

The use of inclusive writing in French media

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RÉSUMÉ. L'Écriture inclusive est une forme d'écriture française suggérée par le Haut Conseil d'Égalité (HCE) qui vise à éviter la discrimination de genre ressentie principalement par les femmes en raison des connotations négatives des titres de poste féminins ainsi que du concept du masculin l'emporte sur le féminin dans la grammaire française. Cela a suscité des débats depuis que Hatier, éditeur de manuels d'école primaire, a décidé d'appliquer l'écriture inclusive dans son manuel (2017). Dans les débats, la participation des médias à la formation de l'opinion publique sur cette question a été observée. Cette étude vise à déterminer la position des médias français face au phénomène l'écriture inclusive à travers les écrits et la rhétorique des articles qu'ils publient. À l'aide de méthodes qualitatives, l'étude est menée sur la base de la théorie morphologique de Grevisse et des règles d'écriture inclusive présentées par HCE. Les résultats montrent que l'utilisation de l'écriture inclusive dans les médias n'était pas une forme d'impact des orientations politiques, mais plutôt une caractéristique de média contrariant. L'application partielle de l'écriture inclusive montre que les médias privilégient toujours les éléments de communication pour faciliter la transmission de l'information aux lecteurs. De plus, l'absence d'écriture inclusive dans les titres est de faciliter les recherches d'articles via les moteurs de recherche.

Mots-clés : *Accord Grammatical; Écriture Inclusive; Féminisation; France; Media*

ABSTRACT. *l'Écriture inclusive* is a French writing form suggested by *Haut Conseil d'Égalité* (HCE) aimed at avoiding gender discrimination mainly felt by women due to the negative connotations of feminine job titles as well as the concept of *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* (the masculine dominates feminine) in French grammar. Gender discrimination has sparked debates since Hatier, a publisher of primary school textbooks who decided to apply *l'écriture inclusive* in its textbook (2017). In the debates, media involvement in shaping public opinion on this issue was seen. This study aims to determine the position of French media towards the *l'écriture inclusive* phenomenon through the writings and rhetoric in the articles they have published. Using qualitative methods, the study is conducted based on Grevisse's morphological theory and present HCE rules of *l'écriture inclusive*. The results show that the use of *l'écriture inclusive* in the media was not a form of political orientation impact, rather the contrarian media characteristic. The partial application of *l'écriture inclusive* shows that media still prioritize communicative elements for ease of information transmission to readers. In addition, the absence of *l'écriture inclusive* in the headlines makes searches of articles through web search engines easier.

Keywords: *Accord Grammatical; Inclusive Writing; Feminization; France; Online News*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In French language, nouns consist of two genres, namely masculine and feminine. An article entitled *The Push to Make French Gender-Neutral: Can changing the structure of a language improve women's status in society?* published by The Atlantic in November 2017 described how a group of French feminists expressed their opinion on the sexist nature of gender in French language. They argued that nouns should equally represent the masculine and feminine genres to provide equal status for men and women in society. The article also explained the emergence of allegations that French is a language that discriminates against women seen by the number of nouns, including nouns which refer to job titles, which only have a masculine form. This is also supported by Andriani (2017) who explains that there are job titles in the feminine form which have a different meaning from the masculine form, i.e. *le président* in the masculine form refers to the president, while *la présidente* in the feminine form refers to the first lady. In addition, there are also nouns in the feminine form with negative connotations even though these do not exist in the masculine form, for example the term *homme public* means men who work in politics, but *femme publique* means prostitute. This shows how job titles in the feminine form have a lower meaning or nuance than the masculine form.

Discrimination against women is also seen through the use of *accord grammatical* in the French language. Grevisse (2007) defines that accord as the fact that the word variable (known as *receveur*) accepts the morphological properties (such as genre and number) from other words in the sentence (known as *donneur*). For example, in the sentence *les femmes sont belles*, the noun *les femmes* is *donneur* and the adjective *belles* is *receveur*. In other words, *accord grammatical* is the conformity between genre and number of two or more syntactically bound words. Therefore, *l'accord* in French has a communicative function because this variation shows whether these words are masculine or feminine, singular or plural. Liddicoat (2011) explains that the sexist

nature of language is also seen from the dual function of the masculine form: as the term for specific masculine words and general terms. The dual function of the masculine form in French is also seen through the use of *accord grammatical le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin*, which literally translates as the masculine dominates the feminine. The purpose of this concept is that the genre of the adjective in a sentence is adapted to the *genre indifférencié*, namely the masculine form. For example, even though there are nine girls and one boy in the room, the group must be described with the noun *ils* which the masculine form for the third person plural pronoun. In *Le Bon Usage* (Grevisse, 2007), it is explained that this concept has been used in standard French since the 18th century.

To overcome the allegations of gender discrimination and sexist French through the *accord grammatical* used in French, in November 2015 *Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les homes et les femmes* (HCE) published a guidebook entitled *Guide Pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe* which is a guidebook that regulates how writing in French media should show gender equality. Later, this writing became known as *l'écriture inclusive*. In *Guide Pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe* (HCE, 2015) it is explained that there are several guidelines for communicating without discriminating against gender, one of them is the elimination of the term *mademoiselle*. The use of this term is considered discriminatory against women because the term refers to a women's status and relationship with men. For example, married women put their husband's name after their name, or the difference between the term *madame* for married women and *mademoiselle* for single women.

The debate about *l'écriture inclusive* was marked by the publication of the school textbook for elementary school level entitled *Questionner le Monde CE2* by Hatier in November 2017. This book applies several rules regarding *écriture inclusive* which are explained in *Guide Pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe* (HCE 2015). The use of *l'écriture inclusive* in a

school textbook caused a long polemic and strong reactions from various parties. On October 26, 2017, *Académie Française* as the official institution of the French language issued an official statement describing its refusal to use *l'écriture inclusive*: *Académie Française* considers the rules regarding *l'écriture inclusive* a threat to French language because the use of orthographic signs and the application of the syntax in *l'écriture inclusive* can lead to language separation and confusion in reading.

The official statement from *Académie Française* (2017) has also received resistance from the public, especially French teachers. On November 7, 2017, Slate published an article explaining that 314 French teachers had signed a petition addressed to the Minister of National Education Jean Michel Blanquer stating that they reject the use of the *accord grammatical le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* and wish to replace it with *la règle de proximité* which has been recommended by HCE (2015).

Regarding the use of *l'écriture inclusive*, as quoted by the newspaper *Le Parisien* on November 13, 2017, the Minister of National Education Jean Michel Blanquer stated that the debate regarding the use of *l'écriture inclusive* was pointless. He emphasized that the rules of French language are based on two things, the use of the language in society and the decision of *Académie Française*. Therefore the public should not take the initiative to change grammar unilaterally. Quoted from the article published by *Le Monde* on November 21, 2017, Prime Minister Édouard Philippe officially banned the use of *l'écriture inclusive* in the official texts such as *journal officiel*, but that has not stopped the debate regarding *l'écriture inclusive*.

The debate about *l'écriture inclusive* does not only involve government institutions, but also French media. After the publication of the school textbook with *l'écriture inclusive* by Hatier (2017), there were several French media who expressed their rejection, especially right-wing media such as *Le Figaro* and *Le Causeur*, stated *l'écriture inclusive* could damage French grammar. Meanwhile, many media expressed their

support, especially left-wing media such as *France Inter*, *Ouest France*, and *Nouvel Observateur*. Not only news media, the use of *l'écriture inclusive* was also applied in social media accounts in leftist political-orientation such as the twitter account of *Gilets Noirs* (18 March 2020) and *La Chapelle Debout* (12 July 2019). With the two sides divided by political orientation, this study aims to examine how French media stated their position towards the phenomenon, *l'écriture inclusive*.

The phenomenon of *l'écriture inclusive* can be considered a newly emerged phenomenon of the French language and so there has not been much study regarding the concept of *l'écriture inclusive*. In general, research regarding *l'écriture inclusive* has been conducted by Andriani (2017) which explains how this phenomenon will cause problems regarding French teaching in Indonesia without paying attention to its application and Julie Abbou et al. (2018) have also reviewed the phenomenon of *l'écriture inclusive* as well as its polemic that occurred in France. Other research related to the phenomenon of *l'écriture inclusive* is under the topic of feminization, which the process of derivation related to titles and professions into feminine nouns which have previously been discussed in the thesis by Valentine Labouheure (2017) and an article by Alina Iftime (2016). Both of these studies focused on the application of feminization, which is also an element of *l'écriture inclusive*, in French media. In addition, research related to language and gender has also been carried out by Gyax & Gabriel (2010) which in general explains how the gender in language influences understanding gender-stereotypes in society. Other related research includes language planning by feminists, reviewed by Liddicoat (2011).

The debate regarding *l'écriture inclusive* was sparked because of the conflicting opinions as to whether *l'écriture inclusive* can be read and understood widely, and thus the application of *l'écriture inclusive* is a topic that deserves deeper study. Looking at previous researches which have different focuses on examining the phenomenon of *l'écriture inclusive*, this study focuses on

examining *l'écriture inclusive* by how it is applied in left-wing and right-wing media through the writings and rhetoric found in the articles they published. This study aims to prove that the phenomenon of *l'écriture inclusive* is a reflection of political ideology of French media.

2. METHOD

This qualitative research is limited to morphology, especially to suffixal derivation, and will focus on the *accord grammatical le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* described by Grevisse (2007) as well as *la règle de proximité* as described by HCE (2015). Sources of data used in this study are news articles with the main subject being women or involving women, so that it can be seen whether the job titles and *accord grammatical* used are in accordance with the subject being discussed. The articles are published in the political rubric because most of the titles in the political field do not have a feminine form. Specifically, this study uses articles that discuss the ongoing elections in France, such as the election for members of the European Parliament 2019 and the *Élection Municipale* 2020. This consideration is taken because articles on the topic of elections have multiple subjects consisting of male and female candidates, so it can be seen whether there are differences in word choices for male and female candidates. These articles were obtained through the media sites Slate and L'Humanité as representatives of left-wing media, and Le Figaro and Les Echos as representatives of right-wing media.

Slate is a French media that reports on actual, political and cultural problems that occur in France. Since 2006, It has been known as a media that opposes public views on a subject or is known as a media with contrarian ideology but through *«Écriture inclusive: Slate.fr choisit l'accord de proximité»* published on November 7, 2017, Slate is the only media publishing articles expressing support for the use of *l'écriture inclusive* and *accord grammatical la règle de proximité*. However, on January 9, 2019, Daniel Engber, one of Slate's contributors, stated that after 15 years since Slate was founded, there was a

shift in ideology that was previously contrarian to leftist ideology-oriented media. This study uses two articles published on 12 April 2019 regarding the election for members of the European Parliament with the title *«Vous les élirez, mais savez-vous avec qui siègeront vos eurodéputés?»* and an article published on February 21, 2020 concerning the election municipale under the title *«Élections municipales à Paris: qui propose quoi en matière de logement»*.

L'Humanité is a French newspaper with an extreme leftist political orientation because it is still part of the *Parti Communiste Français* (French Communist Party). Unlike Slate, L'Humanité does not express support or rejection of the phenomenon of *l'écriture inclusive*. The articles that will be used in this study are an article published on April 16, 2019 about the European Parliament elections with the title *«Extrême droite. L'Europe de Le Pen et Bardella: des échanges, pas de mélange»* as well as an article published on March 18, 2020 about the *élection municipale* with the title *«Les Accablantes Confessions D'agnès Buzyn»*.

Le Figaro is the second largest national newspaper in France and one of the three most widely-trusted newspapers in France, along with social-liberal newspapers such as Le Monde and Le Parisien, and also is the oldest extant newspaper in France. Le Figaro is a right-wing newspaper that clearly shows its rejection of the use of *l'écriture inclusive* in its article entitled *«Féminisme: les délires de l'écriture «inclusive»*, which was published on October 5, 2017. The articles to be used in this study are articles published on April 6, 2019 regarding members of the European Parliament with the title *«Parité chez les eurodéputés: plus de femmes mais peu aux postes de pouvoir»* and articles published on March 16, 2020 regarding *élection municipale* under the title *«Coronavirus: Agnès Buzyn «arrête» sa campagne à Paris mais ne se retire pas»*.

Les Echos is a right-wing French newspaper which is also known for its liberal-conservatism. According to McAnulla (2006) liberal-conservatism is an ideology that combines the classic liberal view of minimal

government intervention in the economy allowing individuals to be free to participate in the market-place and generate wealth without government interference. Through this definition, liberal-conservatism can be defined as a political ideology that combines conservative policies with liberal attitudes, especially on economic, social and ethical issues. This is evidenced by Les Echos' articles which focus on economic issues. The articles used in the study were articles published on February 14, 2019 regarding the European Parliament with the title «Eurodéputé : petit manuel de survie» and articles published on March 16, 2020 regarding éléction municipale with the title «Municipales 2020 : à Marseille, droite et gauche au coude-à-coude».

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The use of periods in articles

In contrast to the *Academie Française*, HCE (2015) states that one of the main rules in *l'écriture inclusive* is to use a period for words that have masculine and feminine genres. This is due to the large number of words in French that are often written only in their masculine form or even when parenthesis is added afterwards to show the feminine form of the word, for example: *étudiant(e)*. In *l'écriture inclusive* the addition of period is considered to have an advantage because it does not obstruct the reading nor does it have a negative connotation by the use of parenthesis implying that the feminine gender is a second subject and gender that is either restricted or omitted. Thus, *l'écriture inclusive* can be written using the following formula.

root + masculine suffix + period + feminine suffix

Source: *Guide Pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe* (HCE 2015)

The use of period in *l'écriture inclusive* can be written using a full stop (.) or a midpoint (•), so that in *l'écriture inclusive*, words are masculine, feminine, and even plural. In this study, only the Slate media apply the *l'écriture inclusive* rule using a period, which is written as the example below.

les candidat•es se gardent bien de prendre des engagements trop précis

Source: Slate, Februari 21, 2020. *Élections municipales à Paris: qui propose quoi en matière de logement.*

One example of a Slate article that applies *l'écriture inclusive* in its writing is an article entitled «*Vous les élirez, mais savez-vous avec qui siègeront vos eurodéputé•es?*» written by Olivier Biffaud on 12 April 2019. Overall, the article discusses candidates and parties participating in the election for members of the European Parliament which will take place on May 26, 2019. From the title of the article, it can be seen how Slate applies *l'écriture inclusive* to show that the meaning of the term refers to two genres, namely masculine and feminine. In this case, the term *eurodéputé•es* is used in the title to refer to both male and female members of the European Parliament.

The following are terms in the article using periods to indicate that the term refers to two genres, namely masculine and feminine.

Table 1. Terms in *l'écriture inclusive* in Slate article published on April 12, 2019

Terms	Masculin	Feminin
<i>eurodéputé.es</i>	<i>eurodéputés</i>	<i>eurodéputées</i>
<i>député.es</i>	<i>Deputes</i>	<i>députées</i>
<i>élu.es français.es</i>	<i>élus français</i>	<i>élues françaises</i>
<i>non-inscrit.es</i>	<i>non-inscrits</i>	<i>non-inscrites</i>
<i>candidat.es élu.es</i>	<i>candidats élus</i>	<i>candidates élues</i>
<i>représentant.es</i>	<i>représentants</i>	<i>représentantes</i>
<i>génération.s</i>	-	<i>generation (s)</i> <i>generations (p)</i>

The table shows that Slate uses periods in terms that refer to candidates for the European Parliament. In French grammar, the masculine genre will be used to represent the two genres when the subject has both genres. This is consistent Grevisse theory (2007) which explains that the masculine genre has two characteristics in French grammar, namely masculine and neutral (*indifférencié*). Overall, this article discusses the candidates for the European Parliament which of course consist of not only male, but also female candidates. The selection of terms used in the article showing that *l'écriture inclusive* does not eliminate the feminine genre brings gender equality to the language. With *l'écriture inclusive*, readers immediately know that there are female candidates for the European Parliament; so that the role of women in politics can be seen clearly.

It can also be seen from table 1 that the use of terms with periods is not only devoted to providing equality between the two genders, but can also be used to indicate

differences in quantities. This article uses the term *génération.s* to represent *génération* in the singular and in the plural. The term *génération.s* in this article can refer to a particular generation, the generation in general or all existing generations; so the use of the term is an attempt to avoid intergenerational discrimination too. This study finds that in contrast to HCE (2015) which only emphasizes that *l'écriture inclusive* eliminates gender discrimination, Slate media shows that *l'écriture inclusive* is a form of writing that avoids other discrimination too, such as intergenerational discrimination.

The article entitled «*Élections municipales à Paris: qui propose quoi en Matière de logement*» by Gérard Horny published on February 21, 2020 discusses the policies that *élection municipale* candidates will implement to address the problem of increasingly expensive housing in Paris. In this article there are also terms that use periods for words that refer to the masculine and feminine genres, such as:

Table 2. Terms in *l'écriture inclusive* in Slate article published on February 21, 2020

Terms	Masculin	Feminin
<i>prétendant-es</i>	<i>prétendants</i>	<i>prétendantes</i>
<i>candidat.es</i>	<i>candidats</i>	<i>candidates</i>
<i>Parisien.nes</i>	<i>Parisiens</i>	<i>Parisiennes</i>

When compared, it can be seen that there are similarities between the terms used in the two articles published by Slate. Terms that use a period are only used for nouns. However, this sentence is also found in the Slate article published on February 21, 2019:

Les propriétaires ne seraient pas oublié•es

Unlike the previous article, the term using a period in this sentence is an adjective that describes the noun *les propriétaires*. In this sentence, the term *les propriétaires* refers to the masculine and feminine genres, but this term does not change because both the masculine and the feminine have the same written form. Thus, though adjectives in French generally have different written-forms in masculine and

feminine, in *l'écriture inclusive* their written-form uses periods. Through this sentence it can be concluded that the use of a period in *l'écriture inclusive* is not only used on the subject in the sentence, but is also used for terms that are tied to the subject, such as adjectives.

Although in its articles Slate uses a lot of terms that refer to the masculine and feminine genres by using periods, this is not applied in the headline of the article published in the Trump 2020 podcast column on December 11, 2019 with the title «*Les Américains font-ils grève?*». Trump 2020 is a podcast published by Slate, in collaboration with Laurence Nardon, researcher at *l'Institut Français des Relations Internationales* (IFRI) and Romain Dessal, CEO of the Time to sign off (TTSO) newsletter, which discusses the

2020 presidential election of the United States. The articles in the podcast rubric are articles containing summaries and audio podcasts that discuss demonstrations that took place in America during Trump's leadership. In the headline, the word *les Américains* refers to all Americans both men and women, but unlike the previous article, this article still uses the masculine form of the word *les Américains* as the headline. If you look at the contents of the article, you can also find that it still uses masculine nouns even though the word actually refers to both men and women, like the word *les Français*. The reason there is no use of *l'écriture inclusive* in this article is because the article is written based on the audio podcast, so the terms are still written in the masculine form because *l'écriture inclusive* cannot be applied verbally. It should be noted that the Trump 2020 podcast is also not an original podcast written and published by Slate, but the result of collaboration with IFRI and TTSO, because when compared to other Slate media podcasts the articles still use *l'écriture inclusive*, so the application of *l'écriture inclusive* is only used in the original text published by Slate.

Although Slate has announced its commitment to implementing *l'écriture inclusive* writing in its articles since 2017, the study only found one article that applied *l'écriture inclusive* to the headline, namely the article «*Vous les élirez, mais savez-vous avec qui siègeront vos eurodéputé•es?*» published on April 12, 2019. This is probably due to an attempt to make it easier for readers to find articles through search engines. Articles that use period in their headline will still appear if searched using the search feature found in Slate, but if searched using a web search engine such as Google, the article will not appear. Through this, it can be concluded that Slate probably does not apply *l'écriture inclusive* in the title to facilitate news searches.

3.2. Adjustments of job titles

In their guidebook HCE (2015) explains that there are more than 2000 designations (*les noms de fonctions, grades, métiers et titres*) in the linguistic guidebook entitled *Femme, j'écris ton nom ...* (1999). This book shows that adjustment of job titles is usually done so that there is no contradiction between the genre of the name of the

profession and the gender of the person discussed. For example, quoted from Fleischman (1997):

“Le capitaine Prieur est actuellement enceinte”

The use of the word *enceinte* in the sentence adds to the awkwardness for the reader because the subject that is being discussed in this sentence is *le capitaine Prieur*, in the masculine genre. The reader will of course imagine Captain Prieur as a man, who could not possibly be pregnant and thus the sentence doesn't make sense. However, the actual subject discussed in this sentence is a woman named Dominique Prieur who is a French soldier. The name of a position in the masculine genre can indicate discrimination against women because it forms the readers' perception that the position is of course owned by a man, although the masculine genre is designated a neutral genre. Through the example above, it can be said that the adjustment of job titles is one of the characteristics of *l'écriture inclusive*, which aims to give recognition to women in society by using a title in a feminine form which previously had other connotations and was often even thought of as being negative for women.

3.2.1. Slate

The use of a period for terms in articles that represent job titles in two genres simultaneously also indicates the recognition of job titles in the feminine genre. This is in accordance with the theory of feminization or suffixal derivation which has been presented by Grevisse (2007): the addition of a suffix can change the genre of a noun. Words with a suffix addition that refer to job titles showing women's position, especially in the political field, have been recognized by Slate. For example, in «*Élections municipales à Paris: qui propose quoi en Matière de logement*» (February 21, 2020), Slate uses the term *la maire* for Anne Hidalgo. In the article, the representation of feminine job names is also seen through the use of terms with period marks, as in the term *les candidat.es*. When compared to articles published before *Académie Française* issued an official statement

regarding the use of professional titles in the feminine form on March 1, 2019, Slate media has also written the names of professions in feminine form in its articles that discuss women as the main subject; so, even before *Académie Française* approved the feminization of job titles, Slate had implemented and still uses it consistently. In an article published on 28 February 2019 under the title «*Aurore Bergé, députée LREM: «Decathlon a surtout fait le choix du buzz»*», Slate uses the terms *la députée* and *la porte-parole* to refer to Aurore Bergé, which is written as follows.

“Aurore Bergé, députée LREM des Yvelines et porte-parole du parti, était l’invitée de Gilles Bornstein mercredi matin dans l’Instant politique sur France Info.”

3.2.2. L’Humanité

Similar to Slate, L’Humanité has used the name of job titles in the feminine form when referring to women. This can be seen in an article published on April 16, 2019 with the title «*Extrême droite. L’Europe de Le Pen et Bardella: des échanges, pas de mélange*» by Grégory Marin. Overall, the article discusses the vision brought by Marine Le Pen during the European Parliament elections. In this article, the pronoun used to describe Marine Le Pen is *La Présidente du RN*. This shows that L’Humanité applies the title adjustment in the article.

In the article published under the title «*Les Accablantes Confessions d’Agnès Buzyn*» on March 18, 2020 by Cyprien Caddeo, it is also seen that the article was written by applying title adjustments. Overall, the article discusses Agnès Buzyn's confession stating that she had been warning Macron of the dangers of the coronavirus since last January. In the article, the title used to refer to Agnès Buzyn is also written in the feminine form. These two articles show that by adjusting the job titles in the article, L’Humanité recognizes the position of women in the political field. L’Humanité uses in «*Assemblée nationale. La majorité renvoie le RIC aux oubliettes*» (February 22, 2019) the term *la ministre de la justice* to call Nicole Belloubet which is written as follows.

“Un objectif intolérable pour la ministre de la Justice [...]”

So, L’Humanité has adopted the names of professions in feminine form in its articles even before March 1, 2019 and still uses them consistently.

3.2.3. Le Figaro

In this study, the article used from Le Figaro is an article published on April 6, 2019 entitled «*Parité chez les eurodéputés: plus de femmes mais peu aux postes de pouvoir*» written by Carolin Piquett. This article as a whole discusses how the number of women who become members of the European Parliament continues to increase, but there are still differences in power between female and male members of the European Parliament.

In the article, Le Figaro uses the term *eurodéputée* only once in one of the infographics included in the article, while for the content of the articles Le Figaro uses the term *des eurodéputés étaient des femmes* to replace the term *eurodéputée*. Writing with the term *eurodéputés étaient des femmes* to replace *eurodéputée* in the article gives the impression that *eurodéputé* should not be a woman. The use of this term is intentional because Le Figaro actually acknowledges the existence of the term *eurodéputée* by using it in an infographic, but in this article the purpose of using *des eurodéputés étaient des femmes* is to support the position of the text which opposes the existence of a woman in European Parliament because it does not bring any significant change.

However, when compared to several other articles, Le Figaro still applies job title adjustments for female subjects, as in «*Coronavirus: Agnès Buzyn «arrête» sa campagne à Paris mais ne se retire pas*» by Mathilde Siraud (March 16, 2020). Overall, the article discusses Agnès Buzyn who is a candidate from the *La République En Marche* (LREM) party who decided to end the campaign period due to the coronavirus pandemic. In this article, there are two titles that are used to replace the subject, namely *l’ex-ministre de la Santé* and *la médecin*. In the first term, it could not be seen whether *l’ex-*

ministre de la Santé is the masculine or feminine form, but in the article the use of the word *la médecin* is appropriate for the subject being discussed. Compared to other articles published by Le Figaro, it is found that Le Figaro has adjusted the title into a feminine form if the main subject involves women, even in articles published before *Académie Française* issued an official statement. It can be concluded that Le Figaro acknowledges the existence of a profession name in a feminine form, but its use is adapted to the purpose of the article. For example, in the article discussing the minister during François Hollande's leadership after Emmanuel Macron was elected President of France, entitled «*Cazeneuve, Royal, Le Drian: que vont devenir les ministres de Hollande?*» on May 15, 2017, Le Figaro used the term *députée* referring to Ségolène Royal and Najat Vallaud-Belkacem and mentions Myriam El Khomri as *La ministre sortante du Travail*. The following is an example of writing a feminine designation in the article.

“*Députée de la 2e circonscription des Deux-Sèvres de 1988 à 2007, Ségolène Royal ne sera pas candidate aux prochaines législatives.*”

3.2.4. Les Echos

The article used from the Les Echos media was published on February 14, 2019 entitled «*Eurodéputé: petit manuel de survie*» written by Elsa Freyssenet. Overall the article describes the experiences of five former members of the European Parliament who did not participate in elections in May. There are two women discussed, namely Françoise Grossetête and Pervenche Berès. In the article, the pronouns used to refer to Françoise Grossetête are *une députée centriste* and *vice-présidente*, both of which are titles in the feminine form.

Les Echos also applies job titles adjustments in other articles, for example in «*Municipales 2020: à Marseille, droite et gauche au coude-à-coude*» by Paul Molga (March 16, 2020). Overall, the article discusses what happened in the first round municipal elections in Marseille. There are two job titles in the feminine form, namely *présidente de la*

Métropole Aix-Marseille Provence et du département des Bouches-du-Rhône to refer to the candidate Michèle Rubirola and *sénatrice* referring to the candidate Samia Ghali. Through the two articles published by Les Echos, it is seen that Les Echos has adopted the feminine form of the title adjustment and has consistently applied it to its articles. Les Echos also implemented title adjustments in articles published before the *Académie Française* issued recognition of the name of the feminine form of profession. This shows that Les Echos also acknowledges the position of women in the political field by bringing up feminine form names in its articles. For example «*Elections européennes: ce sur quoi Le Pen va faire campagne*» (February 19, 2019) briefly discusses Marine Le Pen's campaign in the election for members of the European Parliament. In the article, Les Echos uses the term *la Présidente du RN* to refer to Le Pen. The following is an example of writing in the article.

“*Quant à la sortie de l'euro, « ce n'est plus une priorité. Nous avons la possibilité de changer l'Europe de l'intérieur », explique la présidente du RN qui doute pourtant de l'existence de la monnaie unique à terme.*”

3.3. Accord Grammatical

Accord grammatical is an adjective adjustment according to the subject that preceded it. In this case, the grammatical accord is divided into two, namely the grammatical accord described by Grevisse (2007) as *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin*, which prioritizes the adjustment of adjectives into the masculine genre because the masculine genre is considered an *indifférencié* genre (neutral genre), and grammatical accord according to HCE (2015), *la règle de proximité*, which is the adjustment of adjectives according to the genre of the closest subject.

- *Le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin*

Literally, *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* means the masculine wins over feminine. The purpose of this concept is, as mentioned by Grevisse (2007) to adjust an

adjective in a sentence to the *indifférencié* genre, namely masculine, as in:

les homes et les femmes sont beaux.

- **La règle de proximité**

The concept of *la règle de proximité* aims to match the adjective to the genre of the noun closest to the adjective. According to the Haut Conseil à l'Égalité (2015), the use of *la règle de proximité* is considered an accord which indicates equality between masculine and feminine. Feminists also prefer to use the accord in this way because they think the concept of *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* does not adequately represent women, and often even omits them. The following is an example of *la règle de proximité*.

*les hommes et les femmes sont belles
les femmes et les hommes sont beaux*

3.3.1. Left-wing Media

3.3.1.1. Slate

In an article published by Slate media on April 12, 2019, it can be seen that for terms that represent two genres but do not use a period, Slate sort the two terms alphabetically. For example, the second paragraph states *les femmes et les hommes élus*. Apart from being based on alphabetical order, the phrase also shows the use of a grammatical accord based on *la règle de proximité* as described by HCE (2015) to adjust an adjective to the genre of the noun closest to the adjective, aiming to denote equality between feminine and masculine. The word *élus* in the above phrase is an adjective of the plural masculine noun (m.p.), which shows that the word *élus* used in the phrase is adapted to the word *les hommes* because it is the noun closest to the adjective.

By applying *la règle de proximité*, Slate chooses to sort the words *les femmes* and *les hommes* alphabetically. In this way, the adjectives that follow will be adjusted into the masculine form. Readers will then feel more comfortable because in sentences containing masculine and feminine nouns, the adjective that follows is usually masculine. However, if you look at other articles published by Slate

on November 20, 2019, alphabetical word ordering is not applied. In this article, the phrases for *les candidats et candidates* are ordered as in general writing, namely by putting masculine nouns before feminine nouns, which is in accordance with *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* (Grevisse, 2007).

The context of the April 12, 2019 article is about voting for the European Parliament. In articles like this, usually the media uses the terms *les candidats* and *les candidates*, as used in the article on November 20, 2019. The difference between the two articles is that in the first article nouns are followed by an adjective, while in the second article nouns are not. It can be concluded, therefore, that for practical reason Slate prefers to use the terms *les femmes* and *les hommes* in the first article because if the article uses the terms *les candidats* and *les candidates* the adjective used must be adjusted to the word *les candidates* (feminine), thereby becoming *les candidats et les candidates élus*.

The use of the terms *les femmes* and *les hommes* in the article can mean Slate's attempt to keep using *la règle de proximité* but still adjusting to the public's understanding of grammatical accord, namely *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* or adjectives which adapt to masculine genre nouns when there are two genres in one sentence. Thus, it appears that alphabetical ordering of nouns is only used to denote the use of *la règle de proximité* if there is an adjective following the noun. This shows that Slate's grammatical accord application still adapts to standard French, which is widely understood by the public.

3.3.1.2. L'Humanité

In writing the article, L'Humanité still uses *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* rule. In «*Les Accablantes Confessions D'agnès Buzyn*» (March 18, 2020), it is written as follows.

Des éléments qui n'ont pas empêché ses équipes de campagne d'envoyer un SMS à 500 000 électeurs parisiens pour les encourager à aller voter pour la macroniste

The phrase *électeurs parisiens* in the masculine form is an example of the use of *accord*

grammatical *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* because it is considered a neutral genre that also represents the feminine. The use of the *accord grammatical le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* on L'Humanité is due to the fact that this accord is generally used in French grammar and is well known and understood by the public.

3.3.2. Right-wing Media

3.3.2.1. Le Figaro

Le Figaro still uses *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* rule. This is indicated by the use of terms with masculine genres even though the main subject discussed in the article is women. In an article published on April 6, 2019, the use of *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* also fits the position of the text against women in the elections for members of the European Parliament, because the article clearly undermines women's decision-making ability when compared to men.

«Les hommes s'imposent dans cette compétition, notamment parce qu'ils ont plus de ressources associées à l'expérience et à l'ancienneté» [...] En face, «les femmes sont globalement un peu plus jeunes, ont un peu moins d'expérience politique et moins d'ancienneté, ce qui les défavorise»

This shows that the media supports the position of the text. In this case Le Figaro indicates the superiority of men over women with word choice and accord. The grammatical accord *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* can indeed be used to discriminate against women through language. This is in accordance with the claims of feminist groups regarding the debate of *l'écriture inclusive*.

3.3.2.2. Les Echos

In its articles, such as L'Humanité and Le Figaro, Les Echos still uses *accord grammatical le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin*. The use of the *accord grammatical le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* on the Les Echos media also has the same reasons as the two media previously mentioned, namely because this accord is commonly used and has been taught as standard French and is well known and understood by the public. In «Eurodéputé:

petit manuel de survie» (February 14, 2019), for example, Les Echos uses the phrase *Ils sont respectés* and the term *cinq eurodéputés* in the masculine form to refer to five former members of the European Parliament consisting of three men and two women as the main subject of the article.

4. CONCLUSION

L'écriture inclusive is a way of writing that aims to eliminate gender discrimination and stereotypes in French society that have sparked much debate over the last two years. In the debate, it has been supposed that the media are divided into two parties, namely those who refuse, who are generally right-wing media, and those who support it, who are generally left-wing media, but in reality the application of *l'écriture inclusive* in the media does not depend on political ideology. Only Slate, which is the only contrarian media, uses *l'écriture inclusive* consistently in its articles. Thus, the application of *l'écriture inclusive* does not reflect political ideology but is perhaps more aligned to being opposed to the rules set by Government and society. In this case, then, Slate implements *l'écriture inclusive* because the government previously, through the official statement of Prime Minister Edouard Philippe and Minister of Education Jean-Michel Blanquer, had given a firm statement against the use of *l'écriture inclusive*. Through this study, we assume that the use of *l'écriture inclusive* by Slate media which consistently only applies to the content of the article and not the headline is a strategy to attract and familiarize readers with *l'écriture inclusive*, while the absence of *l'écriture inclusive* in headlines is only because it facilitates article searches using web search engines.

In addition, it was also found that the four French media had implemented name adjustments to describe women in politics, but their use was still adjusted to the opinion the media wanted to present. This is contrary to the findings of Labouheure (2017) who states that right-wing media tend to reject the adjustment of feminine form names and follow the rules presented by Académie Française. This research found that the four

media, both left-wing and right-wing, implemented title adjustments even before *Académie Française* issued an official statement regarding its use, but found they still use the *le masculin l'emporte sur le féminin* rule in their articles. The partial application of *l'écriture inclusive* shows that the media still prioritize the ease of communicative elements of information transmission to their readers over avoiding gender discrimination.

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