SEXISM makes sense within a historically hierarchical relationship between [some] men and women, where one is the norm and the other marked as ‘other’ or inferior and in relation to a wide range of social practices where women (and in some cases men) are exploited, manipulated or constrained because of their [biological] sex.

Litosseliti, *Gender and Language: Theory and Practice*, p. 13

This leaflet is intended to facilitate and promote social and academic best practice as regards non-sexist language.
**NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE**

They/them/themselves
To avoid sexism, you can use these forms, whenever possible, in theoretical and/or general discussions and to refer to groups of people or individuals whose gender is unknown or irrelevant.

Ms/Mr and other titles
Consider using the parallel titles Ms (for women) and Mr (for men) as well as, where applicable, professional gender-neutral titles, such as Inspector, Officer, Dr and Professor, in order to promote equality.

(Further to the above,) neutralization of gendered job titles
On some occasions we tend to associate a particular sex/gender with certain professions. It could be beneficial to avoid bias such as referring to a doctor in conversation with a masculine pronoun even though their sex has not been mentioned (as in, A: "I went to the doctor." B: "What did he say?") and to use gender-neutral terms for professions and positions, for instance, nurse and chairperson (not only for women!).

Alternation between female and male firstness
In pairs, please note that both female and male firstness is acceptable, e.g. brother(s) and sister(s) or sister(s) and brother(s).

**NON-SEXIST PRACTICES (IN ACADEMIA)**

Minority
The ratio between female and male humans in the world’s population is 1:1. You could take that into consideration when referring to disadvantaged groups. That is, "women" are, strictly speaking, not a minority.

Choice of data
If you have data to show, you could consider examples of language used or taken from both men and women.

Acknowledgement of sex-ratio in data
It could be useful, when relevant and/or as it may have implications, to acknowledge the gender ratio between the participants who inform your studies (for example, a third of those who completed the questionnaire were men, two thirds women).

Foreign languages
Unlike English (defined as a natural gender language), foreign languages can have a different grammatical gender system, e.g. Italian, French and German are defined as grammatical gender languages. When studying a foreign language, you may find it useful to reflect on how language can be used to represent a gender-(im)balanced world.

**SEXIST LANGUAGE**

Marital status
Using Mrs or Miss could make the person referred to uncomfortable.

Gender symbolism
Using terms like male nurse or lady doctor, that are hinting at gendered professions, promotes a somehow fixed gender social and labour arrangement that perpetuates inequalities.

Girl/s
Using girl/s to refer to staff or students could accentuate gender imbalances in learning and working environments. Would you use boy/s for male students and staff?

Women/men pairs
Referring to men and women differently, e.g. Harriet Harman is the acting leader of Labour since the resignation of Milliband, could position the two people asymmetrically.

Generics
Using masculine-turned-generic terms, e.g. he or man, when gender is not known or the phenomenon described is not gender-specific — e.g. all men on this planet need to breathe — could not do justice to who is talked about or referred to.