



# **Language and Gender**

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**Authors** Benjamin Fagard | Cristina Gil | Rita Faria | Raquel Meister Ko Freitag | Antonio Chenoll | Grauben Navas | Gabriele Diewald | Daniel Elmiger | Machteld Meulleman | Ana Margarida Abrantes | Christin Schütze | Olga Steriopolu | Hélène Giraudu | Aurélia Morel | Thom Westveer | Marine Delaborde | Auphémie Ferreira | Loïc Grobol | Olga Seminck  
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Sociedade Unipessoal, Lda.  
Palma de Cima 1649-023 Lisboa  
Tel. (351) 217 214 020  
uceditora@ucp.pt | www.uceditora.ucp.pt

# Language and Gender

Benjamin Fagard & Ana Margarida Abrantes (eds.)



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# The Evolution of Gender Representation in Two Editions of a Spanish as a Foreign Language Textbook

Antonio Chenoll\*, Grauben Navas\*\*

## Abstract

Textbooks play a crucial role in the foreign language learning and teaching process: they support teachers when preparing, organizing and evaluating the foreign language acquisition process. Additionally, they have a considerable bearing in the representation of culture and of gender roles (Fernández Darraz, 2010). A textbook should transmit the values associated with the language students are learning and it should moreover encourage critical work on these values in general. Commercial, political, or pedagogical considerations (Morales & Cassany, 2020) cannot justify an aseptic presentation of reality that does not consider the presence of women in egalitarian roles, or the questioning of the depiction of classical roles as opposed to a more diverse representation that would enable the promotion of equality in general terms (Fernández Darraz, 2010). On many occasions, this equity in representation is made explicit in the images selected (particularly in larger publishers, where particular care is taken regarding this aspect), since visual representations are more evident. But there are other aspects and components of a textbook that also account for these cultural features, such as texts, audios, and videos. Notwithstanding the importance of this representation, there seems to be a lack of significant studies that examine textbooks used in Spanish as a Foreign Language from a comprehensive social and gender perspective. Therefore, we present a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the text and images contained in two editions

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\* CECC/Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

\*\* CECC/Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

of a complete textbook (*Aula Internacional 1 Nueva Edición* (2013) and *Aula Internacional Plus 1* (2020)) using the qualitative data analysis programme Atlas.ti. Based on this analysis, we highlight the social dimension of Spanish as a Foreign Language Teaching and focus on the relationship between language usage and texts and images contained in the textbook. We examine several variables such as gender representation, roles, age, and ethnicity using an inductive-deductive methodology. Through an in-depth analysis of the construction of gender equality in the book, we assess the use of inclusive language and the visual representations of gender in each textbook. Through the diachronic comparison of the two editions of the textbook, it will also be possible to assess whether there have been some accurate and precise changes in terms of gender representation or not. The analysis is guided by Critical Discourse Analysis, based on frequency and order of appearance. This analysis could be a valuable aid for teachers interested in encouraging a conscious transmission and questioning of the values associated with the culture under study through critical work on these values and themes in class.

**Keywords:** Culture; Spanish as a Foreign Language; Foreign Language Manuals; Gender Perspective; Representations of Women.

## Introduction

Teaching materials, whether textbooks, teacher-prepared guides, blogs, and official content from legitimate institutions or from internet influencers are invariably products of their time. They are not decontextualized, neutral products, but are precisely imbued with the context in which they arise. Therefore, for teachers in general, and foreign language teachers in particular, it is extremely important to approach teaching materials from a critical perspective, given that textbooks serve as tools to organise and guide an object of study as complex as a foreign language, where the content that is taught is the very vehicle around which knowledge is built. As such, the what, how and when of the teaching process, and namely what contents are not taught or are ignored or referred to tangentially or partially carry a profound impact on the way in which language and culture are acquired.

Among the development of cultural skills, one of the aspects that is very present in the current state of the art is that which relates to gender equality,

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and in particular the representation of gender and the treatment of gender roles in everyday life.

The present contribution first examines foreign language textbooks as a window to the language and culture of the target society (Spanish-speaking societies). In the current socio-political climate (of wars, pandemics and environmental threats, among others) it becomes increasingly important to integrate the social dimension of language into the teaching process. It is not enough to simply guide the student towards the development of a linguistic code with which to communicate; it is increasingly necessary to deepen the critical dimension of the teaching of Spanish, understood here as students' awareness of their own reality as opposed to that of the target society they are being made aware of through language teaching. This issue is particularly important, because of the wide reach of the Spanish language around the world, both geographically and culturally. The cultural perspective and even the dialectal variant are truly different in Spain and, for example, Venezuela. Therefore, we henceforth refer to "target cultures" as an effort to highlight the diversity of language users included in the term "target culture(s)" in the specific case of Spanish. All this so that students may not only develop skills in terms of content, but may also become agents of change and cultural production (Freire, 1967, 1970; Lacorte & Atienza, 2019: 138). There are several key notions where the critical dimension may come into play, for example, the promotion of critical thinking, critical literacy and critical cultural awareness, all of which are aspects connected with the development of intercultural and linguistic skills.

An area that has always been susceptible to critical analysis in the teaching of foreign languages is the so-called cultural component. There is long-standing work on the relationship between language and culture (in this regard see, for example, the special Issue of *Colección Forma 4. Interculturalidad* edited by Gómez Asencio, 2002). These studies share the assumption that language (as a system) and culture are intimately connected or, in other words, that all that is language is equally culture (González Casado, 2002: 63). However, beginning with Byram's (1995) coinage of the concept of the intercultural speaker and since the publication of the CEFR (2001) and its Companion Volume (2020), the comprehensive consideration of critical awareness of the sociolinguistic, communicative and intercultural dimension has become increasingly relevant and central (in this regard, see the section *Saberes y comportamientos socio-culturales* in the *Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes*).

Therefore, in order to thoroughly examine the current context of teaching and learning Spanish as a foreign language, an in-depth analysis of two editions of a Spanish as a foreign language textbook is proposed, highlighting the close relationship between the acquisition of the language and the social dimension of the different cultures (Spanish, Venezuelan, Argentinian, Mexican cultures) of the target language.

If textbooks are to be considered not only as an instrument of mediation between the teacher, the content and the student, but also as windows to the language and culture of the target language, it becomes important to note the fact that in many Spanish-speaking societies, and also in Brazil (Freitag, this volume), a global social dialogue is taking place at the most diverse levels (public and private debates, in academia, on social networks, in politics, etc.) around gender representativeness (Bolívar, 2019). By gender we mean a concept taken from grammar, with which reference is made today to the sociocultural construction of the masculine and the feminine. This sociocultural construction, moreover, is useful to distinguish gender from the concept of sex in the biological sense.<sup>57</sup> Given that one of the main objectives of a foreign language textbook is to guide, organize and monitor the learning, practice, expression and reflection on the target language, we appreciate that textbooks, as a product of their time and permeated by their context, are also bearers of gender representations that should be reviewed if the purpose is not only to teach the code itself, but also to promote the critical development of the values and perspectives of the target cultures.

It is important to do so in some depth and from a multimodal perspective, since currently textbooks, when viewed comprehensively, are a complex, hybrid product. Not only are they composed of texts and images, but there is increasingly an imbrication of audio, video, images and various digital resources which are all susceptible to contain a gender component. Finally, a diachronic study is proposed, namely, to compare two relatively recent editions of the same textbook, because it is relevant to compare the extent to which teaching manuals actually represent the desire for parity that characterizes their corresponding target societies and to observe whether there is an omission of these issues in these textbooks.

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<sup>57</sup> To understand the evolution of the term, see Angouri (2021).

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This is not a new line of inquiry. Depending on the tradition in which they may be inserted, Porreca (1984) and Rifkin (1998) should be mentioned, as well as a broad and prolific line of inquiry and of approaches that are more focused on culture in terms of the relationship between so-called everyday culture and legitimized culture and the intersection of the cultural with various variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic level, disability, inclusion/exclusion (González Casado, 2002) and, lately, gaining increased relevance, the intersection with sexuality and traditional gender roles.<sup>58</sup> What is new about the present study is the comprehensive analysis of the evolution of a textbook not only in relation to its component parts (dialogues, written texts, images and drawings), but the fact that it seeks to integrate it as a multimodal text in which the representativeness of various cultural features such as hierarchies and gender representativeness, among others, are analyzed.

Thus, what is of interest in this teaching manual is to observe the evolution of gender representation in depth, and for this purpose two editions were compared, taking into account the different modes of delivery in relation to other relevant social variables. The importance of a micro-diachronic study derives from the fact that by contrasting two relatively recent editions published ten years apart, we are able to analyze whether significant changes can be observed, in line with changing perspectives on these aspects in the target cultures.

### **Gender and Representativeness in Educational Texts. State of the Art.**

Textbooks are invaluable tools in foreign language teaching, as they support and guide teachers in the preparation, organization and evaluation of the teaching and learning process of the target language. These materials have considerable influence on the representation of culture, in general, and of gender in different roles, in particular (Fernández Darraz, 2010). Ideally, a textbook should convey the culture and values associated with the language students are learning and, in addition, should encourage critical work on these values in general. However, it is well known that teaching materials are not the neutral product of the academic and/or pedagogical work of the institution that designed them.

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<sup>58</sup> A good summary can be found in Parra and Serafini (2021).

They are, instead, the products of their time and context of creation and reception. As such, they are influenced by their surrounding environment, which has a positive, but also a potentially negative, side. An example of this is the recent controversy in the United States, more precisely in Florida, surrounding a considerable number of textbooks for different disciplines which supposedly use biased contents and examples in their explanations and exercises (Luscombe, 2022). The reverse situation is not uncommon: textbooks or teaching materials in the most diverse disciplines that seem to promote a kind of aseptic version of reality (Morales and Cassany, 2020). That is, textbooks where the very absence of several topics is somewhat surprising. Certain educational systems have been caught up in controversies regarding the prohibition of inclusive language, particularly the use of *desdoblamiento*, or lexical split by gender (i.e. the use of both masculine and feminine forms), in primary education teaching materials (Bolívar & Adrián, 2022; Furtado, 2023; Santacruz, 2023).

Whatever may be the case, at the present moment where, from the United Nations to the most diverse levels of government, a consensus is palpable on the need to establish, in the interest of sustainable development, quality education, gender equality as well as a reduction of inequality in general,<sup>59</sup> it is therefore clearly necessary, on the educational side, to promote critical awareness among students as established, for example, in official documents of the European Parliament.<sup>60</sup>

In foreign language teaching, the situation is doubly complex because what is taught is also the vehicle through which critical awareness must be fostered. The language is both the medium and the object of learning. Guiding learners in the acquisition of contents but also in how to critically relate to these, while being mindful of their environment (Freire, 1970), is a deeply complex and demanding task that combines not only classroom work, evaluation and activities, but also teaching materials in particular.

Currently, and particularly in Spanish-speaking societies, the issue of gender is latent. We find ourselves immersed in a dynamic of constant acceleration and contraction of the issue, of massification and, not infrequently, of silence around it, depending on the society in question. As such, a deeper and more attentive study of the pedagogical reality of foreign language teaching materials

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<sup>59</sup> See: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>

<sup>60</sup> See: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/es/sheet/142/la-politica-linguistica>

cannot escape the multimodality of the resources used. This is a particularly powerful and compelling line of inquiry not only in Spanish but also in other linguistic areas: Morales-Vidal & Cassany (2020) for Spanish; Porreca (1984), for English; Rifkin (1998) for Russian, and other important texts for English as a foreign language: Auerbach (1985); Lee (2014); Benlaghrissi (2022). Many of these studies, however, tend to focus on a specific aspect rather than the totality of formats included in a textbook. Therefore, it is appropriate to pursue a comprehensive analysis of teaching materials that includes both the linguistic element and the visual and auditory elements, since gender roles are not limited to representation in the linguistic element, but are present in other aspects, such as visual representativeness, the hierarchical order of appearance, control of the conversation or the attribution of more or less active roles, among others. Thus, in order to achieve a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding on the use of linguistic and non-linguistic forms in teaching manuals of Spanish as a foreign language as regards gender representation/roles, it is advisable to also include the images, audios and additional elements cited in the analysis, to achieve a more complete and holistic view of this representation.

The focus should be not only on the transmission or construction of the image of women with respect to men on more obvious issues such as the images and photographs of a textbook, or the professions or incidence of appearance of the characters, but also on the discourse itself, contents and ordering in the texts and audios, which might reflect stereotyped or negative attitudes or microaggressions<sup>61</sup> contained in the book. We understand microaggressions as “(...) attitudes of ‘soft’ domination or ‘very small intensity,’ latent and denied forms and modes of abuse and imposition in everyday life (...) that men permanently execute.” (Bonino, 2004: 1)

For the purposes of the preparation of this study, we start from the assumption that these are not intentional representations, and that they might well have gone unnoticed during decision-making processes; but that, in any case, they reflect the socio-cultural context in which decision makers (editors, writers or pedagogical advisers) are immersed.

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<sup>61</sup> Translator's Note: within the scope of the present work, references to “microaggressions” should be understood as instances of “micro-machismo,” or subtler forms of machismo, as defined by psychologist Luis Bonino (2004), “Los micromachismos”. *La Cibeles*, 2: 1-6.

In this sense, the most up to date pedagogical approaches define the student of foreign languages and second languages, in general, as a social agent. This highlights the student's ability to interpret statements and to act appropriately in social practices. Thus, it is indispensable to work on developing a critical attitude in foreign language/L2 classes. Twenty years ago, with the publication of the CEFR, the action-oriented approach and the description according to levels of communicative and sociolinguistic competence gained centrality. In 2020, with the Companion Volume, this approach became more clearly shaped, with the inclusion of clear descriptors of multicultural, multilingual and mediation skills. All of the above aspects shape the didactic and pedagogical setting where the textbooks under study can be inserted. This is a context conducive to analyses that go beyond the linguistic aspect, as particular attention is paid to the fact that multilingual and multicultural skills can speed up, to some extent, further learning in the linguistic and cultural fields (section 2.3). On the other hand, this is part of a context in which notions of gender, particularly in sociolinguistic terms, have acquired significant relevance in the most diverse areas. It is worth noting, among these, the fight against discrimination based on the sociocultural construction of gender. Given the above, it is necessary for teachers to develop an observant attitude, and to regard teaching materials with a critical approach to discourse (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; 2005).

Accordingly, a careful analysis of teaching materials used in the Spanish as a foreign language (SFL) classroom is invaluable. It is clear that in order to enhance the critical attitude necessary to act as a social agent, activities and materials geared towards attentive and conscious social interactions, and supported by reflection and awareness on the part of the learner, not to mention the teacher, are necessary (Lacorte & Atienza, 2019: 145). Along the same lines, didactic materials must be viewed as documents which certainly guide teaching from a curricular point of view but, crucially, they should also be understood as cultural artefacts (Lacorte & Atienza, 2019: 141; Angouri, 2021: 1), products of their time that present the language and culture in a selective way, since they materialize decision-making and choices that are the product of their interaction with the environment in which they were produced.

Consequently, it is important to take stock and to attempt to observe diachronically what outlook on reality is built into SFL teaching manuals, particularly with regard to the link between linguistic markers of gender as a grammatical category, but also as a sociolinguistic and cultural phenomenon.

## Methodology

We present the analysis of two editions of a textbook understood as a cultural product permeated by its situational anchoring. From an exhaustive analysis, specific areas in need of attention can be identified and forms of action can be devised that offer guidance and responses to phenomena, environments and social dynamics present inside and outside the classroom (Gutiérrez, Soler and Klee, 2021: 105). Muñoz-Basols and Hernández Muñoz propose reflective work in our area that is polycentric, polyphonic and polyhedral in its approach (Muñoz-Basols and Hernández Muñoz, 2019: 81). To this end, this work seeks to contribute to the study of gender from the contrasting and micro-diachronic points of view of two editions of an SFL textbook. Despite the importance of this representation, there seems to be a lack of studies focusing on the analysis of textbooks employed in teaching Spanish as a foreign language, from a comprehensive social and gender perspective. Therefore, we present a quantitative analysis of text, audio and images in two editions of a complete textbook (*Aula Internacional 1 Nueva Edición* (2013) and *Aula Internacional Plus 1* (2020)) conducted with the qualitative data analysis programme *Atlas.ti*.

The aim is to deepen this sociolinguistic dimension of the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language, with a particular focus on the relationship between the use of language, texts and images contained in the textbook. To this end, the critical dimension of teaching is examined. The focus is on the way in which meanings are being construed in these particular teaching materials, as the ultimate goal is to build the skills necessary to interact with others, to receive and produce texts and to be a mediator (Council of Europe, 2020).

Different variables such as gender representation (from various perspectives), gender roles, age and origin (cultural ethnicity/ethnicity) were observed, using an inductive methodology. In this case, we will focus on the representation relative to gender. The general goal is to propose an analytic model for didactic materials that considers gender when carrying out a transversal and holistic analysis. Subsequently, through the micro-diachronic comparison of two editions of the same textbook, it will also be possible to evaluate whether concrete and clearly visible changes have occurred in terms of gender representation.

This is based on a critical approach to discourse according to the frequency, quality of representation and order of appearance of relevant aspects. The

underlying assumption is that the selected corpus is ideological and *gendered*, that is, the product of a specific context and, therefore, susceptible to be analysed critically at various levels and with a focus on the multiplicity of formats, etc., from a gender perspective. The comprehensive analysis of the corpus is completed with the micro-diachronicity of the proposed approach, which is justified by the speed of the changes referred to above and the permeability of power structures when it comes to this aspect.

The starting point was to consider the textbooks as windows to the language, culture and society under examination. From this, the main or initial question was formulated: Is there gender symmetry in both textbooks? If the Spanish speaking countries have evolved in the past seven years regarding these issues, has the textbook similarly evolved in its new edition? On the basis of these questions, several research objectives were defined:

- To research whether the quality of the representativeness of women is comparable to that of men.
- To identify if there are microaggressions in the representativeness of women in the textbook.
- To critically observe if there is any diversity in the various perspectives (race, age, countries, sexuality, etc.).
- To observe the potential evolution by comparing two editions of the same textbook published ten years apart.

To achieve these aims, the textbooks mentioned above will form the corpus of the research. The goal is to build a corpus in order to carry out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the contents, focusing on the way in which gender representativeness is expressed. To this end, the texts, audios and images of the textbooks have been analyzed and tagged inductively: in general, through an initial reading with an inductive approach. That is, an initial revision of the textbooks was conducted (in the text, the use of pronouns, and adjectives; in the images, who is shown, how they are presented, and the order in which they are presented; in drawings, how the characters look and behave, etc.). This general review was followed by a classification of the findings through the creation of tags that, in the third part of the analysis, were reorganized into categories according to variables such as male/female, order of appearance, race, age, economic status, position of power, etc.). This analysis made it possible to

deconstruct and to attempt to understand the way in which representativeness is built in the textbook under study.

This analysis enables us to infer the process of creation (whether more or less explicit) of contextualizing cultural stereotypes, linguistic usage and socio-cultural values provided to the learner, as well as the erasure of more controversial aspects of the Spanish-speaking social reality.

### The Corpus

As mentioned above, the corpus consists of the textbook *Aula Internacional 1. Nueva Edición* published in 2013 and its counterpart, *Aula Internacional Plus 1*, dated 2020. Although the name of the textbooks differs in the Plus label, the main difference is that the contents have been updated and the texts and grammar sections have been extended, with a more prominent role given to the lexical component. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this comparison, we will focus on those contents that are comparable with the 2013 edition in order to draw more reliable conclusions from the subject at hand. In addition, one of the advantages of both textbooks is that they include a section with more practical exercises, as well as a further practice grammar section at the end, which makes it more adequate to the research perspective and from a practical point of view to use this corpus composed of only two texts.

Furthermore, on the one hand, the written texts, including audios, have been analysed, as well as the images, whether photographs or drawings, taking into account the issue, especially, of gender. The data were collected both from a quantitative (tagging of elements and numerical comparison) and a qualitative (analysis of the significant and representative elements of each edition) perspective.

## Results and analysis

### Quantitative Analysis

For the quantitative analysis, it was deemed appropriate to use a tool normally intended for qualitative analysis, namely *Atlas.ti*. This software enables

the tagging or encoding of multimedia elements, leading, in turn, to an automatic analysis of the tagging carried out.

Analytical and bottom-up tagging was conducted. This form of tagging is particularly useful when the aim is to carry out a sweeping analysis of an element that can then be grouped into a larger category without losing important data about the original element. For example, when analysing the role of a woman in a conversation, it is possible to classify that conversation with the tags *woman* and *first*. Later, it is possible to simply create the tag *woman first*. That is, the more detailed the tagging process, the simpler it becomes to subsequently design a more in-depth analysis. Similarly, the tagging was carried out on various parameters such as ethnicity, explicit gender, interculturality, and age representation, among others. The goal was to create an analytic model for textbooks that can be implemented in other textbooks and for other parameters, so that the tagging work can be used for future analyses. Nevertheless, the present examination focused exclusively on issues of gender.

Figure 1: Example of tagging.



To this end, 537 tags or basic codes were created that were subsequently grouped into 30 code groups. For example, the code group *attitude* consists, in turn, of 30 codes such as *tedious*, *active*, *ambitious* or *chaotic*. Thus, it was possible to collect and analyze in a meaningful way the attitudes in which the different people present themselves when combining the tag *active* with the tag *woman*, for example. In these code groups, codes for format and textbook sections were also included in order to cross-reference the data relating to *woman* with *photography* or with *written text*. In this way, information can

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subsequently be cross-referenced to better understand whether representations of women were more numerous in photographs due to being a more explicit format where there is a conscious choice or if, on the contrary, they are less numerous in written texts due to being a more unrestricted formulation on the part of the authors.

With this coding model it is possible to create simple data cross-referencing as seen below, with the ability to group references to a particular Latin American country, and from there to compare it with references to Spain. This process shows that, as revealed in Figure 2, although the most recent textbook lends more emphasis to Latin America than its predecessor, Spain remains the most important cultural reference. Even though the difference is not statistically significant, considering the weight of native speakers in Latin America, it is still meaningful.

Figure 2: Example of cross-referencing of data from tags for Latin American countries-Spain.

	2013	2020 Plus	Totales
	2 1151	2 1180	
○ España 140	75 41,90 %	65 39,63 %	140 40,82 %
○ Países latinoamericanos 203	104 58,10 %	99 60,37 %	203 59,18 %
<b>Totales</b>	<b>179</b> 100 %	<b>164</b> 100 %	<b>343</b> 100 %

With these tools, a comparison was established from various perspectives. Firstly, the overall man-to-woman representativeness was compared. That is, generally, and taking into account all the formats in the corpus (written text, images, drawings and audio), the percentage of global appearances was studied. The resulting data show that women are more present in the older edition (50.36%) while in the new edition this percentage decreases to 47.35%. As can be seen, these percentual differences are not significant.

When data on the presence of gender in different formats such as written texts, photographs and drawings are cross-referenced, the following results are obtained:

Chart 1: General Man-to-Woman representativeness.

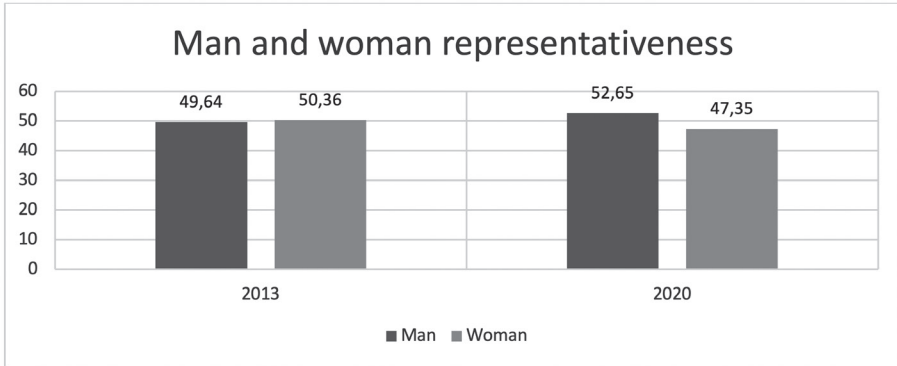


Chart 2: Representation by Gender and Format.

	EDITION	MAN (%)	WOMAN (%)	DIFF. WOMAN (%)
PHOTOGRAPHS	2013	45.00	55.00	10.00
	2020	38.29	61.71	23.43
WRITTEN TEXT	2013	50.72	49.28	-1.44
	2020	52.36	47.64	-4.71
DRAWINGS	2013	56.03	43.97	-12.07
	2020	54.20	45.80	-8.40

It can be observed with this indicator that appearances in photographs evolve positively for women (23.43% higher in the new edition). On the other hand, both in the written text and in the drawings, this percentage is less significant, maintaining its level of incidence. This element is particularly significant because it can be assumed that the choice of photographs is more conscious, in the sense that there is someone who makes this selection and, therefore, whether the representations are of women or of men. It can be observed that in the 2020 edition there is a clear tendency to further increase the level of female representativeness.

In this sense, it was also interesting to observe the differences from a group perspective. Namely, the proportion in which both genders were present in group representations. The underlying assumption here being that when a single gender is represented in a group or appears in greater numbers, it is being

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represented as being more powerful than the other. As such, the following results were obtained, as shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Gender by Group of People.

<b>GROUPS</b>	<b>2013 (%)</b>	<b>2020 (%)</b>	<b>DIFF. WOMAN (%)</b>
<b>MEN ONLY</b>	29.41	16.42	-12.99
<b>WOMEN ONLY</b>	50.00	26.87	-23.13
<b>EQUAL NUMBERS</b>	5.88	31.34	25.46
<b>MORE MEN</b>	8.82	10.45	1.62
<b>MORE WOMEN</b>	5.88	14.93	9.04

The decision-making in the most recent textbook is significantly increased in the preference for groups of people where both genders are equally represented. In this regard, there is a 25.46% increase in images in which the number of women and men is equivalent.

It can thus be seen how an apparently subtle aspect reveals itself to be of great importance to better understand the way in which gender representation is construed in the textbook. Following this reasoning, attention was also paid to the order of appearance in conversations that take place both in written texts and in images. The fact that a member of one gender begins the conversation implies that they assume an active and superior role in the communicative situation which, in principle, gives them more power. This indicator, as well as other indicators observed, do not imply an explicit decision on the granting of this role, but may reflect less conscious actions and beliefs. As we can see in Chart 4, the active role in the conversation is, in both textbooks, a lot more prevalent for men, with a difference of 11% and 9% fewer beginnings of the conversation for women.

Chart 4: Order in Which Speakers Take Part in a Conversation

	<b>MAN FIRST (%)</b>	<b>WOMAN FIRST (%)</b>	<b>WOMAN DIFF (%)</b>
<b>2013</b>	55.56	44.44	-11.11
<b>2020</b>	54.55	45.45	-9.09

In addition to the hierarchy in conversations, the use of explicit tools for equal representativeness and inclusive language such as lexical split by gender, neutral structures, choice of female words or inversion of traditional roles was equally analysed. A very important shift was observed in the 2020 textbook, in which the results are clearly favourable to this representativeness – a good indicator of the efforts to render the textbook more inclusive.

Chart 5: Explicit Inclusive Language Tools.

	2013	2020
<b>DOUBLE MENTION</b>	4	123
<b>FEMINIZED</b>	0	11
<b>NEUTRAL STRUCTURES</b>	0	22
<b>INVERTED ROLE</b>	0	14

In this regard, the 2020 textbook makes a clear commitment to the use of lexical split by gender structures such as *compañero/a* (colleague), *profesor/a* (professor, teacher) while in the 2013 manual only four such structures are observed. There is equally an attempt to select professions with female declinations such as *jueza* (judge), *cirujana* (surgeon) or *científica* (scientist) when mentioning these professions. The use of neutral structures (*alumnado* (student body) instead of *alumnus* (students), *las otras personas de la clase* (the other people in the class) instead of *compañeros* or the inversion of traditional roles such as *secretario* (secretary), *taxista* (taxi driver) or *comercial* (both represented in the text as women).

Finally, it is worth highlighting a rare but very significant presence. Only two same-sex relationships involving women appear in the 2020 textbook. Although in the 2013 manual no explicitly gay relationship appeared – this small addition representing an advance in the LGTQB+ representativeness in Spanish textbooks – it remains curious that these feature women only and are relatively hidden away in small exercises in the textbook. It should be highlighted that these explicit relationships are accompanied by photographs of a couple, in one case and, in another, of one of the partners in the couple.

## Qualitative Analysis

Turning now to a qualitative analysis, it is clear that, despite the fact that the 2020 manual is more inclusive in relation to gender, it has clearly opted for a much greater diversity not only in terms of gender but also from a multicultural, perspective.

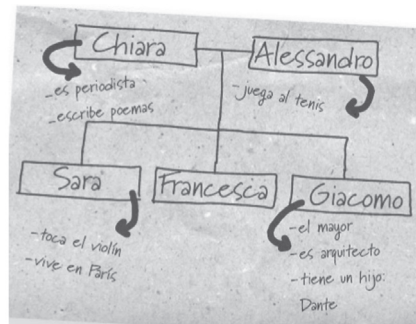
However, some elements continue to be featured which give men a superior position, such as the use, by default, of the generic form (from a linguistic point of view) which coincides with the masculine in the examples, as can be seen in the following image.

Figure 3: Preferential use of male forms in examples.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
<b>1.ª persona</b>	yo	nosotros / nosotras
<b>2.ª persona</b>	tú, vos, usted*	vosotros / vosotras, ustedes*
<b>3.ª persona</b>	él / ella	ellos / ellas

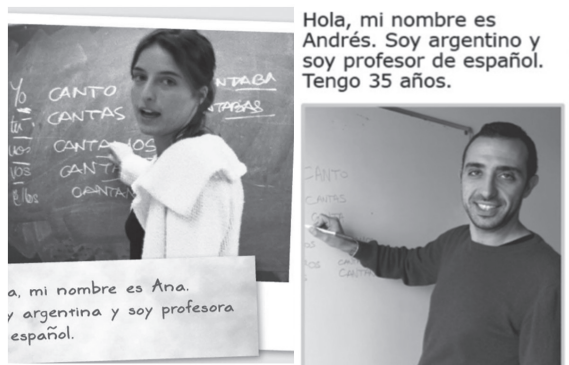
Similarly, it is possible to observe how, in some classical elements, men continue to occupy a predominant role in the situational structure by being placed graphically above and to the right on quite a few occasions. This preference position is well known as Gutenberg Diagram or Z pattern in the image preference studies field (Hernandez & Resnick, 2013). However, an awareness of this fact can be identified in the 2020 manual, with images such as the following, where the preferential placement is given to the woman.

Figure 4: Visually preferential location occupied by a woman.



On the other hand, when comparing both editions, it was observed that many of the activities with images have been kept, but that the images have been replaced to give more prominence to the female gender or to swap traditional roles (see Lacalle & Gómez, 2016 or De la Cruz, 2002) in Spain and Latin-America, as can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: In the 2013 edition, the teacher is an Argentinian woman (left image). In the 2020 version the nationality has been kept, but the teacher is a man (right image).



Similarly, although there is a clear tendency to use inclusive language, particularly in the use of lexical split by gender with complete coherence, since formulas such as *compañeros/as* are used on many occasions as we can see in the chart 5 comparison.

Chart 6: Number of occurrences of words related to 'compañero' (Colleague/partner).

	2013	2020
<b>Compañera</b>	0	1
<b>Compañeras</b>	0	0
<b>Compañero</b>	67	3
<b>Compañeros</b>	50	5
<b>Compañeros/as</b>	0	43

Finally, the evolution of the 2020 textbook also shows a tendency to avoid gender or race stereotypes. As an example, the 2013 manual (p.109) included an exercise in which a woman was in love with two men and had to choose between them. One of the men was romantic and sensitive, while the other

was an engineer and formal. In the 2020 edition this exercise was changed and now the woman has to choose between roommates (p. 128). The selection between romantic or formal love perspective has changed and now she had to make a convenient decision to share the flat not from the stereotype romantic woman point of view, but from the objective decision. This change may be very significant from the perspective of correcting or improving stereotyped images in relation to certain issues or circumstances traditionally confined to women.

## Discussion of Results

Considering the quantitative data, it is possible to discuss the scope in matters of representativeness regarding the two textbooks. On the one hand, both textbooks seem to foreground gender equality and its representativeness as the picture case or implicit as the text cases. Nevertheless, the 2020 edition displays a clear shift, with formal editorial decisions regarding the inclusion of women, not only in terms of number of appearances, but also in terms of the quality of these appearances. In the 2020 edition, women are shown in more active roles, of more diverse origins and more diverse professions. On the other hand, in other aspects, such as non-binary relationships, representativeness is absent. In this edition women are represented as being completely equal to men not only from a legal perspective but also from an active and diverse role perspective in society. Women may hold the same positions and jobs as those traditionally held by men, such as judges or surgeons. In this sense, it is quite evident that the changes in this manual meet the social changes in Spain and Latin America.

Nevertheless, an egalitarian representative place for women in textbooks is still far from perfect. We observed that there is room for improvement in less explicit aspects, such as written texts, the inclusion of contexts in which women have a more active role in a position of power (not only with examples, but in the description of situations), and in apportioning an equitable role in the incidence of personal pronouns, such as beginning the verbal paradigm tables with 'she' instead of always beginning with 'he'.

In answer to the questions that were raised at the beginning of this text, we can say that the representation of women has led to a significant, comparable increase, particularly in some aspects, such as the number of appearances,

which has surpassed that of men. Similarly, some aspects observed can still be improved on in order to avoid some types of microaggression like the position, the order of appearance or even the role of power in a situation (even if these are implicit or unintentional). As such, we can deduce that at no point are they conscious and that those that exist are possibly the response to an unconscious cultural continuum on the part of the authors and editors of the manual. Thus, we were able to identify an editorial effort towards the inclusion and clear management of aspects related not only to gender, but also to ethnicity, multiculturalism and sexual diversity. As the *Editorial Difusión* representants wrote to the authors in a personal email communication "(...) it is undeniable that in recent years there has been more sensitivity to issues related to inclusive language and diversity. We have found that many people who use this collection wanted to see various realities represented and we have tried to do so." (Murillo, N. & Berja, A., personal communication, November 16, 2022)

Given the above observations, it can be affirmed, based on the micro-diachronic progression of the textbook, that there is a clear intention to represent the evolution of Spanish-speaking societies regarding gender-based integration.

## Conclusions

After this analysis, in which aspects such as the role of a textbook in the representativeness of not only linguistic but also cultural elements of the societies it represents have been taken into consideration, we can state that, although there is still a long way to go for gender equality in societies to be comparable to legal equality, the example of this textbook shows that it is possible to create materials for the teaching and learning of languages in an way that is integrated and balanced with the society and culture of the language studied.

The role of publishing houses and, in this case, of *Editorial Difusión*, is fundamental to foster in learners a more enriched imagination, one in which women can be represented on an equal footing, thus contributing to create awareness that allows students in general to critically and consciously face the challenges that their society imposes on them. Thus, this manual offers a good basis to help teachers teach and transmit to foreign learners values of

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democracy and equality discussed daily in Spanish-speaking societies – the very societies these learners are seeking to become closer to through studying the language.

However, there are elements that require more risk-taking on the part of publishers, such as a more accentuated and prolific appearance of sexual diversity, of multi-cultural questioning and criticism, of widely prevalent and generally unfavourable conditions which are often silenced in language learning textbooks, such as poverty, unemployment or inequality in general. This is a common ailment of large publishing houses: the tendency to present the culture and society as one of high economic resources, fun, and free of any major complications or difficulties. It seems as if sometimes a kind of aseptic culture is presented, devoid of any serious problems among its many elements. However, hiding the problems or avoiding their questioning will not make them disappear or keep learners from facing them when they come into contact with the palpable reality of that culture. Therefore, providing students with the necessary skills to perform properly in real situations will help them to understand them better and to be able to react more adequately.

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