

CHANGING TENDENCIES IN FRENCH GENDER AGREEMENT: A STUDY OF
INFLECTIONAL MARKERS FOR TRANSGENDER IDENTITY AND WOMEN IN
PROFESSIONAL ROLES

By

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To my mom

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank my family, my professors, my cohort, and my friends for all their help and support while writing this thesis.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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This thesis explores two main topics in the gender inflection of the French language, transgender individuals and women in professional roles. It seeks to explore the changing usage of language, as caused by social changes in France. This work seeks to understand which gender inflections speakers chose to use when referring to transgender individuals. It also seeks to understand the ongoing process of the feminization of professional titles. After conducting a study with native French speakers, it has been found that speakers show a favorability for using masculine inflections when describing transgender individuals. It has also been found that feminized forms of professional titles are accepted overall, however, not all feminized titles are accepted equally.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Issues relating to gender can play a major role in the use of language by its speakers. Speakers must often negotiate sociological and linguistic factors when considering gender and their use of language. These negotiations can very often be seen in the morphology of a language. The morphology of French prescribes certain rules which dictate linguistic forms. However, these forms do not always adequately facilitate the present sociological factors. For example, both a masculine and a feminine form exist for the title of 'student' in French, but traditionally, there is only a masculine form of 'professor' (professeur). As new societal norms emerge, in this case towards the status of women, speakers attempt to negotiate these norms with linguistic use. Other times, speakers may be unsure of the proper grammatical gender to employ without social context, such as direct instruction from the individual or previous linguistic forms used. Another emerging societal norm is the acceptance of transgender individuals. These are individuals who chose to identify differently than the biologic sex they were assigned at birth. This is often regarded by society as transsexuality, cross-dressing, etc. However, the key component here is that it is the individuals themselves who decide their identity, be it male or female. In languages such as French, which are heavily morphologically inflected for gender, the increased prevalence and acceptance of transgender individuals in society will have important ramifications on pronoun and adjective use. Will speakers choose pronouns and adjectives according to an individual's biological sex or gender identity? To what extent are speakers consistent in their choices, and which social factors (age, gender, level of education, etc.,) condition these choices?

French professional titles have linguistically been gender inflected by traditional gender roles. For example, the nouns for 'judge' (juge) and 'doctor' (médecin) traditionally only have masculine forms. As well, a noun such as 'nurse' traditionally has a feminine form. However, as societal norms have shifted and women have taken their respective place in the modern world, some of these nouns have begun to accept feminine forms. For which professional titles will speakers accept feminine forms? For which forms will they not accept feminine forms? What linguistic and societal factors may be behind these decisions?

The feminization of titles has been a movement gaining much ground in many Francophone countries such as France, Canada, and Belgium. According to Armstrong (2001), the fixed character of French titles is an injustice towards women. One hundred years ago, it would be impossible to imagine a female doctor. However in today's society, this is commonplace. This begs the question of why linguistic forms have not evolved as quickly as societal norms. Why should a female doctor still be referred to with a masculine noun in her professional title?

This thesis will focus on two main factors concerning grammatical gender in French. One section, dealing with transgender individuals, will explore choices speakers must make when assigning gender. This section will examine the choice of pronouns, adjectives, etc. that these speakers make when referring to transgender individuals. A second section, dealing with the feminization of titles, will explore the creation and adoption of new forms for female professional titles. This section will examine to what degree speakers have adopted feminized forms of traditionally masculine nouns.

Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis will discuss the general concepts of French gender morphology and the gender issues being researched. This thesis will use an empirical study of Parisian speakers to examine these questions; details of the methodology employed in this study can be found in Chapter 3 and the results of this study and the discussion of their implications can be found in Chapter 4.

As shown below, in regards to transgender individuals, speakers prefer to use masculine forms more often, regardless of how the individual self-identifies. It will be shown below that there are a variety of factors that may affect these choices, however, such as prompts, gender information given, linguistic information given, etc. In regards to the feminization of professional titles, speakers prefer to use feminine forms. However, not all professional titles are accepted equally in their feminine forms. It will be shown below that some are accepted categorically, while others are less accepted.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review will describe and elaborate upon the major sociological and linguistic areas researched in this thesis. While this thesis consists primarily of linguistic research, a brief sociological background in the areas of gender and transgender studies is necessary.

Social Gender

Gender plays a role in numerous areas of research. This thesis will focus on its role in language. It is first necessary to distinguish sex from gender. According to the World Health Organization's website, sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (2013). Colebrook demonstrates the differences between sex and gender as the comparison of two constructs of society, not accounts of the male and female body. (2004, p. 1). Wardhaugh further illustrates this distinction in stating that sex is used in connection with biological characteristics, while gender refers to cultural traits and behaviors (2010, 334). Barrett (2009, 250) introduces the terms indexicality and performativity when describing language and gender. Indexicality refers to the indirect social meanings of language use and performativity refers to language's ability to change extending beyond language. Barrett argues that speech is often performative in nature as it asserts social gender identity in contrast to one's sexual identity (256). This study will focus on social gender; in doing so, it will attempt to examine the extent to which speakers may also consider sex, physical appearance, and other contextual

factors when determining how to ascribe grammatical gender to pronouns, nouns and adjectives that describe transgender individuals.

Two Areas of Inquiry: Transgender Issues and Women in Non-traditional Professions -- Changing Social Norms

In addition to the issue of gender, this research will also examine the issue of transgender. According to the American Psychological Association's website (2013):

Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else; gender expression refers to the way a person communicates gender identity to others through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, voice, or body characteristics.

An important point to notice in this definition is that it makes it clear that the issue of transgender is entirely based on self-identification. An individual person is the only one with the ability to identify as transgender. Again, this can be contrasted to sex as sex can be biologically assigned by others such as medical communities and governmental institutions. Bailly underscores this point in stating that one of the largest linguistic motivations is the need and desire to be recognized in one's sexual identity (2009, 187).

To my knowledge, there has not been much research regarding linguistic choices and transgender individuals. As society changes, however, and transgender individuals become more prevalent, speakers will be forced to make decisions concerning gender inflections, with biological sex or gender identity.

The French Transgender Community

France has a vibrant and active transgender community similar to those of other Western European countries. One of the most important social organizations for the transgender community in France is Centre LGBT Paris-IdF. This is an organization

which has existed for over 20 years and is located in Paris. According to their website (2014), this association organizes events and speeches, and disseminates information. Importantly, the center also helps its members deal with government agencies in cases of discrimination. Similar groups exist in other French cities, such as STS – Support Transgenre Strasbourg.

Legally, the French transgender community has gained several advancements in recent years. In 2010, being a transgender individual was officially removed from the government's list of mental illnesses (ILGA, 2010). This was an important step as it made sexual reassignment surgery, hormone therapy, etc. available through government funded insurance. In 2012, the French government passed a law prohibiting discrimination against transgender individuals (Ford, 2012). This was an important move because many transgender individuals were victims of harassment, with suicide rates among these individuals being extremely high. Through these government actions, it can be seen that social norms are evolving more and more to accept transgender individuals.

The use of titles in French, especially those referring to women in professions and careers, constitutes an area where there is much variation in the Francophone world. The status of this linguistic feature is indeed very different in Quebec and Belgium when compared to that of France. The feminization of titles became a topic of importance in Quebec starting in the 1970s, while it did not reach France seriously until the 1980s. It was in 1993 that the first official recommendation was made to the Belgian government on this issue (Armstrong, Bauvois, Beeching, & Bruyninckx, 2001, p. 155).

Traditional standard titles such *un écrivain*, *un professeur*, and *un auteur* were no longer seen as sufficient. Armstrong et al. speak of linguistic sexism (2001, p. 153). They quote Pierre Guiraud (p. 153), “Among all of the alienations to which women are a victim, the most serious is that of language (author’s translation).” According to the Minister of the Rights of Women (Armstrong et al., 2001, p. 155), “The fixed character of French constitutes an injustice against women.”

This movement led to the creation and spreading of the feminization of traditionally grammatically masculine words. An example of this new level of feminization is shown below (Armstrong et al., 2001, p. 161). This table shows the varying degree of feminization that nouns can accept. As the level rises, so does the level of feminization. Level I (not shown) represents unalterable masculine nouns. Nouns in level III have already reached their maximum morphological potential, this is what distinguishes them from nouns in level IV. They have already used all of the morphological resources the language allows them to feminize (p. 163).

Table 2-1. Levels of feminizations in nouns

Level	‘Author’	‘Deputy’	‘Minister’	‘Director’
II masculins	Un auteur	Le député	Le ministre	Le metteur en scène
III féminins usuels	Une auteur	La député		La metteur en scène
IV épiciènes			La ministre	
V féminins émergeantes	Une auteure Une autrice	La députée		La metteure en scène La metteuse en scène

An important publication, “Femme, j’écris ton nom...”, was released in 1999 in France under the direction of Bernard Cerquiglini. This was an influential publication as it described the history and the present state of the feminization of professional titles in

the French language. It made recommendations on many linguistic areas in regards to this matter. For example, it recommended guidelines for the use of articles/determiners, how to deal with nouns containing masculine suffixes such as '-eur', how to create feminine forms for words borrowed from other languages, etc. Very importantly, it provided a large list of nouns with their suggested feminine forms. It is notable that it took some 20 years longer for the French to publish a document than it did the government of Quebec.

Dister and Moreau explore the feminization of titles in depth in their 2006 article. They studied the titles given to female political candidates in two separate European elections (1989 and 2004) in Belgium and France. The results show that forms have become more prevalent even in the five years separating the elections (p. 28). They attribute this to the increasing role of women in politics. For example, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's 1997 government consisted of eight women, larger than traditionally seen (p. 33). The researchers found that terms used categorically masculine in 1989, such as *administrateur*, *ministre*, and *représentant*, were used in the feminine forms in between 50% to 100% of cases in 2004 (p. 35). They conclude that feminized forms are in progression because of changing social factors such as the role of women in the work place (p. 38).

In their 2005 article, Itsuko Fujimura also explored the feminization of titles as portrayed in the French press. The author explains some of the reasons for the varying degrees of success certain titles have in feminizing. For example, nouns referring to the realm of politics, such as *juge*, are feminized more, while nouns referring to education and research, such as *docteur*, are feminized less (p. 43). Fujimura explains these

occurrences in stating that political titles are being scrutinized publicly and are susceptible to pressures of political correctness. To explain the reason for the lesser usage of research-related feminized titles, the author links these professions to a tradition of written and standard language (p. 47).

This thesis examines a variety of gender issues in French in the 21st century, including participants' preferred titles for women in a variety of professional roles.

Grammatical Gender

Before discussing grammatical gender, it is relevant to discuss the idea of the linguistic sign. According to Leon and Bhatt (17, 2005), a linguistic sign is made up of two inseparable faces. These two sides are the signifier and the signified. The signifier represents the phonic component, i.e. the sequence of letters and phonemes. The signified represents the mental image that occurs from the word. The relation between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. There is no reason for a string of sounds to create a mental image of the word other than social convention. This is relative to this thesis because a similar concept can be connected to gender-marked pronouns in French, for example. If a speaker were to hear the masculine pronoun 'il', they would likely form a mental image of a stereotypical male. However, as changing societal norms progress, this created mental image, the signified, may also be changing.

Importantly, grammatical gender will be examined, which differs from the notion of socially constructed gender described above. Grammatical gender is a linguistic characteristic that is an inherent category of a noun in gender-inflected languages; in French, it is determined by the structure of the noun itself (Antes, 94). For example, the word "desk" in French, "bureau", is inherently masculine. The speaker may not choose to use feminine articles, feminine inflectional markers, etc. with this noun. Grammatical

gender is, therefore, a matter of linguistics, and until fairly recently, it has been little affected by socially-constructed gender norms. The French language marks all nouns for gender and, until recently, speakers have been hesitant to violate the phonological rules that dictate choice of gender. According to these phonological constraints, nouns ending in [ɛ̃] are virtually always masculine in French (*le médecin* (the doctor), *un vaccin* (a vaccine), etc.). The example, “le médecin parle à ma mère” shows how the interaction between semantics and grammatical gender can cause confusion. The noun “médecin”, was traditionally inherently masculine, given its phonological ending. However, it is very possible that the doctor in this sentence is a woman, yet until recently the noun was always marked in the masculine form. French speakers must now decide whether to allow feminine articles and adjectives with such nouns, to reflect changing social roles, or whether to maintain long-standing linguistic constraints. As such, when studying language and its interactions with gender, we must also look at changing cultural norms surrounding the language.

In an article examining gender morphology in German, Jobin (2011) argues that constructive changes are governed by semantic factors. Jobin describes grammatical gender and its dominance by the noun phrase. The author remarks that if gender morphology can have a ‘destructive power’, i.e. limit the possible grammatical genders on a noun or adjective, is it possible that it can also have constructive effects. A key example used in the text is that of a TV star. The German noun for ‘TV star’ has an inherent masculine grammatical gender. However, when semantic information is added to the sentence, in this case that the TV star is a woman, nouns that follow can be inflected in the feminine. This is shown with the example below (Jobin, 2011):

(1) Der krebskanke TV-Star und ihre letzten Stunden.
Det-Masc cancer stick TV star[Masc] and POSS[fem] last hours.
'The TV star suffering from cancer and her last hours.

Der krebskanke TV-Star und seine letzten Stunden.
Det-Masc cancer stick TV star[Masc] and POSS[Masc] last hours.
'The TV star suffering from cancer and her last hours.

The author concludes that the development of gender agreement markers on adjectives from derivational morphology of semantic core criteria is possible (317). This article is a good comparison with the case of gender morphology in French examined in this research because semantic information informs the gender inflection used. For example, while it is grammatically possible to refer to a woman as 'le professeur', many speakers will chose to use 'la professeur' to include more semantic information.

As discussed above in the section regarding German gender morphology, semantic information can play a significant role in the choice of gender inflection. Francis and Hester (2000) explore this topic more in their article. The researchers in this work studied telephone interactions between speakers. They asked participants to identify the sex of the person they were talking to based on the voice they heard. Participants in almost all cases were able to classify the voices as either masculine or feminine. Francis and Hester found that after this classification had been made, the participants modified their discourse. When they had decided the voice was masculine, the conversations tended to play out as an attempt to negotiate and conserve their opinions and reverse others (221). However, when they had decided the voice was feminine, the conversations became orientated towards more confirmation and support (221).

The study at hand in this thesis does not give vocal cues for participants to make their linguistic decisions as in the aforementioned study by Francis and Hester, but

instead visual clues. However, it is similar in that the participants must make decisions on gender and act accordingly with their use of language. The participants must take pragmatic social information (voices on a telephone/pictures of an individual) and then make language choices with that information.

Morphology of French

The main linguistic subfield examined in this thesis will be morphology. Antes defines morphology as the study of the formation of the words of a language (p. 77). Two of the main fields of morphology are inflectional morphology and derivational morphology. This study focuses on referents that have an animated and human component, i.e. nouns and pronouns referring to real people.

Inflectional morphology is about function, the essential meaning of the word is left unchanged; it merely serves to signal the function of the word in the sentence (Baker & Bobaljik, 2008, p. 1). Virtually all adjectives in French inflect to show gender. Examples of this are *grand/grande*, *noir/noire*, *intelligent/intelligente*, and *heureux/heureuse*. In the examples above, the adjective listed first is the masculine form and the second adjective is the feminine form. These adjectives will inflect depending upon the noun with which they are being used. For example, French would dictate 'un grand homme' and 'une grande femme', 'a tall man' and 'a tall woman'. This is so because the nouns for man and woman in French are masculine and feminine respectively. Therefore, this same adjective must inflect to modify the noun with which it is being used.

French uses many different morphophonological aspects to denote the difference between the two genders. Tamine (1981) gives an exhaustive list of all of these techniques. The most common inflection is the addition of orthographical 'e' to form the feminine of an adjective from the masculine form which phonetically creates the

realization of a latent consonant (Tamine, 35). This can be seen in the pairs 'grand/grande' and 'intelligent/intelligente' from the example above.

The combination of morphemes in French nouns and adjectives is what leads to the understanding of the message of the speaker (Antes, p. 78). The word 'chanteuses', meaning 'multiple female singers' will be used as an example (Antes, 79).

chanteur→	chanteuse→	chanteuses
(noun)	(fem. noun)	(plural noun)

The root morpheme 'chant' first uses derivation, which will be explained more below, to create the noun 'chanteur', 'one who sings'. It is then inflected with other morphemes to identify new functions. The nominal morpheme 'euse' is added to create a feminine noun. The number morpheme 's' is added to create a plural noun.

All nouns in French have an inherent grammatical gender, as is common in many Indo-European languages (Spencer, p. 10), either feminine or masculine. Spencer states this concept as follows:

French has masculine and feminine gender but gender isn't represented formally on the nouns themselves because they have lost their case inflections. As a result, gender in French serves simply to differentiate between arbitrarily defined groups of words, or lexical classes, with no other morphological reflex. (p. 10)

Gender is determined by the structure of the noun and therefore the choice is not given to the speaker (Antes, p. 94). The only exceptions to this rule are epicene nouns, which have the same form for both the masculine and feminine forms (Antes, p. 95).

Examples include un Belge/une Belge, un enfant/une enfant, and un dentiste/une dentiste.

Another major subfield of morphology is derivational morphology. Derivational morphology deals with the process of affixation, the adding of suffixes, prefixes, infixes,

etc. to roots to create new words (Spencer, p. 9). This is a common linguistic pattern for nouns in French. This is the process of creating new words from old words, 'word formation' in the literal sense. Therefore, derivation often induces a change in syntactic category (Spencer, p. 9).

As stated above, nouns in French, having lost their case endings, use derivational morphology almost exclusively to determine gender. The important exception to this is in the use of professional titles which can accept inflection. This allows the language to add more forms, for example 'le juge/la juge' for a male and female judge. Professional titles are discussed in greater detail later in Chapter 2.

Intersection of Social Gender and Language

In her article, Cheshire (2003) describes how social gender and linguistics can intersect. Though her research looked at the English language, her main conclusion is relevant to this case study of French. She concludes: "it seems very likely that, as social roles of men and women change, so the English language will change, to keep pace with the changes in our cultural outlook" (7). The comparison here is quite evident to this research at hand. As women take a larger role in the workplace, the professional titles are shifting to compensate. However, this change is more complicated in French than in English because of the role of grammatical gender. All French nouns have an inherent grammatical gender; this is not the case in English. Cheshire describes the case of the professional title air hostess/steward/flight attendant (8). She found that gender neutral terms account for 84% of use. She states this is a clear case of successful language reform. However, such a result is more complicated in French due to the fact that it is a linguistic impossibility to have a truly gender neutral form.

Approach

This thesis will take a descriptive approach to linguistics. This can be contrasted with a prescriptive approach. This descriptive approach seeks to create a representation of how things are in the real world. This can be compared to a prescriptive approach which focuses on the norms of language (Paolillo, 2002, p. 3).

Gadet (2007) defines four main strata of variation; diachronic variation, diatopic variation, diastratic variation, and diaphasic variation. Diachronic variation represents change over time. Diatopic variation represents geographic and regional change. Diastratic variation represents social diversity. Diaphasic variation represents situational or stylistic change.

An example of diachronic variation would be the loss of the *passé simple* over time in French. An example of diatopic variation would be lexical differences between Québec and France. For example, it is common to see the form 'une blonde' (a girlfriend) in Québec but not in France. An example of diastratic variation would be language differences between social groups, such as between men and women. An example of diaphasic variation would be language differences in formal and informal situations, such as the dropping of the particle 'ne' in oral speech while maintaining it in formal written forms. This may play a role in the use of female professional titles. In everyday informal speech, a speaker may use a feminized professional title. However, in written formal speech, they may choose to use a more traditional form.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In order to answer the examine how 21st century French is changing to reflect new social norms such as the presence and acceptance of transgender individuals and the evolving role of women in the workplace, the following research questions were developed:

- How do French speakers use language when describing transgender individuals? What subject pronouns, adjective agreements, noun agreements, etc. do they employ?
- How do French speakers employ professional titles when describing individuals? Do they use more traditional forms or do they use newly created forms to mark the feminine?
- To what extent are speakers consistent in their choice of gender markers, when asked to describe a transgender individual or a women in a particular career?
- Can differences in gender marking be explained based on speaker's age, gender, educational level, or acquaintance with transgender individuals?

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to research the aforementioned questions.

Participants

For this study, the author traveled to Paris to collect data, using funds provided by an Atkin Grant, which was awarded by the University of Florida Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures. In Paris, he recruited a total of 53 participants matching the following criteria: participants had to be 18 years of age or older at the time of the questionnaire and they had to be native French speakers. The majority of the participants were recruited through Dr. Françoise Gadet of Paris X Nanterre and her doctoral student Anaïs Moreno. This participant pool yielded 23 useable questionnaires. The author was also assisted by Emilia V., who responded to a post in an online

community forum focusing on Paris (<http://www.reddit.com/r/paris>). The post explained the nature of the study and the need for research participants. Emilia V., a linguistics student at Paris VII Denis Diderot, responded to this post and offered her help, yielding an additional five useable questionnaires. Other participants were recruited through the website <http://www.onvasortir.com>, a social meet up website which connects people of similar interests. The author contacted meet up leaders via email to offer services as a native speaker of English for English conversations in exchange for their participation, yielding 15 participants. Additional participants, outside of the three aforementioned pools, were solicited on the campus on Paris X and Paris VII; this yielded 10 additional completed questionnaires.

Rationale

Written, as opposed to oral tasks, were chosen for this research because they were more efficient from a data collection point of view, and also could be more easily quantified. More importantly, however, many gender agreements cannot be detected in their oral form, so written tasks were used to ensure the accuracy of the analysis.

The pictures used in the multiple choice section of the questionnaire allowed participants to combine their visual perception of the agent in the sentence with the written prompt and with the language forms given as options. For distractor questions, approximately 25% of the questionnaire, recognizable people were used as their gender identity is more than likely already known to the general public.

For each multiple choice question, participants had the option of choosing both A and B as acceptable. This was done to account for the fact that speakers may at times accept more than one option for a given language form. When speaking of a female judge in French, for example, speakers may accept both “le juge” et “la juge”. By the

same logic, for each multiple choice question, participants had the option of choosing neither A nor B. This allowed for the insertion of ungrammatical options within the distractors, thus permitting some 'D' choices at times.

Great attention was placed upon ensuring that no gender inflection was given in any instructions, headings, or questions. For example, in the first activity, the noun *enfant* (child) is used to describe the subject of the paragraphs. *Enfant* is an epicene noun, which means it can be either grammatically masculine or feminine. When used in conjunction with the definite article *le* or *la*, because of French phonological rules, the article elides to become *l'enfant*. From *l'enfant*, without further context, it is impossible to determine the grammatical gender of the noun. Another example of attention given to not providing gender cues to participants is the use of the verb *naître* in the present tense in the multiple choice questions, instead of the past tense. In the past tense, the past participle of the verb would have to show gender agreement as is standard with intransitive verbs in French (*il est né* vs. *elle est née*). Therefore, in order to avoid gender agreement, or the lack of gender agreement which still shows a choice of the masculine form, the verb was used in the present tense. The absence of gender markers in the sentences providing context forced participants to choose gender themselves rather than relying on the text to do it for them. The manner in which they resolved conflicts between biological gender and gender identity, and their consistency in marking this chosen gender across task types, will be explored below. Participants' willingness to use innovative feminine forms will also be examined.

The rationale for choosing participants was based on their status as native speakers and having attained the age of majority. Excluding those two factors, participants were chosen primarily on the basis of convenience.

Materials

The questionnaire was developed by the author with the assistance of Dr. Theresa Antes, as supervisor. The consent form was written using guidelines provided by the University of Florida Institutional Review Board. It was translated into French by the author. The accuracy of the translation was verified by a native speaker, Dr. Sami Mustapha.

The questionnaire itself contained three distinct sections. The first task was a fill-in-the-blank style activity consisting of two independent paragraphs, entitled “l'enfant de ma soeur” (my sister’s child) and “l'enfant de mon frère” (my brother’s child). The former was on the subject of a male child who identified and dressed as a girl. The latter was on the subject of a female child who identified and dressed as a boy. (See Appendix X for complete tasks.) Participants were asked to complete each story by filling in missing pronouns, adjective inflections, past participle agreements, and so on, based on the first sentence. According to directions, they could also leave the blanks empty when appropriate. Special attention was given to ensure that the responses of the participants were not primed in any way by gender inflection in the first sentence. The second task in the study was a multiple choice activity containing 19 questions. Each question featured a photograph of a person depicting the intended agent of the test sentence provided, in an attempt to avoid influencing the responses of the participants. The grammatical gender was not provided in any of these test sentences in order to elicit genuine grammatical choices from participants. The target items involved adjectival and

nominal gender agreement. The participants were given multiple choices of A through D, where option C was always “both A and B” and option D was always “neither A nor B.” Approximately half of the pictures depicted transgender individuals with a description stating their sex at birth and their current gender identity. Half of the test pictures were males at birth who currently identify and dress as women, while the other half were females at birth who currently identify and dress as men. The photographs used for the test sentences were gathered from internet stock photography. Figure 3-1 shows a representative test sentence involving gender questions related to transgender individuals:

1. nait homme mais s’identifie comme femme et s’habille comme femme.



- A. Il est beau
- B. Elle est belle
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l’un ni l’autre

Figure 3-1. Example transgender question

In secondary test sentences, participants were shown pictures of individuals wearing clothing suggesting a particular profession (such as nurse or judge) in order to observe the participants’ reaction to the feminization or non-feminization of professional titles. Figure 3-2 illustrates a representative question involving feminization:



5. **Elle travaille à l'hôpital au centre-ville.**

- A. Le médecin soigne les malades.
- B. La médecin soigne les malades.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 3-2. Example feminization of titles question

Approximately 25% of the questionnaire items were designed to distract participants from the research questions in order to conceal the goal of the study and thus avoid biased responses. These sentences focused on morphological issues such as pronominal verbs in the past tense. Figure 3-3 provides a sample distractor:



7. **Jean Reno a visité le coiffeur.**

- A. Ses cheveux, il se les est brossés.
- B. Ses cheveux, il se les est brossé.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 3-3. Example distractor question

To conclude the study, a series of demographic information questions was asked of participants in order to categorize participants for sociological analysis. These questions were free response, with the exception of two “yes or no” questions and were collected in writing. The demographic information gathered from each participant

included age, sex, level of education, and whether the participant personally knew any transgender individuals. The analysis of this demographic information will be further discussed in Chapter 5. A full copy of the questionnaire and consent form is provided in Appendix A. Full copies of both tasks can also be found in Appendix A.

Procedure

Regardless of the source pool from which the participants were drawn, the procedure for administering the tasks was the same. Participants were first asked to read the consent form and were provided with the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. They were then asked to sign and date the form to indicate their consent to participate in the study. It was made clear to the participants that their participation in the study was completely voluntary. Participants were offered a copy of their signed consent form for their records. In the event that the participants elected to continue with the study, they were then administered the aforementioned tasks. The participants were directed to read the instructions provided and to notify the author of any questions. Participants were asked to complete the tasks in one session; however, no time limit was imposed on the length of this session. All documents were provided in French. Once the tasks were completed, they were given unique alphabetic codes so that the identity of the participants would remain confidential.

Analytical Process

Every questionnaire was given an alphabetic code to identify it. All the data were coded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The demographic data provided by the participants was used for statistical analysis.

For the fill-in-the-blank activity, participants' responses were coded for every blank. The code for this section is as follows; 1-masculine agreement or pronoun, 2 – feminine agreement or pronoun.

For the multiple choice activity, every question was given an alphabetic code. Every answer was coded 1, 2, 3, or 4 mirroring the possible choices A, B, C, or D. The few cases of blank or unclear responses were omitted.

Six questionnaires were excluded from the analysis after they had been collected. This occurred for two reasons; either too many test questions were left blank (over 90% of the test questions on a single questionnaire) or had multiple answers given (over 50% of the test questions were given multiple answers on a single questionnaire) or the questionnaires were not signed and dated appropriately.

The Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was imported into IBM SPSS, a statistical analysis software program, for further descriptive and inferential statistical analysis and study.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF QUESTION OF TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

Overview

Chapter 4 will provide the results of the study of the research questions involving transgender individuals. Discussion of these results will follow. Participants were asked to complete two tasks which tested the ways in which they used the French language to describe transgender individuals. The tasks studied morphological markers such as subject pronouns, and adjectival and past participle agreements. The tasks contained an even number of questions involving male to female and female to male transgender transitions. Results from the two tasks suggest that participants responded differently depending on whether they were given only verbal cues concerning an individual's biological sex and gender identity or whether they also had other contextual cues (physical appearance, for example) to consider.

Participants' responses to Task 1: Cloze completion

The following tables show the results from the study conducted as described in Chapter 3. Several examples are shown where relevant to their corresponding tables. Where relevant, results of statistical analyses (two-tailed independent sample t-tests) are also reported.

Tables labeled 'global' in the first section of Chapter 4 include the combination of male to female and female to male transgender individuals.

On Task 1, participants were asked to complete two cloze paragraphs concerning transgender children: the first a male to female transgender, and the second a female to male transgender. Participants had to supply subject pronouns and

adjective and past participle agreements as they deemed necessary based on the prompt:

L'enfant de ma sœur est né _____ garçon mais s'identifie comme fille. _____ est très intelligent _____, sociable, et grand _____. (See Appendix A for full texts from all tasks.)

Table 4-1 shows the occurrences of the choice of agreement on the first fill-in-the-blank on the first task of the questionnaire (*né*___), which prompted participants to respond to a transgender male to female transition. This was the first blank participants were asked to fill in on the first paragraph of the task. The masculine form was chosen in 100% of cases. Also shown are the occurrences of the choice of agreement for the first item appearing after gender identity information about the child described in the paragraph was included (participants' choice of the pronoun to begin the second sentence). The masculine form was chosen in 96.2% of cases and the feminine form was chosen in 3.8% of cases. In their inflections of adjectives and pronouns that followed, participants maintained the gender that they selected for the pronoun at the beginning of this second sentence overall. This can be seen in Table 4.5 which follows.

Table 4-1. Participant responses - Transgender male to female

	Masculine form	Feminine form
Né	53	0
Number of responses		
% of total responses	100	0
First pronoun	51	2
Number of responses		
% of total responses	96.2	3.8

Thus, in this first cloze paragraph, despite being told that the child in question identified as a girl, the large majority of participants began the paragraph with masculine

agreement on the past participle *né*; continued with a masculine pronoun (*il*) and subsequent masculine markers on nouns and adjectives. Fewer than 4% of participants recognized the gender identity of the child and changed to feminine agreement. Those who did so maintained this feminine agreement quite consistently, however (see Table 4-3 and discussion, below).

Table 4-2 shows the occurrences of the choice of agreement in the second paragraph of this first task (*L'enfant de ma soeur est né___ fille mais s'identifie comme garçon*), which prompted participants to respond to a transgender female to male transition. Results for this paragraph differ notably from the first paragraph. In the first blank, the masculine form was chosen following *né* in 88.6% of cases, while the feminine form was selected in 11.4% of cases. Once gender identity information about the child described in the paragraph was included, however, the feminine form was maintained in only 71.7% of cases, while the masculine was chosen in 28.3% of cases. It appears that for this question, unlike the preceding one, participants had a more difficult time deciding whether to make agreement with the child's biological gender, first presented, or with gender identity. In contrast to the first paragraph, participants were less consistent in subsequent gender markings throughout the paragraph, however. While a majority apparently chose biological gender as the determining factor, the difference was less categorical than in the first paragraph.

Overall throughout the second paragraph, participants chose the masculine form in 45.4% of cases. Since these were the first blanks in a new line of questioning, it is possible that participants were primed by the word *enfant*. Although *enfant* is an epicene noun, participants may have decided to use the masculine as the default.

Another explanation is that the word *né* came before any gender identity information was given about the child the paragraph describes. Since there was a lack of gender information, participants may have decided to use the masculine as the default. This is supported by Table 4-2, which shows that after the word ‘fille’ appears in the second paragraph, in the vast majority of cases, participants switched to feminine forms in the paragraph, even though it describes a female to male transition. I would suggest that the participants were primed by the information provided about the child’s biological sex given in the first sentence. In this second paragraph, a larger percentage of participants do appear to recognize the gender identity of the child, and choose masculine markers, compared to the percentage using feminine markers in the first paragraph, however. Reasons for these differences will be discussed in the Chapter 5.

Table 4-2. Participant responses - Transgender female to male

	Masculine form	Feminine form
Né	47	6
Number of responses		
% of total responses	88.6	11.4
First pronoun	15	38
Number of responses		
% of total responses	28.3	71.7

Table 4-3 shows the overall responses concerning the choice of agreement on questions which involved a transgender male to female transition, for Task 1. The masculine form was chosen in 94.1% of cases and the feminine form was chosen in 5.9% of cases.

Table 4-3. Agreement in Task 1 – Transgender male to female transition

	Masculine form	Feminine form
Number of occurrences	336	21
% of total occurrences	94.1	5.9

Table 4-4 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement on questions which involved a transgender female to male transition, for Task 1. The masculine form was chosen in 45.4% of cases and the feminine form was chosen in 54.6% of cases. These differences will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 4-4. Agreement in Task 1 – Transgender female to male transition

	Masculine form	Feminine form
Number of occurrences	163	196
% of total occurrences	45.4	54.6

Participants' responses to Task 2: Multiple choice questions

Task 2 asked participants to read sentences involving a photo prompt.

Participants were then asked to choose one of four multiple choice options following the prompt to describe the transgender person:



1. **nait homme mais s'identifie comme femme et s'habille comme femme.**

- A. Il est beau
- B. Elle est belle
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 4-1. Example multiple-choice question

At first glance, these questions appear relatively straight-forward, asking participants to choose grammatical gender for pronouns, adjectives, nouns and past participles (based on either sex or gender identity) and to choose a response accordingly. Participant

responses indicate that the process was anything but simple, however, and may have been influenced by the photo included or the grammar point in question.

Table 4-5 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement on questions which involved a transgender male to female transition, for Task 2. In questions where there were no discrepancies between subject pronoun and adjective or past participle (see the discussion of question 4, below), the masculine was chosen in 27.2% of cases, the feminine form was chosen in 27.8% of cases, both forms were chosen in 18.1% of cases, and neither form was chosen in 26.9% of cases. It would appear, then, that participants were rather evenly split between describing male to female transgender individuals with either a masculine- or a feminine-marked adjective / pronoun / past-participle, in direct contrast to their strong preference for masculine forms on Task 1.

Table 4-5. Agreement in Task 2 – Transgender male to female transition

	Masculine	Feminine	Both	Neither
# of occurrences	87	89	58	86
% of occurrences	27.2	27.8	18.1	26.0

Table 4-6 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement on questions which involved a transgender female to male transition for Task 2. The masculine was chosen in 35.8% of cases, the feminine form was chosen in 25.8% of cases, both forms were chosen in 19.5% of cases, and neither form was chosen in 18.8% of cases. In these cases, again considering only those questions where there was no discrepancy between the subject pronoun and a later gender-marked form (see

the discussion of question 8, below), there is a slight preference for the masculine forms.

Also of interest in both Table 4-5 and 4-6 are the relatively high percentage of participants (26% and 18.8%, respectively) who indicated that neither A nor B were acceptable responses. One can only wonder here if participants were reacting to the message, rather than to the linguistic form.

Table 4-6. Agreement in Task 2 – Transgender female to male transition

	Masculine	Feminine	Both	Neither
# of occurrences	57	41	31	30
% of occurrences	35.8	25.8	19.5	18.8

From Tables 4-3 and 4-4, it is shown that masculine forms were chosen in 94.1% of cases for a male to female transition in Task 1. However, in cases involving a female to male transition, masculine forms were chosen in 45.4% of cases. This shows that there is not an even tendency to choose either the biological sex of the subject or the gender identity of the subject. It seems participants are first primed by the sex of the individual. However, as the participants continue through the study and move away from the initial gender informative noun, ‘fille’, they returned to the unmarked form, the masculine. In Task 2, as shown from Tables 4-5 and 4-6, it is shown that participants chose the masculine form less frequently, 27.2% and 35.8% respectively. However, in this task participants had the option of selecting both forms as acceptable or neither form as acceptable. For male to female transitions in Task 2, both forms were chosen in 16.9% of cases and neither form was chosen in 34.6% of cases. For female to male transitions in Task 2, both forms were chosen in 19.5% of cases and neither form was

chosen in 18.8% of cases. This suggests that as speakers are faced with decisions about actual individuals that they can see, they appear to become more ambivalent about the forms that they will use. This can be seen in the high rate of choice in the “neither” option. I suggest two possible explanations for this finding. Participants may be unsure of how to handle situations involving transgender individuals. This could lead to the rather large variation in results between different photographs. Participants may also chose the masculine over the feminine because it is unmarked form and does not require them to add supplementary information.

When these results were tested in taking account for social factors, no statistical significance was found. However, the effect of education nears significance ($p= 0.09$).

These results are shown below in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7. Agreement in Task 2 - Education

	Bac	Bac 2 – Bac 3	Bac 4+
Masculine	32.5	24.1	27
Feminine	35	31.3	25
Both	5	19.3	20.4
Neither	27.5	25.3	27.6
p-value	0.09		
Df	6		

A more qualitative examination of these data provides some suggestions as to what might have motivated participants’ choices. Table 4-8 shows the results of two questions in the second task, questions #6 and #13. These two questions prompted participants with the same photo. Question #6 asked participants to choose a subject pronoun and question #13 asked participants to make agreement between a transitive verb in the past tense and a preceding direct object which referred to the photo.

Figures 4-2 and 4-3 show these test questions.



nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.

- A. Il est tombé de l'arbre.
- B. Elle est tombée de l'arbre.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 4-2. Example multiple choice question



nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.

- A. Vous l'avez entendu au concert.
- B. Vous l'avez entendue au concert.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 4-3. Example multiple choice question.

The results for question #6 (Figure 4-2) show that the masculine form was chosen in 13.2% of cases, the feminine form in 35.8% of cases, both forms were found acceptable in 30.2% of cases, and neither form was chosen in 20.8% of cases. The results for question #13 (Figure 4-3) show that the masculine form was chosen in 35.3% of cases, the feminine form in 37.3% of cases, both forms were found acceptable in 13.7% of cases, and neither form was chosen in 13.7% of cases (see Table 4-8) Thus, while the percentage of participants choosing the feminine form did not change from question #6 to #13, the percentage choosing the masculine only (as opposed to both) increased from 13.2% in the #6 to 35.3% in #13. At first glance, it appears that these differences might be attributed to the fact that question #13 contains a more nuanced grammar

point, a preceding direct object with a transitive verb in the past tense, rather than simply choosing a subject pronoun as in question #6. Results for similar questions with other prompts suggest a different explanation, however.

Table 4-8. Questions prompted by same photo – female to male transition

	Question #6				Question #13			
	Masc	Fem	Both	Neither	Masc	Fem	Both	Neither
Number of responses	7	19	16	11	18	19	7	7
% of responses	13.2	35.8	30.2	20.8	35.3	37.3	13.7	13.7

Table 4-8 shows the results of two questions in the second task, questions #4 and #12. These two questions prompted participants with the same picture, this time a male to female transgender. Figures 4-4 and 4-5 (below) show these test questions. Question #4 asked participants to choose a subject pronoun and question #12 asked participants to make agreement between a transitive verb in the past tense and a preceding direct object which referred to the picture.



nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.

- A. Il est avocat.
- B. Elle est avocat.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 4-4. Example test question



nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.

- A. Je l'ai vu hier soir.
- B. Je l'ai vue hier soir.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 4-5. Example test question

The results for question #4 show that the masculine form was chosen in 45.3% of cases, the feminine form in 18.9% of cases, both forms were found acceptable in 15.1% of cases, and neither form was chosen in 20.7% of cases. The results for question #12 show that the masculine form was chosen in 47.1% of cases, the feminine form in 23.5% of cases, both forms were found acceptable in 13.7% of cases, and neither form was chosen in 15.7% of cases.

Table 4-9. Questions prompted by same photo – male to female

	Question #4				Question #12			
	Masc	Fem	Both	Neither	Masc	Fem	Both	Neither
Number of occurrences	24	10	8	11	24	12	7	8
% of occurrences	45.3	18.9	15.1	20.7	47.1	23.5	13.7	15.7

If we now compare question #12 to question #13, we can see that participants did not always respond in the same way to the same type of question. Both questions concern a female to male transgender individual, and both test past participle agreement with a preceding direct object. The masculine form was chosen by

participants only 35.3% of the time in question #12, however, compared to 47.1% in #13. Clearly factors other than linguistic form are at play, as the introductory sentence was exactly the same, and the responses differed only in the verb chosen. It is posited that physical appearance may influence participants' choice of gender markers in cases such as these.

The possibility that participant responses were influenced by the presences of the photos is further investigated through the use of two questions that presented a conflict in gender marking to participants. Two questions were created with one option that included a masculine subject pronoun followed by a feminine-marked professional title (or vice-versus).

In taking a closer look at these individual questions, we can explore the results more in depth. Choice B for question #4 is ungrammatical from a prescriptive point of view, regardless of gender choice. However, this choice was still selected in 18.9% of cases and was included in the choice of 'both,' selected by 15.1% of participants. This indicates that roughly one-third of participants found 'Il est avocate' an appropriate description of the photo provided, perhaps indicative of their ambivalence toward gender markers to be used with transgender individuals, even though this construction should be viewed as ungrammatical. Further confirmation of this ambivalence can also be seen from test question #8, shown below in Figure 4-6. As previously seen, Figure 4-6 is similar in nature to Figure 4-5. Like Figure 4-5, Figure 4-6 perhaps shows an ambivalence to grammaticality and gender markers to be used with transgender individuals. This is the case because this construction should be viewed as

ungrammatical, and yet some participants' are still choosing to select this option in any case.



nait homme mais s'identifie comme femme et s'habille comme femme.

- A. Elle est avocat.
- B. Elle est avocate.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 4-6. Example test question

Again in this example, option A should be viewed as ungrammatical. However, it is still chosen in 16.2% of cases and included in the choice of 'both' in 12.7% of cases. Again, then, just under 30% of participants accept a response where there is a discrepancy between the gender of the initial subject pronoun and that of the noun following the copula. This inconsistency may well be indicative of speakers' indecision concerning how and when to make gender agreement for transgender individuals.

To conclude the results on the research studying transgender individuals as the participants continued through the study and moved away from the initial gender informative noun, they returned to the unmarked form, the masculine. Also, this is consistent with the comparisons of exact photos used over multiple questions, it is noteworthy to consider the effect the photos themselves and the choices given in individual test questions might have on the participants' choices. In the data shown in Tables 4-7 and 4-8, it is shown that two pairs of identical pictures elicited different results.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FEMINIZATION OF TITLES

Overview

Chapter 5 will provide the results of the study of the research questions involving the feminization of professional titles. Discussion of these results will follow.

Participants were asked to complete a task which tested the ways in which they used the French language to describe feminine professional titles. The task explored morphological markers on these nouns and their accompanying articles.

Participants' responses to Task 2: Feminization of professional titles

In addition to seeking participants' responses concerning gender markers used with transgender individuals, some questions in Task 2 also focused on professional titles. Participants were again presented with sentences including a photo prompt, and were then asked to choose from a series of sentences that followed. The sentences allowed for a variety of gender agreements; the point of interest was how gender would be marked for traditionally masculine or feminine nouns in French. For example, participants saw a prompt similar to the following:



a condamné le criminel.

- A. Le juge est entré dans la salle.
- B. La juge est entrée dans la salle.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Figure 5-1. Example of feminization of titles question

Table 5-1 shows participant responses concerning the choice of agreement on questions targeting the feminization of professional titles. The feminine form was chosen in 56.6% of cases and the masculine form was chosen in 30.8% of cases. Participants found both forms, feminine and masculine, to be acceptable in 8.1% of cases, while they found neither form acceptable in 4.4% of cases.

Table 5-1. Female professional titles - Global

	Masculine form	Feminine form	Both	Neither
Number of occurrences	49	90	13	7
% of occurrences	30.8	56.6	8.1	4.4

Overall, participants choose to use feminine forms for these professional titles in a majority of cases: if we combine the 56.6% (option B) and 8.1% (option C), as shown in Table 5-1, participants accept the feminized forms of these titles 64.7% of the time. However, some professional titles were viewed more acceptable in feminine forms than others. Table 5-2 shows, from most acceptable to least acceptable, a listing of these professional titles. Participants found all of these titles acceptable in the majority of cases. However, *actrice* was found universally acceptable, in 100% of cases, by the participants. The masculine equivalent of *actrice* has a relatively more different form, *acteur*, when compared to the masculine forms of *la médecin* and *la juge*, which are formed by changing the definite article. This is a possible explanation for their lower rates of acceptability. Also to be noted, *actrice* has been used for many decades, while other professional titles have entered the language much more recently. This may explain its consensus acceptability.

Table 5-2. Feminine form of professional titles – Ranking of acceptability

Professional title	% of occurrences
<i>actrice</i>	100
<i>la médecin</i>	70.6
<i>la juge</i>	54.7

It should be noted that options for female professional titles, other than those that the participants had to choose from, exist in the French language. For example with the noun *médecin*, the term *femme médecin* exists. This may have played a role in the selection of certain choices when their preferred form was not given. Interestingly, these results do not reflect the findings of Fujimara (2005, 47) who found terms relating to doctors feminized less frequently than political terms such as *juge*.

Statistical analysis showed that there was no significant difference in social stratifications in the results on the feminization of titles in regards to age, gender, education, etc. All social stratifications of the participants generally followed the same trend as the overall results. Almost all categories favored the feminine form in the majority of cases. The only exception to this was participants with an education level of Baccalauréat or less, who chose feminine forms of the professional titles in 45% of cases. However, this result should not be taken as conclusive as there were a very low number of participants in this category, only seven.

The following Tables, 5-3 to 5-5, show the results for the feminization of certain professional titles in French. Table 5-6 shows the results for a case of masculine back-formation. Despite an overall trend towards the feminization of professional titles, participants did not respond equally to all titles.

Table 5-3 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement on questions concerning the feminization of the professional title '*médecin*'. The feminine definite article '*la*' was chosen in 70.6% of cases and the masculine definite article '*le*' was chosen in 15.7% of cases. Participants found both forms acceptable in 11.8% of cases.

Table 5-3. Le/la médecin

	Masculine form	Feminine form	Both forms	Neither form
Number of occurrences	8	36	6	1
% of occurrences	15.7	70.6	11.8	0.2

Table 5-4 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement on questions concerning the feminization of the professional title '*acteur*'. The feminine form '*actrice*' was chosen in 100% of cases.

Table 5-4. Acteur/Actrice

	Masculine form	Feminine form	Both forms	Neither form
Number of occurrences	0	53	0	0
% of occurrences	0	100	0	0

Table 5-5 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement on questions concerning the feminization of the professional title '*juge*'. The feminine definite article form was chosen in 54.7% of cases and the masculine definite article form was chosen in 21.5% of cases. Both forms were chosen acceptable in 13.7% of cases. It can be seen that '*le/la juge*' is not accepted as categorically as previously seen with '*acteur/actrice*'.

Table 5-5. Le/la juge

	Masculine form	Feminine form	Both forms	Neither form
Number of occurrences	11	29	7	6
% of occurrences	21.5	54.7	13.7	11.7

The professional title for ‘nurse’ in French is traditionally a feminine noun. However, back-formation, the coining of a new word by taking an existing word and forming from it a morphologically more elementary word (Staskova, 2012), in this case from the feminine form to the masculine form, can occur. Table 5.6 shows the overall occurrences of the choice of agreement for the professional title ‘*infirmière/infirmier*’. This question was prompted with a photo of a male, as seen in the example below. The feminine form was chosen in 1.8% of cases and the masculine form was chosen in 94.1% of cases. Both forms were chosen as acceptable in 3.9% of cases.



travaille à l’hôpital au centre-ville.

- A. L’infirmière soigne les malades.
- B. L’infirmier soigne les malades.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l’un ni l’autre

Figure 5-2. Example of back-formation

Table 5-6. Infirmier/Infirmière (photo of a male)

	Masculine form	Feminine form	Both forms	Neither form
Number of occurrences	48	1	2	2
% of occurrences	94.1	1.8	3.9	3.9

The results of the research performed on the feminization of titles in French is consistent with the research conducted by Jobin (2011) on gender morphology in German. In this work, Jobin showed that an inherently masculine noun can be inflected in the feminine when semantic information is added to the sentence. This is the case of professional titles such as *médecin* and *jugé*, inherently masculine nouns. However, when semantic information is added, in this case that the person these titles describe is female, the nouns are inflected in the feminine with the use of the feminine definite article, *la*.

From the results of this study, it has been shown that speakers are willing to adopt new forms of professional titles. Terms such as *la médecin* and *la jugé* which would have been found unacceptable in the past are now being found acceptable in the majority of cases. As the changing social norms of the role of women in the work force continues to progress with time, it appears that language use in regards to professional titles is also progressing.

To conclude the results on the research studying the feminization of professional titles, participants favored using feminine forms in the majority of cases. Some titles, such as *acteur/actrice*, were chosen solely in their feminine form, while other titles such as *le/la médecin* and *le/la jugé*, were chosen in the feminine form in the majority of cases, 70.6% and 54.7% respectively. Interestingly, a lower occurrence of feminine forms for *jugé* over *médecin* is contrary to the findings of Fujimura. This may be caused by several factors such as the individual photos themselves or the small sample size of the study.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The research questions for this study were as follows:

- How do French speakers modify their language to describe transgender individuals? What subject pronouns, adjective agreements, etc. do they employ?
- How do French speakers describe women in professional roles? Do they use more traditional forms or do they use newly created forms to mark the feminine?
- Can differences in gender marking be explained based on speaker's age, gender, educational level, or acquaintance with transgender individuals?
- To what extent are speakers consistent in their choice of gender markers, when asked to describe a transgender individual or a woman in a particular career?

Limitations

There are several limitations that should be noted in this research. Firstly, the total number of participants in this study was only 53. Increasing the number of participants could provide for more concrete results. Furthermore, certain social groupings, such as the level of education of the participants, included a small number of participants. Increasing the number of participants in these groups could lead to new findings. Furthermore, this study used speakers found mostly in Paris, France. Using speakers found in other Francophone regions, such as Canada or Belgium, could be useful in learning more about the research questions and exploring diatopic variation.

This study used a written task-based approach to collect data. Other forms of collecting data; such as oral interviews, free response questions, etc., could be useful in learning more about the research questions.

Conclusion of Results

The data presented here have shown that, overall, speakers of French prefer to use masculine morphological forms when describing transgender individuals.

Comparisons between questions showing participants the exact same photos has also shown, however, that speakers are not always consistent in their choice of gender marker when referring to transgender individuals. It is possible that the physical appearance of the individual may cause participants to choose one gender over another, as responses to some photos were quite consistently the same. For others, response rates were much less consistent, suggesting that speakers make a decision on the spur of the moment, and may be swayed by other factors that have yet to be determined. Between Task 1 (verbal only) and Task 2 (depiction of a photo), participants were much more consistent in Task 1. It appears that when presented with solely written information they tend to remain consistent in their choices. However, when presented with photos of actual individuals, their responses vary more often.

It has also been shown that, when responding to questions concerning transgender individuals, participants may default to the masculine in cases where no direct grammatical gender is shown, as in sentences with the epicene noun *enfant*, before supplementary information is provided.

Most sociological differences between the participants were found to make no significant difference on the results. However, a difference approaching statistical significance was found between education levels when responding to questions concerning transgender individuals, although the small sample size of the study precludes any definite conclusions on this basis.

It has also been shown that speakers of French prefer to use feminine forms when describing women in professional roles. Not all nouns are feminized to the same extent, however, with acceptability ranging from a categorical 100% for *l'actrice* to a

bare majority for *la juge* at 54.7%. Further research will be required to determine why a noun such as *juge* would be rejected to such a great extent. Are participants acting on linguistic or societal pressures in rejecting the feminine? Societally, a judge is a traditionally male profession, while an actress is categorically female. Linguistically, *actrice* is a form reserved solely for females, while the noun *juge* may be masculine or feminine depending on the article attached, as shown in these results. I suggest that a combination of these forces is what leads to *la juge* not being as categorically accepted as a female professional title such as *actrice*.

From this study, we can see an overall trend in the French language in the 21st century of increased acceptability of new social norms being represented in linguistic forms. Though the data suggest that speakers prefer to default to masculine forms, a sizeable number of speakers seem to respond to self-identified gender identity and not biological sex when using linguistic forms regarding transgender individuals. I would interpret this as meaning speakers are beginning to more concretely reflect changing social norms in their linguistic choices as the issue of transgender individuals becomes more mainstream. In the matter of the feminization of professional titles, the data suggest that a majority of speakers accept feminine forms on traditionally masculine nouns.

Future Research

The field of linguistics has not yet seriously studied language in use with transgender individuals. It would be possible to adapt the methodology used in this section of this study cross-linguistically to be used with other languages to explore how speakers of those languages describe transgender individuals. It would also be useful to conduct this study again after some time in order to gauge whether there is any

diachronic variation. This would be especially useful as this topic deals with matters that are socially influenced, and social norms will continue to evolve in the years to come.

APPENDIX A
STUDY SHOWN TO PARTICIPANTS

Consentement Eclairé

Titre du Protocol: L'Evolution morphologique de la langue française au XXI^e siècle

Veillez lire soigneusement ce document de consentement éclairé avant de décider si vous participerez à cette étude.

Le but de cette étude:

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'évolution de la langue française au XXI^e siècle.

Il vous sera demandé de procéder à la démarche suivante:

Premièrement, on vous demandera de compléter un sondage composé de deux sections. Ensuite, on vous demandera de remplir les vides dans un paragraphe. Dans la première section, vous verrez une image suivie par des phrases qui la décrivent. On vous demandera d'encrer la catégorie qui correspond à l'emploi le plus convenable de ces phrases. Dans la deuxième section, on vous posera des questions d'ordre démographique.

La durée de l'étude:

15 minutes

Les risques et les avantages:

Il n'y aura pas de risques ni d'avantages.

Compensation:

Il n'y aura pas de compensation.

Confidentialité:

Votre identité sera gardée confidentielle en accordance avec les mesures prévues par la loi. Un numéro de code sera assigné à vos informations personnelles. Votre nom ne fera jamais partie d'un travail.

Participation volontaire:

Votre participation dans cette étude est absolument volontaire. Il n'y aura pas de pénalité si vous ne souhaitez pas participer à cette étude.

Votre droit de vous retirer de cette étude:

Vous avez le droit de vous retirer à tout moment de cette étude.

Qui contacter si vous avez des questions:

Ryan Gallant, Candidat de maîtrise, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, 301 Pugh Hall, PO Box 115565, Gainesville, FL 32611-5565 USA, numéro de téléphone 352-275-6590

Theresa Antes, PhD, Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, 301 Pugh Hall, PO Box 115565, Gainesville, FL 32611-5565 USA, numéro de téléphone 352-273-3767

Qui contacter au sujet de vos droits comme participant dans cette étude:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; numéro de téléphone 352-392-0433.

Consentement:

J'ai lu la procédure décrite dans ce consentement éclairé. Je donne mon consentement volontaire et je reconnais que j'ai reçu un exemplaire de cette description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Chercheur: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Veuillez m'aider à compléter mon blog concernant l'enfant de ma sœur. Ajoutez les pronoms et les accords ou ne rien ajouter, selon le cas.

L'ENFANT DE MA SOEUR

L'enfant de ma sœur est né _____ garçon mais s'identifie comme fille. _____ est très intelligent _____, sociable, et grand _____. _____ est étudiant _____ à une école primaire. _____ veut être médecin _____ ou avocat _____. Je _____ vois chaque fois que je rends visite à ma sœur et son mari.

Par contre, l'enfant de mon frère est né _____ fille mais s'identifie comme garçon. _____ est bavard _____, sociable, et petit _____. _____ est étudiant _____ au lycée. _____ veut être écrivain _____ ou professeur _____. Je _____ vois chaque fois que je rends visite à mon frère et sa femme.

J'aime beaucoup ces enfants ! _____ sont né _____ le même jour que moi, le 18 avril. Donc, nous partageons un anniversaire. Quelle coïncidence !

Partie I

Instructions: Ci-dessous, vous verrez des images et ensuite des phrases qui décrivent ces images. Encerclez la catégorie qui correspond à l'emploi de ces phrases qui vous semble le plus acceptable.



1. **nait homme mais s'identifie comme femme et s'habille comme femme.**

- A. Il est beau
- B. Elle est belle
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



2. **a joué dans un nouveau film.**

- A. Dans le film, il était belle.
- B. Dans le film, il était forte.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



3. **Catherine Deneuve est très célèbre.**

- A. Elle est acteur.
- B. Elle est actrice.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



4. **nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.**

- A. Il est avocat.
- B. Elle est avocat.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



5. **travaille à l'hôpital au centre-ville.**

- A. Le médecin soigne les malades.
- B. La médecin soigne les malades.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



6. **nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.**

- A. Il est tombé de l'arbre.
- B. Elle est tombée de l'arbre.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



7. **Jean Reno a visité le coiffeur.**

- A. Ses cheveux, il se les est brossés.
- B. Ses cheveux, il se les est brossé.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



8. **nait homme mais s'identifie comme femme et s'habille comme femme.**

- A. Elle est avocat.
- B. Elle est avocate.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



9. **nait homme mais s'identifie comme femme et s'habille comme femme.**

- A. Il est belle.
- B. Elle est beau.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



10. **François Hollande a signé une nouvelle loi.**

- A. On est content avec lui.
- B. On est contents avec lui.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



11. **travaille à l'hôpital au centre-ville.**

- A. L'infirmière soigne les malades.
- B. L'infirmier soigne les malades.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B

D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



12. **nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.**

- A. Je l'ai vu hier soir.
- B. Je l'ai vue hier soir.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



13. **nait femme mais s'identifie comme homme et s'habille comme homme.**

- A. Vous l'avez entendu au concert.
- B. Vous l'avez entendue au concert.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



16. **Marion Cotillard est à Cannes pour le festival de film.**

- A. Elle s'est laissé embrasser par Johnny Depp.
- B. Elle s'est laissée embrasser par Johnny Depp.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



17. **nait homme mais s'identifie comme femme et s'habille comme femme.**

- A. Il est professeur.

- B. Il est professeure.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



18. Voici Jean Reno.

- A. Nous l'avons vue dans le film.
- B. Nous l'avons vu dans le film.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre



19. a condamné le criminel.

- A. La juge est entrée dans la salle.
- B. Le juge est entrée dans la salle.
- C. Tous les deux, A et B
- D. Ni l'un ni l'autre

Questions démographiques

Quel âge avez-vous ? _____

Sexe: H F

Etes-vous marié? Oui Non

Quel est votre niveau de scolarisation?

Est-ce que vous connaissez des transgenres ? Oui Non

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ryan Gallant is a graduate student in the Department of Language, Literatures, and Cultures with a major of French and Francophone Studies with a concentration in Linguistics. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Florida in August 2010 with a major in French and Francophone Studies. He also received a Master of Arts degree from the University of Florida in May 2014 with a major in French and Francophone Studies.