An Introductory Evaluation of Gender-Neutral Language in French

Coming to terms with the basic philosophy of a gender-neutral French language is incredibly vital if we hope to genuinely understand the intellectual debate surrounding this controversial phenomenon.

Before analyzing whether or not Glendon should encourage the use of gender-neutral French, it would be interesting to research and evaluate how other Canadian academic institutions perceive this issue and whether or not they have taken any follow-up measures. After direct contact with the French department and faculty of most universities and colleges across Canada, I have tried to neatly compile how a gender-neutral French language is perceived Canada-wide. Please take a look below:

**BRITISH COLUMBIA:**

**Kwantlen Polytechnic University, located in Surrey, British Columbia**  
(contact: Dr. Olivier Clarinval and the Student Recruitment Coordinator, Hannah Cenaiko)  
- This is a completely anglophone institution that only offers language courses as electives.  
- **This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.**

**Simon Fraser University, located in Burnaby, British Columbia** (contact: Dr. Christian Guilbault)  
- The only official language at this institution is English.  
- **This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.**

**University of Victoria, located in Victoria, British Columbia**  
(contact: Dr. Emmanuelle Guenette)  
- This is an anglophone institution that does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- At the department level, all instructors and staff follow the guidelines of French inclusive writing.  
- There is an emphasis on the use of inclusive writing in their French classes.

**Royal Roads University, located in Victoria, British Columbia**  
(contact: Dranna AndrewsBrown)  
- **This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.**

**Thompson Rivers University, located in Kamloops, British Columbia**  
(contact: Marian Anderberg)  
- **This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.**

**Trinity Western University, located in Langley, British Columbia**  
(contact: Dr. Sean Allison)  
- **This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.**  
- They would be happy to receive any documentation about this issue.

**ALBERTA:**

**MacEwan University, located in Edmonton, Alberta**  
(contact: Dr. Suzanne Hayman)  
- This is an anglophone institution that only offers a minor in French.  
- Although they have a policy on the use of gender-neutral English, they do not have one for French.

**University of Lethbridge, located in Lethbridge, Alberta**  
(contact: Dr. Melanie Collado)  
- As far as this professor knows, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- This professor personally tries to use **personne** if they are referring to a specific person or *il/elle.*
Athabasca University, located in Athabasca, Alberta (contact: Dr. Vina Tirven-Gadum)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- Many of this institution’s French courses touch on the issue and use of gender-neutral French.

Mount Royal University, located in Calgary, Alberta (contact: Dr. Antoine Eche and Dr. Indrani Chatterjee)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French namely because Alberta is not bilingual and therefore policies do not need to be translated or written in French.
- This is a matter that Professor Eche has been tackling for a while in order to find a satisfying response to offer to students using gender-neutral pronouns in English and is continuing to try.
- Finding a system that is not too complicated and that is widely accepted is not easy given the characteristics of the language itself and the attitude of some of the French speaking community.
- Professor Chatterjee addresses gender-neutral French at the beginning of each course.
- They would be happy to be made aware of any solutions to this complicated issue.

Concordia University of Edmonton, located in Edmonton, Alberta (contact: Dr. Mai Hussein)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This institution understands the tendency of a gender-neutral French as it aims to promote gender equality and limit sexism. They try to promote this neutrality and gender equity through their practices and through the content that they offer in their French courses and at their institution.
- Their French program is in constant development and this issue is really taken into consideration.

SASKATCHEWAN:

University of Regina, located in Regina, Saskatchewan (contact: La Cité universitaire francophone)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This institution uses the Portail linguistique du Canada.

University of Saskatchewan, located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (contact: Dr. Gisele Piche)
- For the non-credit French classes, this institution uses the masculine singular form in their textbooks and they indicate this in the syllabus. They nonetheless do mention and explain the gender-neutral form of writing in French. The information for French credit classes was not found.

MANITOBA:

Brandon University, located in Brandon, Manitoba (contact: Dr. Eftihia Mihelakis)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- Each professor exercises their academic freedom in terms of this linguistic choice.
- This professor personally uses gender-neutral language and encourages their students to also do so when writing and submitting their essays and assignments.

Université de Saint-Boniface, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This institution has an all-encompassing environment that promotes the inclusion of all.

University of Manitoba, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba (contact: Dr. Constance Cartmill)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This professor and their colleagues try to use l’écriture inclusive in their French correspondence.
University of Winnipeg, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba  
(contact: Dr. Adina Balint and Stacey Belding)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- It is possible to recognize both the masculine and feminine in a sentence, for example: étudiant.e.s.  
- In a strict grammatical perspective, the French language does not exist a sense of neutrality.  
- This institution adapts the usage of the language depending on the particular case in question.  
- This institution has a policy entitled Inclusive Language in Publications.

Canadian Mennonite University, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba  
(contact: Cori Braun)  
- This is an anglophone institution that does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

ONTARIO:

Brescia University College, located in London, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Heather Kirk)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- It is up to the individual faculty member to decide what writing style to use.  
- This professor personally uses a double form when communicating with students based on the Office de la langue française’s recommendations for le double abrégé. An example from one of their examples from one of their syllabi is: Seul.e ou avec un.e partenaire, les étudiant.e.s analyseront et critiqueront un article savant concernant le théâtre renaissant.  
- The other most common trend amongst this institution’s faculty is to favour feminine forms as they are a women’s-only university, which offers them a unique linguistic opportunity.  
- They are becoming more aware of their LGBTQ2 community, which is why this professor uses the doublets in their writing.  
- This institution is in the process of redefining their policy in English on gender-neutral language and the French Department intends to follow in the New Year with French guidelines.

Carleton University, located in Ottawa, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Randall Gess and Dr. Sinclair Robinson)  
- As far as Professor Gess knows, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- Professor Robinson is retired and stated that while English has been trending towards gender-neutral usage, French has been going in the opposite direction. Terms that used to be gender-neutral (to the extent that the masculine was the default gender) are not marked with gender. One used to say le maire even if the mayor was a woman, but now it is la mairesse. One used to say le porte-parole regardless of a person’s gender and now it is either le or la porte-parole.

Laurentian University, located in Sudbury, Ontario  
(contact: Alexie Dennie)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- Some people at this institution have been using hybrid gender-neutral terms in French (iel, ille, ele, etc.) to identify a neutral gender, but none of them are commonly used.  
- Gender-neutral French was a topic of conversation that was brought up by a colleague back in December, and it is still being discussed to see if this would be a policy that would be implemented or more so something that should generally be practiced.  
- The Associate Vice-President, Academic and Francophone Affairs said that this is not a question of policy, but more so of practice.

Brock University, located in St. Catharines, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Astrid Heyer)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
Huron University College, located in London, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Valentine Rodger and Dr. Mariana Ionescu)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- Retired Professor Rodger hopes that this institution has not adopted a policy on gender-neutral French and is happy that they do not have to worry about such things anymore after retirement. They are against gender-neutral French because they have too much respect for the language.

University of Guelph, located in Guelph, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Margot Irvine)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- This institution has an official policy on the use of gender-neutral English.  
- They would be happy to be made aware of the findings of this research.

McMaster University, located in Hamilton, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Joëlle Papillon, Dr. Eugène Nshimiyimana and Christina Maksymetz)  
- As far as both of these professors and this PhD student know, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

St. Jerome’s University, located in Waterloo, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Kerry Lappin-Fortin)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

Trent University, located in Oshawa, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Catalina Sagarra)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- Members of the French Department are free to use gender-neutral French at their discretion.

University of Sudbury, located in Sudbury, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Marianne Denis-Séguin)  
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

University of Windsor, located in Windsor, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Antonio Rossini and Dr. Mustapha Hamil)  
- Unfortunately, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

University of Toronto, located in Toronto, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Sébastien Sacre)  
- As far as this professor knows, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.  
- They tried to find information online, but they failed to find anything conclusive.  
- They feel as if it is an issue that must be addressed.  
- They talked about this issue with certain colleagues, but they find that linguists have a different take on the subject, especially since gender is also grammatical in French.  
- When they write to students in French, they always to avoid the masculine by writing like this, for instance: les étudiant-es du cours.  
- They added this little section to their course syllabi:  
  - **Preferred Name & Preferred Gender Pronouns:** As you may know, U of T professors only have access to student’s legal names via the class list accessible on Quercus, and that this list doesn’t necessarily represent your chosen identity/gender identity. Please know that I will gladly honour your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun in English (although, it might be more complicated in French, so feel free to discuss it with me). Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

University of Waterloo, located in Waterloo, Ontario  
(contact: Dr. Catherine Dubeau)  
- As far as this professor knows, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
QUÉBEC:

Université du Québec à Rimouski, located in Rimouski, Québec  (contact: Johanne Turgeon)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, located in Trois-Rivières, Québec  (contact: Dr. Maureen-Claude Laperrière, Dr. Éric Poirier and Dr. Mariane Gazaille)
- Professor Laperrière does not believe that this institution has a policy on gender-neutral French. They are interested in knowing if the matter of gender-neutral French has been addressed at UQTR.
- Professor Poirier does not believe that this institution has a policy on gender-neutral French, but they do have some language-related policies, such as a linguistics policy. However, this policy has no mention of genre or feminization issues, which are old and different ways of explaining gender-neutral French. They are not aware of any specific policy on gender-neutral usage of French at the departmental level. In their classes in administrative translation, they used to spend one to two classes on gender-neutral processes and techniques in French writing when this was required for some specific documents.
- Professor Gazaille states that this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French, but they believe that their administration would currently be thinking about it.

L’université du Québec en Outaouais, located in Gatineau, Québec
- The document that I was sent related by this institution does not mention gender-neutral French.

Université du Québec, located in Québec City, Québec  (contact: Julie Gagné)
- Unfortunately, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This institution will consider to develop such a policy as part of their efforts to promote equity, diversity and inclusion within their institution.

NEW BRUNSWICK:

Mount Allison University, located in Sackville, New Brunswick  (contact: Tina)
- This institution has an outdated gender-neutral English language policy.

NOVA SCOTIA:

Mount Saint Vincent University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia  (contact: Dr. Juliette Valcke)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- Most of this institution’s communications are in English, except for some French course outlines.

Cape Breton University, located in Sydney, Nova Scotia  (contact: Dr. Bernard Mulo Farenkia)
- Unfortunately, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

Saint Mary’s University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia  (contact: Dr. Annick MacAskill)
- As far as this professor knows, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This professor regularly teaches gender-neutral pronouns in their classes. They do not include this material in graded evaluations, but provide examples in class in an effort to be more inclusive of non-binary students. They began doing this in 2017 and in 2018, they included a unit on le langage inclusif when teaching a 4000 level stylistics/translation course, which considered the different kinds of gender-neutral language used in French (in both cis-feminist and queer/trans contexts).
St. Francis Xavier University, located in Antigonish, Nova Scotia  (contact: Dr. Wojciech Tokarz)
- As far as this professor knows, this institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

Dalhousie University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia  (contact: Dr. Vincent Simedoh)
- This professor does not know if this institution has a policy on gender-neutral French.
- This institution has an official policy on the use of gender-neutral English.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND:

University of Prince Edward Island, located in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island  (contact: Dr. Carlo Lavoie and Dr. Scott Lee)
- This institution does not have a policy on gender-neutral French.

I am continuing to receive responses from other Canadian academic institutions on a daily basis, and I will ensure to update this document with the responses that I receive after this document is sent off.

Overall trend: None of the universities and colleges that I have contacted have an official policy on the use of gender-neutral language in French. However, there is an interesting and increased interest in this complex phenomenon, and many professors try their best to use inclusive French language.

The media and various online newspapers have not shied away from reporting the complexity and benefits of introducing a gender-neutral French language. Some reports are found below.

1. The Guardian - Canadiens and Canadiennes in uproar as student paper takes stand on gender

In February of 2019, the student newspaper serving l’Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) announced that it would cease favouring the masculine over the feminine in the French language.
Since then, non-gendered terms have been used. When referring to a group of people, both female and male nouns are written, and the feminine past participle is included in parentheses — refer to the following example: Les étudiants et les étudiantes sont arrivé(e)s.

The campus’ editor-in-chief, Gabriel Bernier, stated that the feminization of the paper’s contents seeks to “re-establish balance in the matter of gender equality”. This approach to the French language has sparked quick and vicious backlash. Québec author, Denise Bombardier, referred to this decision as “barbarity”. Bernier referred to this backlash as “violent, ill-informed” comments, including one death threat that was reported to Montréal police. Bernier stated that, “We are not activists, we’re journalists. We didn’t invent a language, we just want to make it more egalitarian”.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:  Written French was not always particularly strict regarding the use of gender. This changed in 1647 when grammarian Claude Favre de Vaugelas argued for the restoration of the “purity and clarity” of the French language — he opposed the use of the masculine and feminine in the same sentence and stated that, “The masculine gender, being more noble, must predominate whenever the masculine and feminine find themselves together”. He was a member of l’Académie Française and he was successful in ensuring that his recommendation became a standard linguistic practice. In 2017, this powerful body issued a warning regarding discussions surrounding a gender-neutral French language, saying that its use would solely invite “disunity”, “confusion”, “illegibility” and would ultimately pose a “moral danger” to the language. It is interesting to note that only five of the body’s current 36 members (known as immortals) are women.
Québec has been much more receptive to gender neutrality compared to France. In 1979, l’Office Québécoise de la langue française (OQLF) recognized the legitimacy of feminized job titles, which was only eventually approved by l’Académie Francaise in February of 2019. A 40-year gap period. The OQLF offers free online courses on feminizing the French language. A reason for this difference can be attributed to Québec’s early embrace of its robust and progressive feminist movement. Hélène de Nayves, a terminologist at the OQLF, stated that, “Unlike in France, the push for changes in the language to reflect gender equality came from the population, not from linguists and researchers”.

Criticism aside, the only issue for UQAM has been space-related as using both the masculine and feminine eats up more column inches in its paper editions.

Please consult this link for more information: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/08/canadiens-and-canadiennes-in-uproar-as-student-paper-takes-stand-on-gender

2. The Guardian - Académie Française allows feminization of job titles

In February of 2019, l’Académie Française surprisingly voted by an overwhelming majority to approve a report compiled by three of its five female members advocating for an end to its centuries-old official ban on feminizing the names of professions and trades. Most job titles in French are masculine by default and the few exceptions to this rule that exist are in mainly gender-stereotypical occupations, such as infirmière (nurse) or nourrice (childminder). Members of this powerful body, which was established in 1635 under Louis XIII, last objected to the feminization of job titles in 2014 when they deemed it to be grammatically incorrect for the major of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, to be called Madame la Maire (as she insisted to be called) instead of the authorized Madame le Maire.

The report noted that many job titles could be easily feminized with the addition of a silent e. However, other occupations posed to be more problematic as adding an e to médecin (doctor) risked a sense of confusion with mèdecline (the science of medicine). Other job titles prove to be nothing but a huge headache — for instance, should a female boss (chef) be referred to as chèfe, cheffesse, cheftaine or even chève? Significant debate is definitely anticipated in the future.

Please consult this link for more information: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/01/academie-francaise-allows-feminisation-of-job-titles

3. Independent - Gender neutral version of French sparks backlash

The gender-neutral version of the French language has caused anger among purists. This is a version of the language that ultimately looks to reduce the masculine domination of grammatical gender. Sir Michael Edwards, the sole British member of l’Alliance Française, has deemed it to be “gibberish”. The French government department responsible for equality rights stated that the masculine ending is a form of sexual tyranny. Mid punctuation is used as an inclusive approach to gender-neutral French that aims to split up words — refer to the following example: amis, instead of amis. Inclusive language aims to transform the language into an inclusive and mixed-gender form in order to avoid offending women, as well as gay and sexual minorities. It has consequently offended traditionalists. Le Haut Conseil à l’Égalité, a body promoting inclusion and equal rights, has stated that, “language reflects society and its way of thinking about the world”.

It was stated that in 2018, keyboards will be created with a new key to type this mid point, and campaigners hope that this key will be adopted universally.
Please consult this link for more information: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/gender-neutral-version-french-language-backlash-gibberish-a7987896.html

4. McConnell - *Guidelines for inclusive and gender-neutral language in French*

This foundation has conducted research into current approaches to l’écriture inclusive (inclusive writing), and in particular, le langage épicène (gender-neutral language).

Ces techniques de rédaction reprend les recommandations officielles de l’Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) et du gouvernement du Canada.

- **La formation neutre**

Lorsque possible, reformulez les phrases en utilisant des noms, des adjectifs et des pronoms qui ne sont ni féminin, ni masculin.

*Par example :*
- On peut écrire *Avez-vous la citoyenneté canadienne ?* au lieu de *Êtes-vous citoyen canadien ?*
- On peut écrire *Depuis dix ans, la formation des architectes est devenue multidisciplinaire.* au lieu de *Les architectes formés depuis dix ans ont une approche multidisciplinaire.*

- **Les doublets, suivant l’ordre féminin-masculin**

Précisez systématiquement les formes féminines et masculines d’un nom ou d’un pronom.

*Par example :*
- les Québécoises et les Québécois
- les étudiantes et les étudiants
- chacune et chacun
- toutes et tous

Cette fondation recommande d’utiliser les doublets suivant l’ordre féminin-masculin. L’adjectif ou le participe suivant le doublet s’accorde alors avec la forme la plus proche (accorde de proximité).

*Par example :*
- Les étudiantes et les étudiants inscrits, plutôt que Les étudiants et les étudiantes inscrites.

Lorsque le doublet est identique, privilégiez la formule longue et répétez le déterminant devant chaque doublet.

*Par example :*
- La titulaire ou le titulaire du poste, plutôt que Le ou la titulaire du poste.

Afin de ne pas alourdir les textes, il est accepté de répéter le doublet avec un pronom masculin pluriel.

*Par example :*
- Le vote des sénateurs et des sénatrices aura lieu la semaine prochaine. Ils et elles auront alors l’occasion de s’exprimer sur le sujet, plutôt que Le vote des sénateurs et des sénatrices aura lieu la semaine prochaine. Ils auront alors l’occasion de s’exprimer sur la sujet.

Dans le cas où une phrase est composée de plusieurs doublets, vous pouvez privilégier les doublets pour les appellations particulières (sujet) et conserver le masculin générique pour les appellations générales (complément d’objet).

Par exemple :
- Les chercheuses et les chercheurs ont présenté leurs conclusions aux étudiants, plutôt que Les chercheuses et les chercheurs ont présenté leurs conclusions aux étudiantes et étudiants.

• La féminisation des titres

À l’écrit et à l’oral, utilisez les terms féminins pour décrire les métiers, les fonctions et les qualités des femmes. De nouvelles formes féminines ont fait leur apparition ces dernières années et mélangent parfois les rédacteurs. Par exemple, poète ou poésesse et rectrice ou recteure ?

Le répertoire de noms masculins et féminins sur le site de l’OQLF : http://bdl.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/bdl/gabarit_bdl.asp?Th=1&Th_id=359&niveau

• Solutions de rechange

Les communicateurs progressistes ont recours à plusieurs solutions pour signaler un langage de genre neutre. Cette fondation a choisi de ne pas utiliser de formes tronquées comme : les étudiant.e.s, les expert(e), les auteurEs, les agent-e-s, les évaluateurs/trices, un ingénieur H/F. Bien qu’il s’agisse d’une technique répandue dans le langage courant, les formes tronquées ne sont pas recommandées par le milieu de la recherche parce qu’elles nuisent la lisibilité des textes.

Cette fondation a également décidé d’êtrir les formes féminines telles que : entraîneure (au lieu de entraîneuse) et administrateure (au lieu de administratrice). Le suffixe -e est parfois utilisé pour constituer de nouveaux féminins mais ceux-ci entrent en concurrence avec les féminins traditionnels.


5. Public Works and Government Services Canada - Gender-Inclusive Writing in French

This government website explains how to avoid using gendered language in French.

Some tips include:
- Avoid including a courtesy title (Monsieur, Madame, etc.) in written text.
  • Simply write Bonjour instead of Bonjour Madame/Monsieur.
- Use collective nouns that designate a group of people without specifying whether they are male, female or non-binary. For example, write clientèle instead of clients et clientes.
- Use neutral nouns, adjectives and pronouns that do not change form according to one’s gender.
  • Write spécialiste instead of expert or experte and apte instead of qualifié or qualifiée.
- Avoid nouns that refer to people by referring to either an action, a process or a result.
  • Write les résultats du sondage instead of les répondants et les répondantes.
Avoid gendered words when the context is clear enough.
- Write *la plupart* instead of *la plupart des participants et participantes*.
- Switch from the passive to the active voice to avoid using masculine and feminine voices.
  - Write *nous vous prions de passer* instead of *vous êtes priés et priées de passer*.

Please consult this link for more information: https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/wrtps/index-eng.html?lang=eng&lettr=indx_catlog_g&page=9tZXuAe4oZYs.html#an8

6. CBC - *Why some French-speaking non-binary people don’t seek treatment in their language*

In English, non-binary people typically identity with the pronouns *they* or *them*. However, gendered words are so integral to French that *there exists no they or them equivalent in French*. There exist some gender non-binary French language that has been introduced in the past decade, but most people either do not know how to properly use it or do not even know that it exists. The transgender French population usually uses *iel* to self-identify.

Many French-speaking gender non-binary people in Windsor-Essez feel uncomfortable accessing services in their first language, which has in turn forced them to seek services in English instead. Feeling pushed to communicate in English can cause a significant amount of miscommunication, as well as embarrassment and even a lack of safety. Many people also feel uncomfortable speaking French with border services, police officers and government officials as a result of these issues with gendered language. It is difficult to find services in French that can adapt to one’s identity, which has forced many people to use either the masculine or feminine pronoun. The excuse that is often used is that gender-neutral language in French is *just way too complicated of an issue to address*. It is perceived by some that trans discourses and non-binary identities are more accepted and recognized by the Anglophone world. The ultimate goal is to provide professionals with adequate training so that they will be encouraged to understand why gender neutral pronouns are so important.


7. Government of Canada - *Fair Representation of the Genders in French*

Language is what carries and structures thought and in 1899, Hubertine Auclert underscored the importance of language as a tool for the emancipation of women.

In school, students learn that the masculine overrides the feminine in French (Vaugelas rule). This is a rule that considers the masculine as the nobler of the two genders, which continues to distort the social representation of the genders as it makes women invisible or downgrades their status.

Under the feudal system, women held an important place in the public landscape, which was very much reflected in the language. It was full of feminine nouns, such as *emperière* and *lieutenade*. This fell into disuse once the Napoleonic code was passed, legally subjugating a wife to her husband.

Women tend to not feel involved or might seem themselves ignored when a text fails to acknowledge their presence. One can argue that lexical feminization is now part of our moral standards, though.
When the Prime Minister addresses the public, he typically uses the doublet les Canadiens et les Canadiennes. However, in order to effectively refer to both genders in writing, one must go even further by expressing the presence of women throughout the text (goal of gender-inclusive writing).

A number of institutions have gender-inclusive writing policies or guides, such as:

- Pour un genre à part entière. Guide pour la rédaction de textes non sexistes, Québec, ministère de l’Éducation (Coordination à la condition féminine), 1988.

Please consult this link for more information: https://osez-dare.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/139886886554/1398868895077

8. CBC - ‘What your language tells you’: How gender-neutral pronouns can shape our worldview

One parent claims that gendered language imposes both gender and stereotypes.

Lera Boroditsky, an associate professor of cognitive science at the University of California in San Diego, says that language around gender influences how we think and how we see our world.

Some languages have nouns that are assigned a particular gender often randomly. The moon is male and the sun is female in German, but the reverse is true in Spanish, for example. A 2003 study found that if bridges are feminine in one’s language (like in German), one is more likely to say that they are beautiful and elegant. However, if bridges are masculine (like in Spanish), one is more likely to state that they are strong and towering.

Some Indigenous languages have long included gender-neutral terms.

The Office québécoise de la langue française consulted with people in the trans community when creating their guidelines for gender-neutral language (click here). Ontario did the exact same thing. The German city of Hanover recently introduced inclusive language guidelines, and Germany was the first country part of the European Union to offer a third gender on birth certificates. At the Egalia pre-school in Stockholm, the students refer to one another with the gender-neutral pronoun hen and the school says that this type of language helps steer the students away from gender stereotypes.

According to Boroditsky, shifting our language can change how we think about gender.

Critics have stated that gender-neutral language ignores the biological difference between men and women, and University of Toronto psychology professor Jordan Peterson publicly refused to use alternative pronouns (they and them) as he argues that it hinges on his right to free speech.

Please consult this link for more information: https://www.cbc.ca/radio/what-your-language-tells-you-how-gender-neutral-pronouns-can-shape-our-worldview-1.5098858
In the summer of 2018, I took part in the Explore program in Trois-Pistoles, Québec. I attended a workshop on the use of gender-neutral French, and I have attached the handout that I received on that day. I have highlighted (in pink) the common gender-neutral pronoun *iel* that is often used in French.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mots</th>
<th>Masculin</th>
<th>Féminin</th>
<th>Neutre</th>
<th>Inclusif</th>
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</table>

http://uniquequeensgenre.eklablog.fr

Autre option: La féminisation! Ex : Les étudiantEs, les ami-e-s, les animatrice.eur.s. UnE étudiantE, un-e directeur-ice, la.e jardinière.e.
### Pronoms et déterminants non-binaires

http://uniqueensongenre.eklablog.fr

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mots</th>
<th>Masculin</th>
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| Pronoms compléments   | lui      | elle    | ille / ul / im / ... | ellui / iel |
|                       | eux      | elle:   | eus                | euxes / elleux |
| Déterminants possessifs | mon / ton / son | ma / ta / sa  | man / tan / san | maon / taon / saon |
| Pronoms possessifs    | mien     | mienne  | miem               | miæn [mien-ne] |
| Déterminants démonstratifs | cet / ce  | cette   | cet / cès          | cet / cèx (glamour ^^) |
|                       | celui    | celle   | cille / cül / cim / ... | célui (cellui) / ciel (cyel) |
|                       | ceux     | celles  | ceus               | ceuxes / celleux |

*Le pronom sujet le plus commun : iel*  
*Ex : iel est arrivé, iel est petit.*