

Inclusive language is not here to save our lives. Comments on the article “Changing the Rules. Inclusive Language”

To the Editor,

In the latest issue of the Journal, the article “Changing the Rules. Inclusive Language” was published based on the editors’ proposal to reflect on current topics under debate. The author advocates for inclusive language in the academic field, questioning a language she considers sexist, androcentric, and hegemonic, basing her arguments on a hypothetical scenario.

However, the prelude of the article is a note from the editors proposing a reflection on the use of such language in the scientific community. The present article aims to contribute to these reflections by offering critical arguments to the author’s proposal.

In the text, the author argues that language is not neutral and accuses the Spanish language of being sexist by universalizing the masculine gender. However, it is argued that Spanish has evolved, with its words stemming from localisms, technical terms, archaisms, and foreign words. Etymology shows the absence of androcentrism, considering any such assumption an epistemological reductionism.

Another point discussed is the discomfort of “otros filósofos” (other philosophers) with the differentiation “los/las” which the author attributes to a binary epistemology. It argues that this binary boundary distinction is consistent with biological and genetic evidence, challenging those who find it uncomfortable to expose the burden of proof. It addresses the critique of academic writing by claiming that it assumes a “single, hegemonic formal textuality specific to that environment.”

However, it is argued that scientific language, far from being androcentric, follows norms to formulate descriptive and explanatory models of scientific knowledge, besides structuring a framework of linguistic propositions in fulfilling one of the most fundamental semantic concepts, designation. Such scientific language is unfinished, systematic, critical, and law-like; in contrast, inclusive language and the changing of words seem

to enjoy a strictness where there is no room for the unfinished or the critical, and the words used incur a poor designation of the things to which they refer.

The final point analyzed is the author’s assertion that language is the primary tool for interacting with and modifying reality. We question the potential naive realism of the author by assuming that language intervenes and modifies reality, which is impossible to ascertain since we can only perceive a filtered reality of the world; the inference that reality is as we see it indicates a tendency towards hypostatized metaphysics.

In conclusion, we state that inclusive language is not a definitive solution and is not here to save our lives; its radical positions do not consider dissent, and its argumentative structure incurs an appeal to force (ad baculum) that promotes the obligatory nature of its conclusions, thus also committing a false dilemma fallacy where dissenters of such language are deemed sexist, androcentric, and patriarchal, with no other stance seeming to exist from which to criticize its premises.

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