

Lexical Gender-indexing in Idioms
in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's
Dictionary Third Edition*

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there have been many changes in both lexicon and structure of the English language in order to account for gender-inclusive expectations. In this vein, dictionaries and grammars are depositories which any language user can resort to in order to ratify his/her usage. This study targets gender-referring idioms in the third edition of Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary with a view to finding out how and to what extent their lexical level has been affected by gender awareness. To this end, the paper selectively draws on CDA (Fairclough 2003; Lazar 2005), as well as lexical morphology and lexical semantics (Roey 1990) in a mixed research perspective (Ahuja 2001; Dörnyei 2007).

Keywords: Dictionary, idioms, gender-indexing, lexical sexism, CDA, critical language awareness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language in use is part and parcel of social life – or, to use Coupland & Jaworski's (2009: 33) words, "[l]inguistic and social practice are inextricably linked." In a similar vein, Bourdieu (1992: 1) supports that "language is highly political"; to mean that language is not neutral but always conveys some ideology. That is, language is used in order to impact positively or negatively on others and on our environment. From this matter stand, when used well, language helps achieve successful