



Treatment of Personal Gender-indexing Nouns in the Ninth Edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*

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Abstract: The need to promote and use gender-inclusive language has been on an increase quite recently and has led to the coinage of epicenes throughout the English speech community, particularly in the [+ personal] nominal subclass. This paper attempts to address the treatment of gender-indexing personal nouns with a view to pointing out their form, meaning, distribution as well as ideological overload. The findings have identified different subcategories of the gender-indexing personal nouns, ranging from the generic masculine to the epicene. Finally, the study recommends a critical approach to dictionary consultation.

Keywords: Gender, gender-indexing language, dictionary treatment, personal nouns, gender ideology

Traitement des noms personnels genrés dans la neuvième édition du *Dictionnaire Oxford d'apprentissage*.

Résumé : Le besoin de promouvoir et employer le langage inclusif est en pleine croissance et a par conséquent conduit à la création des épiciens à travers la communauté discursive anglaise et plus particulièrement dans la sous-catégorie des noms dénotant les personnes. Cet article essaie d'explorer le traitement, par la neuvième édition du *Dictionnaire Oxford d'apprentissage*, des noms personnels genrés en vue d'en déterminer la distribution, la forme, le sens ainsi que la charge idéologique. Les résultats démontrent que le dictionnaire présente une gamme des noms personnels genrés, allant du masculin générique aux épiciens. En définitive, il recommande l'approche critique dans la consultation du dictionnaire.

Mots-clés : Genre, langage genré, traitement lexicographique, noms personnels, idéologie genrée

Introduction

The view that language is part and parcel of social life, constructing, perpetuating, and/or changing social life (Bourdieu 1992; Fairclough 2003), is not new. Thus, the issue of gender-indexing in general, and the use of gender-inclusive language in particular, is of current relevance worldwide and more particularly in the English language. That is why various criticisms of sexist language have triggered the coinage and use of epicenes likely to express a gender-inclusive world view (Mills 1995; Sunderland 2006). The dictionary being a depository of linguistic knowledge, at least as far as the lexicon is concerned, there is need to examine how it addresses the issue of gender-referring usage, more particularly its treatment of personal nouns; as the latter are the most at stake in gender-indexing.

This paper draws on the macro- and microstructures of the ninth edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (OALD9, henceforth) in order to examine how personal gender-indexing nouns are treated, and single out achievements and gaps in connection with levelling lexical linguistic sexism. Aside from some methodological considerations, linguistic sexism and nonsexism will be adumbrated before elaborating on different facets of the treatment of personal nouns in the dictionary under consideration.

1. Methodology

This paper is basically a desk research since it is based on written materials (Sunderland 2006, p. xxiii), *viz.* OALD9. That is, the collection of the data consisted in the skim-reading of the dictionary under study. This endeavour was first and foremost guided by the relevance of the noun to the issues of gender-indexing and to its membership in the personal subclass. Thus, the selection was based the expression (*i.e.* the form) and content (*i.e.* meaning) sides of the item considered (Svensén 2009). Given a multiplicity of such terms, only those personal nouns ending in *man*, *woman* and their epicene counterparts were selected. The overall corpus of randomly selected items (see Onwuegbuzie & Collins 2007) generated 134 [+ personal] nouns.

The analysis was based on a qualitative mixed design, with results as point of integration (Schoonenboom & Johnson 2017). Qualitatively, use was made of lexical morphology and lexical semantics (Roey 1990) in order to examine the form and content of each gender-referring item, and point out whether it is gender-specific or gender-inclusive and why. Quantitatively, descriptive statistics will be used to supply the absolute and relative frequency of each of the emergent categories.

2. Linguistic Gender-indexing

This section is intended to offer a theoretical background to the study. Accordingly, it will address in turn, gender-indexing language in the English language, with a particular focus on sexist and non-sexist usage. The term *index* is to be considered in the trichotomy of the notion of sign: (1) *icon* or *iconic signs* (*i.e.* signs which display similarities with items they stand for), (2) *index* or *indexical signs* (*i.e.* signs which point to the items they stand for, and (3) *symbols* or *Symbolic signs* (*i.e.* signs that are arbitrary) (see O'Grady *et al.* 1993, pp. 500-2). Thus, by *gender-indexing* or *gender-referring language* is meant a kind of language which denotes gender. Talking of gender-indexing implies the recognition of a connection between language and social life to such an extent that language can index or construct gender ideologies. Stated otherwise, 'language and social life are inextricably linked'. To quote Fairclough (2003, p.2): 'language is a reducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language' (Bourdieu 1992, p.2).

The term *gender* is to be understood from the social outlook as the way society assigns roles to the biological sex (Tshimanga 2016). Gender-indexing language may be discriminatory or non-discriminatory depending on whether it privileges or discriminates against the referents of either sex. In the former case, we talk of sexist (*i.e.* gender-biased) language while in the latter we talk of non-sexist (*i.e.* gender-inclusive) language. In the dominance theory, sexist language has been viewed as that constituting a variety of bias against women (Spender 1980). In the English language, this type of language has mainly consisted of the use of the masculine as generic, be it in content lexical items (e.g. *mankind*, meaning 'human kind') or in the phoric elements such as *his* (as in everybody has *his* dictionary, with *everybody* and *he* being coreferential) (see *inter alia* Mills 1995; Mulamba and Tshimanga 2020; Tshimanga 2016 and 2021). These two instances help the further subdivision of sexist language into lexical and structural sexism (see Mulamba and Tshimanga 2006). It is also important to note with Tshimanga (2021) that sexism can be extended to the whole discourse and can be subtle or overtly expressed as in the instances above (see also Mills 1995).

Given that this type of language has been variously assaulted worldwide, different epicenes have been coined with a view to favouring and implementing a gender-inclusive perspective (Mills 1995). More importantly, once such items are coined, they enter the lexical stock of the English language, here represented by the dictionary (Tshimanga 2021). Dictionaries are important sources of information for users of all walks of life and are purposefully designed for the satisfaction of various user needs (see Tshimanga 2021). They thus serve a dual

purpose: (2) utility and (2) documentary purposes. In the former case, they may support communication and/or language learning while in the latter they help preserve information for the future (Svensén 2009, p. 1). Viewed in this light, the dictionary may play an important role in the maintenance, perpetuation, construction or change of social norms. Besides, as an authoritative resource book for both native and non-native speakers of any language (see Abecassis 2008, p. 2), it helps in settling usage problems (Roey 1990, p. 15; Leech 1974, p. 202). Given that dictionaries are supposed to settle any usage problem and satisfy multifarious and dynamic user needs (Gao 2010, p. 285; Leech 1974, pp. 203-4), this paper attempts to examine the OALD9 with a view to finding out how and *to what extent*, this dictionary treats gender-indexing personal nouns. This, in turn, will allow spotting out different ideological loads behind such a treatment.

3. Dictionary Treatment of Personal Gender-indexing Nouns

This move is concerned with examining different personal gender-indexing nouns and addressing their treatment by OALD9. Addressing the dictionary and its content, Svensén (2009, p.5) matches its various types of information with the concept of the linguistic sign and considers the latter as consisting of an expression (*i.e.* a certain form) and content (*i.e.* a certain meaning). These constituents are supplemented with the function of the sign (*i.e.* a certain way the sign behaves when it is combined with other signs). On these grounds, Svensén (2009) provides the fourfold basic typology of different characteristics of words and their combinations as commonly treated in dictionaries:

1. formal characteristics (expression-side characteristics), *i.e.* their spelling, pronunciation and morphology (inflection and word-formation);
2. semantic characteristics (content-side characteristics), *i.e.* their meaning;
3. syntagmatic characteristics (function), *i.e.* how they combine with other words and word combinations;
4. pragmatic characteristics, which, among other things, include factors involved in their use.

Although this typology condenses all the relevant information generally found in a common dictionary, it runs afoul of being more microstructure-oriented. The collection and analysis of gender-referring items were selectively based on the aforementioned typology: (1) inflection and word-formation (formal characteristics), (2) the meaning of the lexical item (semantic characteristics), (3) part of speech or word category (syntagmatic characteristics), and (4) marking (pragmatic characteristics). Finally, in the macro- and microstructures, the locus was put on gender-indexing items, and particularly,

gender-referring personal nouns. By *personal nouns* are meant those referring to human beings. Therefore, *gender-indexing personal nouns* are to be understood as personal nouns which refer to men or women (see Tshimanga 2021).

The guiding principle for considering a given lexical item as relevant to the study was first the presence of an explicitly gender-referring form and its meaning. Second, the definition(s), examples or illustrations of the item were also considered; in order to address the subtly gendered or ungendered lexical items. Given the diversity of gender-indexing words, it was decided to work only on words ending in or comprising the terms *man*, *woman* (e.g. *policeman*, *policewoman*) and their gender-neutral counterpart (e.g. *police constable*). A careful examination of the macrostructure of OALD9 reveals that the category of gender-referring personal nouns can be sliced in ten emergent subsets: (1) the masculine (M), (2) the masculine and feminine conjoined (M/F), (3) the feminine (F), (4) generic masculine nouns (GM), (5) masculine and generic meanings conjoined (M&G), (6) generic masculine and generic nouns conjoined (GM/G), (7) generic nouns (G), (8) feminine and generic nouns conjoined (F/G), (9) masculine, feminine, and generic nouns conjoined (M/F/G), and (10) feminine and masculine meaning conjoined (F/M). Each of these will be explored below.

3.1 Masculine Nouns

As for OALD9, personal masculine nouns in *man* comprised in the corpus can also be further subcategorized into those which have their feminine counterpart lexicalized and those which do not. Explicitly masculine nouns comprised in the corpus are illustrated as below.

	<i>Definiendum</i>	<i>Definiens</i>
(1)	<i>He-man</i>	(often humorous) a strong <u>man</u> with big muscles, especially one who likes to show other people how strong he is (OALD9, p.734)
(2)	<i>Man Friday</i>	A <u>male assistant</u> who does many different kinds of work → COMPARE GIRL FRIDAY (OALD9, p.946)
(3)	<i>Night-watchman</i>	A <u>man</u> whose job is to guard a building such as a factory at night (OALD9, p.1044)
(4)	<i>Watchman</i>	(old-fashioned) a <u>man</u> whose job is to guard a building, for example a bank, an office building or a factory, especially at night → SEE NIGHT WATCHMAN (OALD9, p.1760)

All the examples in (1) to (4) are gender-specific personal nouns in *man*. Example (1) is a compound noun composed of the noun *he-* (see OALD9, p.723) and the noun *man*. This word is ideologically loaded in that *he-* denotes 'strong'. Accordingly, one may infer the implicit ideological contrast that 'men are strong

vs. women are weak'. Furthermore, one can infer from examples (2) to (4) the fact that the jobs they describe are or were meant to be male-exclusive. And on this ground, they are gender-biased. Given that the jobs described in (2) to (4) are still current, there is still a lexical gap in referring specifically to a woman who would carry out such jobs; and so is there for the related gender-inclusive term. Simply stated, while the male-referring terms are listed in the dictionary under study, female-referring ones as well as gender-inclusive ones are still lexical gaps.

3.2 *Joint Use of Masculine and Feminine Nouns*

This subsection is devoted to a discussion of entries in which the masculine and the feminine terms are presented together. Such a joint use of the masculine and the feminine terms aims at avoiding gender-bias due to the use of the masculine as generic. That is why it is right to argue that when conjoined in the formal part, the two terms are regarded as one generic form. It is worth noting however that confusion may arise as to whether the term in *man* taken separately is inclusive, specific or both. The latter option is the one coming at the forefront when the semantic part is carefully considered. Such terms are illustrated in the following examples.

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(5)	<i>Spokesman/ spokeswoman:</i>	<i>a <u>person</u> who speaks on behalf of a group or an organization</i> → NOTE AT GENDER → MORE LIKE THIS 25, page R 16 (OALD9, p.1508)
(6)	<i>Weatherman/ Weathergirl</i>	<i>(informal) a person on radio or television whose job is describing the weather and telling people what it is going to be like</i> → MORE LIKE THIS 25, page R16 (OALD9, p.1768)
(7)	<i>Stuntman/ stuntwoman</i>	<i>a <u>person</u> whose job is to do dangerous things in place of an actor in a film/movie, etc; a person who does dangerous things in order to entertain people</i> (OALD9, p.1558)

The examples (5) to (7) above clearly illustrate the view whereby the masculine and its feminine counterpart are conjoined in the dictionary entry. Besides, the conjoint of the masculine and feminine terms is to be considered as a single gender-neutral term. This stems from the fact that the semantic part uses the gender-inclusive term *person* as genus proximum with reference to this conjoint. However, this is still confusing since both the gender-specific and the

gender-inclusive meanings are still possible for the first conjoin (i.e. the noun in *man*), which, as already said earlier is gender-biased. Another gender-bias shown in example (6) above is due to the differential construction or treatment of men and women in terms of age: the masculine term *weatherman* is [+adult] while the corresponding feminine *weathergirl* is [-adult]. On the other hand, on the positive front, the semantic parts in (5) and (6) contain cross-reference to other parts of the dictionary where users are likely to further information regarding the targeted gender-referring items. However, such cross-reference structure is missing in example (7).

3.3 Feminine Nouns

The explicitly feminine terms of the corpus can be further subcategorized into two different subsets: (1) those having their masculine counterparts and (2) those without masculine counterparts. As pointed out in the section regarding explicitly masculine terms, the terms in the present category may also be biased against males as they may imply that the realities these terms denote are conceptualized as explicitly feminine. The other side of the coin is that the latter terms may also be biased against women if the activities they denote are negatively connoted. Below are some instances to illustrate this situation.

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(8)	<i>Chambermaid</i>	A <u>woman</u> whose job is to clean bedrooms, usually in a hotel (OALD 9, p.241)
(9)	<i>Country-woman</i>	(1) A <u>woman</u> born or living in the country, not the town (2) a <u>woman</u> born or living in the same country as sb else (OALD9, p.350)
(10)	<i>Handmaiden/ handmaid</i>	(1) (old-fashioned) a female servant (2) (formal) something that supports and helps sth else (OALD9, p.710)
(11)	<i>Needle-woman</i>	A <u>woman</u> who sews well (OALD9, p.1035)

Except for the term *countrywoman* in (9), which has its masculine counterpart *countryman* lexicalized, the remaining words in (8), (10), and (11) have no masculine counterpart lexicalized in OALD9. They may be regarded as biased against men since they construct the view that the jobs they denote are female-exclusive. Conversely, since these terms refer to household chores at large, they may also be said to be biased against women as they seem to perpetuate the stereotypical view of constraining women's job sphere to the household.

3.4 Generic Masculine Nouns

This point is concerned with cases of generic masculine nouns in *man* (i.e. those which are explicitly masculine but are considered as denoting both sexes). The generic masculine meaning is highlighted by the semantic part which uses gender-neutral defining terms to refer to such terms. Generic masculine nouns in *man* are supplied in the following examples:

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(12)	<i>Bandsman</i>	A <u>musician</u> who plays in a military or brass band (OALD9, p.105)
(13)	<i>Batman</i>	(BrE)The personal <u>servant</u> of an officer in the armed forces (OALD9, p.115)
(14)	<i>Chairman</i>	(1)The <u>person</u> in charge of a meeting, who tells people when they can speak, etc. (2) the person in charge of a committee, a company, etc. note at gender (...) →NOTE AT GENDER (OALD9, p.240)
(15)	<i>Clansman</i>	A <u>member</u> of a clan (OALD9, p.268)
(16)	<i>Woodman/ woodsman</i>	A <u>person</u> who works or lives in a forest, taking care of and sometimes cutting down trees, etc. (OALD9, p.1796)

A careful consideration of the respective formal and semantic parts of the items, in examples (12) to (16) above, shows that these items are explicitly masculine in form. This is highlighted by the presence of the morpheme *man* in their internal structure. They are considered as generic given the use of gender-inclusive terms such as *musician*, *servant*, *member*, and *person* as genus proximum in the defining vocabulary. Since they are considered as hyperonyms subsuming both men and women, such terms may be said to be biased against women. The reason is that they have been accused of subordinating women to men and of obfuscating their identity. Instance (14) diverges from the other instances above in that it includes a cross-reference to the usage note on gender where the dictionary user is likely to get awareness of different issues related to the use of gender-referring items at large.

3.5 Joint Use of Masculine and Generic Meaning

A careful examination of the data from OALD9 shows that the latter also comprises some entries which contain one morphologically masculine term in *man* with two denotations, one generic and the other masculine. Such words, as any other polysemic word, are ambiguous since one can be at a loss regarding the meaning at stake. Furthermore, they may be biased on two counts. One, when

the masculine denotation is considered, the word may be viewed as presenting a monocular view of the reality described, especially if its feminine counterpart is not lexicalized. Two, when the generic denotation is considered, these words may be also accused of constructing a gender-biased point of view for the same reasons as those already put forth for the use of generic masculine above. They are exemplified in the following instances:

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(17)	<i>caveman</i>	(1) <i>A person who lived in a cave thousands of years ago</i> (2) <i>a man who behaves in an aggressive way</i> (OALD9, p.234)
(18)	<i>Countryman</i>	(1) <i>A person born in or living in the same country as sb else syn compatriot</i> (2) <i>A man living or born in the country, not in the town</i> (OALD9, p.350)
(19)	<i>Workman</i>	(1) <i>a man who is employed to do physical work</i> (2) <i>(with an adjective) a person who works in the way mentioned</i> (OALD9, p.1801)

A critical examination of the examples above shows that in (17) and (18) denotation (1) is respectively gender-inclusive. It refers to both men and women as witnessed by the use of the term *person* as genus proximum in the definition. By contrast, the second denotation in both of these examples is gender-specific since it refers to men alone. This is highlighted by the use of the masculine term *man* as genus proximum. Conversely, in example (19), the first denotation is gender-specific while the second is gender-inclusive as noticed through the respective genus proximums *man* and *person*. In all the above instances, the terms behave as generic masculine, on the one hand, and as gender-specific, on the other. In the former case, they run afoul of the common reproach associated with generic masculine, *viz.* subordinating and obfuscating the feminine. Above all, since they are constructed as both gender-inclusive and gender-specific, such terms are confusing for both the dictionary user and participants in an exchange in a real context of situation.

3.6 Joint Use of Generic Masculine and Generic Nouns

By the use of generic masculine and generic nouns in this point is meant the conjoining of nouns which are explicitly masculine in form with those which are explicitly gender-neutral. As can be observed, the generic masculine term is understood as both masculine and generic at the same time. Such nouns are illustrated in the following examples:

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(20)	Dustman/ refuse collector	(also informal binman, formal refuse collector (all BrE) (NAme garbage man) a person whose job is to remove waste from outside houses, etc. note at rubbish (OALD9, p.479)
(21)	Fielder/ Fieldsman	(in cricket and baseball) a member of the team that is trying to catch the ball rather than hit it (OALD9, p.574)
(22)	Signalman/ signaler	(BrE) (1) a person whose job is operating on a railway (2) a person trained to give and receive signals in the army or navy (OALD9, p.1448)

The entries in examples (20) to (22) illustrate the joint use of generic masculine nouns in *man* and gender-inclusive ones. A particular effort of degendering the English language may be noticed in the supply of both of these terms, with the gender-inclusive term intended as a gender-neutral way of referring to the profession. However, since the generic masculine co-exists with the generic one, one might argue that this strategy has not advanced the situation much. The point is that the generic masculine will still convey a biased view of subordinating women to men. Therefore, the choice is left to the user of selecting the appropriate item depending on the context. That is why this situation may be said to confirm Sunderland's (2006, p. 12) assertion that '[n]on-sexist items have on the whole, however, remained alternatives to, rather than replacements for, sexist language items (...), though they may have reduced in frequency.' In simpler terms, though the gender-inclusive terms *refuse collector* (20), *fielder* (21), and *signaller* (22) are intended as gender-free terms, they coexist with their gender-biased counterparts.

3.7 Generic Nouns

The concern here is the set of generic nouns (*i.e.* those which are explicitly gender-inclusive in form and meaning). Since the tendency to consider some jobs as exclusively masculine or feminine has been criticized as perpetuating gender-based inequalities, some effort has been made for the coinage of terms which stress the profession and not the sex of the practitioner. This is the right situation insofar as neutrality is intended. When by contrast there is need for gender-specification, neutralization may end up as a wrong shortcut. Following are some illustrations of generic nouns comprised in OALD9:

<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
--------------------	------------------

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|--|
| (23) | <i>Confidence
trickster</i> | <i>A <u>person</u> who tricks others into giving him or her money, etc. (OALD9, p.317)</i> |
| (24) | <i>Fresher</i> | <i>(BrE, informal) a <u>student</u> who has just started his or her first term at a university. (OALD9, p. 627)</i> |
| (25) | <i>Hunter</i> | (1) <i>A <u>person</u> who hunts wild animals for food or sport...</i>
(2) <i>(usually in compounds) a person who looks for and collects a particular kind of thing (OALD9, p. 770)</i> |
| (26) | <i>Lumberjack/
logger</i> | <i>especially in the US and Canada) a <u>person</u> whose job is cutting down trees or cutting or transporting wood (OALD9, p.931)</i> |

As can be observed from the examples above, the compound noun *confidence trickster* in (23), *fresher* in (24), *hunter* in (25), and *lumberjack* and *logger* in (26) are formally and semantically ungendered. On these grounds, they are gender-inclusive, and help by the same token, talk about both men and women in a nondiscriminatory way. Conversely, such forms may become inappropriate where gender-highlighting is needed. If on the one hand, they are politically correct terms in equally constructing masculinity and femininity, they might, on the other hand, become irrelevant if specific gender-reference is at stake (Mills 1995). Such lexical generality is known as vagueness 'where expressions display a degree of indeterminacy' (Saeed 2010, p. 8).

3.8 Joint Use of the Feminine and Generic Terms

OALD9 also comprises some cases where the feminine term is presented alongside the generic one or vice versa. This way of presenting lexical items testifies to the facts that not only are former male-specific occupations expected to be gender-inclusive but so are equally those which were formerly considered as female-specific. Stating it otherwise, there is a tendency to void the gender-specific job-sphere to the benefit of the gender-inclusive one. And such actions seem to be taking place in both directions. Here are some examples:

- | | <u>Definiendum</u> | <u>Definiens</u> |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| (27) | <i>Barmaid/
bartender</i> | <i>(BrE) (NAmE bartender) a <u>woman</u> who works in a bar, serving drinks (OALD9, p.109)</i> |
| (28) | <i>Charwoman/
charlady/ char</i> | <i>(all BrE, old-fashioned) a <u>woman</u> whose job is to clean a house, an office building, etc. (OALD9, p.248)</i> |

The examples above provide both the feminine and the morphologically gender-neutral term simultaneously. In (27) *barmaid* is feminine while *bartender*

is generic. When one looks at the semantic part, one can notice that it has been given a feminine-specific meaning. Despite this, the term *bartender* appears elsewhere in the dictionary with a gender-inclusive meaning. By contrast, in (28), *charwoman* and *charlady* are morphologically and semantically gender-specific, viz. feminine. Conversely, *char* is formally gender-inclusive but is still feminine in meaning as shown by the semantic part. Furthermore, if the male-referring term *barman* does exist as counterpart to *barmaid* and *bartender* in (27) above, the masculine *charman* is still a lexical gap. This may have a two edged consequence: on the one hand, it is a bias against men since they are actually excluded in the representation of the profession; on the other hand, the term constructs the cleaning job as female-specific and therefore restricts the female sphere to housework.

3.9 Masculine, Feminine and Generic Nouns

As a matter of fact, this pattern shows itself as accounting for all the three options generally needed to refer to gender-indexing in an inclusive or specific way. When male- or female-specific highlighting is needed, either of the gender-specific term is used; and, when gender-inclusive indexing is intended, the dual term is adequately used. However, even in this pattern, the masculine term still convey generic overtones. This pattern is illustrated in examples (29) to (31) below.

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(29)	<i>Congressman/ congresswoman/c ongressperson</i>	A <u>member</u> of Congress in the US, especially the House of Representatives (OALD9, p.320)
(30)	<i>Draftsman/ draftswoman/ drafter</i>	A <u>person</u> who writes official documents (OALD9, p.463)
(31)	<i>Postman/ postwoman/ postie</i>	(especially BrE) a <u>person</u> whose job is to collect and deliver letters, etc. → SEE ALSO MAILMAN → NOTE AT GENDER (OALD9, p.1198)

Instances (29) to (31) above include the complete pattern in gender-indexing since they display the masculine, the feminine, and the gender inclusive forms. It is also important to note the cross-reference structure in example (31) which leads the user to the usage note on gender issues in the dictionary. This is very important in the raising of awareness in the use of politically correct language, at least, as far as gender-indexing is concerned. Finally, the terms in *man* are still constructed as both gender specific (i.e. masculine) and gender-

inclusive (*i.e.* generic). This confirms the claim that the gender-inclusive terms recently coined, rather than replacing the generic masculine ones, have come to coexist with them (see *e.g.* Mills, 1995 and Sunderland 2006).

3.10 Feminine and Masculine Meaning

The last category of gender-indexing nouns found in OALD9 is that of a feminine term with many denotations, one of which female-specific and the other male-specific. This category is illustrated by the following example:

	<u>Definiendum</u>	<u>Definiens</u>
(32)	(The) <i>old woman</i>	(1) (<i>informal, especially BrE</i>) a person's wife or mother (2) (<i>BrE, disapproving</i>) a man who worries too much about things that are not important (OALD9, p.1073)

The term *old woman* in (32) above is polysemic since it has two denotations. The first denotation is female-specific and has its male-specific counterpart lexicalized in *old man*. The second denotation, however, is male-specific and has no female-specific counterpart lexicalized. However, the latter denotation is implicitly loaded with negative gender-stereotypical assumptions as noticed through the diaevaluative label *disapproving*. Peeping into the semantic part may reveal the implied gender-based ideology that '(old) women worry; and a man should not worry like them.'

3.11 Distribution of Gender-indexing Personal Nouns

A careful consideration of the qualitative analysis of the treatment of gender-indexing personal nouns in OALD9 has yielded the following ten emergent variables: (1) the masculine, (2) the masculine and feminine conjoined, (3) the feminine, (4) generic masculine nouns, (5) masculine and generic meanings conjoined, (6) generic masculine and generic nouns conjoined, (7) generic nouns, (8) feminine and generic nouns conjoined, (9) masculine, feminine, and generic nouns conjoined, and (10) feminine and masculine meaning conjoined. These are supplemented with an eleventh one concerning lexical gaps. The subcategory of feminine and masculine meaning conjoined cannot be presented quantitatively as it is subsumed in the category (3) which comprises formally feminine nouns.

The codification of these variables is framed as below:

- (1) M = Masculine terms
- (2) M/F = Masculine and feminine terms conjoined

- (3) F = Feminine terms
- (4) GM = Generic masculine terms
- (5) M/G = Masculine and generic terms conjoined
- (6) M&G = Terms having both masculine and generic denotations
- (7) G = Generic terms
- (8) F/G = Feminine and generic terms conjoined
- (9) M/F/G = Masculine, feminine and generic terms conjoined
- (10) LG = Lexical gaps

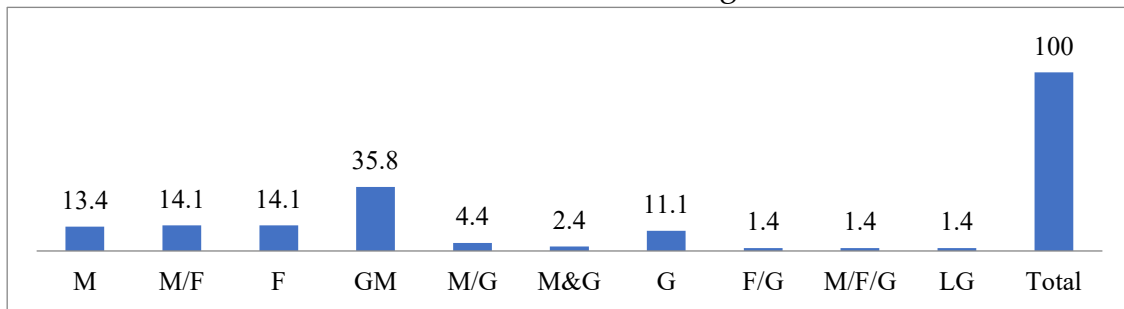
On the basis of the variables above, the frequency and distribution of the treatment of gender-indexing personal nouns across its sub-categories, in OALD9, is tabulated as in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Frequency of Gender-indexing Personal Nouns

N ^o	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Label	M	M/F	F	GM	M/G	M&G	G	F/G	M/F/G	LG	Total
Frequency	18	19	19	48	6	3	15	2	2	2	134
Per cent	13.4	14.1	14.1	35.8	4.4	2.4	11.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	100

This table summarizes the frequency and distribution of gender-indexing through personal nouns in OALD9. It shows, from left to right, the occurrences and percentages of items in the gender-referring categories of: (1) explicitly masculine nouns (M), (2) the joint use of masculine and feminine nouns in the definiendum (M/F), etc. It is worth noting that in this dictionary, the generic masculine (GM) still takes the lead with 35.8%. This picture is clarified by Chart 1 below.

Chat 1. Distribution of Gender-indexing Personal Nouns



(Source: Table 1)

Conclusion

This paper tried to address the treatment of personal gender-indexing nouns in OALD9 with a view to finding out their typologies, form, meaning as well as ideological overload. After covering the methodological issues, the paper explored in turn the issues of gender-indexing as well as the treatment of the targeted items from a qualitative mixed perspective. The findings have revealed that the dictionary under study treats [+ personal] nouns along various semantic subcategories. These include: (1) the masculine, (2) the masculine and feminine conjoined, (3) the feminine, (4) generic masculine nouns, (5) masculine and generic meanings conjoined, (6) generic masculine and generic nouns conjoined, (7) generic nouns, (8) feminine and generic nouns conjoined, (9) masculine, feminine, and generic nouns conjoined, and (10) feminine and masculine meaning conjoined. These subcategories are supplemented with the subcategory of lexical gaps. In the main, it can be observed that despite the coinage of epicenes, the generic masculine is still on the increase. Similarly, the dictionary under consideration still treats both the epicene and the generic masculine as being gender-inclusive. Some sparse cases of the joint treatment of the feminine and the generic also occur. In sum, different users are invited to a critical consultation of the dictionary to avoid perpetuating dictionary-based gender bias.

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