

# Names and Pronouns in the Portuguese Language: the Sexist Issue in Language and in Academia

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**Abstract:** In this essay, I discuss the invisibility of female researchers due to Portuguese language norms and referencing guidelines for academic publications based on gender bias with regard to the crediting of women. With the exception of certain feminist journals, it is a general rule that male and female authors are referred to in articles, dissertations, and theses by their last names, which may reduce the perception of women who are cited in scientific research. Discussions about sexism in language, occasionally raised by the press in social discussions, are addressed here. The question posed is whether there could be a movement to revise the way women are credited in scientific papers. To this end, after the literature review, there will be a proposal that the crediting of female authors should be done in full, with first name, last name and the use of appropriate pronouns.

**Keywords:** gender; authors; women; publishing norms; invisibility.

## Nomes e pronomes na Língua Portuguesa: a questão sexista no idioma e na academia

**Resumo:** Neste ensaio, discuto a invisibilidade de pesquisadoras por conta das normas da Língua Portuguesa e das normas de referenciamento das publicações acadêmicas pelo viés de gênero com relação à creditação de mulheres. É regra geral, com exceção de algumas revistas feministas, que autores e autoras sejam apresentados em artigos, dissertações e teses pelo sobrenome, o que pode reduzir a percepção das mulheres que são citadas em pesquisas científicas. As discussões com relação ao sexismo do idioma, trazidas por vezes pela imprensa a partir de discussões sociais, são considerações aqui tratadas. A pergunta que surge é se pode haver um movimento de revisão da forma de creditar as mulheres em trabalhos científicos. Para tanto, após a revisão da literatura, haverá uma proposta de que a creditação das autoras mulheres seja feita de forma completa, com nome, sobrenome e uso dos pronomes adequados.

**Palavras-chave:** gênero; autoras; mulheres; normas de publicação; invisibilidade.

## Nombres y pronombres: la cuestión sexista en el idioma Portugués y en la academia

**Resumen:** Este ensayo discute la invisibilidad de las investigadoras debido a las reglas de la lengua portuguesa y los estándares para referenciar publicaciones académicas por sesgo de género en relación a la acreditación de mujeres. Es una regla general, a excepción de algunas revistas feministas, que las autoras se presenten en los artículos, disertaciones y tesis, por apellido, lo que puede reducir la percepción de mujeres citadas en las investigaciones científicas. También se consideran las discusiones en relación al sexismo del lenguaje, a veces planteadas por la prensa a partir de las discusiones sociales. La pregunta que surge es si puede haber un movimiento para revisar la forma de acreditar a las mujeres en el trabajo científico. Por lo tanto, luego de revisar la literatura, se propondrá que la acreditación de las autoras se realice en su totalidad, con nombre y apellido y con los pronombres adecuados.

**Palabras-clave:** género; sexismo; mujeres; normas de acreditación; invisibilidad.

## Do female authors' surnames register them as women?

Western history tells us that the first women to write literary texts, and who wanted to have their books read, were forced to use male pseudonyms to escape the prejudice that women should not and were not capable of writing. The names of great European writers like George Eliot (England) and Georg Sand (France) are examples of this. Both were the pseudonyms of renowned writers, the Englishwoman Mary Ann Evans and the Frenchwoman Amantine Dupin, but who became successful only because they did not sign their real names.

These cases, which occurred until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are discussed by Virginia Woolf (1929) in her book *A Room of One's Own* when she recalls female writers who paved the way for literature written by women to enter history. Woolf (1929, p. 27) suggests that they always wrote, but did not have their names attached to their works: "Anonymous, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman." The irony found in the text is used to remind us of women's struggle for recognition and authorization in a world where decisions were and are male.

Virginia Woolf's essay was written in 1928 and was the basis of a lecture given to university students when she was invited to talk about Women and Fiction, but she ended up deciding to call attention to an issue she thought fundamental at that moment: "A woman must have money and a roof of her own, a space of her own, if she is to write fiction" (1929, p. 5). She thanks her aunt Mary Beton, who left her an inheritance of 500 pounds a year until the end of her life, which allowed her to write what and how she wanted, signing her own name: "Food, house, and clothing are mine for ever" (1929, p. 22).

The notion of the privileged person, discussed by Woolf in the texts, demonstrates that, beyond a home, there is a need for permission to occupy certain places, whether physical or in society. Since women have earned this social "permission" to sign the texts they write, as well as to occupy positions in universities, one of the ways to recognize a female author is through her name.

Academic publishing guidelines, for the most part, organize the credits of publications by last name. ABNT, Harvard, AVA, APA, as well as specific university norms, to be adhered to in dissertations and theses and published in their repositories, among other codes of publication practices, look to the last name as a way of crediting both male and female authors. This essay will discuss what this practice means and how it is possible to make texts by female authors visible.

It is a fact that women are cited less in academic publications, in journalism reports, and in public documents, issues that will be presented and discussed in the course of this essay, which warrants its writing. According to the *Gender in the Global Research Landscape* survey (Elsevier, 2017), in the production of scientific articles, Brazilian and Portuguese women occupy 49% of the names catalogued by the Elsevier publishing house. Although this is less than half, it is still the highest percentage in a list of 12 nations, with only 28% of researchers in the world being women. Regina Dalcastagné (2012) states that most Brazilian authors are white, middle-class men, professors or journalists. She points out that women are published less than men, but states that "it is not possible to say if women write less or if they find it more difficult to publish in the most prestigious publishing houses (or both)" (DALCASTAGNÉ, 2005, p. 31).

Raquel da Conceição Santos, Hellen Rafaela Pinheiro Figueiredo and Maria do Socorro Castro Hage (2019), in the article "*Mulheres e Produção do Conhecimento Científico: uma reflexão necessária*" (Women and Production of Scientific Knowledge: a necessary reflection), point out that, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, modern science revolved around the predominance of white, western, male scientists from wealthy classes: "it was men who were at the forefront" of "knowledge and academic productions, as if they were the only ones endowed with reason and wisdom, causing an exclusion of women in this environment". Although there were women building scientific knowledge, they were "made invisible" (SANTOS et al., 2019). The authors explain that in the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was an increase in the recognition of female scientists, albeit with discrimination:

Because they were women, some male viewpoints sought to categorize them through aspects considered "feminine", causing a sexual division of labor; thus, women began making headway in areas of knowledge that were not heavily occupied by men. They had always been marginalized, had no decision-making power, and were not seen as subjects with rights, due to gender issues.

According to the authors, the fact that the human sciences are not perceived as masculine sciences has led to a decrease of men in certain sectors, which may have enabled and caused the increase of female participation. The research was carried out at the PPGSA – Graduate Program in Sociology and Anthropology – of the Federal University of Paraíba. "The analyses carried out with data from the PPGSA showed the growing participation and place occupied by women in the field of scientific research, demonstrating the relevance of the productions undertaken by them in socio-anthropological studies of Amazonian realities," according to the authors (SANTOS et al., 2019). Salete Silva Farias and Alcina de Oliveira Martins (2018), in their article "*Invisibilidade Feminina e Representações Sociais de Gênero em Tecnologia e Ciências*" (Female Invisibility and Social Representations of Gender in Technology and Science) (2018),

tracked the *Global Gender Gap Report*, a report that quantifies gender inequality in the areas of health, education, economics, and politics, through its progress over the years, and found that after a decade of studies, "progress is still slow" in the education sector, which encompasses science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Women are still under-represented in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), where the overall gender gap remains at 47%, with 30% men and 16% women. According to the same report, this is due to the existence of negative stereotypes and the consequent lack of positive role models, which makes girls and women have no desire to pursue STEM careers (FARIAS; MARTINS, 2018, p. 731).

One of the reasons for the lower demand, as the authors explain, is the absence and invisibility of women from these sectors of education in mainstream media outlets, which ends up influencing social beliefs and creating stereotypes. "With more positive representations in the media, in a field that is dominated by men, more women might consider technology as an option, decreasing negative perceptions of women and increasing their leadership aspirations" (FARIAS; MARTINS, 2018, p. 737). The invisibility imposed by the lack of female role models in the field of technology can create the false sense that there are no women in this area of science "since, although role models exist, they are not presented in the media and/or in school and in the prevailing literature, due to a predominantly male educational culture" (FARIAS; MARTINS, 2018, p. 738).

Besides being less published by the media, academia and publishers, there is still the issue of being less recognized, since their names do not register them as women, when presented by their last name and initials only. In this common practice among scientific journals, the reader of a publication may have no idea whether any of the surnames listed in the final bibliographical references are those of a female author. For example, when reading QUADROS. S. or MOREIRA. M., there is no way of knowing the gender to which the person who wrote the text belongs. However, in a culture where men historically produce and publish more, it is common for surnames to be linked to male researchers and not to female researchers. Changing the way women are credited in scientific works is urgent.

As the Portuguese language determines that the masculine grammatical gender overrides the feminine in the case of plurals and pronouns, and in a scenario where most published authors are men, the question that arises is: could the reader's impression be that all surnames refer to male authors? Another question to be reflected upon is: can the valorization of the masculine, which has been emphasized throughout history, be reflected in academia and in scientific texts when women's names are not signed?

The method found to support the reflections proposed here was the theoretical essay, which, being of a scientific nature, is a discussion on a theme whose methodology is the theoretical foundation from a review of academic literature, but not only a state of the art work. The intention of this scientific text is, from a dissertative perspective, to defend a point of view or a somewhat new idea, without claiming to exhaust the subject, as stated by Sandro Soares, Icaro Piccoli, and Jacir Casagrande (2018, p. 331).

The essayist needs to have the skills to expose and defend ideas; reasoning to handle the dialectic required for discussion; good sense and self-control not to be carried away by passionate and emotional motives.

In this paper, the main objective is to consider the publications that deal with the manner in which the Portuguese language relates to gender and sex issues, based on the fact that language, being male chauvinistic in its form, can hinder the visibility of female authors. Another aim is to put forward a proposal of citation that is more inclusive of women, giving them visibility in academic publications, taking into account female researchers who have already started this movement.

The discussion proposed here is current and contemporary to the historical moment in which women all over the world are fighting for gender equality. Visibility is one of the main issues of the Feminist Marches, also called the World March of Women or the International Women's Strike, held on March 8<sup>th</sup> every year in Brazil and Portugal, as well as around the world. In Brazil, the first demonstrations on this date began in 2000 (MARCHA MUNDIAL DAS MULHERES, n.d.). This essay is justified because it addresses the visibility of female authors of scientific texts.

## **Names based on gender**

One of the ways to recognize a female author is because she introduces herself as a woman. Judith Butler (1990, p. 43) closes the first chapter of the book *Gender Trouble* by seeking to define what the feminine is and, to do so, analyzes Simone Beauvoir's most reproduced phrase.

If there is something right in Beauvoir's claim that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman, it follows that *woman* itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully

be said to originate or to end. As an ongoing discursive practice, it is open to intervention and resignification.

Starting from the fact that a woman presents herself as a woman, regardless of her biological sex, but from her identity, the name is one of the ways to indicate the gender of the female author. Although there are names that are masculine and feminine and names that fit all genders, in most cases in the Portuguese language it is possible to recognize feminine and masculine names. Perhaps this is not a common occurrence in other languages, but in Brazil and Portugal, the quest to change civil names to social names is an indication that gender is marked in the name of those who present themselves.

The relevance of the name as a gender identifier has gained notoriety in recent years, as people began to change their names when they identified with a gender different from their biological sex. The medical and parental recognition at birth, officially documented through identification records (such as birth certificates in Brazil and birth registries in Portugal), began to be questioned in the courts. The name change initially took place informally, but the issue became so important that countries began to discuss the adoption of a new name in an official and documented manner, based on gender identification.

In 2011, Portugal became the sixth country in Europe, after Germany, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and Switzerland, to legally allow people who have been clinically diagnosed to change their sex and first name in the civil register. "This law regulates the procedure for changing sex in the civil register and the corresponding alteration of the first name" (PORTUGAL, 2019). The law was proposed the previous year, following guidance from the European Community.

In Brazil, on April 28, 2016, President Dilma Rousseff signed law decree number 8727, which "Provides for the use of social name and the recognition of gender identity for transvestites and transsexual people within the scope of direct federal, autarchic and foundational public administration" (BRASIL, 2016). The decree defines that social name is the "designation by which the transvestite or transsexual person identifies and is socially recognized" and that gender identity is

the dimension of a person's identity that concerns the way he or she relates to representations of masculinity and femininity and how this translates into social practice, without necessarily maintaining a relationship with the sex assigned at birth.

And it determines that the social name be adopted throughout the Brazilian territory by all organs of the federal public administration, autarchies, and foundations that "shall adopt the social name of the transvestite or transsexual person, in accordance with their request and under the provisions of this Decree". The registries and documents of these organs must have a field to record the social name and also the civil name, with the former being detached from the latter: "they must contain the field 'social name' highlighted, accompanied by the civil name, which will be used for internal administrative purposes only".

In March 2018, the Brazilian Supreme Court (*SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL*, 2018) ruled that people interested in changing their civil name to their social name on their birth certificates have the right to do so by going directly to a Civil Registry Office, without the need to be accompanied by a lawyer or public defender when over 18 years old; if minors, they need to file a lawsuit.

Regulating the permission to change one's social name, in the two Portuguese-speaking countries, is a way to alter the language, especially to transform and update it according to social needs, since people born with a biological sex are now called by pronouns related to their gender identity.

If feminism is, above all, a form of activism, there are other forms also linked to different genders that fight for visibility. It is important to point out that there is a deal of confusion created from the linguistic transformations, mainly related to the pronouns used for those who change their names. In Brazil, the case of the singer Pabllo Vittar is one of the examples. Pabllo is a male name, but the figure that represents her is sometimes female and sometimes male, the former being the one that represents her in most cases.

Two images displayed on Estadão's Instagram, on May 15, 2020, demonstrate the two performances by the artist; in the first, Pabllo Vittar performs a male or androgynous character, and in the second, a female character (ESTADÃO, 2020). The photos are from a post whose title is "Pabllo Vittar is the new ad girl for Calvin Klein in LGBTQ Campaign," #ProudInMyCalvins, which features the singer as the protagonist. An excerpt from the post explains that "The goal is to pay homage during the LGBTQ+ pride celebrations that take place in June," which features a quote from the artist: "I hope other girls and boys will be inspired by this and believe in their dreams" (ESTADÃO, 2020).

O Pabllo (masculine definite article) and a Pabllo (feminine definite article) are the usual ways of referring to the artist, who admits to having no preference. In a critical reading of the performer's public persona, Rose de Melo Rocha and Danilo Postinguel (2017) state that it is necessary to assume a look at the "in between" masculine and feminine. This statement makes perfect sense when we analyze the artist.

It is in this in-between (in several in-betweens, actually) that the plastic construction of the drag queen, singer, and performer is affirmed, the same one that appears "disassembled" in videos recorded from a cell phone, circulating through streets and sidewalks in the intervals of a show, the *fe-menino\** who is sometimes the made-up and eroticized diva, with her luxurious and lascivious appearance, and soon after becomes the androgynous young boy-girl, with shaved eyebrows and very short hair, wondering if she will find a boy in the foreign city she is passing through.<sup>1</sup>

This example, since it is of a pop phenomenon for Brazilians, serves this analysis because it provides visibility to the discussion of language: the fact that she is sometimes called he, and other times she by interviewers, fuels discussions among fans and even among more conservative citizens – either in expressions of support or in declarations of hatred. Although this example is not related to the crediting of female authors, the digression was made because of the visibility of the discussion and the use of pronouns and articles, which designate feminine and masculine values in the Portuguese language.

## Is there gender prejudice in the Portuguese language?

It is common to hear the following greeting from women activists when talking to audiences: "Boa noite a todas e a todos!" (Good evening to all [feminine form] and all [masculine form]); "Bom dia alunas e alunos!" (Good morning students [feminine form] and students [masculine form]). These ways of communication arose to account for something that is a feature of the Portuguese language (and other languages that come from Latin), which is the use of the male gender as a way to reduce the plural gender. *Alunos* (male plural) and *alunas* (female plural) become *alunos* (male plural form), for example.

Grada Kilomba (2019), a Black feminist theorist born in Lisbon, contributes to this discussion by considering the inflection of pronouns in the Portuguese language in the feminine and masculine genders.

When I wrote the paper "Facebook as a video production and exhibition platform used by journalism students: a case study of Rede Teia (Brazil)" (Sandra NODARI, 2019) to discuss the use of the place of speech concept in a project within an undergraduate subject from the Journalism course – and which was presented at an English language congress, the issue of gender in the Portuguese Language required further reflection because of the translation. The text was originally written in Portuguese, using masculine and feminine terms for male and female students, male and female teachers, male and female interviewees, and male and female presenters. In the English translation, there was a choice to be made because gender is neutral in English, most of the time.

On first reflection, it seemed that by using nouns, pronouns, and adjectives in the male and female genders, we were evolving toward an appreciation of the feminine; however, in languages where gender is neutral, this is unnecessary. Reading *Memórias da Plantação* (Plantation Memories) enabled us to see that Kilomba (2019) also went through this reflection when she decided to translate her thesis that had initially been written in English. When translating the text into Portuguese, she chose to insert an introduction that explained the specificities with respect to gender inflection.

I am writing this Introduction, which does not exist in the original English version, precisely because of the language: on the one hand, because it seems obligatory to clarify the meaning of a series of terminologies that, when written in Portuguese, reveal a profound lack of reflection and theorization of colonial and patriarchal history and heritage, so prevalent in the Portuguese language. (KILOMBA, 2019, p. 14)

The patriarchal heritage and machismo in the language brought about a heated discussion when the first woman was elected to assume the Presidency of the Republic, in 2010, in Brazil, and there was much questioning about the use of the feminine inflection when referring to her by her position. Was it correct to use *presidenta* (female form) Dilma Rousseff or does the noun *presidente* (president) not accept any variation, since it is common to both genders? Despite Dilma's stance on wanting to be called *presidenta* (as shown in Figure 1), there was disagreement among specialists regarding the permission to use the word in the feminine, and many texts were written to discuss whether the Portuguese language is sexist and what the political dimension of a language is.

**Figure 1:** Presidenta Dilma Rousseff

Source: Roberto Stuckert Filho.

#PraTodoMundoVer (ForEveryoneToSee):

Photo of President Dilma Rousseff smiling and



<sup>1</sup> \* Translator's note: play on the words 'feminine' and the Portuguese word for boy, 'menino'.

looking into the distance. She is wearing a colorful blouse that can be partly seen, and behind her is a large red banner that reads in white letters: "Dilma Presidenta 13".

Cássio Florêncio Rubio and Fábio Fernandes Torres (2018) discuss the way Brazilian senators made use of the terms *presidente* or *presidenta* to question Dilma Rousseff in the impeachment process. The authors agree that there is still no "consensus on the employment of one form or the other, or even on the possible acceptance of the two forms as another variation process of Brazilian Portuguese," despite "the proven records of both forms in dictionaries and orthographic vocabularies" (2018, p. 493) and by its acceptance by "numerous normative and lexographical grammarians" (2018, p. 497). In reviewing the literature on the noun, they conclude that:

It is important to highlight the register, in both senses of the form *presidenta*, of the word woman, restricting its use to the female gender, as opposed to what is registered in the form *presidente*, which has in its first two definitions the word person, which extends its use to both genders. The third meaning of the form *presidente*, however, specific to the office of the president of the republic, is limited to males by the use of the definite article o (RUBIO; TORRES, 2018, p. 497).

In the vote for impeachment, on August 29, 2016, 48 senators participated and used the noun 232 times in their speeches, where the form *presidente* was used by 62.5% (145 times) and the form *presidenta* was used by 37.5% (87 times) (RUBIO; TORRES, 2018, p. 497). The result of the research considers that "the alternation of the forms *presidente* and *presidenta* is influenced predominantly by extralinguistic factors linked to the political ideology of the parliamentarians" (RUBIO; TORRES, 2018, p. 520).

The authors also noticed that there was "greater female sensitivity in determining and recognizing gender identity in the discourse, with women tending to use the form *presidenta* more than men" (RUBIO; TORRES, 2018, p. 521). The discussion about what to call Dilma Rousseff continued during her first term (2010-2014), reelection (2014), and impeachment process (2016), and continues till this day, whereby some call her former *presidenta* and others refer to her as former *presidente*.

Both Pablo Vittar's and Dilma Rousseff's cases bring up social behaviors that have become decisive when it comes to calling a person by their gender identity. If inflection for masculine and feminine is already enough to create division among experts of the Portuguese language and the general population, just thinking about the other gender categories is enough to realize that there is indeed a need to discuss the prejudices of a society in-depth. For Kilomba (2019, p. 14), this need is part of the political evolution that has already occurred in the English and German languages, but which in the Portuguese language "remains anchored to a colonial and patriarchal discourse".

If the male and female gender already suffices to seek an update of the language, how do we account for the categories that leave out LGBTQ+? The various acronyms used in Brazil alone to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite, transgender, non-binary, intersex, and asexual people, such as LBTT (Marcia TIBURI, 2018), LBTTQIA+ (KILOMBA, 2019), LBTTs, LBTTQIA, LGBT, or LBTTI can pose a general difficulty when referring to the topic (see the case of Beatriz Preciado (2014)).<sup>2</sup>

In less formal Portuguese texts, the use of the x or the @ are ways of making gender neutral or non-binary and have been an option adopted by people when writing "colegxs" or "coleg@s" (colleagues), for example, and end up being considered activists of the LBTTQI+ cause. Tiburi (2018) used another resource in the title of her book *Feminismo em comum, para todas, todos e todos*. (Feminism in common, for all [plural feminine form, neutral form and masculine form of the word]) According to the author, the use of "e" instead of x or @ was a strategy to facilitate content accessibility by the visually impaired, because reading software cannot translate the codes x or @.

When discussing where feminism will take us, Tiburi (2018, p. 11) states that "it takes us to the struggle for rights for *todas*, *todos*, and *todos*." The word "*todes*" used by her in her book designates a way of combating sexism in the Portuguese language: "*Todes* because feminism liberated people from identifying only as women or men and opened space for other expressions of gender – and sexuality – and this has come to interfere with the whole of life".

Adriana Baggio (2020) explains that "women write half of the academic articles in Brazil; however, they are less cited, occupy fewer positions in the highest hierarchical stratum of institutions and still suffer prejudice and boycotts in academia. The perception that there are few women writing, researching and publishing occurs "when, for example, people cite female authors but, without realizing it, use articles, pronouns and other concordances in the masculine".

More and more, we see women seeking to reflect on how to increase the perceived presence of female authors in academic writing in order to continue the struggle for equality,

<sup>2</sup> These issues feature in this essay because beyond women we need to think about people with other gender identifications who seek visibility of authorship. The Spanish philosopher Paul B. Preciado, born Beatriz Preciado, in his book *Manifesto contrasexual* (Countersexual Manifesto) (2014), criticizes the fixed categories of identity mainly linked to sex and gender, considered by the author as a product of the heterocentered social contract. The Manifesto declares the technologies of gender responsible for binarism, proposing to erase the descriptions female and male, even in registration documents: "each new body (that is, each new contractor) will have a countername, a new name that escapes the marks of gender, whatever the language employed" (PRECIADO, 2014, p. 35).

which is one of the foundations of the feminist movement. In this historical moment, the Portuguese language is the space where confrontations occur. "Since written language is the primary language of academic production, showing the presence of the feminine through language is a way of increasing the recognition of female scientists and strengthening the relationship between science and the feminine" (BAGGIO, 2020).<sup>3</sup>

Could these discussions, from contemporary female authors and current texts, indicate the need for a movement to revise the Portuguese Language? Grada Kilomba (2019, p. 14) states that there are "a number of terminologies that, when written in Portuguese, reveal a profound lack of reflection and theorization of the colonial and patriarchal history and heritage so present in the Portuguese language." She also questions the fact that the:

(...) absence of terms, which in other languages, such as English or German, have already been critically dismantled or even reinvented in a new vocabulary, but which in the Portuguese language remain anchored to a colonial and patriarchal discourse, becoming extremely problematic (KILOMBA, 2019, p. 14).

Guilherme Mäder (2015, p. 64) states that the use of the masculine grammatical gender to denote human gender, in conjunction with unmarked gender, preserves grammatical sexism. "In addition to perceived gender (sex) difference as a semantic motivation for grammatical gender, other categories may also interact with gender (sex) and influence the classification of nouns into grammatical genders." He explains that one of the arguments used to justify the use of the generic masculine in the Portuguese language is the lack of a neutral gender. However, he refutes this explanation, citing the example of Latin, where even though it had a neutral gender (besides feminine and masculine), "the construction called generic masculine was common, since the masculine was the grammatical gender used to denote the human gender as a whole" (MÄDER, 2015, p. 73).

Another point to be highlighted in Mäder's research (2015, p. 97-98) is the discussion of the use of the masculine gender in other semiotic systems, such as in traffic signs. In the case of pedestrian signs, the image chosen to indicate when the person walking should stop or may continue is usually that of a man. For the author, "the predominance of the masculine in grammar with the predominance of the male in human relations" (2015, p. 100) is a proof of sexism in language.

Several manuals have been launched with the intention of combating sexism in the Brazilian language. One example is the *Manual para o uso não sexista da linguagem* (Manual for the non-sexist use of language) (2006), published with the support of REPEM (Rede de Educação Popular entre Mulheres da América Latina (Network for Popular Education among Women of Latin America), to be distributed online to Brazil and Portuguese-speaking African countries. The guide, initially written in Spanish, has as authors Julia Pérez Cervera and Paki Venegas Franco (2006) and proposes a transformation of society based on the way of speaking and writing.

One of the most subtle ways of transmitting this discrimination is through language, because language is nothing more than a reflection of values, thought, and the society that creates and uses it. Nothing we say at any moment of our lives is neutral: every word has a gender reading. Thus, language not only reflects, but also transmits and reinforces the stereotypes and roles considered appropriate for women and men in a society (CERVERA; VENEGAS, 2006).

The texts introduce initial concepts on patriarchy and how society imposes roles to be played by men and women, which are perhaps being confirmed and maintained through words. According to the Manual, language reinforces gender inequality and "the only way to change a sexist, excluding, and discriminatory language" is to "explain the ideological basis on which it is sustained, as well as to offer concrete and viable alternatives for change" (CERVERA; VENEGAS, 2006).

Written in fairly simple language, it explains that language is changeable, constantly evolving, and therefore can be altered. "The problem is not in the language itself," but in people's behavior, "in the ideological hang-ups, in the resistance to give it a correct use, to use words and expressions that are inclusive and non-discriminatory for women." Words transmit stereotypes and prejudices.

The texts are based on several authors, such as Simone de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray, and propose theoretical discussions. Beyond the conceptual discussions, there is a practical part in which examples of sexist texts commonly used in government documents are presented, followed by alternatives that can serve as tools for a more equitable language that values women.

In general, we wanted to make a manual with a proposal because its most immediate objective is to provide tools that will contribute to "change current society", because by advocating that

<sup>3</sup> The space for the sharing and approval by peers of academic research is written production (which is disembodied). However, in the future, it is possible to imagine that other tools could serve to make the academic production of women and LGBTQI+ visible. Perhaps in the coming years, new technologies and those that are already established can become model spaces for academic publishing that values the corporal performance.

women be named by themselves we will be empowering a change in mentalities that will lead to the creation of a more just and equitable society. This is the challenge. We hope that our enthusiasm and the excitement with which we have put together this manual will be contagious, and that reading it and putting it into practice will be a pleasure and a learning experience for everyone it reaches, just as it has been for us (CERVERA; VENEGAS, 2006).

In 2014, the Government of Rio Grande do Sul edited and published this Manual, proposing that it be used in state public offices as a communication tool. In the presentation text, Governor Tarso Genro states that the manual "determines and guides the 'revision' of the language internalized in the State administration" with the intention of seeking: "the understanding of gender discrimination and, starting from there, concretely make the transition to another model of linguistic treatment, with greater visibility for women and where the use of the masculine does not continue to legitimize the already outdated idea of gender superiority" (2014, p. 9).

The text by Ariane Leitão (2014), State Secretary of Policies for Women, states that gender equality in language "will only be guaranteed from the moment that we rethink the way the theme is treated in educational environments, which today disseminate male domination in discourses, especially when the sex of the person to whom it refers is not identified" (p. 13). The intention, through the use of the Manual, was to publicize women's actions and present them as subjects of historical activities in public documents, giving them visibility.

## Reflections on the invisibility of women in publications

The publication of manuals against sexism tends to credit women in public documents so that they appear in history, since invisibility can be reflected in various aspects of society, such as in the mainstream media that present historical facts in their news. In the editorial offices of media outlets in Brazil, the expressions "we need *um entrevistado* (an interviewee in masculine form); we need to interview *um especialista* (a specialist in masculine form)" are commonly used. In this case, the phrase does not propose that gender is undefined or neutral, but that the interviewee is a man.

Journalistic sources in media outlets are an example analyzed in many studies, including this author's ongoing doctoral research. In the first tests of the methodology, it was already apparent that there is a preference for men as television news sources. Although the information that men speak more than women on television is in the public domain, available to anyone who watches a news program, it is important to quantify and understand the representations and social places of the sources, but as the study is still in progress, the results will be released in the coming years.<sup>4</sup>

According to the census carried out by the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) (CNPq, 2014), the proportion of male and female researchers was equivalent in Brazil. However, on Brazilian TV, most of the interviewees are white, middle-aged men, according to the study conducted by Luisa Massarani, Yuri Castelfranchi, and Anna Elisa Pedreira (2019), who analyzed 169 news reports from the TV programs, *Jornal Nacional* and *Fantástico* (TV Globo) between April 2009 and March 2010. In 39% of the reports, the scientists interviewed were men, in 35% there was no scientist, and in 24% women were interviewed, with the predominant representation being male, over 40 years old, and white.

Of the 169 units identified in our corpus, 116 are occupied by male scientists (equivalent to 68.6%). In 60 of the 169 units, the scientist interviewed (male or female) is "mature" (apparent age over 60). The vast majority of the scientists represented in our sample (154, or 91.1%) are white. The others are distributed as follows: seven Asians (4.1%), six people of mixed race (3.5%), one black (0.6%), and one indigenous person (0.6%) (MASSARANI; CASTELFRANCHI; PEDREIRA, 2019).

The study finds that there is evidence of a kind of silencing that "inclines to a construction of invisibility" of women. Although, in this case, we cannot define this as an issue determined by language, but by culture, the fact is that female researchers are less cited in scientific publications and journalistic publications, which makes it necessary and urgent to discuss this issue.

The question that arises given this data is how to seek gender equality if the Portuguese language itself is sexist? Davi Silva Gonçalves (2018, p.107) states that "a sexist language makes us, even if unconsciously, endorse positions with which we often disagree". These positions may be unconsciously followed by tradition, but they get in the way when the goal of ending inequality is being sought.

Giselly Oliveira de Andrade, Gislene Lima Carvalho and Romana Castro Zambrano (2017, p. 441) researched the representation of gender in entries in the lexicons of the language, from the *Minidicionário Aurélio de Língua Portuguesa* (Aurelio Minidictionary of Portuguese) (Aurélio Buarque de HOLANDA, 2010), and concluded that the gender distinction is quite significant,

<sup>4</sup> The thesis to be defended in 2021 is entitled: *A voz feminina nas reportagens televisivas: um estudo comparativo entre os jornais televisivos de Portugal e do Brasil a partir do lugar de fala* (The female voice in television reports: a comparative study between television newspapers in Portugal and Brazil from the place of speech). Part of the research can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eLYNE40o04&t=183s>.

even greater than what is shown in the existing reality of social interaction, because "even in the entries of those professions where there is a higher concentration of women, the presence of the male gender is quite remarkable. As an example, they mention: "in the Portuguese language dictionary, the terms *educador* and *enfermeiro* appear (educator and nurse in the masculine form). And, when the feminine gender of the words is highlighted, its definition is presented in a succinct way, as in *professora* (teacher in the feminine form), or takes as reference the masculine position, as in *juíza* (judge in the feminine form)."'

The authors consider that the cited dictionary, on one hand, reflects "the discourses of male domination naturalized in societies" and, on the other hand, guides the speakers of the language, contributing "to consolidate and conserve the discourses as well as the societies of male domination". Thus, it may be considered that, although there are two grammatical genders (feminine and masculine), the masculine may be rooted in our speaking culture, because of the grammar of the language, as a way to maintain the culture and history of our society.

If the masculine can synthesize both sexes in the representation of the Portuguese language, when there is information that one is feminine and the other is masculine, what can we say when the feminine names of the authors are not informed and are exchanged only for initials, informing their last names only? The publication norms that guide the type of citation that begins with the SURNAME followed only by the INITIAL OF THE NAME, impose the invisibility of female authors and, therefore, the perpetuation of inequality.

## How can we think of a strategy to make female authors visible?

The views of female researchers such as Grada Kilomba, Márcia Tiburi, Adriana Baggio and many others who believe in the need to value female authorship, as well as description based on women's surnames, first names and pronouns, could trigger a small transformation in the norms that govern the writing of scientific articles, dissertations and theses. If they do not bring about a transformation, at least they propose a discussion about the crediting of female authors which, in the future, will certainly bring about transformations.

Among female activists, the use of "x", "@", or even the letter "e" in place of the article indicating gender managed to draw attention to the masculine character of the language and the lack of words to refer to the plural of feminine and masculine elements. In Brazil, it is not unusual to hear, among young people, the expressions "*amigues*", "*querides*", as a way to escape the masculine plural when referring to friends and dear ones. And, it is increasingly common to hear someone greet an audience by saying: "*Boa noite a todas e a todos*" (Good evening all [masculine and feminine forms]), or to read an e-mail beginning with "*Prezadas professoras e prezados professores*" (Dear teachers [feminine form] and dear teachers [masculine form]). This denotes a transformation of the language that has yet to reach the dictionaries.

This journal, *Revista de Estudos Feministas* (Feminist Studies Journal) (REF, 2020) includes publication guidelines stipulating that female authors must be cited by **name** the first time they appear in the text. According to the recommendation available on the site,<sup>5</sup> "in the first citation entry of each female author, the full first name" must be written in the text, and, likewise, in the list of references: "The complete bibliographic reference list, with **full name** and **first name of female authors**, must be presented at the end of the text". This is a way of recognizing the value of female authors and showing who the women referenced in the publications are, in order to give visibility to the place of women in academic texts.

Editorial decisions like this are the beginning of the struggle for the recognition of women as authors and can inspire other publications. They can also inspire individual decisions, such as mine, when I decided to discuss the need for a more equal and fairer crediting of women. We may be experiencing a moment of small transformations that deserve to be raised and discussed in academia, among female and male students, as well as male and female professors. Who knows, maybe in the future we will witness a transformation of our language?

There are already several researchers who have made the personal decision to write the full names of female and male authors. Cláudia Quadros and Maria Santos (2019), instead of writing only the source's surname and initials of the first names in the bibliographical references of their recent works, cite the author in full, for example: "*RECUERO, Raquel. Redes sociais na internet*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2009". This is the simple path to be followed by everyone, male and female, in their publications.

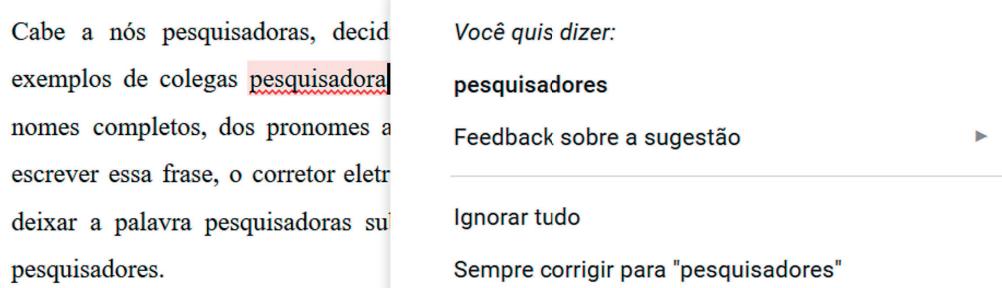
Adriana Baggio (2019) also proposes two other ways that serve to reduce the invisibility of female authors. She suggests crediting the full names of the female translators of these works (since most professionals in this sector are women) and also using the correct pronouns. She explains: "Pablio Vittar, for example, despite having a first name that we identify as male, uses the

<sup>5</sup> To consult the norms of the journal, *Revista Estudos Feministas*: <https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/ref/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.

pronoun in the feminine. So if you're going to mention her – as I've needed to do in an article – use "ela" (she), "a cantora" (the singer [feminine form]) etc.".

It is up to us, female researchers, to decide to fight against invisibility, taking advantage of the examples of fellow female researchers who question, criticize and justify the use of our full names, the appropriate pronouns, and give credit to female productions. As I write this sentence, to confirm my hypothesis, the *Microsoft Word* autocorrect function stubbornly underlines the word *pesquisadoras* (researchers in feminine form) in red and asks me if I meant to say: *pesquisadores* (researchers in masculine form).

**Figure 2:** Microsoft Word corrects to the masculine form



Source: Screen print from the author's computer.

**#PraTodoMundoVer (ForEveryoneToSee):** Image of a computer screenshot of this text itself, translated as appropriate: "examples of fellow *pesquisadoras* (researchers in plural feminine form) who question and justify the use of our full names, the pronouns... The *Word* software program highlights the word *pesquisadoras* and opens up a screen where the following text appears: Did you mean: *pesquisadores* (plural masculine form).

The word will remain underlined in my text file on *Google Drive* to remind me that we need to battle on. In the same way that I had contact, a little more than a year ago, with female authors who fight for us to be valued in academia, and I decided to start using the full names of the women who are my text sources, other women can do the same. In my previous texts, I always followed the publication norms required by journals, congresses, books, etc. to the letter for fear of not being able to publish, worried about having my text returned, among other concerns.

Now, in my orientations for Course Completion Papers and Scientific Initiation Projects, I always suggest that my students include the first and last names of authors, explaining the visibility of female researchers, and I invite them to practice complete referencing in their scientific texts. From now on, I will justify why I no longer use only initials to introduce authors in any of my texts. And I will continue to present bibliographical references as they appear below.

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