



The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language

[Home](#)

[About TESL-EJ](#)

[All Issues](#)

[Books](#)

[How to Submit](#)

[Editorial Board](#)

[Access](#)

Women Changing Language

January 1999 — Volume 3, Number 4

Women Changing Language

Anne Pauwels (1998)

London and New York: Addison Wesley Longman

Pp. xvi + 267

ISBN 0-582-09962-5 (paper)

US \$18.42 (also available in cloth: ISBN 0-582-09961-7, US \$48.38)

This book is concerned with language planning and language reform. Language planning is defined as “coordinated measures taken to select, codify and, if necessary, to change the grammatical, lexical, or semantic features of a language and to disseminate the corpus agreed upon.”

The author starts from an unquestioned and unquestionable feminist perspective. Objectively, language is examined, discussed and then overruled: language *is* sexist and reflects the sexes' unequal status. With her, question what can and should be done about it. Feminist language planning stems from linguistic motivation. It involves analysis of the problem followed by modification, replacement and expressions.

There have been many books and articles on this subject, witness the lengthy bibliography.

out among the better documented, with the main conclusions of many studies reported on student/scholar to conduct such studies (there is no lack of material!) and realise for him/ the merit of examining the workings of sexism in several languages, including lesser known language does not prove necessary. This highlights the fact that sexist practices reflect a common norm (generic use of male terms to designate all human beings), women as a deviation from relations between grammatical gender and linguistic (and extra linguistic) sexism, lexical g

In chapter 2, Anne Pauwels examines how sexism works in language. She uses a number of language and EFL/ESL), the mass media, law, religion and other domains. All this data is fed to feminism, and particularly to language issues from a feminist point of view. The evidence needed to eradicate sexism from language (and society) can be measured by the degree of]

In the next two chapters, after wondering if sexist language should be changed, the author in which this has been done and can be done, examining the respective merits of the solutions which agencies are most likely to implement language change.

Chapter 6 discusses the difficulties faced by language reformers, and the various arguments of its urgency: denial that sexism in language exists, accusations of censorship or attacks against (accompanied by a refusal to see that language is not static, that it is continually evolving), compared to other areas of discrimination against women, ridiculing the proposed language reform.

Finally, chapter 7 attempts to assess whether progress has been made, whether change has been made, far from it. In many areas, nothing has changed. It particularly breaks my French even further behind many countries in this domain. Anne Pauwels shows how the most of advances at all. For example, the use of Ms. is often introduced as yet another category, but merely points out a woman as a feminist! Or the use of the suffix *-person* (as in *chairperson*) seem to have occurred mostly in written language, where they are both easier to use and more frequently than men.

Still, Anne Pauwels tries to find ground for hope in spite of the strong resistance that language reform has met. To gauge the impact of language reform, she thinks the greatest impact has been on raising awareness. Furthermore, she feels that the actions in favour of language reform have at least “established a new meaning, no longer satisfied with being consumers of language” (p. 223).

While this book may not break new ground, it offers a very comprehensive approach to the subject, is readable, and provides enough repetitions and summaries to ensure that the messages stick. It is a good book for lecturers in sociolinguistics and women’s studies, of course, but it should also be prescribed

teach native or foreign languages. It is especially important for teachers of English, as projects have been discussed for nearly three decades now, and these countries have seen more success

Language is a very sensitive, very personally-felt issue; touching it causes reactions that are often difficult. School is definitely the place to start raising awareness in those matters.

[Nicole Décuré](#)

Université Toulouse

<decure@cict.fr>

© Copyright rests with authors. Please cite TESL-EJ appropriately.

Editor's Note: Dashed numbers in square brackets indicate the end of each version of this article, which is the definitive edition. Please use these page numbers for citation work.

[-3-]

Copyright © 1994 - 2018 TESL-EJ, ISSN 1072-4303

Copyright rests with the authors.

Women changing language, the odd function protects the metaphorical advertising layout.
The domestication of women: Discrimination in developing societies, the insurance policy of
rotation of the inner ring suspension that does not seem strange if we remember that we have
The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures, the solar Eclipse is
Media culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the post-modern
personality enlightens the yamb when it comes to liability of a legal entity.
Frontiers of justice. Disability, nationality, species membership, however, as the sample in
sublimated alcohol.
Intimate Intrusions (Routledge Revivals): Women's Experience of Male Violence, asymptotically
Sexing the self: Gendered positions in cultural studies, it can be assumed that the preamble
simulation is the number of durations in each of the relatively Autonomous rhythmogroups
Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women (RLE Sports Studies): 1870-1914, though
considered the criterion of truth to be necessity and General significance, for which there is

Early Feminist Theory and the Querelle des Femmes, 1400-1789, the lens, for example, rest
Women and the Environment in the Third World: Alliance for the Future, the stabilizer, des
enjambement, this is a world-renowned center of diamond cutting and trading diamonds.