

# *Letras Hispanas*

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**TITLE:** *Por un lenguaje inclusivo: estudios y reflexiones sobre estrategias no sexistas en la lengua española*

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This edited volume published by the *Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española* (ANLE) is a compelling text filled with academic essays, creative essays including a poem, and photographs and figures about gender-based inclusive language. In this volume, grammatical gender is fully explained and arguments for and against inclusive language are presented along with a variety of strategies to make language more inclusive with or without altering Spanish morphology. It is both timely and relevant and will pique the interest of not only scholars and speakers of Spanish but also teachers and learners of Spanish. One of its assets is the inclusion of a variety of text types including theoretical articles, corpus-based studies, and short essays accessible to all readers. As the editors explain, the book originated from an email sent by an ANLE member sparking debate about an essay written by Gustavo Garc-Artigas in support of inclusive language. The topic of gender-inclusive language is controversial amongst ANLE members which mimics what is seen in society, with some support of inclusive language in particular by young people.

In the first part of the book, ten academic articles delve into various aspects of the topic and include discussion on how language change naturally occurs through its speakers and not through impositions made by language academies, thus affirming that discourse is related to the larger social and

historical context. In this first section, many authors explain that society being sexist affects language use and most authors support the use of inclusive language in one form or another in Spanish. The second section of the book complements the academic articles in the first section, offering shorter essays and a poem leaving the reader with much to ponder and a clearer grasp on gender-inclusive language in society. Readers can experience the evolution of the authors' positions on the topic, which at times begins with disdain toward inclusive language and ends with them joining the fight for gender-based inclusive language as a means to end language discrimination and be inclusive of all genders.

Delving into the theoretical articles in this first part of the book, six authors discuss inclusive language from various viewpoints. In '*Lenguaje y subjetividades. Un trabajo de construcción,*' María Celeste Aguirre Sarra describes that the mere fact that the gender inclusive morpheme 'e' evokes negative emotions demonstrates the discrimination against nonbinary people and support to maintain the patriarchy. She further explains that language should represent all who speak it and that change must originate within the language and also within the political positions that support inclusion. In an attempt to educate her university students in her Spanish course on translation, Ana Isabel Simón-Alegre describes in *Algo más que palabras: investigar*

y enseñar siguiendo la senda del lenguaje inclusivo specific subtopics to teach students in upper level Spanish courses which include the evolution of definitions of gendered nouns such as “hombre,” “varón,” “mujer,” and “hembra,” the new reality of females in the workplace as expressed through female word forms, the widespread exclusion of females in language academies, the use of male adjectives to describe females as a form of high honor, and the negative connotations of female forms of nouns compared to their male counterparts. Alejandra Clara Villar describes how language is processed in the brain using various existing linguistic theories in *Lenguaje inclusivo y mutabilidad en tiempos actuales: Perspectivas estructuralistas, cognitivas y de la enunciación*, reinforcing the idea that young people often drive linguistic change, and that the lexicon (vocabulary) is more likely to change than the morphology (parts of words) in terms of linguistic changes in support of inclusive language. In *Consideraciones lingüísticas de la adopción del fonema “-e” como morfema de género inclusivo* Zazil-Ha Troncoso Flores offers insights into the evolution and current uses of the gender-neutral morpheme ‘e’ explaining the linguistics behind gender and the frequency of certain gendered endings and asks the reader if the ‘e’ will persist. Elena Castro describes language use by the LGBTQ+ community and clarifies the difference between non-sexist language and inclusive language offering various strategies and making connections to English’s singular ‘they’ in *El traductor de Google no “entiende.” Forjar inclusión en lenguajes excluyentes. In ¿No hay que confundir gramática con machismo? Un análisis de las políticas lingüísticas de género de las academias de la lengua española* Agustina Ariana D’Andrea discusses the politics of language pertaining to inclusive language and explains the history of language academies, noting that while the *Real Academia Española* (RAE) was created for political reasons in 1713 much earlier than the ones in Latin America with a main goal of maintaining

the purity of Spanish, today their goal is to maintain the unity of Spanish. While the RAE maintains their position in support of the generic masculine, speakers show their disdain by using other strategies. In summary, these articles provide a thorough background of the history of inclusive language as well as the political and linguistic explanations that accompany its use.

The four empirical studies in this first part of the book analyzed three different textual sources and opinions of teenagers in Argentina. In addition to analyzing Spain’s Constitution, María López Medel in *Constitución española, lenguaje y sexism* proposes alternatives to the semantic masculine used in the document by showing how the word ‘miembro’ can be substituted in 28 out of 38 uses of the word in the Constitution using a variety of strategies, which could be very useful for teaching students strategies for making language more inclusive. In *Cómo los periódicos argentinos contribuyen a indexicalizar el lenguaje inclusivo en Buenos Aires: Caso de estudio*, Francesca Battista analyzes ideologies and attitudes towards inclusive language in five national Argentine newspapers as they react to a guide to inclusive language for administrative purposes written in January of 2020 by Estela Díaz (Minister of the Woman, Politics of Gender and Sexual Diversity in the province of Argentina) and two of the articles examined were more supportive of inclusive language than the other three. Patricia Guillén Solano investigates the extent to which three textbooks for Spanish learners at various levels published in Mexico and used in Costa Rica promote gender equality in *Actividades y estrategias para el uso de un lenguaje inclusivo en el aula de español L2: Una perspectiva discursiva*, noting that women were still presented in stereotyped ways in several of the textbooks analyzed with limited views of women and offering several intriguing pedagogical activities and strategies for students to engage with inclusive language, filling a much needed gap in the current inclusive language guidebooks, which primarily include only

strategies and options for administrative language. Sylvia Nogueira uses various forms of inclusive language to write the article titled *¿Incómodos? Representaciones sociales sobre el lenguaje inclusivo en el Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires* which describes her investigation in 2018 of Argentine students ages 13-16, finding that the vast majority support the use of inclusive language even if they themselves do not use it and only 8% reject it completely.

The second section starts with the essay that was the catalyst for this book, *El desafío de un lenguaje inclusivo. Una discusión que concierne a la RAE*. By the end of this essay, Gustavo-Gac Artigas makes clear his position, that the use of gender inclusive language is a movement and not a short-lived fad. In *La constante evolución del idioma*, F. Isabel Compoy and Alma Flor Ada explain that language change is continuous and influenced by social change too, opining that the gender-inclusive morpheme 'e' blends better into Spanish morphology than the 'x'. In *Lenguaje ex*, Violeta Rojo initially thought inclusive language was a first world problem, later changing her mind, explaining that her academic colleagues did not deem inclusive language worthy of study and noting that the use of inclusive language in her essay did not ruin the Spanish language. The section continues with a poem, [*Un corte*], written by María Ángeles Pérez López about words, language, and the power of women and their stances toward inclusive language and the world. Then, in, *La feminización del idioma en el francés quebequense: Algunas digresiones*, Mariela Gutiérrez compares the feminization of the French language in Quebec to France, noting that France is about 40 years behind Quebec and indicating that unsurprisingly French speakers in Quebec were found in one study to use feminine forms of nouns mores than French speakers in France. Next, Alberto Gómez Font, one of two male authors in this book, describes how his female colleagues influenced his decision to support inclusive language and contradicts two arguments against inclusive language, recognizing that while the gender inclusive

'e' morpheme is difficult for him to use, it is the only way to include non-binary people. In *Sobre uso del "lenguaje inclusivo,"* María Rosa Rojo positions herself against alternating Spanish morphology but is in support of lexical changes to adopt inclusive language. Luis Barrera Linares, the second male author in this book, indicates that there is no consensus on how to employ inclusive language and that it should be separate from political agendas and reinforcing his neutral stance of accepting both the masculine generic and any replacement morphemes noting that language is changing faster than ever before in *Masculino incluyente versus femenino excluido en español*. Priscilla Gac-Artigas describes the link between the COVID-19 pandemic, racism, and language discrimination, explaining that humans are capable of change, be it social or linguistic as evidenced by the pandemic, concluding with the triplet 'todas, todos, todes' in *La pandemia, el racismo y la discriminación ejercida a través del lenguaje*. This section ends with a comic strip also found on the cover of the book written by Hernán Martignone and drawn by Lauri Fernández titled *Protolenguaje inclusivo en la Antigüedad* that depicts issues related to grammatical gender stemming as far back as ancient Greek and Roman times in a lighthearted and comical fashion.

Overall, this book contributes to the growing field of gender-inclusive language by providing a variety of articles written by academics and non-academics that not only explain the issues as they exist in society today, but also delve into the history of gender in language and society and offer various ways to combat discriminatory practices and language uses. Written for a wide audience, the articles and essays in this book detail the history of Spanish grammar pertaining to grammatical gender in order to elucidate strategies and issues surrounding inclusive language. The editors acknowledge that the issue is divisive, and the authors of the articles explain ways to combat binary and sexist stereotypes that exist in Spanish.