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ABSTRACT
         A discussion of the teaching of nonsexist language to
learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) reviews the history of
the awareness of gender bias in language, outlines the arguments for
and against nonsexist language teaching, and concludes in favor of
nonsexist language use in the second language classroom. It is
proposed that those individuals who promote the use of sexist
language should be called on to defend its underlying value system.
The use of "he" and "man" and their derivatives to refer to people or
animals of both sexes is seen as inaccurate. It is argued that while
in formal writing, a pronoun should agree with its antecedent in both
number and gender, the situation in speech is not parallel. The
"singular they" is used widely and facilitates clear communication
among native speakers, and should therefore be taught to ESL students
as one acceptable form of pronoun usage. A 21-item reference list and
brief bibliography are included, and appended materials consist of
citations for the advocacy of nonsexist language use by professional
organizations, journals, style manuals, textbooks, dictionaries,
other publications, and English teachers. (MSE)

Just Say No To He/Men, or

Teaching Nonsexist Language

in the ES Classroom

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Teaching Nonsexist Language

in the ESL Classroom

Introduction

As I culminate my formal studies of the teaching of

English, specifically as a second language, I find that I

have become particularly conscious of the frequent

discrepancy between a message which is sent (encoded) and

the message which is received (decoded). This discrepancy

arises primarily because of two reasons. First, lack of

precision in usage, and second, lack of consensus between

the sender and the receiver about the connotation and

denotation of the words used. Cross-cultural communication

provides fertile breeding grounds for misunderstanding on

both these counts.

Studies in crosscultural communication prompt us to

recall that even though it may be a bit strong to say that a

culture's language determines the thought and behavior

patterns of its people, it is generally accepted that

language certainly influences them (Martyna, 1980).

Transmitting cultural values and definitions of reality is

integral with language teaching, but just as teachers have

the choice of transmitting the value of cultural pluralism

over ethnocentrism by the way the language is used, the

value of sexism is reinforced by the use of sexist language.

Nonsexist language can be defined as that which does not show prejudice on the basis of gender, or that which does not suggest traditional stereotypes of appropriateness by gender. Volumes have been written and spoken about the many ways language reflects sexism. This paper will be confined to a discussion of the usage of "he" and "man" and their derivatives used as "generics."

English is said to have "natural gender," in which things are referred to with masculine or feminine terms only when biologically correct, as opposed to languages such as German and Spanish, which have "grammatical gender." To purport to a class learning English as a second language that when the gender of someone being referred to is unknown, they should use the masculine, is an assertion of male precedence in our value system.

This is so not just because of the surface meaning, that some claim can be interpreted as "generic," but because of the imagery generated in the minds of the readers and listeners. Stevick (1986) discusses the role of imagery in language teaching. He discusses the complexity with which imagery (not only visual but images invoking other dimensions such as time, purpose, and emotion) interacts with previous experiences to establish a solid network of language reference in the brain. What are the mental images created in the minds of the receivers with the usage of "he," "his," "him," "man," and "men"? Are they truly generic words even when intended to be so by the sender?

History

Language is dynamic. Speakers of a language vary it to meet their needs. English pronouns have been through many changes through the years, including the elimination of "thou" and "thee." Even though our culture has historically been a patriarchy, we can look back to see that English speakers themselves had the common sense to realize that saying "he" did not include the "she's."

Bodine (1975) maintains that 19th century grammarians, in analyzing usage patterns to derive a new prescriptive grammar, incorrectly assessed "they" as being used only as plural in meaning. They were then free to select "he" as the only correct singular pronoun (when gender was unknown), fortifying the patriarchal order.

Miller and Swift (1980) assert that "the masculine-gender pronouns that were used in grammatical examples in setting forth grammars ... did not reflect a belief that masculine pronouns could refer to both sexes. They reflected the reality of male cultural dominance and the male-centered world view that resulted. Males were perceived as the standard representatives of the human species, females as something else" (p. 36). The male prescriptive grammarians of the 18th century put forth the idea that the male should linguistically be assumed to be the standard of the species, flatly stating that the reason for it was because the masculine gender was "the more worthy gender" (Cheshire, 1985). In 1850 the British Parliament

even gave official sanction to the use of the "generic he" in its legislative language (Bodine, 1975).

The pragmatic effect of such actions was that those in power (men) utilized the ambiguity to exclude women or include them, as it suited their purposes. Spender (1985) says that sexist usage essentially makes females "linguistically invisible ... so that it seems reasonable to assume the world is male until proven otherwise" (p.157).

Many discriminatory practices have been continued because the words "man" and "he" were interpreted, accurately enough, as male references. In 1975, the US Department of Labor responded to cases of job discrimination based on the usage of "he" and "man" by rewriting the job descriptions in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles with nonsexist language (Miller & Swift, 1980).

The women's movement gave birth to a new awareness of the sexism in English in the 1970's, and the issue of the "generic" use of "he" and "man" came to the fore. Appendix A details the responses of those professional organizations, journals, and style manuals most responsible for determining "correct usage." Appendix B details the conflicting ways in which various authors have chosen to incorporate nonsexist language into grammar textbooks. Appendix C shows a sampling of the discussions of usage in reference books, reflecting the state of flux the language is in. Appendix D shows what is really published, reflected in the reality of editing by the Publications of the Modern Language

<u>Association</u>, and usage in professional language teaching
books. Appendix E documents recently published examples of
"they" as singular, and Appendix F offers a glimpse of how
English teachers in higher education handle this issue.
These statements, more than bland observations of
"differences in usage," fiercely reflect the lack of
unanimity about the issue among those involved with language
professionally.

Background for understanding this issue necessarily
involves discussing the ambiguity of the uses of "he" and
"man" (and their derivatives), including switching back and
forth from a "general" use to the "specific," and research
into the imagery generated by these words.

> "Bud: What would you do if a man-eating
>
> tiger chased you?
>
> Meg: Nothing, I'm a girl."

Why did the above appear in a 1964 Scholastic joke book
for children? Because ambiguity in our language is often
funny. Now consider the following familiar syllogism from
philosophy and logic:

> All men are mortal.
>
> Socrates is a man.
>
> Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

The usage of "men" in the top line is of the type
usually said to be "generic," or applying to all people.
However, there is a switch in the second line to the use of
"man" as specifically male. If this were not so, the
following would not sound incongruous to most people:

> All men are mortal.
>
> Mary is a man.
>
> Therefore, Mary is mortal.

Moulton (1980) argues that if "man" truly has a gender-neutral meaning, it should retain it regardless of the gender of the referent, as do "human being" or "person." She maintains that the usage has shifted from one meaning to another, invalidating the syllogism, just as in this example:

> All banks are closed on Sunday.
>
> The banks of the Yukon River are banks.
>
> Therefore, the banks of the Yukon River
>
>   are closed on Sunday.

But the fact that we consider the syllogism about Socrates to be valid and that we consider statements like its first statement to be gender-neutral shows that we are frequently misled about neutral uses (Moulton, 1980).

Consider a sentence likely to have been found in a biology text not too far in the past:

> Man is a mammal

Its intent was clearly intended to be general to the species, yet continuing the description, to:

> Man, being a mammal, breastfeeds his young.

demonstrates its incongruity as a "generic." Martyna (1980) argues that it is not that these terms cannot be used generically, but that they allow both specific and general interpretation, even in a context which should force a generic interpretation.

Miller and Swift (1980) discuss the tendency for writers to slip back and forth between the general and the specific. Some writers may say they are including females in their usage of "man," but it seems that the imagery is even too much for them to overcome, and they slip into using it specifically. Spender (1985) cites Graham as concluding: "In practice, the sexist assumption that man is a species of males becomes the fact. Erich Fromm certainly seemed to think so when he wrote that man's 'vital interests' were 'life, food, access to females...'" (p. 155).

A shift in meaning usually takes places smoothly, unless the shift is noticeable or humorous (as in the above examples). Moulton (1980) maintains that it is only noted when the gender-neutral use is attempted and fails, but otherwise we cannot always tell when the shift is taking place. This results in the reader developing images that perpetuate the notion that the male is the standard of the species.

The role of imagery in language is pervasive. Henley (1987) cites 16 research studies published between 1971 and 1986 that show consistently that "he" most readily produces male images in the minds of both sexes. In other words, to the receivers of the message, it is not functioning "generically." In a widely cited study by Schneider and Hacker (1973), it is shown that when college students are asked to bring in pictures to match chapter titles in a sociology book, those given titles such as "Political Man"

or "Urban Man" were significantly more likely to bring pictures of males than those students given titles such as "Political Behavior" or "Urban Life."

The strength of the imagery generated by the usages of "he," "him," "his," and "man" and "men" as gender-specific seem to be great enough that their associated mental images of "maleness" permeate all uses. It must be remembered that in our culture, the male/female distinction is of extreme importance, evoking strong imagery. We never forget whether the stranger we just had a conversation with was male or female.

The preponderance of the gender-specific usage is also a factor in imagery. Martyna (1980) says that in educational materials, for instance, the sex-specific "he" appears five to ten times for every single generic" he.

Henley (1987) also cites studies where the use of "he" as a "generic" has far-reaching implications, adversely affecting comprehension of language, as well as attitudes towards women, and girls' self-esteem Belief in the ability of females to perform a job is also affected negatively by the use of sexist language.

It also must be noted that the "ambiguity" at times served the purposes of those males in the bastions of power when "men" really meant "males." Only a foolish Colonial woman would have thought that "all men are created equal" really included her (Frank & Anshen, 1983).

Arguments For

The arguments for teaching nonsexist language use fall into two categories. First, there are clear social implications for continuing to use and teach the use of sexist language.

But secondly, there is the equally strong position of teaching _precision_ in language use. Language teachers have the responsibility to teach usage that is unambiguous, clear, and concise. And there is nothing precise or graceful about referring to women and girls as "he" or "men."

Our language is constantly changing, adapting old usages (e.g. "money laundering"), and welcoming new terms to accommodate new concepts (e.g. "byte"), even when cumbersome (e.g. "superconducting supercollider"). We even borrow from other languages when there is no exact translation (e.g. "glasnost" and "perestroika"). We teach our students to search for the right words to _exactly_ express their thoughts.

Given the research on language and imagery, or even only women's assertion that they feel excluded by such language, it must be acknowledged that sexist language such as discussed here is imprecise and ambiguous at best, and discriminatory and exclusionary at worst.

It should be clarified that the argument for nonsexist language usage is not an excuse for awkward prose. There are many examples given in guidelines and handbooks for

adequately handling the problem of the singular pronoun of indefinite reference. But it should be noted that even though casting a sentence into the plural is frequently the best solution, an _occasional_ use of "he or she" or "he/she" is no more awkward than the use of "houses or cars" or "and/or," which are _never_ cited as undesirable when used to precisely express a thought.

This particular type of language change both reflects and requires a fundamental change in the way that reality is structured, i.e., the male is _not_ the standard of any species. It should be expected, then, that there will be some pauses for some writers to restructure thought and words in new ways, just as learners of English as a second language have to restructure their perspectives of reality to conform to differing cultural perspectives.

Brodkey (1989), an advocate of the theory that "words constitute world views," asserts that students and teachers who presume that written language "refers to a universal reality, independent of language, ... can argue that they bear no responsibility for the consequences of ... sexist ... language, since [it refers] to an already given reality that language only reflects" (p. 598).

There seems to be no question among those who study human behavior that there is a causal link from sexism in language to sexism in society, even when it is not the only cause. The American Psychological Association, in summarizing their 1975 statement on guidelines for nonsexist

use of language, says "By ignoring [sexist attitudes in research design and sexist language], the status quo is perpetuated, whereas responsible attention by psychologists to the style and content of their writing allows the profession to play an active part in creating human equality" (p. 684). Blauberys (1980) says that whether "language merely reflects existing societal practices or contributes significantly to them, sexist language by its existence reinforces and socializes sexist thinking and practices" (p.137).

Arguments Against

The arguments against this language usage change are many. The first argument is that there is no need for change because "he" and "man" and their derivations are not misunderstood when used "generically." Those who hold this view would include those apathetic to the social implications of this usage and those whose personal political agendas are well served by it.

The second is the "preserve the status quo because it is sacred" argument. Some "language purists and linguistic sexists" (Henley, 1987) hold that sexist usage is "conventional and standard" and ought not be tampered with. They also criticize the common usage pattern of "they" as singular (considered by many to be disagreement in number) as more grievous than referring to females as "he" (unarguably disagreement in gender). In English, a language with "natural gender," it can be no more grammatical to

refer to females with "he" as it is to refer to males with "she." Those who hold this view rarely address the point that social inequities result from disagreement in gender but not from disagreement in number.

The usage of "they" to refer to singular antecedents is widespread in spoken English, across all social strata (Bodine, 1975). Its use is documented in Appendix C. It is even creeping into publication, as documented in Appendix E.

Another pair of arguments acknowledges the existence of sexism in language, but believes efforts to change it are unnecessary or impossible. Stern (1983), quoted in Appendix D, exemplifies those who believe they can nullify the effects of using sexist language by issuing a disclaimer, contending that declaring "he" to be "generic" makes it so.

Lakoff (1973), a feminist linguist deeply concerned with sexism, nevertheless believes that "an tempt to change pronominal usage will be futile," that it is an area of language which is too common, which is not available to "the native speakers' conscious awareness,... [therefore] less open to change" (p. 75). She believes that linguistic change will only follow social change, not facilitate it. She flatly states: "disparities exist in English...each reflects in its pattern of usage the differences between the role of women in our society and that of men" (p. 78). She recommends changing "only what can be changed, since that is hard enough" (p. 75). Blaubergs (1980) also quotes other

feminists who think that attention to sexist language change is superficial and trivial, and detracts from the real struggle, to end oppression of women.

Another argument which many people focus on is that a change would be too difficult and would necessarily result in inelegant and awkward prose. However, skilled users of English always find ways to express themselves gracefully and accurately, despite the many difficulties encountered in constructing English sentences. Wilga Rivers' (1983) On Communicating Naturally in a Second Language is a fine example of smooth writing, in which she does not address the point . sexist language at all, but merely does not use it, except when quoting others.

Mitchell (1979) expresses the concern that the effort to use nonsexist language will initiate a cascade of other linguistic difficulties. He laments the state of the language upon finding published, in a US Department of Transportation manual, the following sentence: "If a guest becomes intoxicated, you might take his or her car keys and send them home in a taxi" (p. 40). This problem of ambiguity of referent ("them" which could refer to keys) is a big one that teachers of English deal with all the time. It is not directly related to attempts to use nonsexist language.

McFadden (1981) considers the "persons ffixes" and "he/she's" to be "as distracting as a cloud of gnats, demanding that the reader note the writer's virtue" (p.297).

S.e reviles against extreme examples, such as reading aloud "he-slash-she" and using "waitperson" and "cowperson." However, she concedes,

> Redress may be due those of us who, though emale, have answered to masculine referents all these years but slashing is not the answer; violence never is. Perhaps we could right matters by using feminine forms as the generic for a few centuries, or simply agree on a per-woman lump-sum payment (p. 298).

Another argument, that used as a "weasel clause" by the established order, exemplified by the Publications of the MLA in Appendix D, is that it would be a form of censorship to tell writers how to write. Henley (1987) eloquently responds that "One may also argue that it is women who have been censored out of language and that the switch to nonsexist forms is an attempt to remove that censorship rather than impose any" (p. 11).

It should be noted that those in this camp do not seem to object to other prescriptive grammarian rules pertaining to such things as double negatives, the use of "ain't," or racial epithets such as "nigger."

Although there do seem to be those who differ on the means to the same end, there is much truth to the statement by Stanley (cited in Blaubergs, 1980): "The arguments that favor man and mankind as generics are not substantive, but political" (p.136).

Author's Viewpoint

I believe that nonsexist language use should be a part of every English teacher's standards, because it is a precise form of language usage which furthers no special interest group's political agenda. Those who promote sexist usage should be called on to defend its underlying value system.

Good intentions are not enough (Martyna, 1980). When teachers tell their students "He who writes, speaks to the future," the girls are one step further from identifying with it than the boys. All are more likely to form a mental image of a male, pen in hand. Teachers must use the precise language needed to convey the message they want to send.

I believe that using "he" and "man" and their derivatives to refer to people (or animals) of both sexes should be considered as inaccurate as referring to "typewriters" as "mountains."

It is my position that in formal writing, a pronoun must agree both in number and in gender with its antecedent. Speech however, is another matter. Despite centuries of systematic efforts to eradicate it, "singular they" is alive and well (Bodine, 1975). It has served the function well, facilitating clear communication. It is not for me to criticize speech patterns or dialects in which there is successful communication.

I contend that since the use of "they" to refer to one person of unspecified gender is widespread in the speech of

native English speakers, its use in speech should be taught to ESL students as one acceptable form. Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988), in their book on teaching grammar to ESL students, advocate teaching "descriptive grammar," that is, the usage patterns of native speakers. To achieve "communicative competence," they advise teachers to disregard older prescriptive rules, such as using "shall" instead of "will" with "I" and "we," because it is not in current usage.

Bishop (1975), in his preface to The American Heritage Dictionary, quotes Samuel Johnson, who wrote in the preface to his 1755 Dictionary of the English Language, "The pen must at length comply with the tongue."

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APPENDIX A
WHAT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
JOURNALS, AND STYLE MANUALS SAY

American Psychological Association (1983)
Publication Manual:
"[In achieving] ... precise, unambiguous communication ...
the guidelines on nonsexist language ... help authors
recognize and change instances in which word choices may be
inaccurate, misleading, or discriminatory. APA ... policy
... requires authors to use nonsexist language." (pp.43,
44) Includes 31 examples of common usage and nonsexist
alternatives. Adopted in 1977.

Modern Language Association (1988) Handbook for Writers:
"...effective writing depends ... on clarity.... the
challenge is to find the words ... that express your
thoughts precisely.... another aspect ... [is] social
connotations.... [a] careful writer avoids statements that
imply unsubstantiated generalizations.... conscientious
writers no longer use "he" to refer to someone of
unspecified sex ... lest readers infer the statement apply
only to a male...."(pp.33, 34)

American Anthropological Association, (1987)
--Publish American Anthropologist and Anthropology and
Education Quarterly. "authors should avoid the unnecessary
use of gender-specific language"

National Council of Teachers of English (1975)
--Publish College English and Teaching English in the
Two-Year College, and others. Published 4 pages of
guidelines for nonsexist use of language in publications,
eliminating use of the "generic he."
"...the guidelines will also benefit ... [those] teaching in
the classroom, assigning texts, determining curriculum..."

TESOL Quarterly (Journal of Teachers of English to Speakers
of Other Languages, the primary US professional
organization)
English Language Teaching Journal (Oxford, England)
Journal of Educational Psychology (APA, Washington, DC)
Journal of Educational Thought (Univ. of Calgary, Canada)
--all say that submissions should conform to the Publication
Manual of APA (above), with the latter three making a point
of saying that they edit out sexist language.

Chicago Manual of Style (1982) Sect. 2.92, p.61:
"...catch errors ... including ... sexist connotations"

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (1987)
"...copy should not assume maleness when both sexes are
involved" (p.237) "[using] "man" or "mankind" [acceptable]
when both sexes are involved" (p. 131)

APPENDIX B
WHAT TEXTBOOKS SAY

McGraw-Hill, a leader in textbooks for elementary and
secondary schools, has prohibited sexist language since
1974.

Warriner's English Grammar and Composition (1982) New York:
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. A widely used text in middle
and high schools, it avoids discussing the issue of 'he" as
a "generic," focusing only on problems involving agreement
in number and objective vs. subjective cases. It does seem
to be aware of nonsexist language in general, however, using
"firefighter," and other "unconventional" references to
women, such as "my mother and I are going on a camping trip'
and using Elizabeth Blackwell (the first woman to graduate
from a US medical school) as a topic for numerous sentences.

Heffernan & Lincoln's Writing -- A College Handbook (1986)
New York: Norton. Used by UNM English 101 students and T-VI
English 100 students. Has a section "Nonsexist Pronouns
with Antecedents of Unspecified Gender," in which they say:
"Not long ago, it was considered all right to say: 'a doctor
... he' But sentences like thes. are unfair to women.
Saying his or he seems to imply that all doctors are men."
It goes on to propose alternatives. It also discusses
connotations of words, including cautions of sexual
stereotyping.

Shea, Matthews, & Rogers (UNM faculty) have published
Thought to Essay (1987, 1989) Needham Heights, MA: Ginn
Press. Used in UNM English 100 classes, and formerly at
T-VI. It stands out s the exception, saying, "the form
mos, widely agreed upon as simplest and most efficient is
the conventional usage (he, his, him), both sexes herein
included."

APPENDIX C
WHAT DICTIONARIES SAY

Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed.,
Unabridged, 1987.

"he: Usage: Traditionally, the masculine singular pronouns
he, his, and him have been used generically to refer to
indefinite pronouns like anyone, everyone, and someone and
to singular nouns that can be applied to either sex.... This
generic use is often criticized as sexist, although many
speakers and writers continue the practice. Those who
object to the generic use of he have developed various ways
of avoiding it...."(p. 880)

"they: Usage: Long before the use of generic he was
condemned as sexist, the pronouns they, their, and them were
used in educated speech and in all but the most formal
writing to refer to indefinite pronouns and to singular
nouns of general personal reference, probably because such
nouns are often not felt to be exclusively singular: 'If
anyone calls, tell them I'll be back at six.' ... Such use
is not a recent development, nor is it a mark of ignorance.
Shakespeare, Swift, Shelley, Scott, and Dickens   well as
many other English and American writers, have used they and
its forms to refer to singular antecedents. Already
widespread in the language (though rejected as ungrammatical
by some), this use of they, their, and them is increasing in
all but the most conservatively edited American English.
This increased use is at least partly impelled by the desire
to avoid the sexist implications of he as a pronoun of
general reference. (p. 1970)

"man: Usage: The use of man to mean 'human being,' both
alone and in compounds such as mankind, has met with
objection in recent years, and the use is declining. The
objection is based on the idea that man is most commonly
used as an exclusive, sex-marked noun meaning 'male human
being.' Critics of the use of man as a generic maintain
that it is sometimes ambiguous when the wider sense is
intended ... but more often flatly discriminatory in that it
slights or ignores the membership of women in the human
race.... Although some editors and writers reject or
disregard these objections to man as a generic, many now
choose instead to use such terms as human beings..."(p.1166)

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APPENDIX C cont'd.

Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, 1989.

"he, he or she: Many handbooks ... and other usage books ...
have articles of varying length dealing with the problem of
what third person singular pronoun to use in referring to a
singular noun antecedent that can apply to either sex....
the prescribing of he as the generic third person singular
seems to go back no further than ... 1795.... The use of
generic he as a common-gender and common-number pronoun has
lately been attacked as offensive by feminists and others.
Bolinger (1980) points out that the problem was not
discovered by feminists, but is an old one in the
language.... The common solution has been to substitute the
plural they (or them or their); even Chaucer used this
dodge.... The use of the double pronoun he or she, him or
her, his or her, is not recent either....[but] has the
disadvantage of awkwardness, ... especially when a context
calls for it repeatedly....We suggest you solve the
difficulty in the was that seems the most natural to you in
a given situation....Those who find the generic he natural
will keep on using it. Those who do not will search for
other solutions..."(p.499)

"they, their, them: The question of the propriety of using
[these pronouns] to refer to indefinite pronouns and
singular nouns ... relate to perceived gaps in the
language.... As most commentators note, the traditional
pronoun ... is the masculine third person singular, he, his,
him. This tradition goes back to the 18th century
grammarians, who boxed themselves into the position by first
deciding that the indefinite pronouns [e.g. anyone,
everyone] must always be singular. They then had to decide
between the masculine and feminine singular pronouns for use
in reference to the indefinites, and they chose the
masculine (they were, of course, all men).... But the
insistence on the masculine singular has its limitations.
Sometimes its results are downright silly: '...everyone will
be able to decide for himself whether or not to have an
abortion -- Albert Bleumenthal, NY State Assembly (cited in
Longman 1984)' ... the masculine pronoun is awkward at best
used in reference to antecedents of both sexes: 'She and
Louis had a game -- who could find the ugliest photograph of
himself...-- J. L. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin' ... The
examples here [many are given] of the "great ones" from
Chaucer to the present are not lapses. They are uses
following a normal pattern in English that was established
four centuries before the 18th century grammarians ... The
plural pronoun is one solution devised by native speakers of
English to a grammatical problem inherent in that language
-- and it is by no means the worst solution."(p. 901,902)

APPENDIX D
WHAT IS REALLY PUBLISHED

"Weasel clause" (Kernberger's term) issued in Publications
of the Modern Language Association, 104, 814-816 against
compliance with guidelines in MLA Handbook. Written by
Claire Cook, copy editor on staff.
"...Beyond requiring standard English and formal
consistency, we insist only on excising 'discriminatory'
wording. Even in this matter, however, we allow some
leeway. We don't routinely replace a generic man with
person or an inexact his with his or her. We devote
considerable time and effort to finding unobtrusive
alternatives and then give the authors the option of
devising their own solutions if ours are unacceptable.... In
the end it is the writers who determine the words t'.at will
express their thoughts.... Readers ... should never stumble
because they don't know what a pronoun stands for...."

Stern, H.H. (1983). Fundamental concepts of language
teaching. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
Notes to Introduction (p. 5): "He/she? Him/her? While I
accept the principle of 'nonsexist language' in scholarly
writing commonly recommended in recent years, I have tried
not to make much of an issue of it in this book and have
used masculine forms 'he/his/him' etc. whenever they seemed
natural and stylistically convenient on the argument that
they can be understood as unmarked for sex unless otherwise
indicated by the context."

Stevick, Earl. (1982). Teaching and learning languages.
Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
Footnote (p. 5): "The exclusive use of he, his, him in
contexts like this perpetuates a tradition which is no
longer acceptable. To use he and she (or she and he) and
the corresponding double pronouns for possessive and
objective forms is prohibitively awkward. No solution is
likely to please everyone. My practice in this book will be
to use the masculine forms in some chapters, feminine ones
in others, and to envy the Turks, Japanese, and speakers of
all other languages in which this issue does not arise."

Hall, E. T. (1959) The Silent Language, (1966) The Hidden
Dimension, (1976) Beyond Culture, (1983) The Dance of
Life. All Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
Uses "he" and "man" "generically" throughout all books.
Seems surprising given his insightful observations on the
inner workings of people in culture, and that he seems to be
aware of different ways in which women experience life.
There are ambiguities when he shifts between the "generic"
and the "specific."

APPENDIX E
PUBLISHED EXAMPLES OF "THEY"
AS SINGULAR

Royko, Mike. (1989, November 6). When the night is a jungle, a woman needs a handgun. (syndicated through Chicago Tribune) The Albuquerque Tribune, C11.
"... Although it's not smart for a young woman to be outside at that hour in that neighborhood, anyone should be able to use the streets anytime they choose...."

Linthicum, Leslie. (1989, November 5). Wunderkind. Sage Magazine, Albuquerque Journal., p. 28.
"...many [parents] are happy to have their child remain in the regular classroom as long as they receive some sort of enrichment..."

APPENDIX F
WHAT ENGLISH TEACHERS DO

Information is from personal interviews, conducted during
October and November, 1989. This list is not intended to be
comprehensive, but rather is merely to show an assortment of
approaches to the subject.

Lynn Beene, Assoc. Prof., UNM English Dept., Director of
Freshman English: "I duck the issue. I tell students that to
avoid offending their readers, they should cast into the
plural, but that they can use 'he' if absolutely necessary."
She says her students are either already politically aware
or don't care about sexist language. Regards the PMLA as
the "old guard," which adheres strictly to conservative
established tradition.

Mike Hogan, Assoc. Prof., UNM English Dept., editor of Words
and the Writer, 1987, used as English 101 text. Says that
he tells students that "80% of the publications and
professors they will be writing for still consider 'he' to
be standard usage." Considers that NCTE passed guidelines
for nonsexist writing strictly as a sociopolitical move, and
that "English teachers are not involved in politics."

David Dunaway, Assoc. Prof., UNM English Dept., author of
two published biographies. Teaches technical writing, in
which he tells students that they must acknowledge the
possibility of both genders in the beginning of their
papers, but in contexts where the singular must be used
later in the papers, can use only "he."

Kathleen Matthews, Asst. Prof., UNM Univ. College, co-author
of Thought to Essay, 1989, used in English 100 classes at
UNM and T-VI. Endorses "conventional usage of 'he'" in
book. In the interview, said that they adopted that stance
because they thought it was still acceptable in publishing.
Seemed grateful to have the issue brought to her attention,
and said that in future revisions, she will see that it is
handled differently.

Kathleen Linnell, Instructor of English 102, UNM English
Dept. Emphasizes consistency of pronoun use, even allowing
"generic she," because she considers "he/she" and "he or
she" awkward and rough. Does not consider the use of "he"
as a "generic" to be nearly as basic and serious of an error
as disagreement in number between pronoun and antecedent.

Susan Brill, Teaching Assistant, teaches English 101, UNM
English Dept. Does not allow "he" as a generic, calls
students' attention to implications of that usage, and
refers to Heffernan & Lincoln's Handbook for authoritative
backup.

APPENDIX F, Cont'd.

George Ann Gregory, teaches basic English usage at Learning
Center, UNM-Gallup. Background in ESL, is a PhD. candidate
in Ed.Linguistics. Says that she can easily apply "he"
generically, and has no strongly male images when she reads
it. Teaches students that it is completely acceptable, based
on what she thinks others consider "standard usage."

Tasia Young, teaches management courses at Univ. of Phoenix
and Webster Univ., in Albuquerque, former head of the NM
Commission on the Status of Women, grad. student in
Ed.Foundations. Makes notes to students about its
implications when she sees "generic he," but does not lower
grades on its use. Says her students are not terribly
interested in any aspect of writing, let alone nonsexist
usage. Feels there is "a lot to lose by pushing it very
hard."

Ann Nihlen, Assoc. Prof., UNM, Dept. of Ed. Foundations.
Absolutely does not allow "he" and "man" to be used
generically in papers for her. Pleased with the American
Anthropological Assn. position on the subject.