



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Triennale Interclasse in
Lingue, Letterature e Mediazione culturale (LTLLM)

Classe LT-12

Tesina di Laurea

Gender-inclusivity in the educational environment: differences across generations

Relatrice
Professoressa Fiona Clare Dalziel

Laureanda
Elisa Carretti
n° matr. 2010475 / LTLLM

Anno Accademico 2022/2023

Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 1 What is inclusive language?.....	3
1.1 Definition of inclusive language and gender.....	3
1.2 The history of gender-inclusive language.....	4
1.3 Reasons behind gender-inclusive reforms.....	6
1.4 Inclusion in today’s society.....	7
1.5 English as a sexist language.....	8
1.5.1 The asymmetrical treatment of women and men.....	8
1.5.2 Semantic derogation.....	9
1.5.3 Names and titles.....	11
1.5.4 Pronouns.....	12
1.6 Possible adjustments that could lead to English being a more gender-inclusive language.....	13
1.6.1 Gender-neutralisation and gender-specification.....	13
1.6.2 The use of pronouns.....	14
1.6.3 Further alternatives: pluralising, passive forms and gender neutral words	16
1.7 Conclusion.....	16
CHAPTER 2 Gender-inclusive language in the educational context.....	19
2.1 The value of gender-inclusivity in the educational system.....	19
2.2 The role of secondary socialisation in the transmission of gender-inclusivity....	20
2.3 The required elements to teach gender-inclusivity.....	21
2.3.1 Curricula.....	22
2.3.2 Textbooks.....	22
2.3.3 Teachers.....	23
2.4 Gender-inclusivity today in schools and institutions.....	24
2.5 Conclusion.....	25
CHAPTER 3 Survey “Gender inclusivity in the educational environment: differences across generations”	27
3.1 Introduction.....	27
3.2 Method review.....	28
3.2.1 Participants.....	28
3.2.2 Design.....	29
3.2.3 Context.....	30
3.3 Results.....	30
3.4 Discussion.....	39
3.5 Conclusion.....	41
Conclusion.....	43
Summary in Italian.....	45
Acknowledgements.....	49
Bibliography.....	51

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation entitled “Gender inclusivity in the educational environment: differences across generations” is to present a general analysis of the concept of gender-inclusive language and its application in the field of education, as well as to compare and contrast how this topic is and was taught to different generations. This last aspect will be investigated through an online survey conducted among people who belong to different age groups.

The first chapter of this dissertation will present an outline on different aspects of the topic of gender-inclusive language. It will start with the definition of said expression, together with the definition of the concept of gender, it being linked to the socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity and not necessarily a direct product of an individual’s biological sex (Giddens 2006). The chapter then will move on to the reforms that were carried out in the last century in this field and the reasons behind that. To continue with the topic of language, the connection between language and society will be established, mainly through the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The chapter will then list the aspects of the English language that make it non-inclusive: among these, the asymmetrical treatment of genders, semantic derogation, different names and titles and non-inclusive pronouns. To conclude, possible adjustments will be suggested that could lead to English being a more gender-inclusive language: gender-neutralisation and gender-specification, the use of the correct pronoun, and other alternatives such as pluralising, passive forms and gender neutral words.

The second chapter of this dissertation will analyse the application of the concept of gender-inclusive language to the educational context. It will start with the description of the values of gender-inclusivity in the educational system: among others, inclusive education promotes inclusive societies, where people can live together and diversity is celebrated. The fundamental role of schools in the process of secondary socialisation will be later described, together with the required elements to teach gender-inclusivity: curricula, textbooks and teachers. The chapter will conclude with a general overview of the implementation of gender-inclusivity in the guidelines from different schools and colleges.

The third and final chapter of this dissertation will consist of the presentation, analysis and interpretation of a survey on the topic of gender inclusivity in the educational environment. The aim of the questionnaire is to compare how people from different age groups are and were taught about gender inclusivity during their educational path. The focus of the chapter will be on how different generations use gender-inclusive language, as a result of their educational experiences about that, as well as their general opinion about the topic.

CHAPTER 1 What is inclusive language?

The aim of this first chapter is to give an insight into what it means to choose to be inclusive and not discriminate when we use language in our everyday interactions. I will start with a definition of what *inclusive language* is and, in particular, *gender-inclusive language*, together with different interpretations of the term *gender*. After giving a short overview of the history of inclusive reforms, and what encouraged the feminist linguistic movement in the previous century to start fighting for a more inclusive linguistic system, an analysis of modern society will be later presented. To continue, an outline of how and why the English language can be considered as a sexist system of communication: how different genders are perceived and, as a result, treated by society, how certain words acquire a different connotation depending on the person they are referring to, how names and titles have different meanings and values for men, women and non-binary people and in which way pronouns can be seen as a problem for what concerns inclusivity. To conclude this chapter, I will present some possible solutions to address the question, some of which are more closely connected to grammar, such as gender-neutralisation and gender specification, while others are more effective for day-to-day interactions, whether with a single person or to address an audience.

1.1 Definition of inclusive language and gender

According to the *Guidelines for Inclusive Language*¹ published by the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), a US organisation that works to promote the scientific study of language, the expression *inclusive language* stands for a language that “acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equal opportunities.” This formula refers to a general definition, which can be further analysed in terms of *disability-inclusive* or *gender-inclusive language*. As far as the latter is concerned, the United Nations provides an additional interpretation of this expression, which is not so different from the one stated above: according to the organisation, “using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes.”

¹ https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/Inclusive_Lg_Guidelines.pdf

After reading the definition of *gender-inclusive language*, what comes naturally is trying to understand what one means when referring to the term *gender*. Several experts in the field of linguistics have provided explanations and interpretations of this word, as its definition might not be so straightforward. Hockett (1991 in Curzan 2003:13) defined *gender* from a strictly grammatical point of view and stated that “[...] (gender) can be defined at the most basic level as a system of noun classification reflected in the behaviour of associated works.” Seen from a different perspective, gender can be perceived as a “societal view of sex and is variable across time and space” (Siddiqui 2014:29). To give a more complete definition, which recalls Siddiqui’s but further analyses the difference between sex and gender, Giddens (2006 in Siddiqui 2014:30) states that:

Sociologists use the term *sex* to refer to the anatomical and psychological differences that define male and female bodies. *Gender*, by contrast, concerns the psychological, social, and cultural differences between males and females. *Gender* is linked to socially constructed notions of masculinity and femininity; it is not necessarily a direct product of an individual’s biological sex.

1.2 The history of gender-inclusive language

The topic of inclusive language was first brought to the attention of the public in English speaking countries by the feminist movement in the late 19th century. According to Pauwels (2003:551), the linguistic activism associated with the women’s movement presented the first major female challenge to male dominance in language standardisation. Over the course of the previous century, many reforms were passed all over the world in order to create a more inclusive and less discriminating environment, where people could avoid being treated differently and unequally based on their gender. Among the most important changes that have been adopted in English-speaking countries starting from the second half of the 20th century, in 1975 a set of guidelines on the use of non-sexist language was published by the Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity of the National Council of Teachers of English; this statement was later revised and updated several times, with the last change being in 2018, when it was

given a new title: *Statement on Gender and Language*. In the same year that the set of guidelines was published in the United States, in the UK the Sex Discrimination Act was passed, a reform that expected job advertisements to replace gendered language with gender-neutral language. A few years later, in 1983 in New South Wales, Australia, a policy was introduced that required all further legislation to change the pronouns *he* or *she* to *they* (Larmour 1990 in Newman 2020:1)

The reforms mentioned above are just a few examples of the changes that were introduced by some of the most powerful and influential English-speaking cultures over the course of the last century in order to achieve social change, with specific reference to the kind that enables greater equality, equity, and access (Pauwels 2003:552). However, changes introduced by governments and executive authorities do not always coincide with changes adopted by the community of everyday-English users. The introduction of these acts and policies, combined with the publication of many studies on the connection between language and gender, drew the conclusion that the English language used up until that moment was a sexist system of communication. According to Pauwels (2003:554), the reaction of the community to these accusations was predominantly negative: it was vigorously denied, both by non-experts and experts in the field of linguistics, that such claims had any basis, although they had different theories to support their opinions. While the former believed so because they denied that language authorities could even exist, the latter claimed that the analyses conducted by feminist researchers were fundamentally erroneous, as they rested on a flawed consideration of gender, in particular of grammatical gender. One example of the above occurred with the Department of Linguistics at Harvard University: a group of students submitted a proposal to ban the use of the generic *he*, as they considered it sexist and to no extent inclusive. The reaction of the department was not the one that they had hoped for: the university stated that feminist analysts held an inaccurate consideration of the relationship between grammatical gender and sex. Despite everything, these denials and comments on the work of many linguistic researchers were in turn refuted and discredited by presenting new investigations that examined people's points of view on gender in language (Pauwels 2003:554).

1.3 Reasons behind gender-inclusive reforms

There are several reasons that, during the course of the last decades, have led feminist language activists to undertake action in order to encourage a change in the way people speak. Among the many motivations and points of view that were found, Pauwels (2003:555) discerns three main aims: to reveal the sexist essence of today's linguistic approaches; to be able to express a woman's point of view through an adequate language system; to obtain an equal and balanced portrayal of all genders in the modern society.

As far as the first goal is concerned, the sociologist Pauwels (2003:555) states that those who aim at uncovering the sexism that lies in the current way of speaking are usually inclined to do so through linguistic disruption. The said strategy consists of breaking morphological, as well as grammatical rules, in order to make people aware of the fact that women are being discriminated against in ways that many are not used to detecting. According to Sterken (2020), the disruption of standard communicative patterns can help accomplish this goal, as it can have the effect of making the hearer stop and engage in a metalinguistic reflection about the representational and worldly consequences of their speech, and how a change in word-meaning pair may help bring about representational and worldly benefits. There are several examples of linguistic disruption used by feminist language activists, some of which are the substitution of the word *history* with the recently-coined and purposely-challenging term *herstory*, or the generic use of the pronoun *she* to replace the generic *he*. With regards to the second goal, the Pauwels (2003:555) affirms that the ability to express a woman's perspective through an acceptable language system has resulted, in the course of several years, in the creation of new woman-centred languages. These privilege the female point of view and are written "for the specific purpose of expressing the perception of women" (Elgin 1998 in Pauwels 2003:555), as the writer and linguist Hadem Elgin stated about her creation of the Láádan language. To date, these inventions have been no more than a fictional creation, drafted by fiction writers with little to no use in the real world. As concerns the third aim, Pauwels (2003:556) declares that the achievement of an equal and balanced portrayal of all genders in today's society has been attempted by the

feminist speech community mainly through the so-called form replacement strategy. This mechanism implies proposing revisions of rules and forms that are used daily.

All these motivations are the reasons that encouraged feminists in the past and still today to ask for a change and to fight for a society in which people of all genders are treated equally and given the same respect.

1.4 Inclusion in today's society

Given the significant role that society plays in establishing the way we, as English users, speak, it is therefore crucial to determine the connection between language and society. One of the thesis that aims at connecting these two aspect is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, also known as the hypothesis of linguistic relativity, which states that the relation between language and society is reciprocally influencing, meaning that it is not just society that influences language, but language has an impact on society as well. According to Siddiqui (2014:5), the function of language is therefore not just to reflect what is happening in life; it is also believed to be involved in the construction of social reality.

Once the relationship between language and society has been established, it is fundamental to understand what consideration the latter has for different genders: many studies have determined that language reflects an unbalanced representation in society. The simple act of referring to a group of people using the generic *he*, without even taking into account whether the group is composed of only men, men and women or whether there are non-binary people in it, is a demonstration of what these studies refer to. According to Jaspers (2010:153), the privileging of the masculine grammatical form reveals, however subtly, “the privileging of the male and the masculine outside of language, representing a world in which men are ‘normal’ and unmarked, and of primary interest.” Most feminist activists were and are supporters of language change as a measure to face and improve this situation.

One can argue that it is very complicated to distinguish between unintentional and intentional exclusion. We grew up in a society where the generic *he* is used more as a

habit than a way to discriminate against those who do not belong to this category. However, times are changing, jobs that once could have never been done by anyone but a man are now being done by both sexes. As Miller and Swift (1981:23) affirm, “Women in art, in science, in education, in business, and in politics are adding a dimension to the human environment that was previously lacking.” For this reason, it is crucial to adapt language to the changes that are occurring in nowadays society, as the fewer and less salient gender-based differences in linguistic practice there are, the more egalitarian the society will be likely to be (Jasper, 2010:153).

1.5 English as a sexist language

For all the reasons stated above, the English language that has been used up until modern times can be labelled as *non-inclusive* and *sexist*. Beginning from the second half of the 20th century, this situation has begun to change, but it would be untruthful to affirm that the treatment of all genders in the various language-related aspects has become equal and unbiased. Many recent studies have focused on the asymmetrical perception and consequent treatment, which results in the existence of some areas that are still grey, even though they have started to be researched and discussed, areas concerning discrimination and lack of inclusivity, such as the semantic derogation of words, the use of titles and pronouns.

1.5.1 The asymmetrical treatment of women and men

In many modern languages, it is not unusual to find a harsh asymmetrical treatment of men and women. In most cases, the common practice is to consider the male/masculine as the norm that should be followed in order to represent all humankind; on the other hand, the female/feminine is treated as the “marked” form, only taken into consideration in opposition and comparison to the male. According to Pichler and Preece (2011:98), this practice either participates in making women appear to be judged with cultural conventions associated with masculinity and male behaviour or makes them invisible. This last case often occurs when the generic reference to a certain object is identical to the masculine term, meaning that the generic nouns coincide with the nouns which refer to males. When this happens, women frequently try to make themselves more visible,

often through a derivative grammatical variation of the male term. Unfortunately, this only results in the emphasis on the “marked” form that they are (Pauwels 2003:553).

Given what has been stated above, the fact that many languages tend to asymmetrically treat men and women may result in the demeaning and belittling of women’s status in relation to men, by representing women as “belonging” in a relationship with men, which can either be marriage or family, or as having a lower status in the workplace and public life, or as being treated as sexual objects for men’s pleasure. The core of this asymmetric treatment of women and men is that the former are dependent on the latter, whereas the latter are simply defined as human beings whose existence does not need to rely on anybody. To sum up, according to Pichler and Preece (2011:99) sexist language does not only represent the male as a norm against which women are measured, but it also reproduces a common perception of gender norms in society that contribute to many women having less power than men and less access to material resources. A study conducted by Harvard Kennedy School in 2011 showed that women feel more ostracised and reported less motivation in different environments, from the professional one to the educational one, when presented with gender-exclusive language rather than gender-inclusive language.

1.5.2 Semantic derogation

Each word has two meanings: a denotative and a connotative meaning. The former refers to the literal significance of a term, its strict dictionary definition. One example of denotation could be, given the word *house*, the meaning of “a building for people to live in, usually for one family” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries). On the other hand, the connotation is what a word implies or suggests, the emotional association related to it. Taking into consideration the same term as before, a house may be associated with different words according to its connotation: if it is positive, it can also be called a mansion, a dwelling, a home, while if it is negative it can be referred to as a shack or a dump (Cambridge Teacher’s Guide). Connotative meanings can differ from person to person since everyone associates different concepts with words depending on their relation and feelings about them. However, the connotation can have a further and deeper meaning. It can also refer specifically to the image associated with a word, an

image created by society. As stated in the previous paragraphs, genders are perceived differently by society itself. As a result of this process, terms and adjectives that refer to or address them have developed different connotations.

According to Pichler and Preece (2011:97), the expression *semantic derogation* refers to the process in which words that apply to women have acquired a lower or more sexual connotation, compared with the same terms used for men. The verb *to derogate* means, as a matter of fact, “to state that something or somebody is without worth, to cause to seem inferior.” There happen to be several examples of semantic derogation in the English language. One could be the term *spinster*, whose male counterpart is *bachelor*. Although both these terms refer to a person who is not and has never been married, they acquire different second meanings depending on the gender of said person. A bachelor is often thought of as an independent, free man whose financial success makes him desirable for marriage and family-building. The same cannot be said about the term *spinster*: a woman who has never married is seen as unlovable, physically unattractive, and frequently judged as old and “past her time”. The negative connotation that surrounds this term is only applied to the female version, not the male one. Another example of a term whose meaning has changed over time is *gay*. According to Meyerhoff (2011 in Gold et al. 2015), in 1310 the word *gay* was used to refer to a person who was full of joy and mirth. Then in 1637 it took on a negative meaning, describing someone “addicted to social pleasures and dissipations”. In 1825 it began to denote a woman leading an immoral life. Finally, in 1835 it took on today’s meaning, referring to homosexuality. According to a study conducted by the Hawaii Pacific University in 2015, with the change in people's attitudes towards homosexuality, the word *gay* has taken on a more positive connotation: 29% of the respondents think the word *gay* is positive, while only 19% think it is negative, 38% think it is neutral, whereas 14% think it is both. Several more examples of semantic derogation can be mentioned, such as *mistress*, *sexy*, *queen* and *tomboy*.

To conclude, according to Schulz (1975 in Pauwels 2013:553), “a perfectly innocent term designating a girl or woman may begin with neutral or positive connotations, but that gradually it acquires negative implications, at first only slightly disparaging, but

after a period of time becoming abusive and ending as a sexual slur.” This practice constantly reinforces the unfortunate “generic man” and “sexual woman” portrayal.

1.5.3 Names and titles

The problem of the unequal treatment of genders poses itself for what concerns names and titles as well. It often happens that people refer differently to someone, depending on the gender of said someone. As a matter of fact, women are frequently addressed by their first names, whereas men, in the same situation, are called by their last names. Miller and Swift (1981:121) state that this behaviour, whether it is done intentionally or unintentionally, creates the impression that women merit less serious consideration and less respect than men.

Titles, as well as names, are, in English language contexts, a sign of how sexism is rooted in the language system. They are used to draw a distinction between men and women and to tell the marital status of the latter, yet not of the former. If the conjugal situation of a man is unknown, he will be referred to as *Mr*, as this is the default title for men. The circumstances are different for women: a woman is required to choose one of three titles, *Mrs*, *Miss*, or *Ms*, all of those reveal much more personal information if compared to the individual *Mr*. These three titles all originate from the now-outdated *Mistress*. The first and oldest one was used back in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before an adult woman’s family name, regardless of the marital status of said person. The same applied to the less common abbreviations *Mrs*. Finally, *Miss* was used both to address a young girl and later as a synonym for prostitute (Miller and Swift 1981:127). Sometime later, between the 18th and the 19th century, the title *Miss* began to be used to refer to unmarried women, whereas *Mrs* started to appear in front of a man’s first and last names to indicate his wife. In more modern times, as a result of the spread of the feminist movement and ideals, the title *Ms* was re-introduced to avoid distinguishing between married and unmarried. Although it seems that this action has not been entirely successful in the United Kingdom, studies have shown that in the USA, Canada, and Australia women are more and more inclined to use *Mrs* (Pauwels 2003:565). These three titles, which are still significantly used in everyday usage of the English language, have come to suggest particular aspects of the identity of the woman

in question; for instance, a woman who prefers to use *Ms* rather than *Miss* or *Mrs* may be labelled as a feminist, while a woman who chooses *Mrs* instead of *Ms* is likely to be perceived first and foremost as a wife and mother. In the past century a new title was coniated, whose usage has however increased in the last years. It is *Mx* and it is meant to be a gender-neutral alternative to the titles *Mr* and *Ms*. Just as the *Ms* title gives no marital status, the *Mx* title gives no gender (Nonbinary Wiki). Depending on the individual, people who have nonbinary gender identities may ask to be called *Mx*, or by a different gender-neutral title, or by a title that is not gender-neutral, or may ask that no titles be used for them at all.

1.5.4 Pronouns

In addition to semantic derogation and the different use of names and titles, another aspect that makes English a non-inclusive language is the usage of certain pronouns when speaking about a general situation or a mixed group. The pronouns that were used up until recent times in these particular circumstances were *he*, *his* and *him*. Many argue that the reason behind this choice is to follow the example of well-educated writers and speakers of classic English, to obey the rules adopted in ancient English grammars. However, many studies were conducted, among which Miller and Swift (1981), and they showed that the use of singular masculine pronoun appeared in English normative books no earlier than the 18th century and it was not until the 19th century that this usage became mandatory and widely taught. In contrast to the opinion of those who argue that *he*, *his* and *him* were used by the biggest literate of the English literature, it is not hard to find references to the singular *they* in many works of very well-known poets and writers, such as Shakespeare, who wrote in his comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598) “God send everyone their heart’s desire”, or Lord Chesterfield, who wrote in a letter to his son (1759) “If a person is born of a gloomy temper [...] they cannot help it.”

Moreover, in contrast to those who may argue that the usage of the generic masculine pronoun *he* is more straightforward and tacitly implies the inclusion of *she* in generalisation, many modern linguists agree with the opinion of Wendy Martyna. The psychologist wrote: “*He* deserves to live out its days doing what it has always done best - referring to *he* and not *she*” (1980 in Miller and Swift 1981:48). More recent studies

also included the situation of non-binary people, who clearly do not identify with the pronoun *he*, as their gender is not male nor female. The non-binary gender movement is frequently hailed as a new phenomenon, but in reality it has only reached critical mass in recent times due to the potentials afforded by the internet for collective engagement across geographical location (Bergman 2017).

1.6 Possible adjustments that could lead to English being a more gender-inclusive language

Since the very first action undertaken by the linguistic feminist movement to bring to the eyes of the public the problem of English being a non-gender-inclusive language, much has changed, but a lot still needs to be accomplished. Many studies have been conducted on the relationship between language and gender, first of all in order to understand what causes could lead to the use of a sexist communication system, and secondly in order to find some possible solution that could lead to English being a more gender-inclusive language.

Many strategies have been found and are currently being used to create not only a more inclusive way to communicate but a more inclusive society as well, in which nobody felt left out and discriminated against. Among these solutions, some examples are gender-neutralisation, gender-specification and the usage of gender-neutral pronouns, plural and passive forms.

1.6.1 Gender-neutralisation and gender-specification

As stated above, one of the reasons that led the feminist linguistic movement to undertake action in order to promote a more gender-inclusive language system is to obtain an equal and balanced portrayal of all genders (Pauwels 2003:555). The main strategies applied in order to accomplish this goal are two, and they are gender-neutralisation and gender-specification. The former mechanism implies the total or partial elimination of marked forms as far as human referents are concerned. An example of gender-neutralisation would be the abandonment of gender-specific job titles that end with suffixes such as *-ess*, *-ette* or *-trix*, a case in point being the term *actress*. On the other hand, gender-specification aims at the exact opposite: this process

has the specific purpose of explicitly and symmetrically marking the gender in human referents. A case in point of the said mechanism would be the replacement of the generic *he* with *he or she*.

According to Pauwels (2013:556), both these strategies are supported by effective arguments: the defenders of gender-neutralisation claim that equality between genders can be more easily achieved when the reference to said genders is minimalized; on the opposite end, supporters of gender-specification sustain that their strategy allows women to become more visible, as well as it gives proof that women can be found in several professions and, at the same time, it ensures that all occupations are perceived clearly as accessible and available to both men and women.

1.6.2 The use of pronouns

One of the most common and convenient ways to ensure gender inclusivity in daily communication is the use of an inclusive pronoun when referring to or addressing a person. If the gender of said person is unknown to the speaker, the easiest way to avoid discrimination is to respectfully ask the interlocutor about what pronoun and form of address should be used for them. This is the suggestion of the *Guidelines for gender-inclusive language in English*² published by the United Nations. Alternatively, if this option is not available, one can resolve it by using gender-neutral pronouns.

When referring to a general situation of a mixed group composed of both men and women, many people choose the practice of “pairing”. This concept consists of the use of both masculine and feminine forms (*he or she* or *he/she*) to make sure that neither men nor women felt left out of the conversation, making them explicitly visible. However, Miller and Swift (1981:53) argue that this practice may be troubling and distracting both for the person using it, who has to repeat it several times, and for the receiver who is trying to follow, resulting in the text or conversation becoming quite confusing.

² <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>

Another solution to the problem of gender-neutral pronouns is the use of the singular *they*. As stated above, this practice has been used for some time now, going back to significant authors such as Shakespeare, Scott and Austen. This solution has been then recognised and officialised by no less an authority than *The Chicago Manual of Style*³ written by the University of Chicago Press: in the fourteenth edition published in 1993, the *Manual* recommended as a matter of fact “the revival of the singular use of *they*.” This strategy, in addition to being more effective and time-saving if compared to the one of using both masculine and feminine pronouns, is also even more inclusive, as it takes into account and gives consideration also to those who do not identify either as a man or as a woman, but use instead pronouns as *they/them*. One of the many focal points for non-binary activism is represented by the fight to include gender neutral pronouns such as *they* in social and mainstream media, and recognise these as legitimate (Bennet 2016 in Bergman 2017).

A third possibility suggested by the *Guidelines*⁴ of the United Nations to avoid discrimination is the use of pronouns such as *one* or *who*, which do not discriminate against any gender. Thus, instead of saying for example “A staff member in Antarctica earns less than he would in New York”, a more inclusive option would be “A staff member in Antarctica earned less than one in New York” (United Nations’ *Guidelines*).

Finally, Miller and Swift (1981:54) propose addressing the problem directly by eliminating the pronouns, meaning removing them from the sentence. This strategy is often applied when the gender of the individual does not have any importance for the comprehension of the message. For example, instead of “An old person may be unable to feed and dress himself” a sentence could read “An old person may be unable to eat and get dressed without help” (Miller and Swift). Frequently, replacing pronouns with nouns and articles works for avoiding discrimination against any gender.

³https://www.mvcc.edu/learning-commons/pdf/Chicago_Manual_of_Style_17_Notes_and_Bibliography.pdf

⁴ <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>

1.6.3 Further alternatives: pluralising, passive forms and gender neutral words

Further alternatives can be taken into account to address the problem of gender inclusivity in the current language system. According to the Guidelines of the United Nations, such alternatives include using plural pronouns and adjectives, practising the passive voice and choosing gender-neutral words. The first strategy consists of pluralising sentences, sometimes using plural pronouns and adjectives and sometimes avoiding using pronouns at all. As a matter of fact, when something is written in the plural form, often the exclusive pronouns vanish, with the added advantage that the change is both more inclusive and results in a shortcut. An example of a sentence written using the plural form is “Before submitting your document, send it to the focal point for their review; they will return it to you with comments” (United Nations’ Guidelines). Using the passive voice is another way to reject discrimination. A case in point is the sentence “The author of a communication must have direct and reliable evidence of the situation he is describing” which can be transformed into “The author of a communication must have direct and reliable evidence of the situation being described” (United Nations’ Guidelines). Unfortunately, this option is not always appropriate for all cases in English, as often changing from active to passive voice also changes the emphasis given to the sentence. However, when it is possible, using this form may represent a valid alternative to avoid gendered constructions. Finally, it is crucial in order to ensure a gender-neutral language to choose gender-neutral words and expressions. As a matter of fact, many terms in English tend to have the suffix *-man* as a result of the language having been constructed around men. However, an alternative to these words is usually available, thus in order to avoid discrimination, one should simply opt for the more inclusive rather than the less inclusive form. In 2008 the European Parliament published the *Gender-Neutral Language Guidelines*, in which a list was compiled of words to avoid in order to treat all genders equally; among these are: humanity (for mankind), staff (for manpower), synthetic or artificial (for man-made), advisory panel (for committee of wise men) and political leaders (for statesmen).

1.7 Conclusion

To sum up, this first chapter presented an overview of what the expression *gender-inclusive language* means, from its definition to its concrete application in the

day-to-day use of the linguistic system of the English language. It started with the first reforms made by the linguistic activists who wanted to undertake actions and the reason behind that, namely the wish to reveal a sexist system and the necessity for a more fair representation of all genders in society. The chapter proceeded with an analysis of how the English language has a different consideration of men and women, with women usually being considered invisible or less significant. The chapter ended with a series of possible solutions, among which the use of the proper pronouns, plural forms and passive voices, in order to try to solve or at least avoid participating in the discrimination that in today's society still damages those who are not male.

CHAPTER 2 Gender-inclusive language in the educational context

In this second chapter of my dissertation on the use of gender-inclusive language in the educational environment, the prime focus will be on the educational context. I will start by stating what the values of ensuring gender-inclusivity in the education system are, and will then present the results of a survey conducted by a leading online language school on the importance of gender-inclusivity in the educational environment. I will later move on to the sociological point of view on the matter, defining the role that secondary socialisation plays and how it is significant for the transmission of gender-inclusivity. The required elements to avoid discrimination in the learning environment will be subsequently analysed, these being curricula, textbooks and teachers, all of which need to be up to date. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the present guidelines provided by universities and institutions all over the world, guidelines that aim at ensuring respect and inclusivity, as well as condemning discriminatory practices in any form.

2.1 The value of gender-inclusivity in the educational system

According to the Open Society Foundations, the world's largest private funder of independent groups working for justice, democratic governance, and human rights, an inclusive system contributes to the creation of a better quality education for all children and is a valuable tool that can and must be used to change discriminatory attitudes. On the contrary, an educational environment that excludes and segregates perpetuates discrimination against traditionally marginalised groups. As Professor Roger Slee stated in a paper commissioned by the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, inclusive education promotes inclusive societies, where people can live together and diversity is celebrated, rather than condemned.

Sarah Winfield and Gloria Diamond, members of the UNGEI (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative), declared that research findings indicate that inclusive education leads to better learning outcomes for all students. Based on the concept that education should address and respond to the diverse needs of all learners, inclusive education is about quality education and safety to learn, without any fear of discrimination or violence. They go on by stating that the links between gender-responsive and inclusive

education in terms of improved learning outcomes, economic gains, and overall country development, are indivisible.

Over the years, many studies have been conducted on the importance of gender-inclusivity in the educational environment. One of them was carried out in 2021 by Europe's leading online language school Lingoda among language learners on the platform. The participants were asked questions regarding their familiarity with gender-inclusive language and the importance they placed upon it overall, as well as in different aspects of life, the educational context being one of them. The results showed that more than half of the respondents in the USA agree that gender-inclusive language is important in the educational system, be it school, college and academia. An interesting finding is that those who more than anyone believed in the value of inclusive language in the educational system were the younger members of those interviewed: 61% of participants up to 30 years of age agreed, compared to 54% of 31-45-year-olds and 48% of 46+-year-olds.

2.2 The role of secondary socialisation in the transmission of gender-inclusivity

As stated in the previous chapter, the educational environment plays a fundamental role in transmitting the values of gender-inclusivity. The French sociologist Émile Durkheim believed that schools are essential for imprinting shared social values into children (McLeod 2023). The education system meets a functional pre-request of society by passing on its values. This process, which consists in the transmission of ideas, practices, values and roles of one's society onto someone else, especially a child, is known as *socialisation*.

The practice of socialisation is divided by sociologists into two different moments: a first stage, called primary socialisation, and a second one, known as secondary socialisation. The main difference between these two moments is that the former occurs between the child and those people in his or her life with whom he or she has primary relationships, such as parents, grandparents, siblings, etc. On the other hand, secondary education happens when the person interacts with people outside their family (McLeod

2023). During this last process, individuals learn the basic values, rules, and behaviours that are expected of them in the context of their community and society.

In the process of teaching inclusivity to young children, which will later result in a more inclusive society once these young people grow up, secondary education plays a fundamental role. As a matter of fact, schools, and in general educational institutions, are one of the main agents of secondary socialisation. According to Mcleod (2023), they are held responsible for transmitting those values that are seen as especially important by their society.

In the context of education, sociologists have often distinguished between a manifest and a latent function. The former is the combination of functions that are immediately apparent and consciously recognized by the participants, those known and intended effects. On the other hand, the latent functions of schooling are the unintended, unrecognised or hidden effects (Potts 2015), those aspects that students learn through the experience of attending school rather than through the main curriculum they are taught. This last function, also known as the hidden curriculum, promotes the idea that schools and educational institutions transmit values not only by what they teach explicitly, but also by what is taught by the structure of the school itself.

For this reason, in order to guarantee the transmission of gender-inclusivity, it is important for children to be exposed to a completely-inclusive environment, as they learn and assimilate as much from the curricula and notions that are directly addressed to them, as from the context that they are indirectly exposed to.

2.3 The required elements to teach gender-inclusivity

Teaching gender-inclusive language in the educational environment requires a combination of several elements. Curricula and textbooks prove to be fundamental to ensuring avoiding discrimination, as well as teachers and specialists, who are to be trained and educated about the topic in order for them to transmit it to their audience.

2.3.1 Curricula

A gender-inclusive learning experience calls for inclusive curricula. A curriculum has been described by the International Bureau of Education (UNESCO) as “the central means through which the principle of inclusion is put into action within an education system”. According to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, it reflects what is meant to be taught, which can be intended as the content, and what is meant to be learned, so to say the goals. Moreover, a curriculum needs to be consistent with how it is to be taught (pedagogical methods) and learned (tasks), as well as with the materials to support learning (e.g. textbooks, computers) and the methods to assess learning (e.g. examinations, projects).

Some may argue that an inclusive curriculum lowers the standards of the learning experience, or reduces the quality of the knowledge. However, according to Flecha (2015 in GEMR 2020), the opposite is true: inclusive curricula are flexible and involve interactive participation and group work in order to enhance the educational experience. Curriculum choices are of fundamental importance to promote the values of an inclusive and democratic society. They should not lead to dead ends in education but be the key challenge to building pathways for continuous education opportunities.

2.3.2 Textbooks

According to Fuchs and Bock (2018 in GEMR 2020), textbooks, as an essential part of enacted curricula, are crucial for promoting inclusion. A textbook development approach that, together with the employment of gender-inclusive language, represents diverse identities and integrates human rights as well serves the purpose of inclusion (UNESCO 2017).

Not directly addressing the topic of gender-inclusive language is not the only way a textbook can be discriminative: textbooks, as a component of the curriculum, can perpetuate bias and stereotypes through visual or written content but also by omission, undermining any pretence to inclusion.

2.3.3 Teachers

One of the most fundamental elements required to transmit gender-inclusivity in the educational environment involves ensuring that all teachers are educated to do so. According to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, inclusion cannot be realised unless teachers are agents of change, with values, knowledge and attitudes that permit the spread of inclusion and equity.

Many courses have been activated in order to guarantee this aspect of inclusive education. Among these, the promoters of the 2023-2024 Erasmus Training Course believe that the richness and complexity of gender-related topics require teachers and education staff to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes related to gender-responsiveness and inclusiveness. By facing gender stereotypes, empowering students to express their unique selves and fostering confidence in their personalities, educators can have a crucial role in preventing gender-based discrimination and fostering inclusive learning environments. Such responsiveness passes through the promotion of self-reflection and self-awareness, the activation of anti-discriminatory and anti-harassment practices and the ability to implement tools and strategies to make students feel listened to, understood and respected.

Still, many pieces of research that have been conducted on the topic of gender-inclusivity in the educational context revealed that teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusion, but had reservations as well. This occurred either because they were not empowered to overcome certain barriers or because they believed that the education system and learning environment were not supportive and encouraging. Yet another problem is represented by the fact that many teachers may not be immune to social biases and stereotypes themselves, making it extremely difficult not to transmit them to their young audience.

Overall, studies have shown that teachers around the world lack access to comprehensive training on inclusion. Analysis of information collected for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report determined that out of 168 countries analysed, 61% provided elements of training on inclusion. This analysis, however, did not contain

sufficient information on coverage and quality. Teachers are considered to be the foundation of an inclusive educational system. Their attitudes affect student achievement, even when they are not explicit, and this results in a non-negligible conditioning of future society.

2.4 Gender-inclusivity today in schools and institutions

The topic of the use of gender-inclusive language is very present in today's society, definitely more than in the last century. Given the fact that it is a matter that has changed and evolved in the past and will continue to do so in the future as new elements come to the attention of language users, many educational institutions have felt the need to keep up and stay up to date with the current events.

In the last few decades, several schools and universities across the world have drawn up guidelines to ensure respect and inclusivity and to condemn discriminatory practices in any form. These guidelines are generally of easy access for anyone to read and familiarise themselves with, as they are usually published on the main webpage of said institution. Moreover, they are, as stated before, continually updated and renewed, so that everyone can stay abreast of the contemporary state of affairs.

Many of these guidelines that ensure the spread and respect of gender-inclusivity share some key aspects: first of all, one can normally find the definition of the same notion of inclusion. “Inclusive language respects and promotes all people as valued members of society. It uses vocabulary that avoids exclusion and stereotyping and is free from descriptors that portray individuals or groups of people as dependent, powerless, or less valued than others”. This is the definition that the Queen’s University in Ontario, Canada, gives of the concept of inclusive language, while the University of Otago, New Zealand, states that “(inclusive language) acknowledges diversity and individual differences, is respectful to all people, promotes the participation of all and avoids words and phrases that exclude people from being seen as a part of a group or team.

Another element that often can be found in Universities’ Guidelines for inclusion is a set of practices that are recommended to be followed in order to maintain and guarantee

a gender-inclusive environment. As a case in point, the University of Otago recommends the use of language that emphasises individuality over membership in a particular group; it discourages words and phrases that might exclude people, as well as any stereotyping at all, i.e. making assumptions based on membership in a particular group (e.g. sex, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, cultural identity, or sexuality). Moreover, it advises people to be inclusive and respectful of sexual and gender diversity, being mindful of the appropriate terms and reviewing and updating existing teaching materials and other documents distributed to students or staff to ensure that the principles of inclusive language are followed.

Related to this last recommendation, resorting to appropriate terminology, several guidelines provide a list of terms and expressions and the correlated definition, so that it is easier for people to avoid making mistakes. For example, the Harvard Guidelines for Gender-Inclusivity supply an explanation of different gender-related idioms, such as Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Gender Nonconforming, Gender Transition, Sexual Orientation and Transgender.

To conclude, an important aspect that can be found in many Guidelines written to ensure inclusivity in the way people speak and refer to each other in the educational environment is the concept that language changes: what is considered to be inclusive today surely is different from what was considered to be inclusive fifty years ago and most probably will not be the same fifty years from now. As the Guidelines of Queen's University states, people need to be aware that preferred terms change over time and as language evolves. For this reason, several institutions provide contacts, emails or numbers, that people with uncertainties can get in touch with so that they can be helped with finding the best solution to their question and to avoid discrimination and be as inclusive as possible.

2.5 Conclusion

To recapitulate, this chapter focused on the use of gender-inclusive language in the educational environment. It started with an examination of the benefits of inclusive education, among which are the fight against discriminatory attitudes and the promotion

of future inclusive societies, where people can live together without any fear of discrimination or violence, in an environment where diversity is honoured and praised. The chapter proceeded with the results of a survey conducted by the online language school Lingoda on the importance that students place upon gender-inclusivity in several contexts, the educational being one of them. The results showed that more than half of the respondents in the USA agree that gender-inclusive language is important and the majority of those who believe it are the younger portion of the interviewed.

The role of secondary socialisation was then analysed, how it is important that children are constantly exposed to a fully-inclusive environment, as they learn as much from the notions that are directly taught to them, as from the context that they are indirectly exposed to. The chapter continued with a description of the required elements to teach gender-inclusivity in the educational context: curricula, textbooks and teachers need to be built in order to guarantee the promotion of the values of an inclusive society. The chapter ended with the observation of different guidelines on the topic of gender-inclusivity published by universities and institutions located in different countries and continents: the most common elements that they share were the same definition of inclusion and other gender-related terms, some key practises to follow in order to avoid perpetuating discrimination and the need to keep updating these guidelines, as language changes and evolves over time and so do the issues that come with it.

CHAPTER 3 Survey “Gender inclusivity in the educational environment: differences across generations”

This third and last chapter of my dissertation on the use of gender-inclusive language in the educational environment will focus on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of a survey that was conducted among a group of people coming from a vast range of countries and age groups. The research aims at comparing the learning experiences of different generations on the topic of gender inclusivity. After a brief introduction to the concept of *generation* and the research questions that were posed in order to conduct the study, the chapter will continue with a general presentation of the method review of the questionnaire, which will include the description of the participants, the design and the context. I will later move on to the analysis of the results that were collected, examining in depth the answers to each question, and after that I will proceed with the discussion of such results, comparing the responses of the questionnaire in order to find answers to the research questions.

3.1 Introduction

An online survey was conducted among an international sample of people with the aim of comparing the learning experiences of different generations on the topic of gender inclusivity. People from different backgrounds, both geographical and cultural, were posed with a series of questions about their process of learning about inclusivity, especially gender inclusivity, as well as with a list of practice examples about their concrete use of the English language.

As the aim of the study is to compare how people from different age groups were taught about gender inclusivity during their educational path, it's important to understand the concept of *generation*. The most basic definition of this term is, according to the 2023 Oxford Learner's Dictionary, “all the people who were born at about the same time”. However, even though the term is widely used in contemporary society, being present in various fields of research, from the political or economic ones to the field of humanities or exact sciences, authors worldwide still struggle to develop an exhaustive definition that can be universally accepted literature (Tomonicska 2016 in Popescu 2019). The present study for the most part overlooks this complex issue and focuses on the

dictionary definition of the word. Participants in the survey will be divided into age groups, which can be summarised as Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Gen X (born between 1965 and 1980), Millennials of Gen Y (born between 1981 and 1996) and Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012).

Based on the topic of the study and the aim of the survey, the research questions at the foundation of the investigation are:

- How many people were taught about inclusive language during their educational path?
- As a result of their educational journey, how many people use gender-inclusive language in their daily use of the English language?
- What is the general opinion about gender inclusivity? Is it a meaningful or pointless matter to teach in school?

3.2 Method review

3.2.1 Participants

The survey on gender inclusivity and how this topic is and was taught in the educational environment was conducted among 75 people coming from a vast range of countries, all around the world. The vast majority of the participants were European citizens, coming from Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Albania and Finland. Other participants were instead from countries outside the European border, coming from places such as Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay, Morocco and Russia.

Given the fact that the aim of the survey is to compare the experiences of different generations on the topic of gender inclusivity, the participants belonged to a range of age groups, the majority being born from 1997 to 2012, the so-called Gen Z, some belonging to the Millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996, some even older, born between 1965 and 1980 and part of Gen X, and one person that belongs to the Boomer generation, being born between 1946 and 1964.

All participants in the survey underwent the process of learning English as a foreign language, whether they have done it in the past or were studying it at the very moment

that the questionnaire was distributed. They were all selected based on the criteria of having studied English as a second language and being able to use it in a day-to-day basic conversation. Participants who answered the questionnaire in a language different from English were rejected and their responses were not taken into consideration in the analysis and discussion of the results.

Table 1. Summary of background information about participants

<u>Country</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy: 63 participants • Albania: 1 participant • Brazil: 1 participant • Chile: 1 participant • Czech Republic: 1 participant • Finland: 1 participant • Germany: 1 participant • Hungary: 1 participant • Morocco: 1 participant • Paraguay: 1 participant • Russia: 1 participant • Slovenia: 1 participant • Uruguay: 1 participant
<u>Gender</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female: 54 participants • Male: 19 participants • Non-binary: 2 participants
<u>Age</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gen Z (born 1997-2012): 61 participants • Millennials or Gen Y (born 1981-1996): 10 participants • Gen X (born 1995-1980): 3 participants • Boomers (born 1946-1964): 1 participant
<u>English learner</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L2 English learners: 75 participants

All the participants agreed to take part in the study voluntarily after they were informed that the collected data would be treated as confidential and remained completely anonymous. They were as well made aware of the fact that the results of the questionnaire would be used for study purposes only.

3.2.2 Design

The research was conducted through an online form containing both closed and open ended questions on the participants' background information and their experiences with gender inclusivity as L2 English learners.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions, one of which was divided into three sub-parts. There were 8 closed questions, 4 short open questions and 3 long open questions. Not all of the said questions were marked as mandatory, as some of them referred back to a previous yes-or-no question.

The study was conducted through the Google Form platform and shared through social media. The link was distributed on an international level with the support of social networks such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Facebook, and participants in the survey were asked to help with the distribution of the questionnaire as well, creating a large word of mouth and making it smooth to gather the required information.

3.2.3 Context

The research study was conducted for a bachelor dissertation entitled “Gender inclusivity in the educational environment: differences across generations”. It was written and shared by a third-year language student at the University of Padua, under the guidance of her supervisor.

The work was developed in its entirety online, both the distribution of the questionnaire and the collection of data, as well as the analysis of the results, performed through online platforms such as Google Docs and emails for clarification with the supervisor.

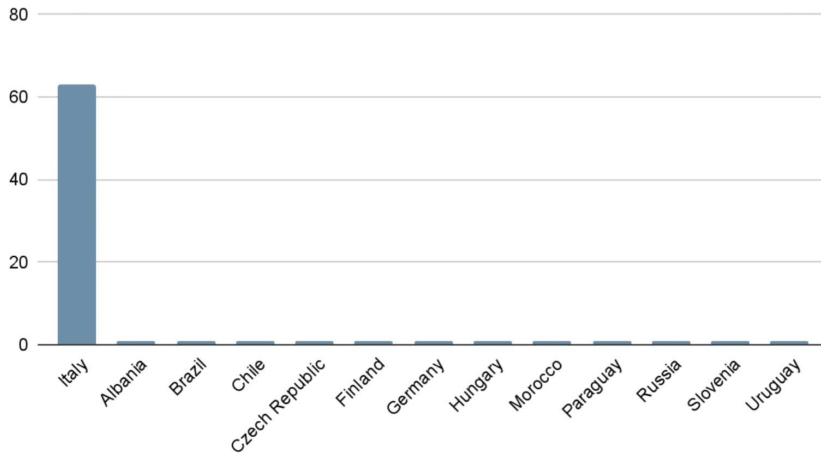
The topic of gender inclusivity in the educational system, how it is taught today and how it was taught in the past, was chosen because of the interest of the dissertation writer in understanding how the teaching of a foreign language has changed throughout time, following the transformation of society.

3.3 Results

The first questions of the survey on gender inclusivity and how this topic is and was taught in the educational environment regarded the participants’ background information. The results of the answers to the first question “Where are you from?” showed that the vast majority of those who participated in the survey were from Italy. Besides this, other participants came from different countries in Europe, such as

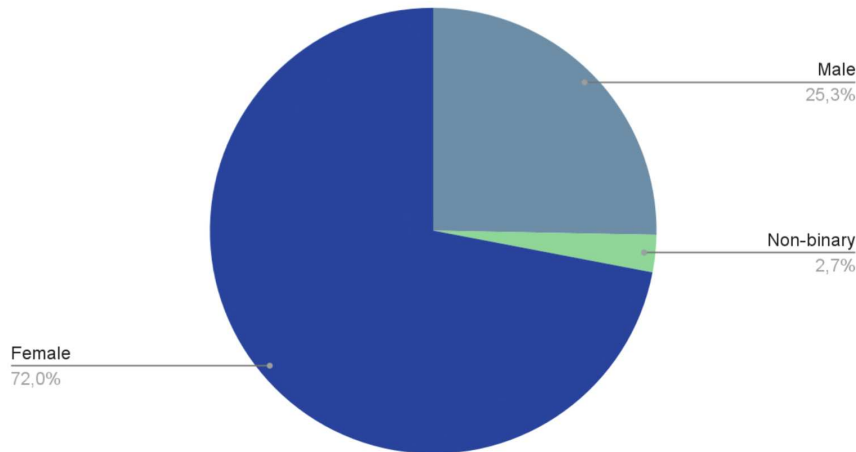
Albania, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Slovenia. In addition to people coming from European countries, other participants came from other places all around the world, including Brazil, Chile, Morocco, Paraguay, Russia and Uruguay.

Figure 1. Results to the question “Where are you from?”



The second question asked “How do you identify?”. Out of the 75 answers, 54 answered “Female”, 19 “Male” and 2 people responded “Non-binary”.

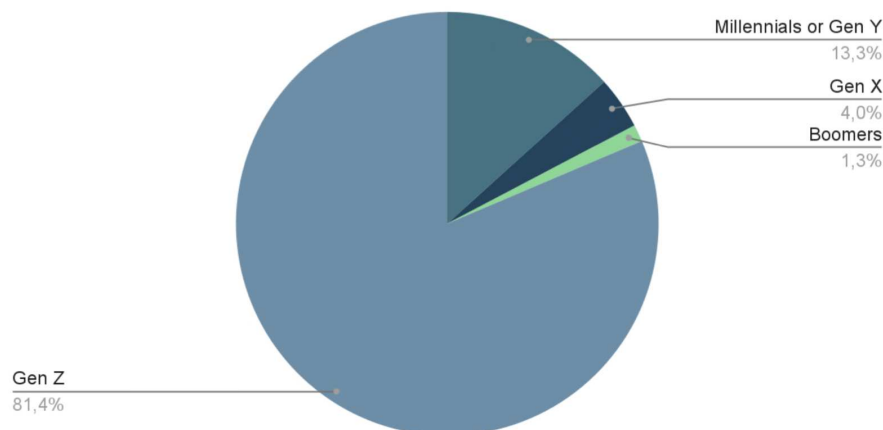
Figure 2. Results to the question “How do you identify?”



The third question was quite essential to the aim of the survey, which is to compare how people from different age groups were taught about gender inclusivity during their educational path. The results of the answers to the question “What generation do you belong to?” showed that 81,3% of the participants belong to Gen Z, being born from

1997 to 2012, 13,3% are Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, 4% belong to Gen X, which include people born from 1965 and 1980, and 1,3% are Boomers, being born between 1946 and 1964.

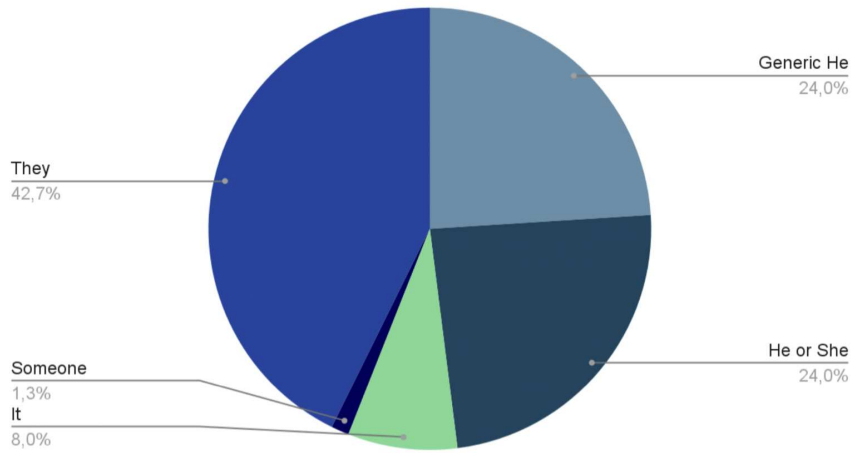
Figure 3. Results to the question “What generation do you belong to?”



The fourth and last question about the participants’ background information constituted the basic criteria for taking part in the survey, which was to study or have studied English as a second language and to be able to use it in a day-to-day conversation. To the question “Do/Did you learn English as a second language?” 75 participants out of 75 answered affirmatively.

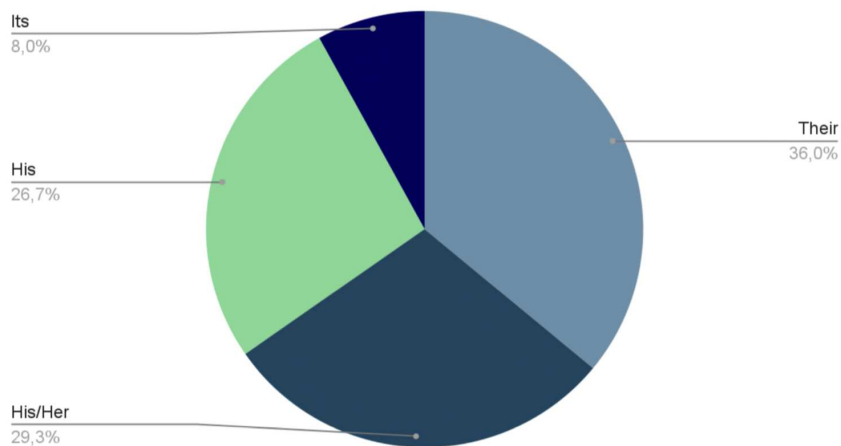
Questions number 5 to number 7 were practical examples of gender-inclusive language that could be found in daily conversation. The fifth question was “If you are speaking about someone you don’t know, which pronouns would you generally use? Example: Someone forgot the textbook in class, hopefully ____ will come pick it up before the test.” To this question, 42,7% answered “They”, 24% said “Generic He”, 24% stated that they would use “He or She”, 8% said “It” and 1,3% answered “Someone”.

Figure 4. Results to the question “If you are speaking about someone you don’t know, which pronouns would you use?”



The sixth question was similar to the previous one and asked “If you are speaking about someone you don’t know, which pronouns would you generally use? Example: A journalist should not be forced to reveal _____ sources.” The results showed that 36% of the participants would choose the pronoun “Their”, 29,3% would use “His/Her”, 26,7% would say “His” and 8% would choose “Its”.

Figure 5. Results to the question “If you are speaking about someone you don’t know, which pronouns would you use?”



Question number 7 was divided into three sub-parts. Participants were asked to think about what they had been taught in school, preferably elementary school or middle

school, and to write the term that referred to a series of definitions. The first one was “Someone whose job is to stop fires burning”: the answers showed that participants were divided into two groups, those who wrote “Fireman” (43 answers) and those who put “Firefighter” (32 answers). The second definition that was given was “Someone who is a member of the police”: again, answers were split in two, those who said “Policeman” (62 answers) and those who wrote “Police officer” (13 answers). The third and last definition was “Someone whose job is to serve and take care of passengers on an aeroplane”: the answers to this question were more diversified, as 47 participants wrote “Hostess”, 12 put “Flight attendant”, 6 answered “ Hostess or Steward”, 5 picked “Steward” and 4 wrote “Flight assistant”.

Figure 6. Definition: “Someone whose job is to stop fires burn

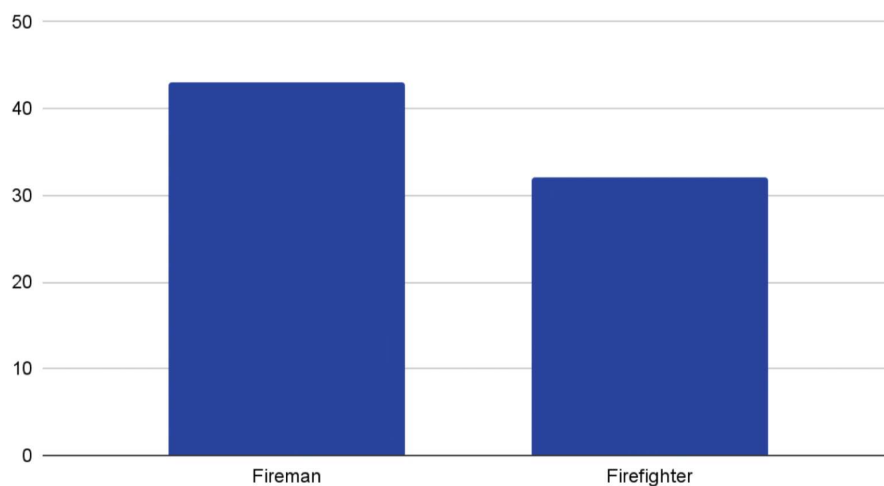


Figure 7. Definition: "Someone who is a member of the police"

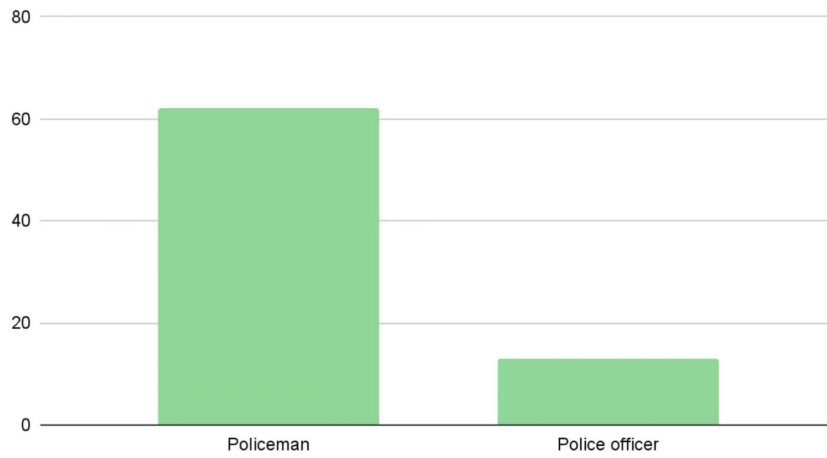
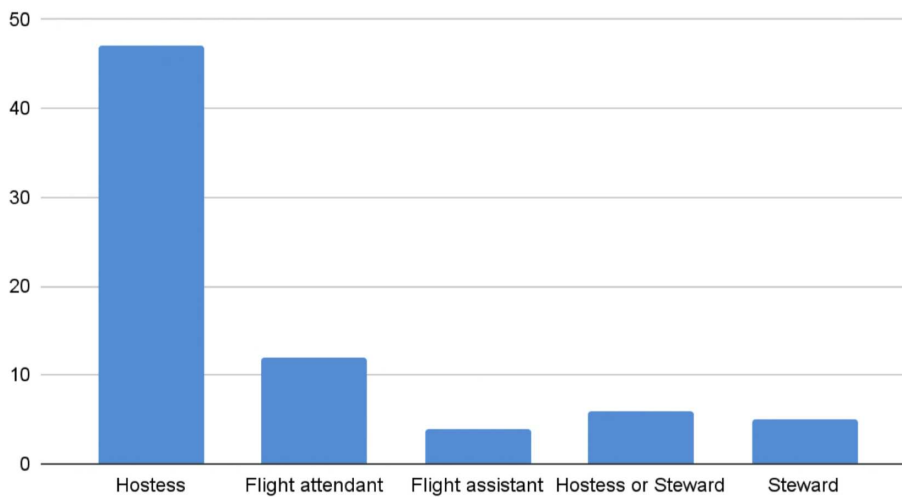
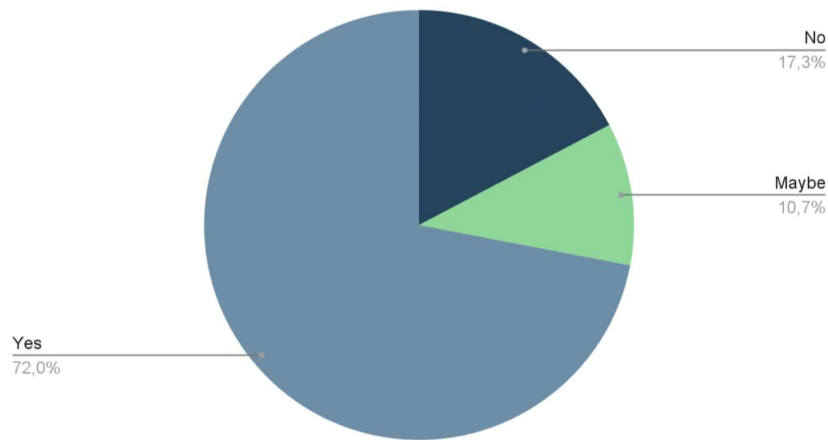


Figure 8. Definition: "Someone whose job is to serve and take care of passengers on an airplane"



Questions number 8 to number 12 concerned the participants' inclusive-language learning experience. To the question "Have you ever heard of the expression *inclusive language*", 72% answered affirmatively, 17,3% answered negatively and 10,7% were not sure about it.

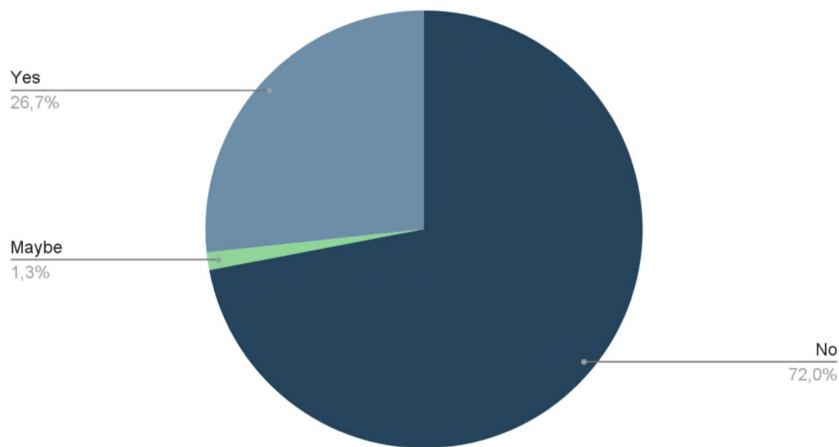
Figure 9. Results to the question "Have you ever heard of the expression *inclusive language*?"



The ninth question was connected to the previous one and asked "If your answer to the previous question was *yes*, when and in which circumstances did you first hear about it?". Many participants stated that they first heard about it at university, many said through social media and television, while others responded that they talked about this topic with their friends.

Question number 10 asked "Thinking about your educational path, have you ever been taught about gender-inclusive language in school?". The vast majority of the participants (72%) responded negatively, 26,7% answered affirmatively, while one person (1,3%) said "Maybe".

Figure 10. Results to the question “Have you ever been taught about gender-inclusive language in school?”



The eleventh question was related to the previous question and asked “If your answer to the previous question was *yes*, when did you first learn about it?”. Out of the 22 people who answered, 14 said “University”, 5 people “High School”, one person “Middle school”, one responded “Elementary school” and one person answered “Other education institution”.

Question number 12 was, again, connected to the previous one, and it stated “If your answer to the previous question was “high school”, “university” or “other educational institutions”, please write which kind it was. (eg. Scientific high school, engineering degree at university, etc.)”. Answers to this question were quite diverse: many participants wrote linguistic high school and foreign languages degree at university, others answered primary education degree at university, some wrote scientific high school, some fashion school and a few answered political sciences degree at university.

Question number 13 to 15 were open questions regarding the participants’ thoughts on gender-inclusive language and the role that education plays together with it. The third-to-last question asked “If your answer to the question *Have you ever been taught about inclusive language in school?* was *yes*, do you consider it as a meaningful part of your educational path or do you think that it was pointless? Why?”. 21 participants responded to this question and their answers were quite different. The majority believed

that having been taught about inclusive language in school was meaningful, useful and important, as it helps with being more respectful and inclusive while talking to other people, it empowers women and non-binary people and it allows people to think outside of the “traditional” boxes. On the other hand, some people found it quite meaningless, as they judge it strange when people talk differently, using inclusive language.

Question number 14 concerned the other side of the coin and asked “If your answer to the question *Have you ever been taught about inclusive language in school* was *no*, would you have wanted to learn about it or are you good with your curriculum? Why?”. 44 participants responded to this question. The vast majority would have wanted to learn about inclusive language in school, as they believe that it represents a big step towards gender equality, it ensures respect for everyone and, overall, many find it an interesting subject. On the other hand, a lot of people didn’t mind not having been taught about inclusive language during their educational path, as they don’t consider it an important or necessary topic and they don’t think it has any relevance today.

Finally, the last question of the survey asked the participants “Do you think that the way children and teenagers are taught about language in school has any reflection on the way they behave in society? Why? Why not?”. Answers to this question were very diverse: many people believe that teaching about inclusivity and inclusive language represents a fundamental step in a child’s education process, as it opens one’s mind and makes sure that, as a teenager and as an adult, said person will be able to communicate with anybody without being confused or careless. On the other hand, other participants are convinced that school does not play an important role in the education of a child, a task that relies instead on the family and the social environment to which children are exposed in the early stages of life. The answers to this question were not just black or white: some people think that it depends, mainly on the figure of the teacher, whether they are competent or not: a good teacher is someone who is able to pass on their passion to their students, making sure that they find it interesting to properly learn a language so that they could be able to communicate with other people without discriminating against anyone.

3.4 Discussion

The data collected through the online survey about how gender inclusivity is and was taught in school was quite conclusive and demonstrative. In response to the first research question, “How many people were taught about inclusive language during their educational path?”, the results are quite self-explanatory: out of 75 people who answered the questionnaire question “Have you ever been taught about gender-inclusive language in school?”, 54 participants responded negatively, 20 people answered affirmatively, while one person said that they were not sure about it. The interesting aspect of this finding is that all those who do not belong to Gen Y, which means all people born before 1996, responded “No” to this question: all 14 participants in the survey, people who are either millennials, Gen Z or boomers, were never taught about this topic during their educational journey. On the other hand, participants who belong to Gen Y are perfectly divided in half: 20 people were never taught about inclusive language and 20 people were. Interestingly, out of these last 20 participants, only one person first heard about it in elementary school and one person in middle school, while all the others either did it in high school, university or another educational institution.

Another important finding is the one related to the second research question, “As a result of their educational journey, how many people use gender-inclusive language in their daily use of the English language?”. The answer to this question is based mainly on the results of questions number 5 and 6 (“If you are speaking about someone you don’t know, which pronouns would you generally use?”) and 7 (“Write the term that refers to the following definitions”). The interesting fact about these answers is that they differ, depending on whether the element that is taken into consideration is pronouns or terms. As far as pronouns are concerned, the majority of the participants use a gender-inclusive language, which includes pronouns such as *They/Their* and *He or She/His or Her*. It can be said that, in general, only 1 out of 5 participants uses generic *he or his* to refer to someone they don’t know. On the other hand, as far as vocabulary is concerned, the majority of people were not taught, and as a consequence do not use, gender-inclusive language. The terms *fireman*, *policeman* and *hostess* are vastly preferred to their more-inclusive equivalents *firefighter*, *police officer* and *flight attendant*. A thought-provoking aspect of these results is how they relate to the different

generations: participants belonging to both Gen Y and Gen X tend to differentiate between the use of pronouns, in which they are more inclusive, and vocabulary, in which they are generally less inclusive, even though many millennials use gender-inclusive terms such as *police officer* and *firefighter*. The only boomer who participated in the survey tends to always use gender-inclusive language, often differentiating between females and males (eg. He or She, policeman and policewoman, hostess and steward). Again, as for the previous research question, participants who belong to Gen Z are more varied, some of them being less gender-inclusive and using for example the generic he, some of them using always inclusive pronouns and inclusive vocabulary.

The third and last of the research questions, “What is the general opinion about gender inclusivity? Is it a meaningful or a pointless matter to teach in school?”, was more broad and extensive. The answer to this question is based mainly on the results of questions number 13 (“If your answer to the question *Have you ever been taught about inclusive language in school?* was *yes*, do you consider it as a meaningful part of your educational path or do you think that it was pointless? Why?”) and 14 (“If your answer to the question *Have you ever been taught about inclusive language in school* was *no*, would you have wanted to learn about it or are you good with your curriculum? Why?”). In general, the overall approach to the topic of gender inclusivity is a positive one. The vast majority of the participants consider it a meaningful and relevant part of the educational system and a necessary principle to communicate with other people without being disrespectful to anybody. Others do not share the same point of view, even though in the majority of the cases they are not openly against the use of inclusive language, they mainly consider it as not relevant or “strange”. Once again, as far as the different generations are concerned, they tend to gather together and share the same view on the topic, with the exception of Gen Y. This last generation is the one that presents the highest percentage of participants who regard the topic as pointless. Millennials, on the other hand, are generally in favour of inclusive language, either because they find it to be a way to include all groups of people or simply because they think that it is an interesting topic. The same applies to the participants who belong to

Gen X and to the one boomer, who believe that using inclusive language is, as a matter of fact, beneficial for the whole community.

The findings of this survey on gender-inclusive language and how this topic is and was taught in the educational environment show that the situation in recent years has in some ways changed if compared to a few years back, but in some ways it has not yet. Taking into consideration the practical use of gender-inclusive language, Miller and Swift in *The Handbook of Non-Sexist Writing* (1981) described the usage of the generic he, for example, as quite common at the time or up until a few years back, and the results of the survey prove that this has not quite changed: a third of the respondents still use it when referring to someone that they do not know. The same applies to the use of terms such as *fireman/firefighter* or *policeman/police officer*: the non-inclusive version is very often preferred. On the other hand, as regards the idea that people have of gender-inclusivity, it does have changed from a few years back. The results to the last research question confirm the findings of the survey carried out in 2021 by Europe's leading online language school Lingoda. When asked about the importance that they placed upon gender-inclusive language, more than half of the respondents agreed that this topic is important in the educational system, be it school, college or academia. The fact that people do believe in the values of teaching gender-inclusivity, but still struggle to apply it to their practical use of the English language, shows an interesting aspect. As the vast majority of those who have been taught about gender-inclusive language in school learnt about it in high school or university, this supports Mcleod's idea (2023) that schools should start discussing this topic to children from an early age. If this were the case, not only would people think that gender-inclusivity is important, but they would also be able to automatically apply this idea in their practical use of the language, without having to think about it.

3.5 Conclusion

To summarise, this third and last chapter presented the analysis of a survey that was conducted online among a sample of 75 people coming from different countries all around the world and belonging to different generations. The aim of the study was to examine the various learning experiences of the participants who belonged to different

age groups, in order to better understand the relationship between the fact that someone has or hasn't been taught about gender-inclusive language and their resulting use of this matter in the daily use of the English language. The investigation was based on three research questions, which found their answers in the results of the questionnaire. The first research question asked about the number of people that received a proper education on the theme of inclusive language during their educational path: the answer to this question is that, among those who participated in the survey, no one born before 1996 was taught about this topic in school, while people born after that date were divided into two equal groups, those who were and those who weren't. The second research question wanted to find out how many people actually use gender-inclusive language in their daily use of English, as a result of their educational journey: the findings show that people tend to use inclusive pronouns more than they use inclusive vocabulary and, in general, those who do not use a gender-inclusive language at all mainly belong to the younger generation. Finally, the third and last research question asked about the general opinion on gender inclusivity, whether people consider it a meaningful or a pointless matter to teach in school: the general attitude towards this topic resulted to be a positive one, with people believing that teaching gender-inclusive language will lead to a less discriminating society in which people will be free to express themselves without worrying about being discriminated against.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this dissertation entitled “Gender inclusivity in the educational environment: differences across generations”, it is evident that education plays a fundamental role in transmitting a certain set of values, which among others includes gender inclusivity. According to Mcleod (2023), teaching this matter to young children will later result in a more inclusive society once these young people have grown up. Winfield and Dimond, members of the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), have conducted several research on the topic and their findings indicate that not only does inclusive education lead to better learning outcomes for all students, it also guarantee a safe space to learn, where children do not fear any discrimination or violence.

Sociologists agree that in order to transmit the value of gender-inclusivity, it is important for children to be exposed to a completely-inclusive environment, as they learn and assimilate as much from the notions that are directly addressed to them, as from the context that they are indirectly exposed to. For this reason, it is crucial that children’s textbooks do not perpetuate bias and stereotypes through visual or written content; contemporaneously, teachers and educators must be able to access comprehensive training on inclusion, so that they can prevent gender-based discrimination and foster inclusive learning environments. If teachers do so, if they teach about gender-inclusivity and gender-inclusive language to their students from an early age, these young people will be able to automatically apply it to their day-to-day use of the English language. This will result in the avoidance of certain practices that are still very much used in today’s society, such as semantic derogation, the usage of a non-inclusive pronoun or a non-inclusive title when referring to other people.

The findings of the present study on gender-inclusive language and how this topic is and was taught in schools show that there is still a long way to go in order to achieve a completely inclusive society. It is true that the results indicate that people have a general positive attitude towards teaching gender-inclusivity, considering it important as it opens a person’s mind. However, many people still struggle with the use of gender-inclusive pronouns and terms, preferring a *general he* to a more inclusive *they*.

This is nothing but the result of what they were taught in the early stages of their educational path, which shows the importance of schools and curricula in a child's education about inclusivity and inclusive-language use.

To conclude with the words of one of the participants in the survey:

The notions that a child learns at school will affect their life and will be used in their daily conversations, often without the person knowing why and how, as it will be almost automatic. For this reason, it is important to teach and create a new approach to these topics, gender inclusivity being one of these. And of course, it is easier to do that with children: they will grow up knowing about it and it will come natural to them to communicate with anybody without being confused, careless or discriminative.

Summary in Italian

Un argomento che è stato molto discusso e analizzato negli ultimi tempi è decisamente quello del linguaggio inclusivo, assunto che ha raggiunto alti livelli di diffusione a pari passo con l'aumento di importanza di temi come l'inclusione e l'apprezzamento per la diversità.

Con l'espressione *linguaggio inclusivo* si intende un modo di parlare che riconosca la diversità, porti rispetto nei confronti di tutte le persone, sia sensibile alle differenze e promuova uguali opportunità (definizione data dalle Linee guida per un Linguaggio Inclusivo, pubblicate dall'organizzazione americana Linguistic Society of America). Questa definizione può essere applicata tanto nel campo dell'inclusività verso le persone portatrici di disabilità, quanto nel campo dell'inclusività di genere, dove per *genere* si intende l'insieme delle differenze culturali, sociali e psicologiche tra maschi e femmine (Giddens 2006 menzionato da Siddiqui 2014).

Il concetto di linguaggio inclusivo di genere nella lingua inglese ha subito un lungo processo di cambiamento nell'ultimo secolo, in particolare a partire dallo sviluppo del movimento femminista tra fine ottocento e inizi novecento. Le motivazioni che hanno spinto tale movimento a intraprendere una lotta per raggiungere una parità di genere nel modo in cui parliamo sono molte; secondo Pauwels (2003) le più importanti sono: rivelare l'essenza sessista della lingua inglese, essere in grado di esprimere un punto di vista diverso da quello maschile grazie ad un sistema linguistico adeguato e ottenere una rappresentazione bilanciata dei diversi generi che compongono la società moderna.

Nel mondo in cui viviamo oggi, infatti, uomini e donne non vengono rappresentati allo stesso modo. La regola generale prevede che un'espressione usata al maschile rappresenti la normalità, ciò che dovrebbe essere usato per indicare un insieme di più persone, indipendentemente dal loro genere; utilizzare una forma al femminile, invece, è qualcosa che viene notato e, generalmente, messo a confronto con l'equivalente maschile. Secondo Pichler e Preece (2011) questo comportamento contribuisce a far sentire le donne giudicate o addirittura a renderle invisibili. Oltre alla regola generale, nella lingua inglese si possono trovare diversi fenomeni che contribuiscono a rendere

questo idioma sessista: la *semantic derogation*, che prevede che espressioni utilizzate per riferirsi al genere femminile acquisiscano una connotazione inferiore rispetto all'equivalente maschile; l'uso distintivo dei pronomi, che prevede che una donna debba fornire più informazioni riguardo il proprio stato civile rispetto a quanto debba fare un uomo; infine, il problema dei pronomi, in quanto nell'inglese moderno molte persone utilizzano ancora i pronomi personali soggetto e oggetto nella loro forma al maschile per indicare gruppi di persone, indipendentemente dal fatto che tali gruppi siano composti solo da uomini, da uomini e da donne o da persone che non si identificano né con un genere né con l'altro.

Ci sono tuttavia degli accorgimenti che si possono prendere durante una conversazione per far sì che tutte le persone si sentano incluse e non vengano discriminate: prima di tutto i fenomeni di *gender-neutralisation* e *gender-specification*, che prevedono una messa in rilievo di un'espressione nella forma al femminile o, al contrario, di una neutralizzazione del linguaggio, in modo che nessuno venga escluso da un discorso; un altro accorgimento è quello di usare i pronomi corretti quando si parla, in primo luogo chiedendo al proprio interlocutore con quali si identifica oppure usando forme generiche quali *they* o *he or she*; infine, altre alternative che rendano il modo di parlare più inclusivo possono essere utilizzare una forma plurale, passiva o parole neutre che non siano caricate di stereotipi di genere.

Tutti questi aspetti riguardanti il linguaggio inclusivo di genere è importante che vengano insegnati a scuola ai bambini, in quanto creare un ambiente più inclusivo fin dai primi anni di vita permetterà la creazione di società future in cui le persone non verranno discriminate sulla base del loro genere. Oltre a promuovere società inclusive, insegnare questo argomento a scuola contribuisce anche ad un miglioramento della qualità dell'educazione a discapito di atteggiamenti discriminatori e xenofobi (secondo l'associazione statunitense Open Society Foundations). Per far sì che questo accada, è necessaria la partecipazione di diversi elementi nel contesto scolastico: l'offerta formativa, che viene definita dall'UNESCO come "il mezzo principale di diffusione del concetto di inclusività nel sistema scolastico", i libri, che non devono perpetuare stereotipi di genere né direttamente né per omissione, e infine i docenti e tutto il

personale scolastico, che è importante siano preparati e istruiti sull'argomento in modo che lo possano trasmettere ai loro studenti e alle loro studentesse.

Tale approccio verso l'inclusione e come questo argomento venga insegnato nelle scuole sono stati l'oggetto di un sondaggio a cui hanno partecipato 75 persone appartenenti a generazioni diverse, elemento che ha permesso un confronto fra queste. L'obiettivo della ricerca era infatti proprio mettere a paragone gruppi d'età diversi e vedere se e come a questi sia stato insegnato il tema del linguaggio inclusivo durante il loro percorso scolastico. Dalle risposte dei partecipanti si è potuto concludere che, innanzitutto, più di due terzi non hanno mai affrontato questo tema durante il loro percorso formativo, ma ne hanno sentito parlare piuttosto in altri contesti, quali i social media o altre fonti di notizia. Di conseguenza, la maggior parte dei partecipanti non usa un linguaggio inclusivo mentre parla la lingua inglese, soprattutto in riferimento ai termini utilizzati, preferendo ad esempio parole come *fireman* o *policeman* ai loro equivalenti più inclusivi *firefighter* o *police officer*. Ciò nonostante, l'atteggiamento generale che i partecipanti al sondaggio hanno dimostrato nei confronti del tema dell'inclusività è piuttosto positivo, ritenendo che insegnare questo tema ai bambini li renda di mentalità più aperta e fa sì che crescano con dei valori di inclusione e anti-discriminatori.

Per concludere, è evidente che l'istruzione giochi un ruolo fondamentale nella trasmissione di determinati valori, tra cui anche l'inclusione di genere. La maggior parte delle persone ha una considerazione positiva di questo argomento, ma fa ancora fatica a metterla in pratica nell'uso quotidiano della lingua, preferendo termini meno inclusivi quando un'alternativa è invece possibile. Questo non è altro che il risultato del modo di parlare che è stato loro insegnato, il che dimostra l'importanza del sistema educativo fin dai primi anni di vita di un bambino, sistema educativo che deve essere inclusivo in ogni suo aspetto, in modo che le persone crescano imparando il valore e la necessità dell'inclusività di genere e la tramandino alle generazioni future, creando una società più inclusiva e attenta a questi argomenti.

Acknowledgements

Ci tengo a dedicare uno spazio a quelle persone che mi hanno accompagnata nel mio percorso, chi fin dall'inizio e chi per un tempo più breve, ma comunque significativo.

In primis, il ringraziamento più grande va ai miei genitori e a mio fratello, grazie per non avermi mai fatto mancare il supporto, in nessun momento e per nessuna ragione, avete sempre creduto in me fin dal primo istante, spero con tutto il cuore di avervi resi fieri di me.

Un ringraziamento importante alla mia famiglia, ad ogni zio, zia, cugino e cugina che mi ha sempre fatta sentire speciale e mi ha sempre fatto credere di essere in grado di fare tutto ciò che mi metto in testa. In particolare, un ringraziamento a mia nonna Emma, che non mi ha mai fatto mancare il suo appoggio, e ai miei nonni Tina, Gino e Remo, che vegliano su di me da lassù.

Un ringraziamento speciale alle mie migliori amiche, Elena, Genny e Rebecca, che da sempre sono al mio fianco e senza le quali mi sentirei persa, e ai miei più grandi amici, Davide, Gianluca, Lorenzo, Manuel, Marco, Marco e Miro, su cui so che posso e potrò sempre contare.

Un ringraziamento anche ad Umberto, che è entrato nella mia vita a piccoli passi, ma che da subito mi ha spronata a dare il meglio di me e a non mollare mai, credendo in me anche quando io stessa faticavo a crederci.

Un ringraziamento poi a Giulia e Murilo, due persone che hanno reso la mia esperienza Erasmus una delle esperienze più belle di tutta la mia vita e con le quali spero di non perdere mai i contatti.

Un ringraziamento infine alla mia relatrice, la Professoressa Dalziel, per avermi accompagnata e aiutata in questo percorso, grazie per la sua pazienza e per i suoi consigli.

Grazie infinite a tutti voi, grazie per avermi reso la persona che sono.

Bibliography

Bergman, S. B. & Barker, M. 2017. Non-Binary Activism. In Richards, C. et al. 2017. *Genderqueer and Non-Binary Genders* (pp. 31-52). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Curzan, A. 2003. *Gender Shifts in the History of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Erasmus Training Courses. 2023. *Promoting gender inclusiveness in education and in the classroom. Teacher Training*. (Accessed 11 May 2023)

<https://www.erasmustrainingcourses.com/gender-inclusiveness.html>

European Parliament. 2008. *Gender-Neutral Language in the European Parliament*. (Accessed 20 April 2023)

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/151780/GNL_Guidelines_EN.pdf

Gold, M., Salvesen, K. E., Obeid, S. A. & Viano, L. 2015. *Language attitudes toward some gendered words in English: A preliminary study*. Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series 13, 70-76.

Harvard University. 2018. *Guidelines for Gender Inclusivity in the Workplace*. Harvard University. (Accessed 14 May 2023)

<https://edib.harvard.edu/guidelines-gender-inclusivity-workplace>

Jaspers, J. et al. 2010. *Society and Language Use*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

Linguistic Society of America. 2016. *Guidelines for Inclusive Language*. (Accessed 6 April 2023)

https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/Inclusive_Lg_Guidelines.pdf

Mcleod, S. 2023. *What is Secondary Socialization? Simply Sociology*. (Accessed 11 May 2023) <https://simplysociology.com/secondary-socialisation.html>

Miller, C. & Swift, K. 1981. *The handbook of non-sexist writing for writers, editors and speakers*. 3. British ed. fully revised and updated. London: Women's press.

Newman, B. et al. 2021. *Female Empowerment and the Politics of Language: Evidence Using Gender-Neutral Amendments to Subnational Constitutions*. Cambridge: British Journal of Political Science.

Nonbinary Wiki. 2021. *MX*. (Accessed 23 May 2023)

<https://www.nonbinary.wiki/wiki/Mx>.

Open Society Foundations. 2019. *The Value of Inclusive Education*. Open Society Foundations. (Accessed 14 May 2023)

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/value-inclusive-education>

Pauwels, A. 2003. Linguistic Sexism and Feminist Linguistic Activism. In Holmes, J. & Meyerhoff, M. 2003. *The handbook of language and gender* (pp. 550-570). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Pichler, P. & Preece, S. 2011. Language and gender. In Mooney, A. et al. 2011, 3rd edition. *Language, Society and Power* (pp. 91-112). Oxford: Routledge

Popescu, A. 2019. The brief history of generation – defining the concept of generation. An analysis of literature review. *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*.

Queen's University. 2023. *Inclusive Language*. Queen's University Canada. (Accessed 14 May 2023) <https://www.queensu.ca/brand-central/writing-style/inclusive>

Siddiqui, S. 2014. *Language, gender and power : the politics of representation and hegemony in South Asia*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Sterken, R. 2020. *Linguistic Intervention and Transformative Communicative Disruptions*. Oxford: Oxford Academic

Stout, J. G., & Dasgupta, N. 2011. When He Doesn't Mean You: Gender-Exclusive Language as Ostracism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

Straub, J. 2022. Lingoda's report on inclusive language: How important is it to language learners? *Lingoda*. (Accessed 14 May 2023)

<https://www.lingoda.com/en/p/research/lingoda-study-investigates-the-importance-of-inclusive-language/#:~:text=The%20online%20language%20learning%20platform,%25%20and%2049%25%2C%20respectively.>

United Nations. *Gender-inclusive language*. (Accessed 6 April 2023)

<https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2021. *Inclusion and education - 2020 GEM Report*. 2020 GEM Report. (Accessed 11 May 2023)

<https://gem-report-2020.unesco.org/thematic/>

University of Otago. 2023. *Inclusive language guidelines*. University of Otago. (Accessed 14 May 2023)

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/working-at-otago/equity/inclusive-language/index.html>

Windfield, S., & Diamond, G. 2018. *Gender and inclusive education | UNGEI*. UNGEI. (Accessed 14 May 2023)

<https://www.ungei.org/blog-post/gender-and-inclusive-education>