

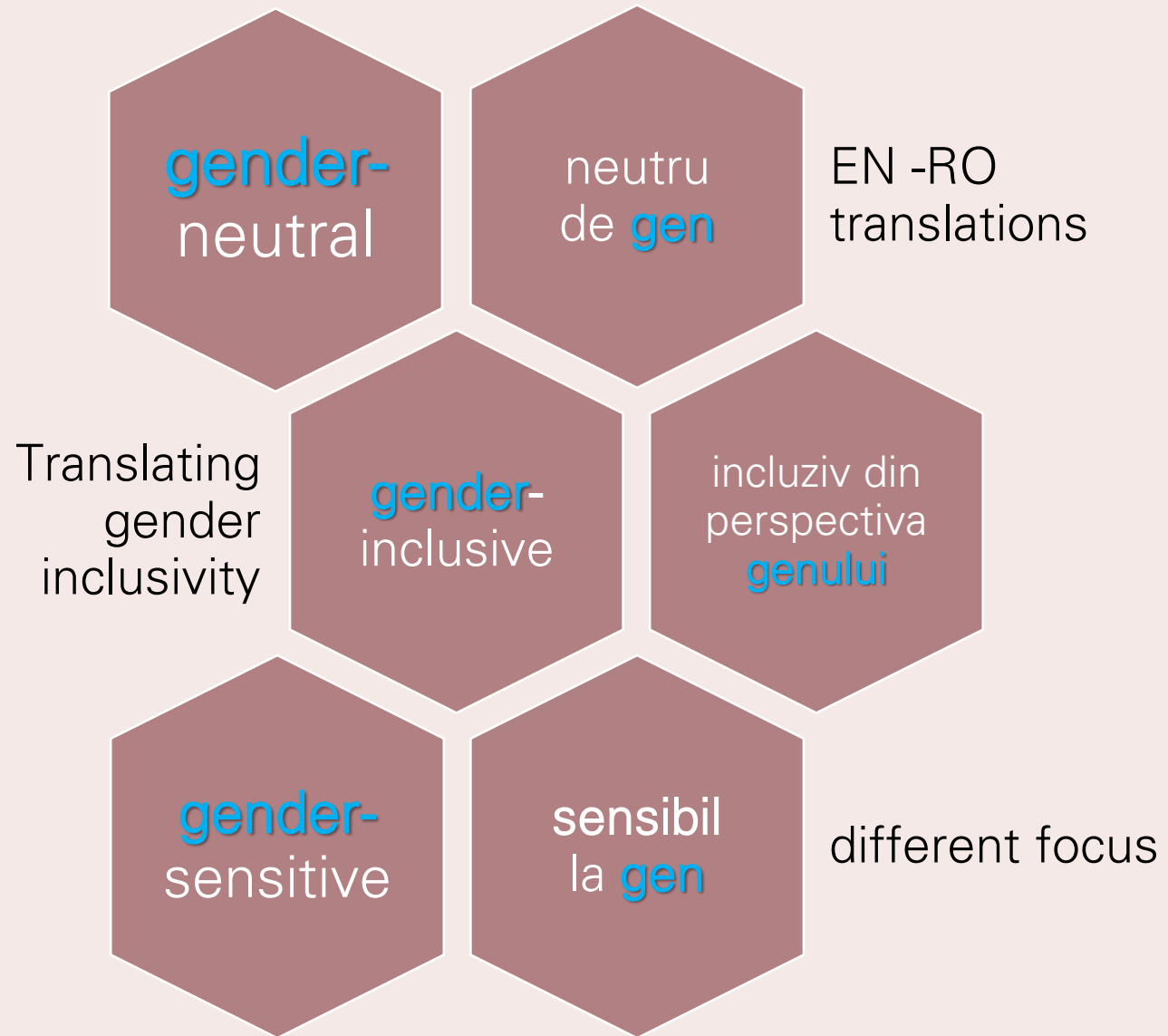


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LANGUAGE AND GENDER: ACHIEVING
CONCEPTUAL CLARITY, QUEEN MARY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, 19 JANUARY
2024

KEYWORDS IN
ROMANIAN: GEN,
NEUTRU,
INCLUZIV



RELEVANT SOCIAL LANDMARKS IN ROMANIA

☐ Sociolinguistic

- Academy-governed style of codification (The Romanian Academy), standardization from above /but/ after 1989, slight, gradual shift towards pluricentrism and to a free-enterprise style of codification (see Zafiu 2020:262)

☐ Sociopolitical & sociocultural

- Romania has been a member of the European Union since 2007.
- LGBTQIA+ marriages or civil unions are not legally recognized in Romania at this time, in spite of EU recommendations.

A FOCUS ON TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH (I)

□ **gender-fair language** = **limbaj corect din perspectiva genului** (>> 'language correct from the perspective of gender', 2008 European Parliament Gender-Neutral Language Guidelines) **limbaj echitabil din perspectiva genului** (>> 'language fair from the perspective of gender', Popovici 2021)

□ **non-sexist language** = **limbaj nonsexist** (>> 'language nonsexist')

(late 1990s - early 2000s, see Miroiu 2002)

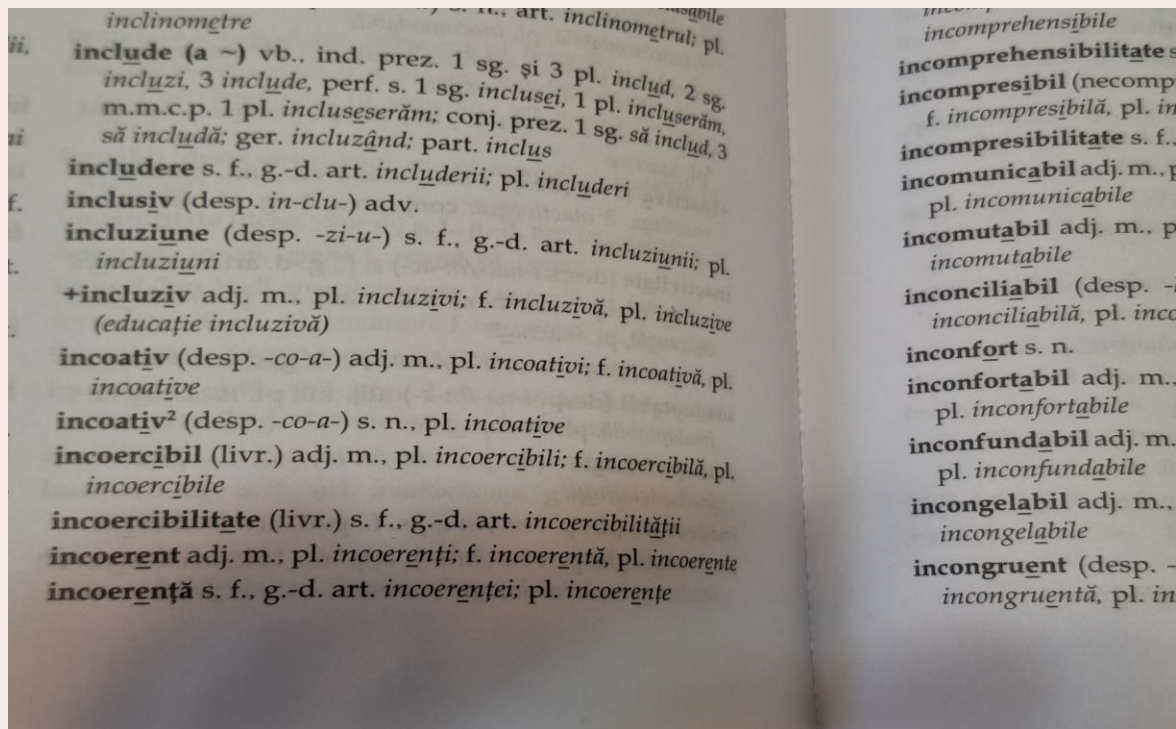
A FOCUS ON TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH (II)

- gender-neutral language=
 - ❑ **limbaj neutru din punct(ul) de vedere al genului** (>>'language neutral from the point of view of gender', European Parliament GNL Guidelines 2008, Vintilă-Rădulescu 2010)
 - ❑ **limbaj neutru din perspectiva genului** (>>'language neutral from the perspective of gender', [European Parliament GNL Guidelines 2018](#))
 - ❑ **limbaj neutru la gen** (>>'language neutral to gender', social media, various guidelines, e.g. [University of Bucharest Gender Equality Guidelines, 2023](#))
 - ❑ **limbaj neutru de gen** (>>'language neutral of gender' e.g. Romanian Wikipedia)
 - ❑ **limbaj neutru** (>>'language neutral' e.g. [Inclusive Communication Kit for The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation Funding, UEFISCDI](#))

DEFINING GENDER-NEUTRAL, RO/EN

- limbaj neutru din punctul de vedere al genului , • gender-neutral language, English definition, [The Romanian definition, The European Institute for Gender Equality](#) [European Institute for Gender Equality](#)
- Limbaj nespecific **genului sau sexului**, care se referă la persoane în general, fără să se refere la femei și la bărbați
- (My emphasis, My translation: Language that is not specific to **gender or sex**, which considers persons in general, with no reference to women and men)
- Language that is not **gender-specific** and which considers people in general, with no reference to women and men.

A FOCUS ON TRANSLATION FROM ENGLISH (III): THE INCLUSIVE IN GENDER- INCLUSIVE



2021= the first attestation of **incluziv** in DOOM (the best-known normative dictionary of Romanian); DEX (the most used explanatory dictionary of Romanian) does not currently register it

- gender-inclusive language=

- **limbaj incluziv (/inclusiv) din perspectiva genului** (>>'language inclusive from the point of view of gender', European Parliament Guidelines 2008, 2018)

- **limbaj incluziv** (various current guidelines e.g. inclusive communication guidelines for The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation Funding, UEFISCDI)

- gender-sensitive language=

- **limbaj sensibil la gen** (>>language sensitive at gender), e.g. University of Bucharest Gender Equality Guidelines)

DIFFERENCES AND OVERLAPS

- ❑ for certain researchers, see Popovici 2021, [gender-inclusive=gender-neutral= gender-fair=non-sexist](#)
- ❑ [gender-neutral = gender-inclusive=non-binary](#) (various instances in the social or traditional media, including a 2021 podcast by Romanian activists, [Gen & limbaj neutru](#), see a discussion in Vişan, forthcoming)
- ❑ Prominent LGBTQIA+ associations in Romania (Accept, MozaiQ) currently use **limbaj incluziv** (gender-inclusive) as a keyword:
 - *Folosirea x-ului la finalul anumitor cuvinte are ca scop crearea unui limbaj incluziv, atât pentru persoanele non-binare, cât și pentru cele cis și trans (My translation: Using the -x at the end of certain words has the purpose of creating an inclusive language not only for non-binary persons, but also for cis and trans persons, [Accept's Facebook Page](#))
- ❑ Recent institutional recommendations in Romania make a clear difference between gender-neutral language defined as (“not taking gender into account”) versus gender-sensitive language, seen as connected to the fair treatment of women and men, and as the best way of achieving inclusivity

DEFINING GENDER-SENSITIVE RO/EN

- limbaj sensibil la gen, Romanian definition, The European Institute for Gender Equality
- realizarea egalității de gen în limba scrisă și vorbită obținută atunci când **femeile și bărbații** precum și **persoanele care nu se conformează sistemului binar de gen** devin **vizibili și sunt tratați [masculine plural]**, prin intermediul limbajului, ca **persoane** egale **[feminine plural]** ca valoare, demnitate, integritate și respect (My emphasis, My additions in brackets)
- gender-sensitive language, English definition, The European Institute for Gender Equality
- Realisation of gender equality in written and spoken language attained when **women and men and those who do not conform to the binary gender system** are made visible and addressed in language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect.

GENDER IN GENDER- INCLUSIVE

The lexicographical representation of GEN in DEX
(The Explanatory Dictionary of Romanian, latest
edition, 2009)

Meaning 1= kind, Meaning 2 (art) = genre, **Meaning 3**
=grammatical category (gender), Meaning 4
(biology)= systematic category (genus) , Meaning 5
(logic)=genus proximus

GEN, *genuri*, s.n. 1. Fel, soi, tip (pe care le reprezintă un obiect, o ființă, un fenomen etc.). ♦ Fel de a fi al cuiva. 2. Diviziune obținută prin clasificarea creațiilor artistice după formă, stil, temă. ♦ *Pictură de gen* = pictură care înfățișează aspecte ale vieții cotidiene. ♦ Fiecare dintre diviziunile fundamentale în care se împart operele literare și care cuprind creațiile asemănătoare prin modul de a reprezenta realitatea. *Genul epic. Genul liric. Genul dramatic. Genul oratoric.* 3. Categorie gramaticală bazată pe distincția dintre ființe și obiecte, precum și dintre ființele de sex masculin și cele de sex feminin. 4. (Biol.) Categorie sistematică, subordonată familiei, care cuprinde una sau mai multe specii înrudite de plante sau de animale. 5. (Log.) Clasă de obiecte care au note esențiale comune și cuprind cel puțin două specii. G *Gen proxim* = gen (5) care este cel mai apropiat de noțiunea de definit. — Din lat. *genus, -eris.*
GENĂT, *genati*, adi. (Per de)

GRAMMATICAL GENDER IN ROMANIAN

- ❖ Romanian as a three-gender language (although there are linguists who dispute this >> “the so-called neuter”)
- ❖ Overlaps of the gender assignment for +animate nouns with what is considered the biological sex of the individual
- ❖ Syncretism between masculine and neuter forms the singular msg = nsg [Agreement]
- ❖ Syncretism between feminine and neuter forms in the plural fpl=npl [Agreement]
- ❖ The generic masculine is always used for mixed-gender groups when the referent is animate
 - Fetele și băieții sunt buni.
 - girls(fpl) & boys(mpl) are good(mpl)
- ❖ Like in other languages, the masculine is used as an ‘unmarked’, generic form, as in:
 - General advice: When you are tired you need a change (tired = msg form in Romanian).
 - Generalization: We are all tired from time to time (all, tired = mpl forms in Romanian)

A NOTE REGARDING ROLE NOUNS

- Colloquial Romanian & Standard Romanian (Current, frequent use)
- (Ea) este profesoară/ (Ea) este lingvistă/ (Ea) este președintă/ (Ea) este studentă.
- [(she) is [[N_job_title]+FEMININE SINGULAR SUFFIX]
- She is a teacher/She is a linguist/She is a president/she is a student
- Standard Romanian but only in formal registers (Until recently – Institutional guidelines, Laws, Rules and regulations)
- Ea este profesor./ Ea este lingvist/Ea este președinte/Ea este student.
- [she is [N_job_title]+FEMININE SINGULAR SUFFIX]
- She is a teacher/She is a linguist/She is a president/She is a student.

ON THE *NEUTRAL*(?MASCULINE/NEUTER) IN GENDER-NEUTRAL

- Cu toate acestea, folosirea limbajului neutru vine cu unele dezavantaje: de obicei această abordare va favoriza perspectiva masculină, ca cea de bază, punând astfel în umbră diferențele de roluri, situații sau nevoi specifice celor **două genuri**. (UEFSCDI, 2023)
- Nevertheless, the use of gender-neutral language is not without its disadvantages: generally, this kind of approach will favour the masculine perspective, taking it as basic, and thus overshadowing the difference in roles, situations or specific needs between the **two genders (My translation, my emphasis)**

[Inclusive Communication Kit for The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation Funding, UEFISCDI](#)

THE MASCULINE AS A ‘HYPERGENDER’

- Întrucât, în general, se acceptă faptul că, în română, masculinul are o valoare neutră, de «hipergen», atunci când este folosit pentru denumirile generice de profesii și funcții, se recomandă utilizarea formelor de feminin în următoarele cazuri: a) când se particularizează o profesie sau o funcție și se face referire directă la o persoană de sex feminin sau b) când există în textul original (în cazul în care problema se pune la nivelul traducerii) intenția clară de a desemna în mod explicit atât persoanele de **sex** masculin, cât și cele de **sex** feminin. (My emphasis)
- **Because, in general, it is an accepted fact that, in Romanian, the masculine has a neutral value, that of a “hypergender”, when it is used for generic professions or functions, the recommendation is to employ feminine forms in the following situations: (a) when a profession or a function is used in a particular situation to directly refer to a person of female gender or (b) when the source text (in case this is a translation issue) holds the clear intention to designate both the persons of male gender and persons of female gender (My translation, my emphasis)**

Practical Guide of the Romanian Department in the Directorate-General for Translation in the European Commission, Section on Gender-Neutral Language) My emphasis

‘RIDICULOUS’ &/OR ‘IMPOSSIBLE’ GENDER-NEUTRAL ROMANIAN

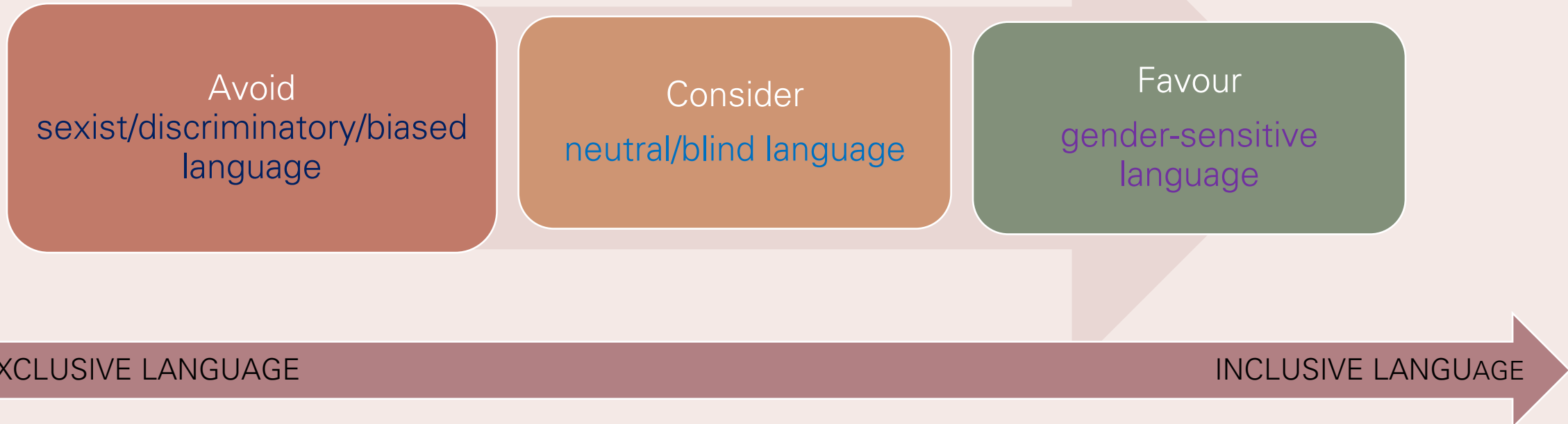
- *The Romanian Academy*: Vintilă-Rădulescu (2010): the “so-called”, “ridiculous” gender-neutral language
- *The European Parliament*:
- LIMBAJUL INCLUZIV/NONSEXIST ÎN LIMBA ROMÂNĂ
- În limba română, fiind o limbă cu gen gramatical marcat (masculin/feminin/neutru), nu se poate crea un limbaj propriu-zis neutru din punctul de vedere al genului.
- GENDER-INCLUSIVE/NONSEXIST LANGUAGE IN ROMANIAN
- In Romanian, which is a language which marks grammatical gender (masculine/feminine/neuter), it is impossible to create a genuine gender-neutral language (My translation, my emphasis).

GENDER-NEUTRAL - TO CONSIDER, GENDER-SENSITIVE - TO USE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE

- Tipuri de limbaj: 1. Limbaj sexist (de evitat) 2. Limbaj neutru la gen (de luat în considerare) 3. Limbaj sensibil la gen (de folosit cât mai des)
- Exemplu:
 - a) În sondajul "X" din anul 2022, 18% din persoanele cu vârste cuprinse între 18-25 ani au declarat că au avut cel puțin o experiență de discriminare de gen în ultimul an (limbaj neutru la gen)
 - b) În sondajul "X" din anul 2022, 25 % dintre femeii și 5% dintre bărbații cu vârste cuprinse între 18-25 de ani au declarat că au avut cel puțin o experiență de discriminare de gen în ultimul an (limbaj sensibil la gen)
- Types of language: 1. Sexist language (to be avoided) 2. Gender-neutral language (to take into consideration) 3. Gender-sensitive language (to use as often as possible)
- Example: a) In a certain poll of 2022, 18% of the persons aged 18-25 stated they had at least a gender discrimination experience in the last year (gender-neutral language)
- b) In a certain poll of 2022, 25% of the women and 5% of the men aged 18-25 stated they had at least a gender discrimination experience in the last year (gender-sensitive language) (My translation)

THE INCLUSIVITY SCALE IN LANGUAGE

My retranslation into English of the Romanian inclusivity scale present in the [Inclusive Communication Kit](#) of the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation Funding. The Romanian translation is, in fact, an unacknowledged translation of the inclusivity scale provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality



SENSITIVE / BINARY

- Gender-neutral language = “not taking gender into account, referring to people in general, not taking into account the fact that they are men or women”
- Example:
- Oamenii nu sunt **conștienți** de impactul pe care-l au asupra mediului înconjurător. [Masculine plural inflection]
- People are not aware of the impact they have on the environment.
- Gender-sensitive language defined as the equal treatment of both men and women
- Example:
- Angajatele și angajații acestei instituții...[Feminine plural noun & Masculine plural noun]
- The female employees and the male employess of this institution...

CONCLUSIONS

- ❑ Gender = tendency towards erasure; tends to be omitted from the Romanian translations of 'gender-inclusive' or 'gender-neutral'
- ❑ Neutralization = relevant as part of institutional discourse regarding equity but represented either as "impossible" or as "to be taken into consideration" (yet not as the preferred choice)
- ❑ Feminization = new awareness, revival & new emphasis of an older strategy in Romanian, seen as acceptable by The Romanian Academy even when institutional guidelines adopted the 'unmarked' masculine; re-alignment of Academy policy-makers with institutional policy-makers
- ❑ Inclusivity = gender-inclusive undergoes generalization, as the umbrella term "inclusive"
- ❑ Sensitivity = the Romanian 'gender-sensitive' does not make non-binary persons visible

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