

A study of androcentrism in Galizan reference dictionaries.

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We are two-legged wombs, that's all: sacred
vessels, ambulatory chalices
Atwood, M. (1987: 146)

Dedication

Every day, thousands of wimyn around
the world are beaten, mutilated, sold,
raped and murdered by men.
This article is for them.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this article is to explore androcentrism as contained in monolingual dictionaries by analysing contrasting definitions given to basic gender-related terms such as 'man' vs. 'woman' and 'girl' vs. 'boy'. Albeit only a cursory study of some of the more flagrant examples, this approach is nevertheless felt to be a useful way of gauging potential ideological bents underlying malestream language usage especially within the framework of prescriptive reference models as opposed to descriptive language usage.

The turn of the Century brought with it an absolute spate of large, monolingual reference dictionaries in Galizan, one of which was to be definitive for the unprecedented scope of the work and one equally definitive in terms of authority as described below, namely the *Gran Diccionario Xerais da Lingua* ['Big Xerais Dictionary of the Galizan Language'] (Carballeira Anllo, 2000) and the *Diccionario da Real Academia Galega* ['Dictionary of the Royal Galizan Academy']

(García, 1997) respectively. Neither has been superseded in its genre since the time of their first editions. Symbolically, this brought Galizan firmly into the new Century. However, upon closer inspection, at least as far as the way wimyn are represented, in many ways in these works, it appears that the ideological underpinnings of Galizan lexicography, remaining firmly rooted not even in the 20th but rather in the 19th Century.

This line of research is not new and to a certain extent can be seen to it follow on in the footsteps of other research carried out in this field (*Cfr.* Hampares, 1976; García Meseguer, 1993). What sets this particular article apart from the rest, however, is the fact that it deals specifically with androcentrism in lexicography within the particular framework of a non-normalised language, namely Galizan. The Galizan language in a state of on-going social normalisation which tends to foster a feeling of linguistic insecurity amongst the users-users on the whole which is substantially aggravated by the prevailing prescriptivist climate surrounding language codification and standardisation (see Baxter, 2004a), relying on pronouncements regarding the ‘correctness’ or ‘incorrectness’ of different linguistic forms by authoritative bodies, such as the Royal Academy of the Galizan Language, which is officially the utmost legal authority on all language-related affairs.

As far as non-andocentric language planning and reform movements such as that espoused by this article are concerned, the repercussions of this rather peculiar sociolinguistic climate are quite far-reaching and potentially useful if used to the advantage of an ideologically progressive language planning agenda in so far as language planners, including first and foremost lexicographers, wield considerable power over the language-users and the way they feel they are supposed to use language. As such, the choices made by lexicographers in such climates will have a much greater potential to either perpetuate definitions based on archaic, inappropriate or

conservative social usages or alternatively to canonise definitions geared to a more progressive, plural agenda free of social prejudices such as androcentrism. Indeed, to a certain extent, where such authoritative bodies enjoy full legal recognition, the definitions dictionaries produced or endorsed by them provide almost reach the status of being legally binding.

Unlike such reference dictionaries as the Oxford English Dictionary which intends to be primarily descriptive and up-to-date as far as modern written and, to a lesser extent, spoken usage is concerned, Galizan dictionaries of the type studied here are primarily intended to be overtly prescriptive in nature, i.e. defining ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ language usage, thus making their role as agents for ideologically-oriented language planning all the more important.

Before going in, it should be said that opinions are divided on the exact (socio)linguistic status of Galizan: on the one hand, there are those who argue that the language is a co-lect of Portuguese and as such should look to Standard Portuguese when setting standards for lexicon, etc., whilst the ‘official’ view is an ‘isolationist’ one, which accepts that Galizan and Portuguese stem from the same language stock, but that today Galizan is a language in its own right. For obvious reasons, therefore, the latter option offers considerably more leeway for direct intervention on the part of the language planners, including the lexicographers, who are entirely free to develop their own internal Galizan model without necessarily referring to other preset models, and it is this variety of Galizan which is studied here via the analysis of various selected dictionary entries.

As such, dictionaries and lexicography clearly have an important potential role to play as a key agent in any anti-andocentric language reform exercise, and to the contrary, any such endeavour which does not consciously integrate such a *desideratum* will, as demonstrated below, inevitably fall prey to mistaking malestream

androcentric values for objective reality, thus serving to canonise and perpetuate outdated definitions based on an underlying prejudiced, reactionary ideology.

There are those who would inevitably try to counter such a clearly interventionist stance as the one defended here by arguing that dictionaries are not and should not be used to ‘peddle’ particular ideologies:

It [i.e. in this case the use of the inclusive feminine and masculine gender marker ‘@’] has been seen recently in certain texts of a more or less pamphleteering nature
Porto Dapena, J.-A (1999: 5)

Whilst on the face of it, it may seem fair to argue for what is apparently an objective use of language and that it is desirable for dictionaries to aspire to be as ‘objective’ as possible, the real possibility of achieving full neutrality within the context of an andocentric society which uses language androcentricly is nothing more than an chimera. By failing to recognise and challenge such androcentric uses of language, dictionaries inevitably perpetuate and validate them. The point is, therefore, not to make dictionaries more objective but rather to reorient their subjectivity in line with a more overtly progressive ideology:

[...] the object of tampering with linguistic conventions is to make the point that the way of using language which most people consider 'natural' is not natural at all [...]
Cameron (1995: 156)

In fact, on closer analysis, the quote itself reveals just how easy it is to mistake one's own subjectivity for objectivity (Cfr. Cameron,

1998: 159), with the author happy to accuse his adversaries of being “pamphleteering”, as if they were trying to foist an alien ideology on language-users, whilst referring to this as the result of a “*síndrome antimachista*” (‘antisexist syndrome’), as if to deviate from the accepted male-dominant norm in language was itself some sort of undiagnosed pathology.

The consequent need call for integrating an alternative subjectivity based on a progressive, anti-androcentric agenda, is all the more necessary and all the more effective in the prescriptivist framework described, where officially recognised language authorities such as that responsible for compiling and publishing the dictionary analysed have a greater potential to influence language usage in the broader literate Galizan-speaking population.

CORPUS ANALYSIS

ON WIMYN AND MEN

There is general agreement between the two main monolingual references dictionaries in Galizan, differing almost only in their wording and coinciding to a large extent with the definition given in the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Language Academy for the term *muller* (‘woman’):

1. Person of the feminine sex [...] 2. Adult of this sex [i.e. as opposed to ‘girl’]. 3. (In relation to a man) the woman married to him. Syn. ‘wife’. Cfr. ‘lady’, ‘married woman’.
- García, C. (1997: 802)

Fortunately, this authoritative reference dictionary mercifully spares the reader the hoary old examples of stereotypical set phrases still to be found in other similar works, e.g.: ‘*Muller fatal: seductora*;

vampiresa. Muller pública: prostituta,¹ Pena (1999: 732). Not only is this asymmetrical with *home público* in the sense of a ‘public figure’, but also shows just how dictionaries can help preserve and perpetuate certain usages even when they no longer coincide with actual usage, because I have never heard or seen this phrase used in Galizan. Dictionaries can therefore prescribe and/or proscribe certain usages whether or not they are in common usage by including them in their definitions. Dictionaries are not, therefore, objective or neutral simply by reflecting conservative or malestream values, and the ideological slant inevitably present in lexicography should be turned to the advantage of renovating the language in line with the needs of the new Century, rather than fossilizing it in prehistory.

Nevertheless, the definition provided by the Galizan Royal Language Academy is, at least, a huge improvement on the definition provided by the *Novo dicionário da lingual portuguesa*, which is sadly and worryingly reminiscent of the Margaret Atwood’s handmaid (*op. cit.*):

Human being of the feminine sex capable of conceiving and giving birth to other human beings, distinguished from men by these characteristics.
Buarque de Holanda (1986: 1168)

Incidentally, such a definition also begs the question whether men are not involved in procreation, thereby further implying, by extension, that women are also ‘naturally’ responsible for ‘their’ offspring as mothers. It would seem that certain dictionary compilers are happy to continue to propagate the myth that a wimyn’s place is in the womb...

¹ Literally: ‘Femme fatale: seductress, vamp. Public woman: prostitute.’

One might be tempted to argue that this is one advantage of the ‘isolationist’ stance, i.e. not identifying Galizan as a co-lect of Portuguese, in as much as it leaves the lexicographers’ hands free to set up their own, more impartial or differently oriented definitions and usages. And while this may well be true in theory at least, in practice such considerations for anti-androcentric language planning seem to be largely ignored and backgrounded to other specifically philological concerns of equal ideological weight, i.e. striving to atrophy differences between Galizan and Portuguese. To this extent, therefore, while the dictionaries analysed do avoid the glaringly retrograde definitions cited above for their Portuguese counterparts, they still fail to rid themselves of vast disparities between the way men and womyn are defined, reflecting a continued underlying androcentrism.

It is, for example, noteworthy that while ‘wife’ is given as a synonym for ‘woman’ in García (1997: 802) and not merely as a semantically related term, the same is not true of the definitions provided for ‘man’ (*Vid. infra*) which includes ‘husband’ as one possible meaning of the term but, significantly, does not include it as a synonym, thus avoiding defining men in relation to wimyn. In fact, the only related term to which the reader is referred within the definitions concerning ‘man’ is ‘person’. It is clear, then, that the underlying view of wimyn expressed by the dictionary definitions is that wimyn can legitimately be defined in terms of their marital relationship with men (though not with other wimyn in the case of same-sex marriages) whereas men cannot be defined in similar terms, but rather in terms of pseudo-generics where men represent the whole of humynkind.

In order, therefore, to glean a better and fuller understanding of the way wimyn are portrayed by the dictionary as a whole, the previous definitions of the term *muller* should be contrasted with those given for *home* (‘man’). From a purely objective, biological point of view, the definitions should actually vary little if at all if the semantics of language is to be based upon external realities rather than social

stereotypes. Any other considerations based on social conventions and norms and as such should preferably be labelled accordingly in references dictionaries, including specific recommendations regarding the appropriateness or not of such usages etc. In the case of the definitions given for the term 'woman', this is far from being the case, with the dictionary placing social definitions of 'man' as a gender on a par with sexual/biological definitions:

The first thing to strike the reader when comparing the two entries in question is the vast difference in space given over to defining each term. The term *muller* is defined in 54 words under 3 different subheadings, each with one corresponding illustrative sentence (i.e. a total of 3) with 1 synonym *esposa* ('wife') and 2 associated terms defined elsewhere as main entries, i.e. *dona* ('lady') and *señora* ('married woman'). No further example sentences are provided. The term *home*, on the other hand, apparently requires over seven times more words to define it, with the total of 421 words divide into 7 different subheadings and including a rich and varied range of complementary set phrases and illustrative sentences.

Owing to the extension of the definition, the term *home* needs to be analysed piece by piece.

Rather revealingly, unlike the equivalent definition for *muller*, the primary definition of *home* is not a biological one based on sex, but rather on a highly polemic social usage of the term as a pseudo-generic:

Man: 1. Animal belonging to the human species, the most highly evolved animal on Earth, essentially characterised by its vertical position, its use of an articulate language, highly developed intelligence and the capacity to reason [...]. Cfr. 'person'.
García, C. (1997: 619)

Whereas the dictionary definition for *muller* ('woman') referred the reader to the hyponyms *dona* ('lady') and *señora* ('lady, married woman'), the corresponding entry for *home* ('man') refers the reader to the item *persoa* ('person'), supposedly a synonym for 'man' in the pseudo-generic usage of the term. Contrasting this primary definition of 'man' with that given for 'woman', the inescapable logical conclusion can only be that 'woman' is a hyponym or subtype of 'man' not only in one meaning of the term, but in fact in its primary meaning.²

Some would argue this use of the masculine as a pseudo-generic is natural, necessary and/or easily decipherable. Although the following example applies to Spanish and the generic use of the term *padres* [lit. 'fathers'] to mean 'parents', the argument is equally valid for Galizan and other related masculine pseudo-generics such as *home*:

One member of the [Royal Spanish Language] Academy claimed that it would be 'superfluous and even ridiculous' to recast the phrase *Me acuerdo mucho de mis padres* (m) 'I often think of my parents' into *Me acuerdo mucho de mi padre y de mi madre* 'I often think of my father and of my mother' [Alarcos Llorach, 1999: 136]. Naturally, many situational context will unmistakably disambiguate the masculine form (as e.g., in the latter case because nobody is likely to have two fathers) Kjær (2002: 272)

² Whether it is etymologically motivated or not, the respellings 'womyn', 'wimyn' and 'humyn' adopted here is a symbolic reaction to precisely this kind of subordination of wimyn to men by implicitly defining wimyn in terms of their relationship to men, e.g. establishing 'wife' as primary synonym for 'womyn' or by establishing 'men' as a pseudo-generic synonymous with 'humyn being', thus effectively relegating wimyn to the status of a subtype of men.

The argument is of course only true from a heterosexist point of view, i.e. the impossibility of a gay male couple having children and also resides upon a subjective aesthetic value judgement of what is 'superfluous and ridiculous'. I would argue that the alternative phrase is actually quite natural-sounding and, moreover, that if either of the two parties involved in procreation, i.e. an adult's relationship to its offspring, is 'superfluous', then it is inevitably the father, not the mother.

Taking this same line of argument one step further, others imply that a failure to accept the androcentric ideology underpinning the use of such masculine pseudo-generics is to be 'oversensitive':

The masculine form of the nouns – unlike the feminine form – isn't always used to refer to the sex of the person referred to, but also normally possesses, as we know, a generic semantic value and [is] therefore indifferent to the male/female distinction, which is why we say, for example, *El hombre es un ser social* [lit. 'Men are social beings], which refers, obviously, not just to male men (*sic.*) but also to women, who should not feel discriminated against. [...] This [...] far from being 'sexist' is the normal use of the language which, far from discriminating amongst the sexes, what it does is to bring them together and to unite them referentially.

Porto Dapena. J.-A. (1999: 6)

Note the unfortunate - although perhaps not quite so fortuitous - use of the term 'normal' here, which is the very quid of the issue in hand, i.e. what is accepted as normal and by whom and with what right (*Cfr.* Cameron 1995: 121-122), thus effectively relegating all other uses to the realms of deviance. The obvious flaw with such a line of

argument involves the fact that masculine and feminine, male and female, are not actually brought together and united under a common class, but rather that everything feminine, even in a majority, is necessarily subjugated to the masculine. The nuance is not only glaringly obvious but also highly significant.

In practice, therefore, there is a considerable scope for ambiguous and erroneous interpretations of what are supposed to be ‘generic’ uses of masculine terms and gender, and it is always up to the wimyn addressees of the message to try and construe whether the speaker’s intention was to include or exclude them. It is obvious, for example, that ‘men’s toilets’ are reserved for males, but is it conversely not quite so obvious whether ‘one man one vote’ means what it says or is open to a wider interpretation meaning ‘one person one vote’. The ‘correct’ interpretation of the latter depends, clearly, not upon the ‘linguistic system’ which Dapena seems to feel threatened by what he terms the “anti-sexist syndrome”, but rather by social conventions set in a specific time and place. In legal terms, failure to distinguish correctly, for example between a pseudo-generic *fillos* (lit. ‘sons’) to mean *decendencia* (i.e. ‘children; decedents’) clearly leaves the door open to interpretations of whether or not the term actually covers female decedents or not (see Baxter, 2004b).

Languages are not merely structured systems, immutable and eternal existing within a void which speakers must adhere at the risk of the system collapsing (*Cfr.* Cameron 1995: 94-97) as Dapena seems to suggest:

[...] certain anomalous uses of gender which are spreading to an alarming rate in modern-day Spanish and [...] which represent a serious threat for the system – and its corresponding functionality – of the flexional forms of the noun
Dapena (1999, 5)

On the contrary, in fact, as Offred would say, “Context is all” (Atwood, 1987). In other words, what Dapena claims that “as we know” (*op. cit.*) about how to ‘correctly’ interpret masculine pseudo-generics actually depends not upon the actual structure of the language *per se* but on the way language is actually used in constantly fluctuating social contexts, i.e. it depends upon our knowledge of the way society works not language. As such, therefore, what language reform proposals seek to challenge, ‘threaten’ and alter are the values expressed by such usages – languages don’t just break down and people stop being able to communicate, as the authors appears to suggest. Moreover, the onus of such contextualising in order to decide whether masculines are to be interpreted as masculines or as pseudo-generics is, of course, exclusively on wimyn, as men are *de facto* always included. This perhaps helps explain, in part at least, this particular critic’s refusal to acknowledge how, from his own personal, male experience of language usage as an addressee of pseudo-generics, anyone could legitimately feel marginalised by the use of overly masculine pseudo-generics.

The implication of this and its relevance to anti-andocentric lexicography policy would be to recognise that such pseudo-generic usages of masculine forms as *home* to mean ‘humyn being’ is in fact not a characteristic of the language as a system but of social convention and as such falls outside the scope of rigorous dictionary definitions to the extent that the dictionary does not supply the parameters necessary to determine when such a usage is seen as valid and when it is not. It would be preferable to adopt other strategies which acknowledge such potential usage in practice but including recommended alternatives, e.g. “Man: Sometimes incorrectly used as a synonym for person’ or ‘humyn being’. This usage is imprecise, incorrect and potentially offensive by marginalising wimyn and as such should be avoided”.

One could of course object that dictionaries are not or should not serve as vehicles designed to spread any particular ideology. However, as we have already pointed out, a failure to subscribe expressly to a particular agenda inevitably implies subscribing to that which dominates society at large. In practice, therefore, by not adhering clearly to a progressive, non-androcentric ideology, dictionaries always serve as vehicles effectively spreading and legitimising malestream, androcentric discourses.

From what we have seen, against the charge that any attempt to expose and/or correct an androcentric usage of language, in this case as it is codified and legitimated by authoritative reference dictionaries, is “[...] inelegant – if not to say incorrect – [...]” (Dapena, 1999: 6), surely the contrary is true, i.e. that it is the claim that androcentric usage of male generics is in any way natural which is incorrect. And surely it is far from “superfluous” or “ridiculous” (Alarcos Llorac, *apud* Kjær, *op. cit.*) to want to try and highlight androcentric discriminatory discourse expressed by normalised language usage when men treat wimyn as mere belongings to be done with as they see fit (‘woman’ = ‘wife’, i.e. existing only by dint of her marital relationship to her ‘man’), beating, maiming, raping and murdering them by their thousands every day. In a word, when forced to chose between being “ridiculous or invisible” (Eide, 1993), surely ridiculous is preferable. In the twenty-first century, the time has come when dictionaries should opt for definitions of wimyn which differ from the traditional stereotypes of wife, mother, and virgin and whore...

2. Individual of the masculine sex belonging to the human species, e.g. ‘Man’s reproductive organs’, ‘men and women have the same rights’.
García, C. (*idem*)

Note that the first example could be ambiguously intended to be a pseudo-generic in such sentences as ‘Man’s reproductive organs

are less effective than those of animals'. Also, given the overall panorama analysed so far, the second example give might be construed as a mere sop to feminism and a gambit to deflect possible criticism. This is, of course, merely lip service, as it is clear that men and wimyn do not have the same rights even within the limited scope of a monolingual reference dictionary.

3. Human being of the masculine sex, considered from the point of view of his qualities and defects, e.g. 'He's a formal man', 'A man of action', 'A calm man'.
García, C. (*idem*)

The choice of set phrases reflects only positive qualities attributed to males by the dictionary. Thankfully, however, the dictionary under study doesn't engage in the use of negative counter-examples to define wimyn as in the case of the *Cumio* dictionary (Pena, 1999): instead, wimyn are brushed off with as few lines as possible without any such illustrative sentences accorded their male counterparts. Quite simply, they seem not to exist in any mention-worthy social function above and beyond their basic definition:

In a world where language and naming are power, silence is oppressive, is violence.
Rich (1879: 204)

It is also worth noting that none of the adjectives used actually describe specifically male 'qualities and defects'. In order, therefore, for the illustrative sentences to better capture such 'qualities and defects' more exclusively masculine traits might have been appropriate, e.g. *É habitual que o home padeza impotencia erectil* ('Men often suffer from erectile dysfunction, i.e. impotence'), *O cáncer de próstata está en aumento nos homes maiores* ('Prostate cancer is on the increase in older men'), etc.

4. Human beings of the masculine sex considered from the point of view of their professional, social relations, etc. ‘Man of letters’, ‘Statesman’.
García, C. (*idem*)

The precise nature of this particular definition is unclear and blurred when compared with previous ones. It initially appears that it provides a gender-based definition as opposed to a sex-based one, although the examples given do not fit in with this initial appraisal. Once again, the adjectives used are all positively charged. While some lexicographers apparently seem to feel that negative connotations such as ‘prostitute’ are quite appropriate within the framework of a succinct definition of *wimyn*, albeit not in the case of the dictionary in hand (*vid. ut supra*), there also seems to be a general trend to exclude such negative features when describing men.

It might perhaps be interesting and instructive to include adjectives more habitually reserved to describe *wimyn*, not as a reprisal but in order to make readers question why they feel such usage is odd when applied to men and therefore to reconsider whether it is, in turn, equally suited to describe *wimyn*, e.g. *home belo* (‘beautiful man’), *home divorciado* (‘divorcee’), *home lareto* (‘gossipy man’), etc.

5. An individual answerable to a civil or military authority, e.g. ‘The commissar and his men’, ‘Twenty thousand men made up the line of combat’.
García, C. (*idem*)

What is meant by ‘an individual answerable to a civil authority’ is unclear, unless the implication is that all civil servants can legitimately be referred to in the masculine. As far as military authorities are concerned, on the other hand, *wimyn* can, of course,

also be soldiers. This particular of pseudo-generic masculine has been debunked quite clearly by Kjær. Once again, the example cited refers to Spanish but is equally applicable to Galizan:

The opposition *hombre/mujer* is highly asymmetrical in Spanish [and identically so in Galizan] [...] During the Gulf War, a very influential newspaper in Spain, *El País*, wrote: *Los soldados (m) estadounidenses en el frente echan de menos el alcohol y las mujeres (f)*. ('The American soldiers at the front are longing for alcohol and women.') [...] Considering that female soldiers actually were present during the war, the example suggests a connection of *mujeres* to 'sexual encounter'. (Note that the masculine form *los soldados* cannot be interpreted generically)
Kjær (2002: 261)

This is an antiquated hangover where language usage remains with its feet firmly entrenched in days gone by and as such has no place in a modern reference dictionary which aspired to set standards for language usage in the 21st Century.

6. Adult human being of the masculine sex, e.g. 'He's a [real] man now'.
García, C. (*idem*)

It is interesting to note that the definition is ambiguous, i.e. it is unclear whether it refers to biological adulthood, which is more or less quantifiable in terms of post-pubescences, or to a social concept of adulthood. The phrase used to illustrate this particular usage clearly indicates the latter, i.e. the culturally loaded concept of being accepted into the circle of adult males. While there is nothing in itself wrong with providing such anthropological definitions, it is instresting to note the lack of symmetry which exists when compared with the

equivalent definition under the main heading *muller* ('woman'), where adult womynhood, as opposed to girlhood, is defined in exclusively biological rather than cultural terms.

7. pop. (In relationship to a woman) the husband or, by extension, the partner.
García, C. (*idem*)

This definition based on a man's marital relationship with a womyn - any non-heterosexual unions are once again completely absent - is the very last of all of the possible meanings given associated with the term, even behind usage N° 5 commented above. It is interesting to note, perhaps, that the meaning of *home* ('man') meaning *esposo*, i.e. legally married husband; spouse' can be extended, according to the dictionary, to mean *compañeiro*, i.e. 'partner', whereas this is not the case for the definitions for *muller* ('woman') to mean *esposa* ('wife') which cannot apparently be extended to cover non-marital relationships described using the equivalent term *compañeira*. It may be simply that more attention was paid to the way the definitions covering men were to be written up than those defining wimyn, or it may also be a throw back to the idea that men are free to maintain relationships with wimyn and be seen as 'studs', whereas wimyn who do the same outside wedlock are seen as 'sluts'... There is, for example, to my knowledge, no female equivalent of a 'bachelor pad' in English and the accepted social view is that bachelors are those men who don't want to 'get tied down' in a marriage, whereas spinsters are those wimyn who can't find a man to marry them.

Can acquire different meanings depending upon the context and the tone of voice, such as reproach, insistence, etc., e.g. *¡Home, por favor, xa está ben!* ('Do us a favour, give it a rest'), *¡Veña, home; un pouquiño máis!* ('Go on, give us a bit more'), *¡Pero*

home!, *¿como consentes iso?* ('Really I don't know how you put up with it'), *¡Si, home, si! O que ti queiras.* ('Okay, okay, whatever you say'), *¡Home, ¿que queres que che diga?* ('Well, what can I say?'), *¡Home, home!, podías ter un pouco máis de coidado.* ('What what you're doing! Take a care!') / *¡Home claro! Por suposto.* ('Of course. Obviously')

García, C. (*idem*)

Of all of the remaining examples and set phrases, this one is particularly worthy of mention in as much as it implies that the term *home* ('man') can be used to address wimyn in certain contexts. And whilst it is true that as a popular synonym for 'of course' only the masculine term *home* and not the feminine *muller* is actually usually employed used, e.g. *Home claro!* ('Well, of course!'), when used directly to address a womyn, the term *muller* is usually used and the masculine would be generally seen as anomalous, e.g. *Veña, muller!* ('Come on, womyn'), *Que me dis, muller?* ('What do mean by that, womyn?')

By way of conclusion, although apparently less overtly sexist and androcentric by avoiding primarily childbearing functional differences, there nevertheless remains a huge qualitative and quantitative asymmetry between the way terms which differ only by their sex/gender are handled. The apparent neutrality belies disparities which relegate wimyn to a subordinate position, defining them in terms of synonyms such as 'wife', i.e. via their legally-recognised marital status in relationship to men, in a way which is not paralleled in the equivalent entries for men.

ON GIRLS AND BOYS

The two basic terms consulted were *moz-a/-o* and *rapaz-a/-Ø*, both covering similar semantic fields roughly equivalent to the English

terms ‘girl’ and ‘boy’. Both terms are only included in the dictionary under the masculine main entries *mozo* and *rapaz* respectively (see below).

The following definition is provided for the term cited as *mozo* –a:

adj. 1. Stage reached after childhood but before adulthood. ‘He’s still too young to do certain things’. Syn. ‘young’. Cfr. *rapaz* (‘boy’) 2. Also noun. ‘Your child (lit. ‘son’) is a young man’. Ant. ‘old man’. 2. By extension [person] in early adulthood or who is younger than someone else to whom they are compared. ‘He’s very young for his age’. ‘She’s still young next to a seventy year-old’. Syn ‘young’. Also noun. ‘She married a thirty-year old young man’ Ant. ‘old man’ // noun 3. Person who maintains sentimental relationship with another in relation to them. ‘He phoned his girlfriend’. Syn. ‘boyfriend’.

García, C. (1997: 800)

There is an ostensible asymmetry in the way gender-marked forms are used throughout the different example and sub definitions, whereby the feminine form is only cited explicitly - and to the exclusion of the masculine form - as a synonym for ‘girlfriend’, although, as if to dispel any doubts, the reader is faithfully referred to the masculine main heading *noivo* (‘boyfriend, fiancé’).

The definition for the term cited as *rapaz-aza* is essentially the same, with all of the explanations and sub definitions given exclusively in the masculine, i.e. *mozo* (‘young man’), *mozo*, *novo* (‘young’), *veno*, *fillo* (‘child, son’) again with the notable exception of the meaning ‘girlfriend/boyfriend’ when the synonyms “*mozq ou moza*” are given.

In both cases there is a lack of a uniform semantic criterion. Unlike *home* and *muller* which are listed as separate entries in their own right, such doublets as *moza~mozo* and *rapaza~rapaza* are lumped together under the same heading despite the fact that the semantic difference between such terms is the same as in the former case for *home~muller*, i.e. one of sex and/or gender. When compared with the way the semantically equivalent terms ‘*girl~boy*’ and ‘*garçon~fille*’ are handled in English and French dictionaries, it becomes clear that the reason for not dealing with the same terms separately in Galizan is a traditionalist one based on normative conventions rather than semantic criteria used elsewhere, i.e. owing to the lack of any ostensible lexical dimorphism.

The way the entries are listed under the masculine heading and the way the lexemes are analysed morphologically with regard to their respective masculine/feminine gender-marking suffixes is also traditionalist rather than justified in purely linguistic grounds. The conflict of principles here involves whether such nouns should be cited and listed under their masculine forms of which the feminine would be seen as particular ‘variety’ or ‘subset’ as dictated by tradition or the alternative based on a correct morphological analysis of the lexemes to be listed under their root forms. It would seem preferable for modern dictionaries to adhere to a coherent scientific approach in line with the data available at the time rather than relying on erroneous traditionalist views. It is surely a sign of the times that such androcentric usages and conventions still continue to be tolerated, flying in the face of modern morphological theory, whereas it would be genuinely surprising to find the same dictionaries quoting similar passé pseudo-scientific theories in other fields, e.g. a pre-Galilean vision of the cosmos. Wymyn, are, as usual, subject more to the constraints of traditional values, it would appear, than to the advances of the so-called knowledge-based society.

Such methodological inconsistencies and anomalies within the putatively objective, scientific structure of modern lexicography regarding ordering have been picked upon elsewhere:

An inconsistency with regard to the graphic representation of these endings found in many dictionaries, in which feminine words are presented as if they were simply derived from the masculine forms, e.g.: *niño/-a* ‘boy/girl’. Obviously, this cannot be the case. A more appropriate procedure would be to write *niñ/-o, -a* or *niñ/-a, -o*.
Kjær (2002: 255)

Furthermore, applying the criterion of alphabetic ordering to such lexemes with the appropriate –o/-a gender-marked suffixes would naturally result in the feminine items appearing first (Espiño, 1997: 35). This criterion of alphabetic ordering is applied systematically in all cases except this specific ‘detail’ where the masculine always precedes the feminine regardless of any other governing principles applied elsewhere. The only explanation can be the traditionalist view that men are more important than women:

Wilson [1560: 234; also in Mair edition 1909; 208] elsewhere states the general principle to be followed with regard to the linguistic ordering of female and male as, ‘the worthier is preferred and set before: As a man is sette before a woman’.
Quoted in Bodine (1975:128)

To those who would object that such analyses are tantamount to an academic splitting of hairs and fault-finding, the following remarks by Kjær (2002: 255) are revealing:

That this matter is not trivial can, for example, be seen in etymological dictionaries: these usually list only the masculine forms. Feminine forms and, hence, women, have no origin.

It is clear, therefore, that where wimyn are concerned, lexicography chooses tradition and convention over the coherent application of scientific principles, relegating wimyn to the status of a subcategory of 'men' who they must under no conditions be allowed to overshadow, even symbolically in the form of their order of appearance in reference dictionaries:

Men have not supplied meanings which undermine their power, diminish their prestige, or detract from their image. Intentionally or otherwise they have formulated a semantic rule which posts themselves as central and positive, as the norm, and they have classified the world from that reference point, constructing a symbolic system which represents patriarchal order
Spender (1985: 58)

CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, language mavens and panic-mongers should recognise that languages are not systems which exist in social vacuums, but are subject to social norms and conventions. What language reform projects such as the anti-androcentric agenda purport to do is to expose and challenge the values underlying androcentric uses in language in order to make people think about the implications of what they say as an initial step towards consciousness raising.

Following on from the previous statement, it becomes clear that dictionaries which adhere to traditionally accepted usage within a predominantly androcentric social climate under the pretence of neutral objectivity in fact only serve, in practice, to perpetuate and vindicate biased and slanted language uses. Lexicographers should realise that despite any good intentions to the contrary, dictionaries are

inevitably organised and written based on covert socially dominant ideologies and discourses and not on purely objective, scientific linguistic principles.

As such, therefore, lexicographers should not shirk their social responsibility when choosing to either accept or reject discriminatory uses dictated by discriminatory society, as, for instance, when defining terms such as ‘womyn’, ‘black’, ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’, etc.

Dictionaries work to an agenda whether lexicographers care to admit so or not. Language reform campaigns seek not to make dictionaries in any way ‘objective’, in which case they would continue to reflect and canonise the objective racist, sexist, homophobic society (*Cfr.* Cameron, 1998: 161), but rather to reorient their innate subjectiveness in order to bring it into line with a pluralistic, progressive agenda.

The role played by dictionaries and their potential as instruments for implementing progressive language reforms such as that defended here is even greater in the case of non-standardised languages, particularly in a prescriptivist climate such as that described for Galizan where the authority deposited in officially recognised lexicology bodies such as the two dictionaries analysed wield a considerable potential to influence usage, even by the force of law in some cases.

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