

The Feminist Revolution of Words. Translating the Feminist Discourse through Newspapers

Abstract: Gender differences and hierarchical relations, cultural values and expected gender behaviours: all these elements are reflected into languages in terms of syntax, lexicon and contexts of use. At the same time, a language is the privileged territory for its reference culture.

The feminist perspective has given relevant contribution to the creation of the feminist gender discourse by offering values and expressions designed to eradicate the established androcentric language, and by defining key words and concepts: the Spanish *empoderamiento* (empowerment), *techo de cristal* (glass ceiling), *inequidad de género* (gender inequality) are some of the terms which were born with the feminist stance and became part of a discourse on gender spread through the written medium, in particular press. As a specific literary genre, journalism has indeed welcomed the features of the feminist discourse, providing a powerful communicative tool for the feminist standpoint.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relation between feminist theories and the feminist language, observe its main features on Spanish newspapers and its influence on the creation of gender identity.

Keywords: *feminism, gender, identity, language*

1. Introduction

When observing the current feminist ideology¹ – which emphasizes the idea that women and men belong to different subcultures – it is possible to examine issues of gender and language from a lexical standpoint, taking into account the perspective offered by a variety of fields, such as applied linguistics or sociolinguistics. By doing so, the study of women's language can be dealt with outside a framework of oppression and lack of power. In fact, in recent years, women have started to bring to light many 'invisible' problems related to their condition 'through' language by coining new expressions – from the 'double day' (at work and at home) to the so-called 'glass ceiling' – and have called for unity and cooperation among each other from the pages of global newspapers. This renewed interest around feminist ideas is also confirmed by statistics on online searches, which saw 'feminism' as the most searched word in 2017 according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Feminisms arise, as Castro Vázquez states, on the margin of the dominant discourse due to a situation of inequality.² It will be shown here how feminism – which has traditionally denounced this socio-historical disadvantage – seeks to subvert the established male domination and to repair this inequality by proposing deep changes in all languages – which of course are never neutral, but always loaded with connotative values. In general, it could be observed that those phenomena reflecting changes that have taken or are taking place within a community or society are typically the starting point for much linguistic innovation. In relation to this, Freixa points out that:

¹ For further notions on feminist theory see, among the others: Nancy C. M. Hartsock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited, and Other Essays* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Janet Radcliffe Richards, *The Skeptical Feminist (RLE Feminist Theory): A Philosophical Enquiry* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Mary G. Dietz, "Current Controversies in Feminist Theory", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6.1 (2003), 399-431.

² Olga Castro Vázquez, "Género y traducción. Elementos discursivos para una reescritura feminista", *Lectora*, 14 (2008), 287.

The reality to be expressed implies different psychological reactions on the part of the speakers as individuals and as members of a social group, and these diverse psychological and social motivations find expression in the ability of each speaker to constantly produce new lexical units.³

All these reactions – expressed at the lexical level through the introduction, among the others, of loanwords, adaptations of foreign terms, semantic calques, false friends, invention of new terms – are spread through social media and the Internet, and of course through the international press. As a matter of fact, this paper will only consider the latter medium, given the authoritativeness that print media (and newspapers particularly, albeit in their online version) still seem to retain. As Alvar Esquerda correctly claims, the language of journalism serves as one of the means of promoting and spreading the use of new words and expressions in all fields of language:

It is therefore not only a rich source of examples through which to illustrate the processes of formation and incorporation of new words into a language, but also a means of taking the pulse of the vitality of a language in order to measure its ability to withstand the arrival of foreign words and its creative potential, qualities which both help to keep it alive producing novelties at every instant.⁴

For what concerns journalism as a literary genre, its features were clearly recognizable and undoubtedly peculiar from the very beginning. By the end of the 19th century, journalism was the privileged communication tool for news, politics, culture, arts, advertisement, and many other fields; above all, newspapers and magazines configured as an open space for narratives, a virtually unlimited medium available to writers, thinkers, ideologists to communicate their ideas and opinions, their proposals and perspectives. This feature luckily stands to the present day and, over time, global social movements have spoken from the pages of the world's newspapers: feminism (at least in Western countries) makes no exception.

Following genre classification, journalism falls within the category of non-fiction and is characterized by an informative and communicative purpose which makes it close to other kinds of informative texts. The language includes lexicon drawn from the general language and limited specialized terminologies (from various fields of language for special purposes). As for syntax and discourse analysis, this is where journalism differs from other literary genres, being subject to specific rules and constraints also due to space limits; objectivity, accuracy and transparency are other criteria which should be met – in terms of language, contents, organization and presentation of the information – in journalistic writing, as part of a journalist ethics embedded in this profession.

Given the intrinsic global nature of journalism, the inclination towards internationalism is especially evident in the introduction, appropriation and use of foreign words and concepts, a topic that has always been of interest in language and translation studies on journalism. The possibilities connected to the translation of foreign words and expressions on newspapers sparked linguistics research at least from the 1960s until the present day. In translation studies, different methods and procedures for translating foreign terms have been examined, for example those based on Venuti's foreignization or domestication strategies,⁵ and attention has been given to the actual practice of translation beyond theory: since, in translational terms, it is the journalist of the receiving culture who decides on the translation of lexicon from a different source culture, it appears that translation in the field of journalism is mostly a matter of agency, political ideology, and culture/decision-making processes.

³ Judith Freixa, "La dimensió social de la neologia" in Maria Teresa Cabré et al., eds., *Lèxic i neologia* (Barcelona: Observatori de Neologia, Institut Universitari de Lingüística Aplicada, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2002), 70. Translation by the author.

⁴ Manuel Alvar Ezquerda, *Palabras nuevas en los periódicos de hoy, en la lengua española a finales del milenio* (Burgos: Caja de Burgos, 1998), 40. Translation by the author.

⁵ Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

Consequently, this research aims to observe lexical innovation in the digital version of the Spanish newspaper, *La Vanguardia*, in a period that spans from the 2017 U.S. election campaign to the present day. It should be added that some of the terms considered in the present corpus were coined before 2017, but have been revitalised after some major socio-political events; indeed, international journalism was, in this period, marked by the impact of President Trump's male chauvinist political speeches and by a subsequent wave of protests at the global level which led to different reactions to sexist attitudes on the part of feminists.

For what concerns the broader framework on gender and language studies, despite the fact that most of the work carried out to date considers phonetics and phonology, morpho-syntax, discourse analysis and translation,⁶ very little research has been done concerning the influence of the most recent feminist movement on the innovation of lexical units with a social function. This study hopes to contribute to fill this gap.

As regards methodology issues, the psychological, social and practical aspects that influence the updating of the Spanish language – such as, for example, the role played by the Fundéu, the foundation advised by the Real Academia Española (RAE) to promote the good use of Spanish in the media – were taken into account so as to identify the lexical units derived from English – in accordance with the theoretical framework given by Cabré,⁷ of which more will be said further on. Among the considered neologisms, the presence of foreign words, of words formed by lexical revitalisation and of structural calques with metaphorical value was highlighted. For each word, explanation on its first appearance in the English language was given, as well as term definition and Spanish adapted equivalent; furthermore, neologisms were analysed in context in order to observe their function in response to given communicative needs. Finally, some filters were established and applied to the indicated lexical units in order to obtain a preliminary indication of their degree of neologicity, such as their introduction in other lexicographic sources⁸ and their frequency in the *Obneo* database (the Observatori de Neologia of the Institut Universitari de Lingüística Aplicada at Universitat Pompeu Fabra).

2. Borrowed neologisms: *foreign words*

There are many foreign words – foreign entries that have not been adapted to the phonetic and morphologic system of the target/receiving language⁹ – connected to the struggle for equality and justice of different social movements in Spanish. Although many newspaper articles tend to keep the original English terms, an attempt has been made to provide possible translations into Spanish based on specific elements of which more will be said further on. With reference to the analysis of Spanish newspapers, one of the words that marked the lexicon of the feminist discourse in recent years was the term ‘mansplaining’. According to *Know Your Meme*, the word appeared for the first time in a blog comment published on May 21, 2008. In 2009 it reached the *Urban Dictionary* website and in 2012 and 2014 the *Oxford Dictionary* considered it as one of the most ingenious and most used words by feminists on social networks. This word is the blending of the words man and explaining.

The exact definition of ‘mansplaining’ given by Lily Rothman, writer for *The Atlantic*, is “explaining without regard to the fact that the explainee knows more than the explainer, often done by a man to a

⁶ See, for example, the seminal work by Deborah Cameron, “Gender, Language, and Discourse: A Review Essay”, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 23.4 (1998), 945-973; Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff, eds., *The Handbook of Language and Gender* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003).

⁷ Maria Teresa Cabré, “Aspectes sobre la neologia: La «novetat lèxica» a través de dos diaris catalans” in Cabré et al., eds., *Lèxic i neologia*, 57-68.

⁸ In particular, *El diccionario Clave* online, which includes expressions and terms of daily use, the *Diccionario de uso del español* by María Moliner, the 23rd edition of the *Diccionario de la lengua española* (updated to 2017).

⁹ Valentin García Yebra, *Teoría y práctica de la traducción* (Madrid: Gredos, 1894), 333-352.

woman”.¹⁰ Rebecca Solnit, who is considered the creator of the term, gives an example of mansplaining in her article for the *Los Angeles Times*, “Men who explain things”.¹¹ She was at a party, and a man was talking about a very interesting book about the photographer Edward Muybridge which had been highly acclaimed by the *New York Times*. While the man was describing the book, Rebecca thought it was very similar to hers, when her friend said to Mr. Very Important (as she calls him): “She wrote that book”. He didn't listen to her. She had to tell him three or four times until the man realized that he had in front of him the very writer of that interesting book.

Rebecca Solnit, in her article, comments:

Men explain things to me, and to other women, whether or not they know what they're talking about. Some men. Every woman knows what I mean. It's the presumption that makes it hard, at times, for any woman in any field; that keeps women from speaking up and from being heard when they dare.¹²

According to lexicographer Mark Peter, mansplain was so successful that it generated the suffix (or ‘libfix’) ‘splainin’, a contraction of explaining. The word has come to encompass all types of offensive and condescending language, such as ‘melaninsplainin’ (for white people) and ‘ablesplainin’ (for non-disabled people). Some use this suffix for a different purpose, flipping and subverting its main meaning to create female versions of mansplaining: ‘womansplaining’. In addition, it has been noted that the condescending act of mansplaining has extended not only to gender divisions but also to racial politics and human rights. This obsession has given rise to other compound terms formed by the prefix -man.¹³ These three letters can turn almost any noun, verb or adjective into coarser, sexist, vulgar and even childish words, as in the case of:

- ‘Maninterrupting’: unnecessary interruption of a woman’s speech by a man. Proposed by *Time* in 2015, it is very common in business meetings and even presidential debates, courtesy of Donald Trump to Hillary Clinton;
- ‘Manderstanding’: It is said of those private jokes between men that only they can understand. This behavior is sexist when it is done with women around, who are baffled and often outraged because the jokes are usually sexist;
- ‘Manslamming’: the phenomenon of men not letting anyone pass at the entrances or exits of public spaces, resulting in a ‘collision’, almost always with women;

Other terms include ‘manologue’, the monologue of a man, and ‘manspreading’, a word coined in 2013 that Fundéu proposed to translate as male or sexist leg-spreading. These are indeed practices that transcend cultures. Translating mansplaining would be to assume that this practice also exists in Spanish. According to the literature blog *latorredemontaigne*:

The Spanish word “explicar”, to explain, has an interesting etymology. “Plica”, in Latin, means fold, like the folds of a cloth, while the prefix “ex”, among other things, gives the idea of opening and closing. From there, explaining is the same as unfolding, clarifying, smoothing. If we get serious, “androplicar” (a possible translation for *mansplaining*?) would be something like complicating things in the masculine style, folding like a man. It's strange and twisted. But isn't it that – when a man wants to explain what a woman already knows, or when he doesn't let her finish her sentence, or when he wants, in one way or another, to silence her – what he's doing is twisting a situation that, in its normality, in equality, is so simple?¹⁴

¹⁰ Lily Rothman, “A Cultural History of Mansplaining”, *The Atlantic* (2012), <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2012/11/a-cultural-history-of-mansplaining/264380/>, accessed 1 December 2018.

¹¹ Rebecca Solnit, “Men Who Explain Things”, *Los Angeles Times*, 4 (2008), 1-2.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ <https://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/dictionary/mansplaining-spawns-a-new-suffix/>, accessed 1 December 2018.

¹⁴ <https://latorredemontaigne.wordpress.com/2015/06/16/mansplaining-una-nueva-palabra-en-busca-de-traduccion/>, accessed 1 December 2018.

Accordingly, *androplicar* has the meaning of folding and closing a speech, or folding the woman in order to shut her up.

On the other hand, Fundéu proposed the neologism *machoexplicación* as a valid alternative to refer to this masculine habit. The neologism *machoexplicación* (from *macho*, male chauvinist, and *explicación*, explanation), which is already used and which shares the same informal character as the English original, is an alternative that adequately captures its meaning and also allows the creation of other words from the same lexical family, such as the noun *machoexplicador* or the verb *machoexplicar*. A more formal translation could employ the word *condescendencia* (+ *masculina*, male, or *machista*, macho, depending on the nuance): in Spanish, the verb *condescender* means, according to the *Diccionario de la lengua española* (23rd ed.), “accommodating oneself out of kindness to someone's taste and will”, a term which is often used with a negative nuance. Therefore, in the analysed articles, it would be appropriate to substitute the foreign word with the equivalent *machoexplicación* or *condescendencia machista*:

We can also talk about mansplaining [...]. All these concepts allude to various ways of perpetuating male chauvinist attitudes that tend to go unnoticed, that is, micro-sexisms.¹⁵

In that scene, one thinks one is going to see the classic 'mansplaining' and it's not like that, but the hypocrisy of that man and the shame he has suffered is undressed.¹⁶

The same can be observed for the word ‘manspreading’. This compound – which emerged in 2014 and was incorporated into the Oxford Dictionary in August 2015 – is an informal term that alludes to the way some men sit, especially on public transports, with their legs open, thus invading the space of adjacent seats. After a period of linguistic implementation within the English-speaking countries, the word was brought to light internationally and in particular in Spain in 2017, as protests by both feminist groups and the authorities responsible for some public transport networks sparked heated debate on the issue:

The Community of Madrid is not planning to take concrete action against ‘manspreading’ on the Metro.¹⁷

The different ways of sitting in the subway have lately become news, especially the male *despatarre* and the campaigns of different cities against this example of micro-sexism and lack of civility.¹⁸

The terms *despatarre* or *despatarre masculino* are possible Spanish alternatives to the English ‘manspreading’, as suggested by the Fundación del Español Urgente. The Spanish verb *despatarrar(se)* is, according to the *Diccionario académico*, a colloquial term that means “to open the legs excessively”, therefore the derived noun *despatarre* adapts perfectly to the action described by ‘manspreading’.

¹⁵ Clara Polo Sabat, “Micromachismos o formas sutiles de perpetuar agresiones sexuales”, *La Vanguardia* (15 November 2016), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/muyfan/20161105/411602705837/machismo-micromachismos-violencia-abusos-mujeres.html>, accessed 1 December 2018. Translation by the author.

¹⁶ Antonio Martín Guirado, “Chastain: La representación de la mujer en el cine no ha sido certera”, *La Vanguardia* (22 December 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20171202/433369239876/chastain-la-representacion-de-la-mujer-en-el-cine-no-ha-sido-certera.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

¹⁷ “El gobierno no tomará medidas específicas contra el ‘manspreading’ en metro”, *La Vanguardia* (6 June 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/madrid/20170606/423229310134/el-gobierno-no-tomara-medidas-especificas-contr-el-manspreading-en-metro.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

¹⁸ Vivo, “Cruzar las piernas como en esta foto no es tan malo como parece”, *La Vanguardia* (18 June 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vivo/salud/20170618/423487574150/cruzar-las-piernas-viral-efectos-salud.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

Despite the doubts of some critics such as Juana Gallego,¹⁹ the success of these words is indisputable, probably because they encompass broad sets of situations that go beyond anecdotal or subjective experiences.

Among the adapted foreign words, in recent times the concept of ‘interseccionalidad’ (intersectionality) has been well received by feminist and gender studies at a global level, being defined as “the best contribution made so far to gender studies”.²⁰ The notion of intersectionality arose when black lesbian feminist collectives denounced, in the mid-1970s, the racial blindness of their white feminist sisters in the United States. Feminist and law theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined the term in 1989 in the well-known article “Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex”. In the text, Crenshaw wanted to rescue from invisibility and omission – both by feminists and anti-racist discourses – the specific experiences of subordination and exploitation of black, poor, and/or immigrant women in the U.S. – which were caused by the combined effect of the social identification categories of class, race, sex/gender, and so on. To explain this legal vacuum, Crenshaw raised the analogy of car traffic at a road junction:

Consider an analogy for traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happened in an intersection, it can be caused by cars travelling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them.²¹

With this metaphor Crenshaw pointed out how certain situations of discrimination cannot be identified or adequately addressed from a univocal perspective which does not consider simultaneous interweaving. Therefore, as the following articles demonstrate, the term ‘intersectionality’ refers to the situation in which a particular type of discrimination takes place within two or more categories, all creating a single situation: gender, ethnicity, sexuality, citizenship status, functional diversity, age or education level.

Hillary Clinton's defeat in front of Trump makes it more urgent than ever to read this apostle of intersectionality in feminism, supporting the idea that the movement cannot be just a matter of white university women.²²

In the feminist discourse, moreover, there are many defenders who ask the intersectionality of the struggle to be taken into account. Emmy winner on best script (*Master of None*) Lena Waithe calls for black women to break out of the stereotype. This is why she observes that in every American film there is at least one female character who is black, in a position of power and who is in a healthy relationship.²³

2.1. Borrowed neologisms: *words formed by lexical revitalisation*

When analyzing the lexical evolution of some words, it can be observed how some of them, after falling into disuse, for some reason are revitalised with another meaning or with the same one. This is the case, for instance, of the Spanish word ‘sororidad’ (sorority). The Real Academia’s need to revitalise this

¹⁹ Coordinator of the Master in Gender and Communication at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, he frames neologisms within the tendency of Americans to invent new terms for everything.

²⁰ Leslie Mcall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality”, *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30.3 (2005), 1771.

²¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics”, *Feminist Legal Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 149.

²² “Con espíritu indie”, *La Vanguardia* (9 December 2016).

²³ Pere Solà Gimferrer, “¿El test de Bechdel está pasado de moda? Creadoras proponen otras alternativas”, *La Vanguardia* (22 December 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/series/20171222/433813779773/test-de-bechdel-feminismo-interseccionalidad-series.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

word with a new ethical and political meaning arose after Fundéu qualified it as a ‘valid term’. However, it is not a new word: as the CORDE consultation shows, it was already used (without italics and without inverted commas) by M. De Unamuno when, in his *La Tía Tula* (1921), he spoke of *matria* and *sororidad* – both deriving from the Latin *mater* and *soror*, mother and sister; it is curious to note that both *sororidad* and its English equivalent ‘sorority’ are rare compared to the male equivalents *fraternidad* (in Spanish) and ‘fraternity’ (in English). The term *sororidad* is formed from the Latin word *soror*, *-oris*, meaning “sister, companion, lover, sister of a society, same and similar to another”, plus the quality suffix *-tat/-itat*, in Spanish *-dad/-idad*. Hence, *sororidad* is “the quality or condition (-idad) of belonging to a society (soror) of women”. The following articles show how women make a call to unity:

The women of the governing group of the capital declare that they symbolically participate to a “historical day” with an “internationalist spirit and under the principles of sorority” that unite millions of women.²⁴

On her part, Pontevedra’s number-four María Pierres, called for ‘sorority’ and non-competition.²⁵

However, the revitalisation of this word is to be attributed to the Mexican feminist and anthropologist Marcela Legarde de los Ríos, who proposed it in relation to the distressing issue of the so-called “Juárez’s murders” which have been perpetrated in Chihuahua, México, since 1993. According to Lagarde, sorority is:

An ethical, political and practical dimension of contemporary feminism. It is a female experience that leads to the search for positive relationships and for existential and political alliance (...) with other women to contribute with specific actions to the social elimination of all forms of oppression, to offer mutual support to achieve the generic power of all women and the vital empowerment of each woman.²⁶

Following the *Diccionario de Americanismos*:

Sororidad. (From Eng. sorority). f. PR. A group based on friendship and reciprocity among women who share the same ideal and work towards the same goal.

The spirit of cooperation and friendship, therefore, emerges as a distinctive feature of this term – in line with the meaning of ‘sorority’ in English, indicating a society in school or university (“a society of female university or college students”).²⁷ On the other hand, the relationship of brotherhood and solidarity established among women to create support networks that spark social changes with the objective of achieving equality is defined with the word ‘sisterhood’. This word already has equivalents in Spanish: the neutral *hermandad* (brotherhood) and *fraternidad* (fraternity), which the RAE defines as “friendship or affection between brothers or among those who are treated as such”. This reflection leads to the assumption that language is not neutral, but is a vehicle of values, traditions and ideological positions, and highlights the need to coin a new term to refer to the ideological union among women.

Moving forward, the verb *empoderar* (to empower) and the noun *empoderamiento* (empowerment) also abound in the lexicon of social movements and unleash the perplexity of many speakers when

²⁴ “Carmena y sus concejales se suman al paro feminista por miles de razones”, *La Vanguardia* (8 March 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20170308/42657593874/carmena-y-sus-concejales-se-suman-al-paro-feminista-por-miles-de-razones.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

²⁵ “Leiceaga se compromete ante mujeres del PSdeG a recuperar la ley de igualdad en el trabajo del bipartito”, *La Vanguardia* (17 September 2016), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20160917/41383429378/leiceaga-se-compromete-ante-mujeres-del-psdeg-a-recuperar-la-ley-de-igualdad-en-el-trabajo-del-bipartito.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

²⁶ Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, “Pacto en mujeres. Sororidad”, *Aportes* (2006), <https://www.asociacionag.org.ar/pdfaportes/25/09.pdf>, accessed 1 December 2018.

²⁷ <https://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>, accessed 1 December 2018.

evoked in public life. According to the RAE and the *Diccionario de Uso del Español* María Moliner, both terms were already circulating in the dictionaries of the 16th and 17th centuries (prior to the creation of the Real Academia). However, they soon fell into disuse, displaced by their synonyms *apoderar* and *apoderamiento*. That is why many speakers today take *empoderar* and *empoderamiento* as artificial novelties invented for the occasion. Before the timespan considered, the word *empoderamiento* was dying out in Spanish, while ‘to empower’ and ‘empowerment’ gained strength in English; these were traditionally translated into Spanish as *apoderar* and *apoderamiento*, which is what these terms mean. Thus, both words acquired an additional meaning in Spanish: the action or effect of a collectivity reaching a form of power that was previously denied. In this way, the radical vision of empowerment as an act and a strategy for change was theoretically and politically strengthened by minority groups and feminist elaborations on gender issues. After the Spanish translation of an adapted version of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of 1995, the word entered the official language with a new connotation. It did not take long to make to empower and *empoderar* linguistic equivalents, despite the availability of *apoderar* and the possibility of broadening one of its meanings (“to become strong”) – as had been done in English. These anglicised uses caused the RAE to take a double decision concerning the 2014 Dictionary:

- reintroducing the old *empoderar* from the 16th century – 13 years after discarding it in 2001 – with an etymology derived from *en* and *poder* (“bestowing a power”), yet marking it as disused word;
- adding a second entry for *empoderar*, originated from the equivalent English word with its modern meaning as assimilated in Spanish:

To empower [a socio-economically disadvantaged group] to improve their living conditions through self-management. The corresponding noun is *empoderamiento*: the action or effect of empowerment.

Starting from 2017 – what, in the Spanish context, has been considered as ‘the year of women’ –²⁸ this expression has also carried another dimension, which includes being aware of one’s individual power and the recovery of the women’s own dignity as persons:

Along the same lines, the ‘Decalogue of Good Practices’ has been developed for the processing of information related to sexist aggressions. In addition, in order to promote the empowerment of women, the School of Feminisms has been set up with various training actions and, to strengthen the economic autonomy of women, a commitment has been made to make women who suffer from situations of economic precariousness visible.²⁹

Through her satirical cartoons full of violence, humour and a strong sense of vindication, the Barcelona illustrator Raquel Riba Rossy seeks to promote female empowerment. And she does so by talking openly about her sexual frustrations, covert sexism and couple conflicts which is impossible not to identify with.³⁰

Therefore, empowerment as derived from the theory and practice of feminism can be summarised, in accordance to Rowlands³¹ as quoted by De León,³² as a process in which women, in a context of gender disadvantage, acquire or reinforce their capacities, strategies and prominent position, both individually

²⁸ Following Jara Atienza, “Los libros que han convertido el 2017 en el año de las mujeres”, *La Vanguardia* (20 December 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/cultura/20171220/433759800134/cultura-libros-lista-feministas-2017-navidad.html>.

²⁹ “Pamplona se suma al día contra la violencia hacia las mujeres con teatro, cinefórum y una mesa redonda”, *La Vanguardia* (17 November 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/navarra/20171117/432946215368/pamplona-se-suma-al-dia-contra-la-violencia-hacia-las-mujeres-con-teatro-cineforum-y-una-mesa-redonda.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

³⁰ Jara Atienza, “Los libros que han convertido el 2017 en el año de las mujeres”.

³¹ Jo Rowlands, *Questioning Empowerment: Working with Women in Honduras* (UK and Ireland: Oxfam, 1997).

³² Magdalena De León, “Poder y empoderamiento de las mujeres”, *Región y Sociedad*, 11.18 (1999), 190-197.

and collectively, to achieve an autonomous life in which they can participate – in terms of equality, access to resources, recognition and decision-making – at all levels of personal and social life. Consultation of the most relevant corpus of Spanish – the Reference Corpus of Current Spanish (CREA) and the Corpus of Spanish of the 21st Century (CORPES XXI) – yields significant results in terms of cases and trends in use linked to the gender perspective. The word *empoderar* co-appears 115 times with the noun *mujer* (woman), evidencing a strong associative power between the two entries.

2.2. Borrowed neologisms: *structural calques with metaphoric value*

Lexical calques are special types of borrowings that do not imitate the actual phonetic entity (signifier) of the foreign model, but rather two more ‘internal’ aspects: the morphological schema or construction, and the meaning in its metaphorical value, typical of some English compounds/words/composite words. These types of loans are used by feminist movements mainly to focus on gender stereotypes, labour market segregation based on gender, social and psychological harassment, and the incompatibility of private and public life. These are all related to the concept of micro-sexism, *micromachismo*, a Spanish term coined in 1991 by Luis Bonino Méndez in response to the need to find a term that conceptualised less perceptible types of gender violence. These metaphors have had quite significant rhetorical success, and one of their important aspects is that they play a necessary role in our understanding of the world as we find them in the discursive construction of all spheres of life – since they constitute a fundamental part of our conceptual system.

Consequently, different kinds of metaphors to describe the challenges that women and other disadvantaged groups have to face both in the world of business and in politics exist, among which: *suelos pegajosos* (sticky floors), *muros maternos* (maternity walls), *tuberías con goteras* (leaky pipes), *escaleras mecánicas de cristal* (glass escalators), *laberinto* (labyrinth), *precipicio de cristal* (glass cliff). These metaphors are used by both male and female journalists to manipulate social groups and persuade them to adopt certain principles or to act in certain ways.

Many years have passed since the first use of the glass ceiling metaphor in the 1980s by the editor of the Wall Street Journal, Gay Bryant; today it has become a buzzword after candidate Hillary Clinton resorted to it in the wake of her defeat by Republican Donald Trump: “We have not broken the glass ceiling, the tallest and hardest glass ceiling we face, but we will, and I hope sooner than we can think right now”.³³ The expression ‘glass ceiling’³⁴ began to be used with metaphorical allusion to the apparently invisible (glass) and yet very concrete (ceiling) barriers that prevent many highly skilled women from accessing the highest levels of economic, political and cultural power. Since then, the glass ceiling metaphor has been a very useful tool to draw attention to gender discrimination in the workplace and to motivate both research and practical intervention. It has also been included in academic speeches, commentators and legislators’ discourse, and has been extraordinarily successful, enjoying massive popularity among both the press and the general public:

³³ Hillary Clinton, “Hillary Clinton’s Concession Speech – Full Transcript”, *The Guardian* (9 November 2016), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/09/hillary-clinton-concession-speech-full-transcript>, accessed 1 December 2018.

³⁴ Marilyn J. Davidson and Cary L. Cooper, *Shattering the Glass Ceiling: The Woman Manager* (London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1992), 27.

“I have been considered and well paid and I have lived a real equality, but to a certain extent. There’s this famous glass ceiling and I think that it does exist in theatre. The positions of power are still held more by men”, explains the actress.³⁵

For this reason, the researcher of the UOC’s Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3) and one of the project’s coordinators, Ana M. González Ramos, defends that “it is necessary to change the dynamics of the field and begin to raise young people’s awareness on the need to break the glass ceiling and improve access and visibility for women”.³⁶

Starting from the meaning attributed to the word *techo* (ceiling), other expressions have also been coined as per the Glossary of the University of León:

- *techo de cemento* (cement ceiling): referring to the limits that prevent women from growing politically, socially or entrepreneurially due to their lack of references, maternity, personal life, greater self-criticism or their different way of understanding leadership and professional ambition.
- *techo de diamante* (diamond ceiling): coined by Amelia Valcárcel in her book *La política de las mujeres* (1997, Ediciones Cátedra). It refers to the fact that, in the patriarchal society, the man is an “object of appreciation” and the woman is an “object of desire” (just like a diamond), subordinated to a situation in which the man perpetuates his power.

These invisible barriers are attitudes resulting from traditional expectations, norms and values that hinder women’s full participation in society. Accordingly, similar expressions are:

- *suelo pegajoso* (sticky floor), another significant term coined in 1992 by Catherine Berheide in a report for the Center for Women in Government at SUNY. It is a concept related to the glass ceiling metaphor referring to maternal, conjugal and domestic work, which cause women – charged with responsibilities, emotional and affective burdens that obstruct or impede their professional and personal fulfillment away from the family environment – to walk on a ‘sticky’ surface which holds them back:

The landscape is dark for half the world’s population. If we add that women have to take on tasks that are stereotypically their own, such as caring for the young and the old, cleaning or cooking, it is especially difficult to get rid of the sticky floor that keeps them trapped in this position. And if men don’t help... We get into the dark tunnel of complacency.³⁷

Conversely, the expression *doble jornada* (double-day) describes the everyday life of women who have to face work and domestic or family tasks as the only viable or obligatory horizon. Almost 30 years ago, when a massive flow of women and mothers joined the workforce, Arlie Hochschild, a Berkeley sociologist, wanted to know how families were coping with this revolutionary change. He spent several hours interviewing and observing 50 couples, and he described a phenomenon that he called “double day”: women coming back home from work had to face another round of unpaid housework, besides taking care of children. Therefore, the metaphor represents the double workload borne by women daily and synchronically in the same period of time as men:

³⁵ “Isabel Ordaz. El teatro tiene su propio techo de cristal para las mujeres”, *La Vanguardia* (8 January 2018), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/madrid/20180107/434149570799/previsiones-del-lunes-8-de-enero-de-2018.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

³⁶ “Sólo uno de cada cuatro trabajadores del sector tecnológico es mujer”, *La Vanguardia* (30 October 2017), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20171030/432490445144/solo-uno-de-cada-cuatro-trabajadores-del-sector-tecnologico-es-mujer.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

³⁷ “Fomento al autoempleo femenino”, *Página Siete*, (23 December 2017), <https://www.paginasiete.bo/inversion/2017/12/31/fomento-autoempleo-femenino-164972.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

When Barenys entered the Parliament she combined her work as a deputy with the care of her mother. “Women are always burdened with the work of family care”. And Barenys believes that, even today, women still work a double day. “There is still a long way to go”.³⁸

That is why women are, on the one hand, trapped between the multi-tasks that lock them up/relegate them in maternal, domestic, conjugal and other types of care that impede their professional success and fulfillment and, on the other, subordinated to barriers that hinder their personal advancement.

3. Conclusions

During this study some interesting data about the use of language, especially in the evidenced lexical fields, were observed. On the one hand, it is clear that language is not neutral, but operates as a vehicle of values, traditions and ideological positions; therefore, it is necessary to introduce new words in common language use so that vital changes are produced also in the field of journalism. The use of neological units responds to a denominative or expressive necessity where the speaker plays with language and shows his/her implicit vision of the world in order to seek attention from the interlocutor; also, some units are employed to show or reaffirm his/her belonging to a certain group. On the other hand, there is a significant tendency to acquire loan words from English that, in most cases, undergo processes of adaptation to the phonic and morphological system of the target language. Finally, it can be observed that the language of journalism is an inexhaustible source of lexical creativity. It includes numerous areas of knowledge and reflects linguistic changes that constantly occur in language; it revitalises disused words, unifies other words that were never associated before, forms new lexical expressions/collocations, compound words, and introduces foreign words.

With the aim of observing the relationship between neologicity and modern feminism, some filters can be established, such as the existence of neologisms in other lexicographic sources and their frequency based on data retrieved from Obneo. The majority of neological units is not recorded in the chosen lexicographic sources, with the only exception of ‘empoderamiento’. Therefore, as Cabré³⁹ states, the majority of neologisms score high in neologicity because they do not appear in lexicographic sources different from those used as exclusion corpus. Moreover, the use of certain punctuation marks in *La Vanguardia*, such as inverted commas, appears necessary to point out that a new use of a word is in place – when the new meaning is not considered in dictionaries – or to mark an ‘inexistent’ word (taken from another language, created for the occasion).

In addition, the frequency of neologisms based on data retrieved from Obneo can be considered. In this case, the starting assumption is what Cabré et al.⁴⁰ report, that an inverted relationship is established between frequency and neologicity: “the higher the frequency of appearance, the more stable the neologism is and, consequently, the more the perception of neologicity is lost”. Accordingly, the only word that appears with relevant frequency (more than 10 times) is *empoderamiento*, which underlines the fact that this word has a lesser degree of neologicity, being more stable in Spanish compared to other words. Instead, *interseccionalidad* and *doble jornada* do not appear among frequent terms.

However, an attempt has been made to highlight the attitudes of many different feminist groups that, in recent years, have helped not only to expand new concepts, but to give them strength to the point of stabilizing them in the general language.

³⁸ Laura Aragó, “Mujeres en el parlament. Una lucha para conquistar espacio político”, *La Vanguardia* (12 January 2018), <https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20180112/434222776548/mujeres-parlament-lucha-espacio-politico.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

³⁹ Cabré, “Aspectes sobre la neologia”, 57-68.

⁴⁰ María Teresa Cabré et al., “Evaluación de la vitalidad de una lengua a través de la neología. A propósito de la neología espontánea y de la neología planificada”, in Cabré et al., eds., *Lèxic i neologia*, 291.