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GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN FRANCE: A MANUAL

IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH WRITING PRACTICES

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Our inclusive writing manual is based on an array of previously published resources, especially the Practical guide for public communication without gender stereotypes, published by the Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes (High Gender Equality Council[1]). Public institutions or organizations may support our project by signing the convention for public communication without gender stereotypes proposed by the HCE..

Excerpts from the Guide pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe included in this manual were approved by the Haut Conseil à l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes (www.haut-conseil-egalite. gouv.fr), following their meeting with Mots-Clés and Épices & Chocolat in September 2016.

[1] Established by decree of the Prime Minister on January, 3rd, 2013, the High Council for Gender Equality complements the institutional architecture of gender equality policies in France, bringing together several bodies that had worked separately so far.

Table of Content

FOREWORD

According to Michel Foucault in **The Discourse on Language**, *"Discourse does not only reflect struggles and systems of domination, but is that through which and for which we fight, the power we want to reclaim."*

Our communication agency **Mots-Clés** considers that discourse is not simply an instrument to exert influence but the place where influence occurs: we make a difference through our ability to impose words, expressions, and narratives.

Discourse thus condenses the changes in our society not only by reflecting these changes but also by shaping them. In so doing, discourse registers and participates in the construction and perpetuation of gender inequalities and stereotypes that surround us in our everyday lives.

We have decided to commit to equality between men and women by working on words.

Our approach : inclusive writing

Inclusive writing is the set of graphical and syntactical marks that ensure an equality of representation for both sexes. Concretely, this includes : rejecting the generic masculine form (*des acteurs du développement durable*), the dominance of the masculine form over the feminine (*des hommes et des femmes sont allés*), and many other conventions that are often internalized by each of us.

> Discourse is not simply an instrument to exert influence but the place where influence occurs.

Fortunately, others have preceded us in this process. Of particular note is **the Practical Guide for Public Communication without Gender Stereotypes**[2], published in November 2015 by the High Gender Equality Council[3] (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes), a consultative institution created in 2013 and supervised by the prime minister. This guide reflects the growing involvement of major political institutions

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[2] *Guide pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe*, Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, November 2015.

[3] Established by decree of the Prime Minister on January, 3rd, 2013, the High Council for Gender Equality complements the institutional architecture of gender equality policies in France, bringing together several bodies that had worked separately so far and providing it with a more firm and sustainable institutional structure." https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/structures/france/high-gender-equality-council

in inclusive writing practices, which should result in significant recommendations in the years to come. We should also mention the seminal work of Anne-Marie Houdebine, professor emerita of linguistics and semiology, whose publications focus on the gender marking in job titles and their feminization in the French language. Literature scholar Éliane Viennot has also been

> We have decided to commit to equality between men and women by working on words. Our approach : inclusive writing

a tremendous resource. In her essay **Non, le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin**, she traced the history of conflicts and tensions surrounding gender in the French language over the last three centuries. She analyzed in particular the social resistance concerning the prevalence of the masculine form over the feminine. Another notable source of inspiration has been the 2015 second issue of the journal **Well Well Well** that promoted and used inclusive writing.

In May 2016, our agency interviewed journalist Mathilde Fassin, who has made this approach official by publishing a manual on inclusive grammar. Other sources can be found in our bibliography, which derives from my own doctoral research. Finally, I was fortunate to be supported by my dissertation advisor, Caroline Ollivier-Yaniv, professor of communications, who kindly interviewed her colleagues on the three language conventions I will develop in this manual.

This inclusive writing manual is the product of this collective reflection. This new edition is in part the result of our agency's experience in working with many entities (institutions, companies, organizations) who, since 2016, became pioneers by committing to inclusive writing practices.

These include the city of Paris, 3F[4], the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers along with many others who have trusted us in conducting this change. Evidently, advocating for this issue is not always easy, as illustrated by the polemic that exploded in fall 2017. However, writing practices in favor of equality are increasingly used every day, heralding a silent revolution in the way we write.

This turbulent – though very enriching – period presented us with the opportunity to receive feedback on our past recommendations. We had the pleasure and honor to write the afterword for Éliane Viennot's new book, published in September 2018 by IXE: *Le langage inclusif : pourquoi, comment.* Insightful and regular exchanges with professor Viennot encouraged us to establish a unique and common point of

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[4] 3F is a French Real Estate Agency: https://www.groupe3f.fr/

reference so that gender-inclusive writing could be echoed within the businesses, institutions and organizations we work with.

Feedback from users and detractors alike helped us to stabilize conventions that would be as consensual as possible: simple, ergonomic, and perfectly usable for institutions.

This indeed is the most important aspect of our work: transforming institutional writing to insure more equality between men and women.

Following this principle, the conventions of this gender-inclusive language manual will be used in all our writings: emails, website, contracts, and internal documents.

From the start, our initiative has always been fundamentally exploratory and will remain that way: through our readings and encounters, we realized that our project would always generate highly stimulating discussions. Please do not hesitate to come talk to us or even apply the three rules of gender-inclusive writing we offer in this manual.

Enjoy the reading!

Raphaël Haddad

Founder and associate partner at Mots-Clés.

THE THREE CONVENTIONS OF INCLUSIVE WRITING ADOPTED BY MOTS-CLÉS

Usage of feminine forms
for functions, jobs, ranks and titles,

Usage of both masculine and feminine forms
by enumeration in alphabetical order, by
adding sparingly a centered dot[5] (·), or by the use
of gender-neutral terms (mots épicènes)

Avoidance of capital letters in gender-specific
terms such as "Men" or "Mankind"

[5] An interpoint (·), also known as a middle dot or centered, is a punctuation mark consisting of a vertically centered dot used for interword separation in ancient Latin script. In France, it is called a point médian.

IN PRACTICE

Usage of feminine forms for functions, jobs, ranks and titles

The nouns referring to functions, jobs, ranks and titles have existed in the feminine form since the Middle Ages. Mots-Clés considers that there is therefore no reason to erase women's social presence from discourse by not using these terms. The inclusive writing tab on pages 13 to 16 of this manual offers a list of frequently used terms and includes their feminine ending. If that list is not exhaustive enough, the guide *Femme, j'écris ton nom*[6] includes more than 2000 nouns referring to functions, ranks, jobs or titles, in the feminine and masculine forms.

In most cases, the correct formulation will be chosen in conformity with the nature of the French language. We will thus prefer terms such as *autrice*, *professeuse* or *chercheuse*. However, other formulations such as *auteure*, *professeure* and *chercheure* also coexist with these and give adequate attention to the feminine form in a text.

Usage of both masculine and feminine forms by enumeration in alphabetical order, by occasional use of a centered dot, or by the use of gender-neutral terms (*mots épicènes*)

We do not use the generic masculine form but rather alternatives that indicate the presence of the feminine and the masculine so that women have their rightful place in our language, as much as men do[7] .

To distinguish masculine and feminine forms, Mots-Clés thus considers several possibilities that can be combined within the same text::

[6] *Femme, j'écris ton nom… : Femme, j'écris ton nom… : guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms de métiers, titres, grades et fonctions,* 1999, dir. Bernard Cerquiligni.

[7] Antonomasia words designate all the nouns introduced by a capital letter out of deference. Examples include *État* (State) or *Homme* (Man): these capital letters are used in order to add institutional prestige to certain words. In this perspective, the spelling of *Homme* raises an issue, as it is often used as a generic masculine term, as in the expression *Droits de l'Homme*. We therefore prefer using *droits humains* or *droits Humains* rather than *droits de l'Homme*. As mentioned in the Practical Guide for public communication without gender stereotypes, the word homme has long been used in the Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l'Homme to legally prevent women from voting. The authors of the United Nation's declaration of 1949 wanted to write "Man Rights" but Eleonor Roosevelt–the only woman present on that day –fought for the expression "Human Rights" to be adopted instead so that women would be included as well. France translated the expression as *Droits de l'Homme*, contrary to other francophone countries such as Québec, in which *Droits de la personne humaine* is commonly preferred.».

Listing feminine and masculine terms in alphabetical order:

i.e : *elle et il, tous les Acadiens, toutes les Acadiennes, celles et ceux.*

Using the centered dot sparingly(point médian) as follows:

Masculine word (since it is often the shortest) + centered dot+ feminine suffix. An -s will be added to indicate the plural (without adding any other dot at the end):

i.e : *ingénieur·es, historien·nes, sénior·es.*

In order to use the centered dot as sparingly as possible, the punctuation mark will only be used when terms are very similar: when the masculine and feminine form only have one or two different letters[8]. In writing, it will be used as an abbreviation, while orally the use of the centered dot implies a double flection. For instance, *académicien·nes* will simply be pronounced as *académiciennes et académiciens*[9].

Endings of frequently used words are listed in the inclusive writing tab on page 13 to 16 of this manual.

Mots-Clés prefers the use of the middle dot to other signs, as it is best suited from a semiotic perspective. The centered dot seems preferable compared to parentheses (which refer to secondary elements), the slash (which implies a division), or the capital E (which could be perceived as giving a different consideration to the masculine and feminine forms). The centered dot also seems preferable to the comma or period, as the latter have grammaticall fixed usages. The centered dot is preferred to dashes, regardless of their length or shape, since they are also used as parentheses or to introduce dialogue.

In distinction to all these signs, the centered dot[10] has the advantage of not being currently used[11] —it seems to have been replaced by a space during Antiquity and completely disappeared several centuries ago. The centered dot is thus susceptible

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[8] We are referring to the frame of reference proposed by Éliane Viennot in her book *Le langage inclusif. Pourquoi, comment ?* published in September 2018 by Éditions Ixe.

[9] Many punctuation marks already exist in the French language. For instance, *M.* is pronounced *Monsieur!* The usage of an abbreviation mark is thus not only the preserve of inclusive writing.

[10] For the centered dot on Windows, press Alt+0183. It's possible to simplify its use with the Microsoft Software *Keyboard Layout Creator*. You can download the keyboard used by all our staff members by clicking here. On Mac OS X, the centered dot on Mac OS X, press Alt+maj+F on a French Keyboard (AZERTY) or ⇧ + ⌥ + 9 on a QUERTY keyboard. Once again, solutions exist to simplify the use of the character.

[11] At least, neither in French nor in English.

to reacquire a singular semiotic function and directly address the discursive and social problem of gender equality[12]

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[12] The centered dot has not yet been included in all word-processing software, although it should be soon. When unavailable and until it becomes the norm, the dot will be used instead.

A "moderate usage of the centered dot": why, how?

While the centered dot is not the only way to practice inclusive writing and although it is an abbreviation mark and does not impair the readability of a text once the reader sees it for the second time[13], the centered dot generated ample criticism in France during the fall 2017 debate on inclusive writing.

In order to moderate the debate on the topic and take feedback into account, we recommend a judicious usage of the centered dot. Concretely, we suggest limiting its use in words for which the feminine form is obtained by the addition of letters. It is the case for the final -e in *ami* and *amie* or *étudiant* and *étudiante*, as well as in double syllables such as *intellectuel* and *intellectuelle*, *terrien* and *terrienne*. These terms will prevail over those requiring more spelling changes. As for plural forms, we can also reduce the punctuation to one dot and prefer *cinglé·es* to *cinglé·e·s.*, or *incorrect·es* to *incorrect·e·s.*

How about agreements?

The agreement based on proximity as well as the agreement based on meaning[14] are also ways to include the feminine form in our sentences. Although they seem perfectly legitimate to us, we chose not to use them. The purpose of this manual is to offer a sustainable frame of reference for institutions. This implies the respect of all the grammatical rules, even if we are aware of the social history of some of these rules. This is the reason why we chose this standard while hoping for a change in these norms and a reintroduction of the agreement based on proximity.

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[13] Studies conducted by Noelia Gesto and Pascal Gyrax on this matter are very enlightening, particularly the study ventitled *"Féminisation et lourdeur de texte"* published in 2017 in *L'Année Psychologique*. Although the study focuses particularly on the dash , it proves that punctuation marks that render the feminine form visible do not impair the reading process as early as the second occurrence of the word in a text.

[14] Although the masculine form prevailing over the feminine is the rule, there are two alternatives: the agreement based on proximity and the agreement based on meaning. In applying the principle of subject-verb agreement, proximity agreement is the practice of relying on the noun that is closest to the verb to determine whether the verb is feminine or masculine (ie: *les hommes et les femmes sont allées* rather than *les hommes et les femmes sont allés*). It existed in French until the seventeenth century[14]. The agreement can also be based on meaning: for instance, the phrase *on est parties* can be used if the "on" pronoun refers to a plural group; the expression on est parti should be used if the "on" refers to an anonymous singular subject.

The use of gender-neutral terms.

i.e: *artiste, cadre, membre*.

Again, the tab on pages 13-16 includes examples.

In order to preserve the editorial ergonomics of a text, several generic formulations can be used, such as *la direction* instead of *les directeurs et les directrices*. In many contexts, these words can prevent repetitions.

INCLUSIVE WRITING TABLE
OF FREQUENTLY USED WORDS

ADJECTIVES, ARTICLES, PRONOUNS[15]	
Singular	Plural
ce·tte	ces
certain·e	certain·es
chacun·e	chacun·es
différent·e	différent·es
un·e	des

ÉPICÈNES WORDS (terms that have the same masculine and femine form)	
Singular	Plural
artiste	artistes
bénévole	bénévoles
cadre	cadres
capitaine	capitaines
diplomate	diplomates
fonctionnaire	fonctionnaires
gendarme	gendarmes
guide	guides
interprète	interprètes
juriste	juristes
maire	maires
membre	membres
propriétaire	propriétaires
scientifique	scientifiques
secrétaire	secrétaires

[15] For certain words as celle and celui, repetitions will be employed in order to limit the use of the centered dot.

WORDS ENDING WITH A VOWEL IN THE MASCULINE FORM

MASCULINE IN -É AND -I

Singular	Plural
administré·e	administré·es
apprenti·e	apprenti·es
attaché·e	attaché·es
chargé·e	chargé·es
délégué·e	délégué·es
député·e	député·es
diplômé·e	diplômé·es
retraité·e	retraité·es

MASCULINE IN -U / FEMININE IN -UE

Singular	Plural
élu·e	élu·es

MASCULINE WORDS ENDING WITH A CONSONANT

MASCULINE IN -AL/FEMININE IN -ALE

Singular[16]
départemental·e
local·e
médical·e
municipal·e
préfectoral·e
régional·e
social·e
syndical·e
territorial·e

[16] According to our recommendations on the moderate usage of the centered dot, the abbreviation will not be used for terms ending in *-al* and *-ale*.

MASCULINE WORDS ENDING WITH A CONSONANT

MASCULINE IN -EF/FEMININE IN -EFFE

Singular	Plural
chef·fe	chef·fes

MASCULINE IN -EL/FEMININE IN -ELLE

Singular	Plural
intellectuel·le	intellectuel·les
maternel·le	maternel·les
professionnel·le	professionnel·les

MASCULINE IN -EN/-IEN / FEMININE IN -ENNE/-IENNE)

Singular	Plural
citoyen·ne	citoyen·nes
gardien·ne	gardien·nes
lycéen·ne	lycéen·nes
technicien·ne	technicien·nes

MASCULINE IN -EUR (EXCEPT -TEUR)/FEMININ IN -EURE[17]

Singular	Plural
chercheur·e/chercheuse[18]	chercheur·es/chercheuses
entrepreneur·e/entrepreneuse	entrepreneur·es/entrepreneuses
gouverneur·e	gouverneur·es
ingénieur·e	ingénieur·es
professeur·e/professeuse	professeur·es/professeuse

[17] For some words ending in -eur, endings in -eur and -euse both exist. Both can thus be accepted. Usages will prevail.

[18] The term "chercheuse" can also be used.

MASCULINE WORDS ENDING WITH A CONSONANT	
MASCULIN IN -T /FEMININE IN -TE	
Singular	Plural
adhérent·e	adhérent·es
adjoint·e	adjoint·es
agent·e	agent·es
assistant·e	assistant·es
avocat·e	avocat·es
consultant·e	consultant·es
étudiant·e	étudiant·es
habitant·e	habitant·es
président·e	président·es
remplaçant·e	remplaçant·es
suppléant·e	suppléant·es

OTHER	
Singular	Plural
artisan·e	artisan·es
commis·e	commis·es
sénior·e	sénior·es

NON-EXHAUSTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interested? Here are a few references for further reflection.

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Bernard CERQUIGLINI, 2018

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Éliane VIENNOT, september 2018

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Non le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin !
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Pierrette VACHON-L'HEUREUX et Louise GUÉNETTE, 2006

Guide de féminisation des noms communs de personnes,
Louise-Laurence LARIVIÈRE, 2005

À juste titre : guide de rédaction non sexiste,
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Écrire les genres : guide romand d'aide à la rédaction administrative et législative épicène,
Thérèse MOREAU, 2001

Le nouveau dictionnaire féminin-masculin des professions, des titres et des fonctions,
Thérèse MOREAU, 1999

Femme, j'écris ton nom… : guide d'aide à la féminisation des noms de métiers, titres, grades et fonctions,
Dir. Bernard CERQUIGLINI, 1999

La féminisation des noms de métiers en français et dans d'autres langues,
Dir. Anne-Marie HOUDEBINE, 1998

TEN ARGUMENTS YOU WILL HEAR AGAINST INCLUSIVE WRITING[19]

Five arguments you will often hear to justify the idea that things should not change ...and how to respond!

1. The usefulness argument :
"It's an issue of secondary importance"

Language reflects society and its conception of the world. It is precisely because language is political that the French language has been voluntarily inflected towards the masculine form for centuries by the groups that were opposed to gender equality. A language that makes women invisible reflects a society in which they play a secondary role.

2. The argument for the existence of a generic masculine form:
"the masculine form is also neutral. It represents men and women."

In French, the neutral form does not exist: a word is either masculine or feminine. In fact, the use of the masculine form is not perceived as neutral despite its apparent intention. It actually generates less feminine mental representations among survey respondents as a generic *épicène* word, which can be either masculine or feminine. It is in such common use that we have widely internalized it. A parallel could be drawn here to the history of universal suffrage: the masculine is not neutral, just as suffrage was not de facto universal in France until 1944 when women obtained voting rights.

3. The readability argument :
"It takes up too much space in the text"

No, women do not "take up too much space" in a text. In fact, our staff members have used inclusive writing for several months and realized that the eye rapidly got used to it. It quickly became second nature..

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[19] For more information, see page 23 of this manual, which details the conclusions of the study on inclusive writing conducted in 2017 by Harris Interactive for Mots-Clés.

4. The aesthetic argument :
"Écrivaine or pompière does not sound good"

The aesthetic argument is frequently mentioned. Once again, using the feminine form is simply a question of habit. Feminine job titles are "disturbing", as they reveal the fact that a territory initially conceived as masculine is progressively being invested by women.

"These dots everywhere deform words"

To those shocked by the usage of the centered dot, several responses can be given. No punctuation mark is intrinsically beautiful or ugly. It is a question of habit more than anything. Who would dare call colons, semi colons and *cédilles* ugly? Although they are well integrated in our contemporary writing practices, they generated harsh debates in the past. Why would the at symbol @ or the pound key # —two signs of our digital modernity— be beautiful while the centered dot would be hideous? Is it the sign or what it indicates that bothers our current detractors? Additionally, once again, inclusive writing is not limited to the centered dot. Let's go further: it is perfectly possible to practice inclusive language without ever using the centered dot and choosing to employ gender-neutral terms and the duplication (i.e: *les étudiants et les étudiantes*).

5. The prestige arguments:
"Some women themselves use the masculine form to refer to their profession"

These women have perfectly understood the messages sent by those who eliminated feminine terms, and by those who are nowadays considering these same words as unknown or improper, which lets these women know that they have nothing to do on someone else's territory and that their presence would be, in a way, an exception to the norm. We cannot blame these women who have gained social positions in a male-dominated sector and are looking for ways to conform to the preexisting habits of their field. Yet, it is unfortunate that the use of the feminine form for job titles is seen to undermine their skills. Moreover, these women are pioneers and can therefore be important role models for future

generations.

6. The complexity argument
"Inclusive writing is too complicated to use"

Once again, this argument is limiting inclusive writing to the centered dot while the double flection and gender-neutral formulations do not create any particular difficulty. As for the centered dot, it is more and more accessible and the soon to be AZERTY keyboard reform will increase its accessibility. Incidentally, many initiatives exist to technically facilitate the learning and use of gender-inclusive language. The inclusive writing hackathon[20], the first major event that focused on the technical aspect of the subject, enabled the creation of various tools. Inclusive writing converters, centered-dot buttons, reference websites, collaborative platforms that monitor practices and even a software for the blind now exist in order to facilitate the adoption of inclusive writing.

7. The proscription argument
"The use of gender-inclusive writing was prohibited by the Académie Française and by the French government"

The French language is controlled by usage. Although certain institutions are indeed against gender-inclusive language, they do not have the power to ban it. The role of the Académie Française, for instance, is not to promulgate rules but to acknowledge social innovations that already and always exist beforehand. Even the memorandum sent by Prime Minister Édouard Philippe[21]—that led to extensive press coverage—is not against gender-inclusive writing. Although it prohibits the abbreviations in the official bulletin, it recognizes the importance of using duplications as well as gender-neutral words. Furthermore, certain public institutions such as the Conseil Économique, Social et Environnemental as well as many institutions of higher education such as the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers, have already been using inclusive writing for a long time and have not stopped.

[20] For more information, go to http://hackecritureinclusive.com/

[21] For more information, go to: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.

8. The argument of mortal danger posed by gender-inclusive writing to the French language[22]
"Inclusive writing is a threat to the French language"

If inclusive writing is threatening anything, it is the domination of one gender over another: the domination of the masculine form over the feminine and, by extension, the domination of men over women. This is what frightens people. But the language itself is not at risk. It is alive because it evolves according to social changes and according to the way it is disseminated. In this sense, gender-inclusive language even constitutes an exceptional process of revitalization of the French language: we are rediscovering simple and well-conceived words, we are rediscovering practices accessible to everyone, we are rereading classics with new eyes (authors used to know these words and practices), and, on top of that, we have a deeper knowledge of our language.

9. The Orwellian argument
"Inclusive writing is like newspeak"

As several studies reminded us, accusing gender-inclusive language to be like newspeak has a **discursive** goal: delegitimizing another discourse. The reference to Orwell has become so ordinary that linguistics scholars have come up with a general law: the Orwellian law. It is defined in these terms: the longer a discussion on language lasts, the probability of a comparison with newspeak increases.

10. The sustainability argument
"Inclusive writing is not sustainable for an institution that has to have homogeneous editorial practices".

This is precisely what encouraged Mots-Clés to work on the issue and on this manual. The three conventions recommended here were elaborated in order to be sustainable so that institutions can adopt homogeneous editorial practices. Since September 2016, this free manual and its previous versions have been downloaded more than 35 000 times and used as a base to guide many organizations through this change.

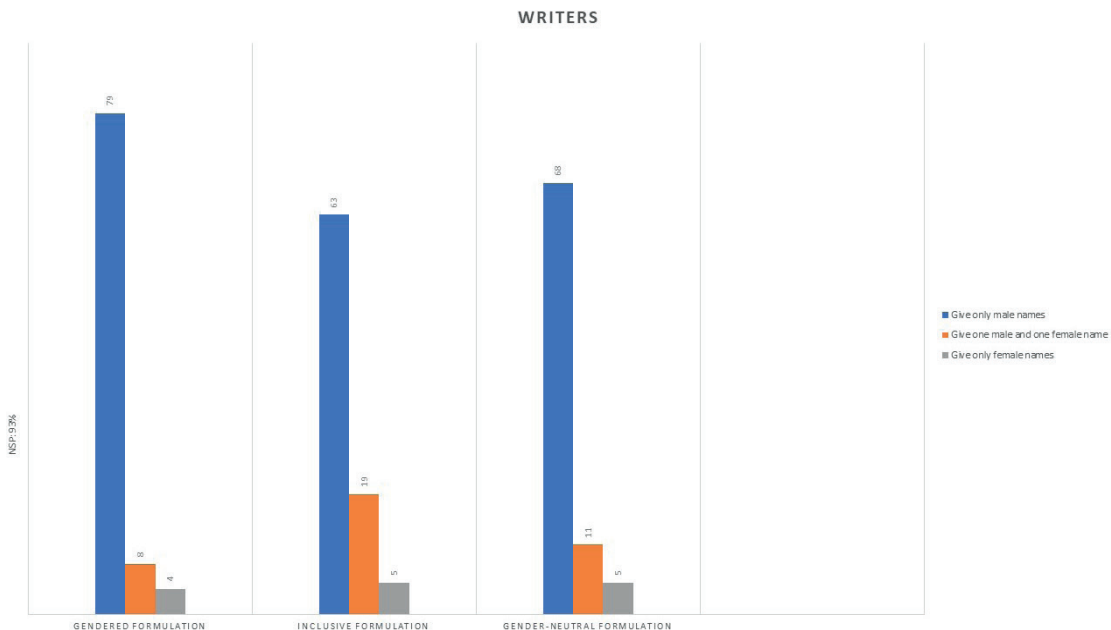[22] Or what the Académie Française called a "péril mortel."

A SURVEY ON INCLUSIVE WRITING

In October 2017, Harris Interactive conducted a survey on gender-inclusive language for *Mots-Clés*. This survey shows **how powerful inclusive writing is in concretely advancing equality: inclusive or gender-neutral formulations generate up to twice as many mental representations of women.** Before being surveyed, respondents were asked to make a list of celebrities. In each case, respondents exposed to gendered-specific texts, such as "*citez deux présentateurs du journal télévisé*" (Give the names of two TV hosts) or "*citez deux champions olympiques*" (give the names of two Olympic champions), mentioned more male names, while respondents who had seen inclusive formulations systematically mentioned more women.
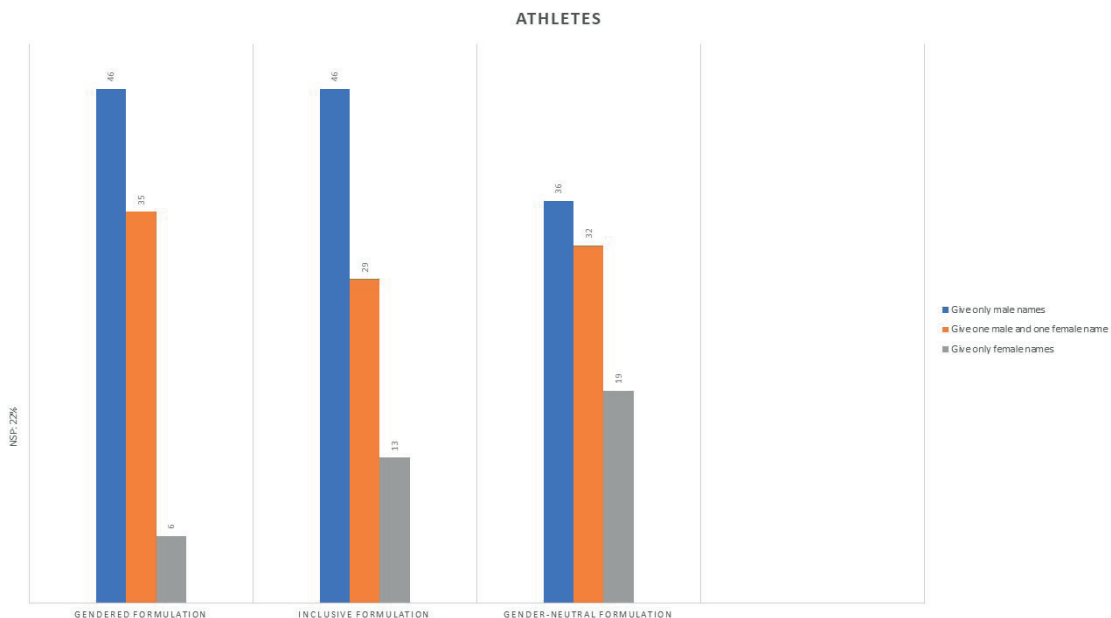
Asked to spontaneously give the names of TV hosts, respondents gave more female names when confronted with gender-inclusive formulations.

TV HOSTS
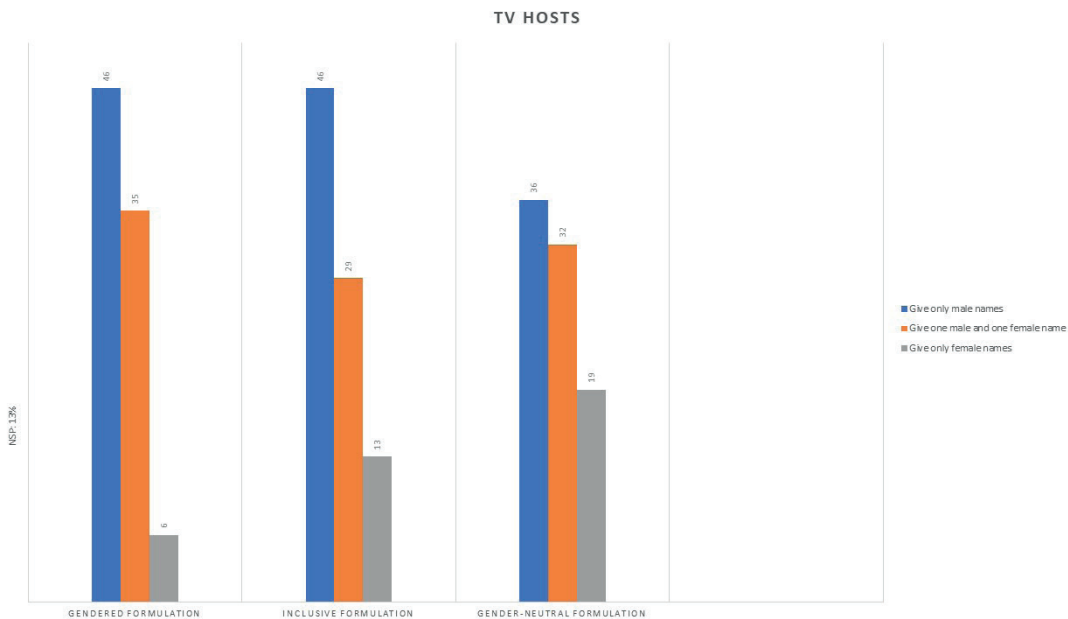
Asked to spontaneously give the names of writers, respondents give more female names when confronted with gender-inclusive formulations.

WRITERS

NSP: 9.3%

- Give only male names
- Give one male and one female name
- Give only female names

GENDERED FORMULATION — 79, 8, 4
INCLUSIVE FORMULATION — 63, 19, 5
GENDER-NEUTRAL FORMULATION — 68, 11, 5

Asked to spontaneously give the names of athletes, respondents give more female names when confronted with gender-inclusive formulations.

ATHLETES

NSP: 22%

- Give only male names
- Give one male and one female name
- Give only female names

GENDERED FORMULATION — 46, 35, 6
INCLUSIVE FORMULATION — 46, 29, 13
GENDER-NEUTRAL FORMULATION — 36, 32, 19

AFTERWORD

This work is a short and particularly effective manual that reminds us of the importance of language and its impact on mental constructions and social representations of each individual speaker; that is why it is crucial to be aware of the ethical dimension of language, which is its quality of being discriminating, patronizing, egalitarian, or racist.

Sexual differentiation is hidden in French, contrary to other languages such as Portuguese which distinguishes between *obrigada* (thank you-woman) and *obrigado* (thank you-man). Yet, such differentiation exists, as revealed by the resistance to the feminization of job titles and linguistic usage. Acknowledging women without hiding them behind a pseudo neutral gender—since French only recognizes two genders—is more than legitimate. Words and grammar allow it.

French can easily be feminized, as it already was before various grammar specialists and institutions masculinized it. Since the seventeenth century, they facilitated the long-term development of masculine domination, creating the supposed rule according to which the masculine form prevails over the feminine[23]. This masculinization can de deconstructed in speech and writing, which the present manual does by presenting very precise rules of inclusive and non-discriminating writing.

I strongly recommend this book for its efficiency and its linguistic and ethical interest.

Anne-Marie Houdebine, professor emerita in linguistics and semiotics, Université Paris Descartes – Sorbonne

[23] Brilliantly denounced in Éliane Viennot's book Non le masculin ne l'emporte pas sur le féminin (cf. bibliography).

NOW WHAT?

Modify a keyboard to simplify the use of the centered dot.
For the centered dot on Windows, press Alt+0183.

It's possible to simplify its use with the Microsoft Software Keyboard Layout Creator. You can download the keyboard used by all our staff members by clicking here.

On Mac OS X, the centered dot, press Alt+maj+F on a French Keyboard (AZERTY) or ⇧ + ⌥ + 9 on a QUERTY keyboard. Once again, solutions exist to simplify the use of the character.
The Unicode for the middle dot is U+00B7, block command and Latin 1 supplement.

See the list of companies and institutions that are experimenting with or adopting gender-inclusive language:
Following the inclusive writing hackathon organized in January 2018, the Facebook group Taginclusive references inclusive writings practices. Its members publish in weekly posts several examples that illustrate the spreading of these writing practices in various sectors.

To make a change in your organization
Mots-Clés has developed a comprehensive set of resources in order to facilitate the transition to inclusive writing. Advice, fun and practical training workshops, revision of your editorial content… Don't hesitate to reach out to us for any of your needs.

MOTS·CLÉS

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