usages and customs. Distinguishing masculine and feminine gender or using generic forms may once have been considered incorrect or even unusual; we must now make these practices the norm to fulfil the requirements of the Gender Equality Plan.

The objective is twofold:

- a) Visibility resources: make the presence of women visible in every area.
- b) Avoidance resources: avoid generic references to people or the use of the masculine plural.

1.- Use of the feminine form.

When referring to a specific person, we should use the masculine or feminine form according to that person's sex.

For office holders or professionals, we should use the masculine or feminine form when the person's sex is known. For nouns whose form does not change, the feminine article provides the distinction. For example, in Catalan, gerent (manager) becomes *el gerent* or *la gerent*.

When including an invariable noun in a text intended to remain in use for a long time, we should either use a generic term or include both articles in case the situation changes.

2.- Generic forms and other expressions.

When not referring to a specific person, we should use invariable nouns whenever possible. This avoids continually repeating both gender forms (*ells i elles*, *l'home i la dona*, *els treballadors i les treballadores*: masculine and feminine forms for they, man and woman, and workers). We can also combine generic terms with paired gender forms to avoid overusing either resource and make the text more readable. Examples (Catalan forms with English translations):

<i>Suggested wording</i>	<i>Instead of</i>
Persona, ésser humà, individu (person, human being, individual)	Home (man)
Tothom (everyone)	Tots (all, masculine)
Infant, criatura (child, little one)	Nen (boy)
Les persones beneficiàries (beneficiary persons)	Els beneficiaris (beneficiaries, masculine)
La persona que signa (the person signing)	El signant (the signatory, masculine)

La persona usuària (the person using the service)	L'usuari (the user, masculine)
Les persones grans, d'edat avançada (older people)	Els ancians (the elderly, masculine)
Personal d'infermeria, personal infermer (nursing staff)	Les infermeres (nurses, feminine)
Cos mèdic, el personal mèdic, equip (medical body, medical staff, team)	Els metges (doctors, masculine)

3.- Paired forms.

When a generic noun cannot be used, both feminine and masculine forms can be included, either in full or abbreviated. For example: Senyor/a (Mr/Ms).

Using the full forms ensures that the feminine form is not merely an addition to the masculine form, but that both are placed on an equal footing.

We recommend restricting abbreviated forms to documents such as printed forms or questionnaires, and to greetings in circulars and letters addressed to unspecified or multiple recipients.

All these proposals require coordination and grammatical agreement when using paired forms. If in doubt, one solution is to use a plural adjective. For example: *l'administratiu i l'administrativa encarregats de...* (the male and female administrative staff responsible for...).

4.- Neutral or impersonal expressions.

These expressions can be used to avoid referring to a specific person. Some examples are proposed below (Catalan forms with English translations):

<i>Suggested wording</i>	<i>Instead of</i>
Amb la col·laboració de (with the collaboration of)	Col·laboradors (contributors, masculine)
Redactat per (written by)	Redactors (writers, masculine)
Us donem la benvinguda (we welcome you)	Benvinguts (welcome, masculine plural)
Hi ha 30 sol·licituds (there are 30 applications)	Hi ha 30 sol·licitants (there are 30 applicants)

For printed forms:

<i>Suggested wording</i>	<i>Instead of</i>
Nom: (Name:)	Sr./Sra.: (Mr/Ms:)
Cognoms i nom: (Surname and given name:)	El/la sol·licitant: (The applicant, masculine/feminine:)

Lloc de naixement: (Place of birth:)	Nascut/uda a: (Born in, masculine/feminine:)
Domicili: (Address:)	Domiciliat/da a: (Residing at, masculine/feminine:)

5.- Changes to pronouns.

Omitting the subject can help avoid gendered pronouns when referring to groups or unspecified people.

If the pronoun cannot be omitted, we can use pronouns without gender, such as *qui* (*who*), *tothom* (*everyone*), etc.

Catalan has the form of address *vós*, which has an advantage over *vostè*: it takes the same form whether referring to masculine or feminine, singular or plural. It allows more equal language without overusing paired forms.

6.- Minor changes to wording.

- Remove articles before nouns that have the same form in the masculine and feminine. For example: *Professionals de la medicina* (*medical professionals*).
- Replace a determiner that marks sex with a pronoun or another determiner that does not (*tothom*, *qualsevol*, *cadascú*, *ningú*, *cap*: *everyone*, *anyone*, *each person*, *nobody*, *no*, etc.).

7.- Asymmetrical use of surnames and forms of address, and other asymmetries.

- Unlike in some other places, women here retain their surnames. Nevertheless, mixed-sex couples are often referred to using only the man's surname. In such cases, use separate forms: instead of *els senyors Romeu* (*Mr and Mrs Romeu*), say *el Senyor Romeu i la Senyora Terrades* (*Mr Romeu and Ms Terrades*).

8.- Adjectives and nouns with different meanings when referring to men or women.

- Some adjectives do not convey the same meaning in the masculine and feminine, since the feminine form carries negative connotations. Catalan examples: *fresc/fresca* (literally fresh, with different personal connotations); *un home públic/una dona pública* (a public man/a public woman, the latter carrying a derogatory sexual meaning).

9.- Assumptions.

Today, certain professions are associated with a particular gender. These tend to be occupations and positions in which one sex predominates, resulting in more frequent use of feminine forms for low-status jobs and masculine forms for prestigious jobs. To avoid this, we propose the following examples (Catalan forms with English translations):

<i>Suggested wording</i>	<i>Instead of</i>
El personal de neteja (cleaning staff)	Les dones de la neteja, dones de fer feines (cleaning women, charwomen)
El personal infermer (nursing staff)	Les infermeres (nurses, feminine)
L'equip mèdic, el cos mèdic (medical team, medical body)	Els metges (doctors, masculine)

3.- Conclusions.

This document seeks to identify the difficulties that may arise when drafting a document, circular, form or any other text, whether for internal circulation or communication to the public. It has made us more aware of habitual errors arising from established language usage, which needs to be adapted to new social circumstances and to a context of equality between women and men. Only in this way can we help this social reality become reflected in every area of society.

The provisions in this document are not final. They will be monitored and reviewed by the relevant Gender Equality Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, as well as by the committee established for this purpose.