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**DEPARTAMENT DE FILOLOGIA ANGLESA I DE GERMANÍSTICA**

**ESP, Feminism and Gender Roles: Revision of  
Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* from a Linguistic  
Perspective.**

Treball de Fi de Grau

Author: Anna Marcen Ribas

Supervisor: Dra. Sònia Oliver Del Olmo

Departament de Filologia Anglesa i de Germanística

Grau d'Estudis Anglesos

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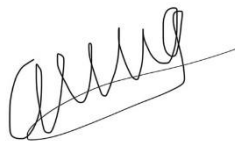
## **Statement of Intellectual Honesty**

**Your name:** Anna Marcen Ribas

**Title of Assignment:** ESP, Feminism and Gender Roles: Revision of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* from a Linguistic Perspective.

I declare that this is a totally original piece of work; all secondary sources have been correctly cited. I also understand that plagiarism is an unacceptable practise which will lead to the automatic failing of this assignment.

Signature and date:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Marcen Ribas', written over a horizontal line.

12/06/2023

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **Abstract**

ESP is a field of learning which has gained relevance in the last few years, since it allows people to focus their study of language and language practice on certain fields of knowledge, (that might be of interest). Simultaneously, the growing interest in the feminist movement and ideology, as well as in the role that gender distinctions play in society, have called for a need to implement new forms of addressing this issue in education. Consequently, ESP applied to the specific branch of feminism and gender roles in society allows learners or readers interested in the field to attain a higher degree of knowledge towards this matter, which will eventually lead them to actively participate in feminist discourses and practices successfully. In this sense, the present TFG aims to describe the theoretical background and terminology that surrounds the area of study of feminism and gender roles in society in relation to an ESP approach to learning. The ultimate goal of this study is to implement such knowledge in an English L2 classroom. Furthermore, in the present research, the work of Jane Austen, more specifically, *Pride and Prejudice*, will be considered and analysed from a linguistic perspective to provide students with methodological tools, and therefore making this specific theoretical framework more understandable and meaningful.

**Keywords:** ESP, Feminism, Gender Roles, Jane Austen, English L2, Teaching and Learning.

## **1. Introduction**

In the following lines the personal motivation for carrying out this TFG, the main thesis, structure, and the relevance of this study will be explained.

### **1.1. Personal motivation**

First and foremost, I would like to introduce you to the present study by exposing the reasons that have contributed to my motivation in choosing the topic of *ESP, Feminism and Gender Roles: Revision of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice from a Linguistic Perspective*, to develop my TFG. Accordingly, I must highlight that I have had an enormous motivation for the English language and learning since I was very young, and having had the opportunity to course a degree in English Studies has allowed me to introduce myself into this world and find my own motivation in it. In this sense, when having to choose the topic for my final project, I considered the three subjects that had impacted me in the most positive way these last few years and found a bond between them to create my personal TFG: ESP, imparted by Dra. Sònia Oliver, English Teaching Methodology, taught by Elisabet Pladevall, and English Romantic Literature, by David Owen. Furthermore, the importance of having selected Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* to contribute to the understanding and meaningfulness of my study relies on the way her work has always inspired me to seek for social change and justice. All in all, taking into consideration the previously mentioned aspects, I decided to adopt and combine the relevant areas of knowledge that interest me the most to design and develop a relevant and meaningful project which encapsulates my primary interests in English learning and teaching.

## **1.2. Object of study**

The object of study of the present work is to analyse the way in which ESP (English for Specific Purposes) can be applied within the field of feminism and gender roles in society. It will be carried out with the aim to further create awareness among individuals of both the need to familiarize themselves with the proper terminology involved in the field, and the need to challenge dominant discourses and practices that affect the conceptions of women and their roles in society, to reach gender equality. To do so, the well-known novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), written by Jane Austen, will be examined, and analysed in order to uncover certain practices and ideologies that are crucial to our understanding of the feminist movement. In this sense, the ultimate object of the present study is to expose the way in which the theoretical information that will be provided throughout the study, can be introduced in a classroom. Therefore, information about the type of learners, the role of teachers, kind of activities and some practical exercises will be provided to observe how the previously exposed information can be introduced in an educational environment.

## **1.3. Assumptions**

ESP has proved to be an effective approach to learning since it allows those interested in specific fields to attain the most relevant information and further develop their practical skills about certain topics that they may be interested in. Therefore, the desired impact of this study relies on the expected ability of readers and learners to engage in meaningful conversations regarding the need to apply feminist theories to construct a more inclusive and respectful society, in which women have independence, and the ability to speak and

decide for themselves. Also, readers and students will be expected to have reached the desired and needed knowledge to become active participants in discussions where the questioning and challenging of generalized and imposed views towards gender roles serve as the basis for communicating. In sum, they will be expected to reach a level of knowledge that enables them to participate in feminist activist practices in a successful way. Therefore, the role of ESP in such a field is to create awareness among its learners about the fact that gender equality and the needed change of mindset in our society, will only be reached if members of such a community are educated to have knowledge about the social and personal implications that the difference in treatment of males and females have.

#### **1.4. Thesis**

The present dissertation endeavours to provide, through adopting an ESP approach to learning, the theoretical knowledge needed to become active participants in feminist discourses. Also, discourses through a revision of Jane Austen's most influential work: *Pride and Prejudice* from a linguistic perspective will be conducted, specifically focusing on those aspects which make the novel relevant from a feminist point of view. Accordingly, the purpose of this revision is to provide examples of the way in which language is used by Jane Austen, in her novel, to be able to associate such use of language to the terminology involved in the specific branch of ESP that is being studied. Furthermore, a modern perspective will be provided to expose the newest approaches to the issue. Finally, after providing theoretical content on the topic, this work aims to conclude with a presentation of the different ways in which all the previously exposed information can be used in an educational environment.

### **1.5. Contribution of TFG to the ESP field**

ESP is an approach to learning which is, in fact, gaining relevance among people since it allows learners to focus on the study of specific fields they may be interested in. The branch of ESP under study is significant provided that it further explores the need for social awareness and change within our communities with the aim to search for better ways of approaching the limitations in terms of treatment and opportunities that women are subjected to. Furthermore, Austen's proto feminist ideas serve as a tool for a better understanding of the impositions of the patriarchal society of the time, and how they evolved throughout time. Overall, the contribution that this topic has in the ESP field is quite significant since it emphasizes the importance of educating people on the basis of feminist knowledge and creating awareness among individuals of the need for social change.

### **1.6. TFG structure**

The structure of the present work will follow a continuum from an introduction to the meaning and theoretical background of ESP, and more specifically to the field of feminism and gender roles, to the explanation of the key terms necessary to attain the desired knowledge on the topic. The work will follow with a presentation of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* and its influence in the context of the ESP branch that will be studied throughout the dissertation. Furthermore, the revision of the novel will prove to be effective in providing examples for the terminology exposed in the previous sections, in order to clarify the understanding of such concepts. The ultimate section of this work will be devoted to expose the pedagogical implications of the study through which the reader will attain a general view of the way in which the previously exposed information

can be implemented in the education field, in the form of a didactic unit or course. Finally, a section introducing some concluding remarks on this study will be presented.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This section will cover the main explanation of what ESP is and its background, followed by an introduction to the ESP branch that has been selected for this study. Furthermore, the proper terminology involved in the field will be exposed so that readers can gain access to a better understanding of the concepts involved in the field.

### **2.1. Introduction to ESP**

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) is the study of the use of the English Language in specific fields of knowledge aimed to be taught, learned, and used in professional environments. It focuses on specific vocabulary and terminology proper from each discipline, and its aim is to provide students with the level of language and the sufficient content-related knowledge, around a specific topic, that they need to communicate effectively in that field. Certainly, “a truly valid approach to ESP must be based on an understanding of the processes of language learning” (Hutchinson and Waters,1987, p.8). Furthermore, ESP is centred around the students’ needs and preferences. It is designed to adapt to the individual needs of each learner as well as to their level of competence, their interests, and their individual goals. Certainly, this is a central key point that resumes ESP’s focus, as “new developments in educational psychology also contribute to the rise of ESP, by emphasizing the central importance of the learners and their attitudes to learning. Learners are seen to have different needs and interests, which has an important influence on their motivation to learn and therefore on the effectiveness of their learning” (Hutchinson and Waters,1987, p.8). Accordingly, students are provided with real-life

content materials and activities which contain the information and language skills that they need to further apply in their work on the field. As it is pointed out by the sociolinguists Cristina Aliagas, Maria Rosa Garrido and Emilee Moore, there is a need to focus the main aim of education not only on the theoretical information that needs to be provided to students, but also on practice in which they can produce and perform their identities and interests regarding the subject under study:

“We regard education as a broad practice not exclusively attached to the school institution and setting (and thus to its particular epistemologies and ontologies) but to learning as a situated practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this framework, learning is a complex process where life trajectories, personal interests, communities of practice, funds of knowledge and identity construction play a key role (e.g. González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Drawing on these insights on education and learning, we see pedagogy as a space in between theory and practice where all these elements come into play in constructing ways of knowing and “third spaces” (Gutiérrez, 2008; Moje et al., 2004) of learning that produce, transform and bridge knowledge, discourses, identities and crucially, language and literacy practices” (Aliagas, Garrido, Moore, 2016, p.2).

## **2.2. ESP background**

The origins of ESP are found back in the 1960s and 1970s, a time when the need for language teaching was beginning to emerge because of the increasing globalization and expansion of certain fields such as trade, technology, and science (Johns, 2012). The demand for proper knowledge of language and terminology involved in various sectors raised with the aim to attain a successful communication among people involved in the different fields. In this way, “the growth of ESP was brought about by a combination of three important factors: the expansion of demand for English to suit particular needs and developments in the fields of linguistics and educational psychology. All three factors seemed to point towards the need for increased specialization in language learning” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987p.8).

Furthermore, the phenomenon of globalization which has been highly developed through the last few decades, has entailed a growing demand for relevant language instruction on specific fields of knowledge. Likewise, such education of the language has allowed the successful development of the interaction between those interested in a particular field of knowledge and in its subsequent recognition at a worldwide level (Johns, 2012).

Such development of ESP had occurred in two different stages. The former, focused on “language at the sentence level” (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.10), highlighting the importance of grammar use involved in distinct fields of knowledge. Conversely, the latter intended ESP to become “closely involved with the emerging field of discourse or rhetorical analysis”, so in this stage, attention shifted to “understanding how sentences were combined in discourse to produce meaning”. (10).

Nowadays, according to Johns (2012), ESP is regarded as a distinguished approach to language teaching which has had an enormous influence on the way people communicate in a variety of situations and disciplines, such as English for Business, English for Sports, English for Engineering, English for Literature, and so on.

### **2.3. Definition of the chosen ESP branch**

The present study has been devoted to the investigation of the proper terminology and use of language that is involved in the field of feminism and gender roles in society that can be introduced in a didactic environment. Accordingly, it is a branch of ESP which certainly assembles those who find themselves engaged in feminist discourse, action, study, or advocacy. Indeed, language and the proper use of it in such context is considered as a key factor in constructing and confronting certain norms imposed by society, the

dynamics shaped by relationships of power, and the existing inequality among the distinguished genders (Johns, 2012). Certainly, ESP for feminism and gender roles in society seeks to provide those interested in the field with the ability to think critically and to interiorize the proper language structures and knowledge, as well as literacy skills that are needed to perform successfully in debates, forms of activism, and research on those matters which concern the need for social justice and gender equality.

#### **2.4. ESP in feminism and gender roles (background)**

The branch selected to carry out the present study began to gain relevance when the feminist movement started coming to light and gaining strength as a social and political force. Consequently, the need to learn the proper way to use language in such a context, as well as the need to familiarize oneself with new terminology related to the issue started becoming a priority for those interested in the field. To communicate effectively, a wide variety of content and materials involved in ESP for feminism started being created with the intention to reflect the multiplicity of feminist perspectives, theories, and activities through which people would navigate in order to create their own debates and ideologies.

As the feminist scholar Nina Lykke (2012) points out,

“During the last thirty to forty years, Feminist Studies has developed into a well-established field of academic knowledge production. Critical research and teaching on gender/sex, gendered hegemonies, gender relations, gender identities, symbolic representations of gender/sex and intersections between gender/sex, sexuality, and so on is today carried out at universities in many countries all over the world” (Lykke, 2012, p.32)

#### **2.5. Terminology**

In order for those interested in the field to acquire the desired knowledge and ability to be able to perform successfully in ongoing debates and activities engaged in feminist discourses, there is a prior need to familiarize themselves with the proper terminology

that constructs the movement. Accordingly, the present section endeavours to provide some definitions of the most relevant concepts in both feminism and gender roles. But first and foremost, it is important to state that the terminology included in these subsections has been chosen because of the recurrent use of such terms in the distinct studies that have been examined to conduct this study, and their corresponding definitions proposed below have been mainly extracted from the Cambridge Dictionary.

### **2.5.1. Feminism**

To begin with, the field of feminism englobes a large variety of key terms that reflect the distinguished points of views, theories and approaches that are of large importance to those who actively participate in discussions around the topic or in meetings that promote a general awareness of such movement. Such key terminology englobes notions such as: patriarchy, empowerment, feminist theory, feminist activism, and consent.

First, “patriarchy” is a socially constructed term used to describe a culture where men (especially the oldest male of the family) have the power to rule, consequently, presenting an abusive attitude towards women to attain their personal interests. As a matter of fact, women are accordingly subjected to being regarded as marginalized or oppressed by these “dominant” empowered male figures. As stated by Holmes (1997) “In men's stories, `doing gender' tends to involve presenting themselves as in control, knowledgeable, skilled, and competent” (210) whereas “`feminine' identity is associated with powerlessness and politeness” (211). Considering this, feminism aims to uncover the practices that result in women’s oppression for them to be able to have a voice and stop being silenced or controlled by such male figures who find themselves in the position of using their power to their own advantage.

Second, the notion of empowerment is highly used in feminist discourses since it serves as the pivotal element for reaching the main goal of feminism supporters. Accordingly, “empowerment” is a word that refers to the process of earning independence, agency, and autonomy to act according to one’s own personal interests, taking, in this way, control over one’s destiny. The relationship between this term and feminism relies on the movement’s attempt to empower women by dismantling social constraints and fighting for their rights, independence and for the power to take control of their own life.

Third, the concept “feminist theory” has been created as a way of encompassing the theoretical basis that makes a critique of the present social injustice in terms of gender. Moreover, it promotes an egalitarian vision towards the distinction between male and female roles in such society. Certainly, Feminist gender theory is concerned with understanding how gender is connected to social, economic, and cultural status and power in society (Holmes, 1997).

Fourth, the term “feminist activism” is of high relevance for the present topic since it encompasses the collaborative acts that are carried out by those interested in the field to bring to light the ideology and aim of feminist theories. It can be exposed in many different forms, including demonstrations, community building, informative meetings, campaigns, and so on.

Another important concept involved in feminist discourses is the notion of “consent”. It is used to reflect the importance of expressing “permission, approval, or agreement” (Cambridge University Press, n.d.) in sexual interactions and relationships. In this sense, it emphasizes the significance in always exposing one’s own agreement or

disapproval in front of situations involving sexual acts, mainly. Feminism aims to extend the awareness of the relevance of bearing in mind such ability to express one's approval, as well as to respect other people's decisions, to prevent sexual violence, rape, or any kind of dominance or pressure in carrying out sexual intercourses.

### **2.5.2. Gender roles**

Moving on with the concept of **gender roles** in society, a proper definition attributed to it is the one crafted by psychologist John Money (1972): "All those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman, respectively. It includes but is not restricted to sexuality in the sense of eroticism" (397). It is important to state that the relevance of this term relies on its emphasis on the necessity to seek an understanding of the way in which these are constructed, emphasized, and questioned in a particular society, culture or historical context. Certainly, this term delves into the expectations and/or ways of acting and behaving that are associated with both feminine and masculine ideals in a particular community. It is from childhood that people begin to perform gender through observation and imitation, and, consequently, learning the social meanings, values, norms, and expectations associated with being a girl and being a boy. They further develop ways of behaving and personality characteristics considered appropriate (or not) for a woman or a man.

Accordingly, the present section aims to expose a set of terms that can be engulfed in this previously mentioned notion: sex, gender, gender stereotypes, gender socialization, femininity, and masculinity.

To begin with, it is very important to clearly distinguish the meanings of the concepts of "**sex**" and "**gender**". Accordingly, on the one hand, the term "sex" refers to

the biological differences that exist between males and females, which are based only on those aspects that can be appreciated through physical appearance. On the other hand, the concept, “gender”, refers to the social meanings and values attached to being male or female in any given society, i.e., masculinity and femininity. In other words, “a group of people in a society who share particular qualities or ways of behaving which that society associates with being male, female, or another identity”(Cambridge University Press, n.d.). As a result, terminology related to sex and gender is “the main social factor driving variation and change” (Cheshire, 2004, p.439) in the English language.

Furthermore, the term “**gender stereotypes**”, according to Holmes (1997) refers to the expanding ideals that are globally held and generalized about the traits, actions and roles that people are expected to perform according to the gender they are identified with. Stereotypes can most often be regarded negatively since they present barriers to individual opportunities and promote inequality. Feminism has raised the need to challenge gender stereotypes, commit to gender equality and gender diversity, as well as to the rights of sexual minorities in order not to limit anyone’s freedom of self-expression.

Another important concept used in relation to the notion of gender is “**gender socialization**”. Accordingly, it refers to the process by which people learn and absorb the previously mentioned expectations, roles and conventions imposed by society according to personal gender identification. As stated above, gender socialization starts developing during childhood and is marked by factors, including education, family, the media and the social environments that one takes part in.

As previously stated, **femininity** and **masculinity** are two key concepts that are needed to be considered in this field. On the one hand, femininity is used to describe the qualities that are attributed to women regarding the way they act or speak. On the other hand, the term masculinity, refers to the set of traits mentioned above, but that are associated with men figures. Indeed, both terms are also influenced by the expectations or impositions of society and vary according to the context or environment that one finds him or herself in. They can further encourage stereotypes associated with each one of them.

### **3. ESP branch applied to Jane Austen's work**

This section is devoted to the introduction of Jane Austen's influential work *Pride and Prejudice* to prove how it can contribute to a better understanding of the concepts and ideas involved in the branch of ESP that is being studied. Furthermore, a relation between the previously stated terminology involved in the field and Jane Austen's use of language will be exposed to make even more clear the meaning and relevance of such concepts and ideas.

#### **3.1. Importance of Jane Austen's work in the field**

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is a novelist whose work has a great significance in the field of feminism since her novels, written between the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, present a profound insight into the social constraints and limitations that women were faced with at the time. Her work certainly delves into the social and political impositions and expectations on women that characterized the mindset and intercourse of the Victorian era. As Caine (1980) points out, "scholars engaged with literary, philosophical, and cultural studies have written about the feminist engagement

of literary and philosophical texts. The novels of Jane Austen have thus been encompassed within recent discussions of the history of feminism” (1).

In her novels, Austen attempts to portray the struggles and challenges that women faced in a society dominated by male figures through the characterization of empowered female figures, such as Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). These characters struggle to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations that were instilled in the society that is depicted, with the aim to reach gender equality in a society where male dominance is present in every domain of social and private life.

Often, her protagonists are regarded as heroines, provided that they struggle to question societal norms and impositions in order for them to follow their own desires and become self-determinant women. Therefore, as her novels reveal the inequalities existing in society in terms of gender, the reader is presented with a glimpse of other possible situations for women which leave behind this traditional conservative ideology of women being subjected to male figures to survive, so that women’s economic and social dependence can be achieved one day. Furthermore, these female characters are most presented with characteristic traits such as intelligence, wit, and/or self-determination that, in fact, empower them and, at the same time, serve to challenge the prevailing idea that women were intellectually inferior or less capable of deciding upon their own destiny than men.

All in all, Austen’s portrayal of powerful feminine characters offers insights into the exploration of the limitations that women were faced with in society, and attempts to create a sense of awareness in the reader of the situation faced by them though exposing a critique of societal norms and dynamics of the time:

“One can learn from Austen’s critique of her world regardless of the reason behind the reading. Austen voices her concerns about 18th century gender roles throughout her novels, and both the pleasure reader and the critic reap the benefits of her work. A woman choosing to write as a vocation has been, in and of itself, a feminist act for the majority of literary history. Authorship was traditionally a male dominated field” (Eberle, 2011, p.1).

In light of this, her work can be considered as highly relevant for understanding the grounding basis of the feminist movement, as well as its central aim.

### **3.2. *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen**

Even though most of Austen’s novels can be studied and analysed from a feminist point of view, and plenty of insight related to the emergence of the Feminist movement can be extracted from them, in this study, only one of her most influential works will be considered. Accordingly, the publication of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) produced a huge impact on the feminist movement, since it questioned dominant gender ideologies present in nineteenth century society, as well as it offered a critical approach to the limitations and expectations that were placed on women at the time. Certainly, in her novel, Austen “pushes for cultural changes while simultaneously allowing her readers to enjoy the experience of social critique” (Eberle:2011, p.4).

Through the characterization of Elisabeth Bennet, the writer accomplished to portray a feminine figure who challenged social expectations by refusing to be tempted by the pressures and limitations established by this particular social community. Furthermore, Austen encouraged, through the portrayal of this character, the need to seek for one’s autonomy and independence. In this novel, such aim appears to be achieved by prioritizing genuine love connections grounded in respect and personal desires, rather than regarding marital engagements and economic stability as necessary for women’s survival.

Taking this last point into account, it is worth mentioning the way in which Austen's novel offers a critique of the conception of marriage that the society of the time had and the impact that such view caused on the treatment of women. Accordingly, marital engagements were needed to be ensured by women since their social and financial security depended on this very act. Certainly, "most women in the novel must marry and since access to money both shapes and is shaped by traditional attitudes toward women and their proper destiny, even women with money feel pressured to get a man". (Lowder, 1978, pp.32-33). In this way, Austen emphasizes, in her novel, the socio-economic limitations that the marriage market imposed on women, and further questioned such impositions through the characterization of Elisabeth Bennet as unwilling to marry for convenience and insisting on her desire to seek her own independence and happiness. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, "the failures of (the marriages of) Charlotte Lucas and Lydia Bennet bolster the ideal marriage of Elizabeth, but the two foils also serve as cynical warnings about social realities". (Eberle,2011, p.17)

Additionally, the general portrayal of the Bennet sisters (Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine, and Lydia) emphasizes the value attributed to education and intellectual desire on behalf of women for them to cease being recognized and treated as less intelligent or less capable of acting for and by themselves. In fact, the shaping of the sisters in terms of large intellectual knowledge and their ability to decide for themselves, enforces this need to alienate women from male subordination and dominance, and start associating to them the capacity of self-determination.

### 3.3. Examples from the novel applied to Feminism terminology

The notion of “**consent**” is present in the novel in the sense that Mrs. Bennet longs for one of her daughters to marry Mr. Collins, and consequently, he goes to “Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife” (Austen, 1813, p.123) and chooses Lizzie as his future companion. This proposal is merely based on a mercantile view towards marriage; Mr. Collins just wants a wife to be socially complete, he is not concerned about Lizzie’s feelings nor opinion. It is indeed shocking for a modern reader to consider such a situation because matrimony is based on necessity rather than want. Furthermore, there is no instance of aiming for Lizzie’s consent towards such an imposition to marry Mr. Collins.

Another instance from the novel that exemplifies the feminist notion of consent is the way in which Mr. Darcy’s marriage has been arranged for him since he was born, as Lady Catherine states “from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin” (Austen, 1813, p.404). The fact that such a powerful man’s destiny had been chosen for him and he was consequently destined to marry for convenience rather than want ceases with his ability to decide for himself and express his consent towards such an arrangement.

Moving on, the notion of **empowerment** can be seen in the novel through Elizabeth’s rejection of Mr. Collins’s proposal. It certainly suggests that in this whole situation of ‘obsession’ with marriage and money, that there still is one individual who is willing to fight for her autonomy and show that she has a voice to decide over her own destiny.

Also, the charisma of Elizabeth leads her to question the morality of the time and offer an alternative point of view towards the imposition of marrying for convenience:

“Why is he not to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?” (404). She is suggesting, in this way, an evolution in the perspective about the idea of marriage that has been instilled into this society and aiming for better prospects for both men and women regarding their situation with respect to marriage.

The term “**patriarchy**” can be applied in Austen’s novel in the sense that for most women of the time, their only prospect for life was to submit themselves to a male figure who would be capable of providing them with security and comfort. Certainly, men seem to dominate the society that Austen depicts since for Charlotte, for instance, “without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, (...) uncertain of giving happiness” (Austen, 1813, p.144).

#### **4. Evolution into modernity**

The field of Feminism is in constant change and evolution in order to adapt to the newest perspectives and approaches to the situation present in each society. Therefore, the need for the introduction of new terms is increasing more and more to find the proper ways of expressing new ideas, concepts, ideologies, approaches, and so on.

The present section of the study aims to expose some of the terminology that has been introduced in the lexicon involved in feminism and gender roles in recent years due to advancements in conception of society towards the matter.

To begin with, “**gender identity**” is a term that refers to a person’s self-perception of their own gender. Previously, such categorization was strictly limited to male/female distinction. However, in recent years, several identities have been included in terms of

gender perception. Certainly, “Research on language and gender has tended to follow the general development of feminist thought, moving from an essentialist paradigm where speakers were categorized in terms of their biological sex through a period where the significance of the cultural concept of gender was recognised, together with social psychological dimensions, to a more dynamic social constructionist approach” (Cheshire 2004, p.423).

The term “**non-binary**” refers to “having a gender identity that is not simply male or female” (Cambridge University Press, n.d), and, people who identify in such a way, use "they/them" pronouns. Second, the term “**transgender**” has been introduced in the lexicon to identify in terms of gender those “whose gender does not match the body they were born with” (Cambridge University Press, n.d). in contrast with the term “**cisgender**”.

Moving on, the term “**gender equality**” has gained relevance in recent years in feminist discourses, since it is the main aim of the movement. It refers to the belief and need to quest for equality in terms of opportunities, rights and treatment of people, no matter their gender identification. It struggles to end the discrimination present in many practices in society to have a more respectful environment and equal treatment towards all gender possibilities.

Finally, one more concept that is worth including in this section has to do with the differences in terms of treatment in the labour sphere. Accordingly, as in the past few decades women have gained access to the labour market, a new need has emerged; to seek for equal male/female treatment and opportunities in such an atmosphere.

Overall, it is important to highlight that the lexicon included in the field of feminism and gender roles in society is continuously evolving and being amplified. Through ongoing arguments and debates within the field, the understanding of gender roles is continuously being reshaped, giving rise to new ways of approaching and confronting the matter to seek gender equality in all domains of social and private life.

## **5. Pedagogical applications and implications of this TFG**

This section will be devoted to providing a complete explanation of the way in which the study that has been developed in the previous sections and the information extracted from it can be applied in an educational environment. Accordingly, the type of users, the kind of activities that can be designed and put into practice, and the teacher's role involved in this course will be exposed to further implement it all in an ESP classroom. The main aim of such pedagogical implications of the study is to educate students to be able to engage in meaningful conversations regarding feminism and gender roles in society, as well as to become actively involved feminist practices.

### **5.1. Target audience**

The present subsection aims to expose the type of audience or students to which this pedagogical application of the study can be addressed, as well as to point out the basic knowledge of English and of the field that they are expected to have before engaging in such a course. Furthermore, the role of teachers will also be exposed so that both teachers and students are aware of the way in which lessons are expected to be imparted.

#### **5.1.1. Required level and previous knowledge of students**

Considering the English level students should demonstrate, they are, at least, expected to have a B2/C1 level so they can construct full and complex sentences in a clear way to

express the desired message. A further relevant skill that should be taken into consideration is the ability to speak fluently and in a spontaneous and convincing way, provided that users are expected to engage in improvised conversations, debates or speeches. In addition, given that some users wish to become article or newspaper writers, for example, they would also need to demonstrate a basic dominance of not only specific English vocabulary related to feminism and gender roles, but also of the ways in which this information can be properly written in a clear, well-structured formal way. Moreover, students are also expected to have a certain awareness of the current situation of male and female treatment in society before entering the course, since it is pivotal for their further applicability of the knowledge acquired into the situation that they can observe in the life around them.

#### **5.1.2. Students' needs**

Students need complete training and education on both theoretical information and practical exercises to fully develop their communication skills in both spoken and written language. In addition, at the beginning of the course, students should be provided with a written syllabus of all the content that is going to be of their interest throughout the course and which will be taught to them. This syllabus must contain a description of all the units or topics that will be covered, the different kinds of activities that will be carried out, the corresponding bibliography and the material that is recommended to be consulted as well as the evaluation system that will be used to assess students.

#### **5.1.3. Teachers' challenges and suitable tasks (applied to each individual's circumstances)**

There are many aspects that should be considered regarding the teachers' challenges when facing a class with students. These students need to be educated on the basis of the

different ways in which information about feminism and gender roles in society can be delivered. Moreover, they need to be taught specific vocabulary on the field to be able to apply it adequately when doing their work or engaging in meaningful conversations. Furthermore, teachers should be able to educate their students how to present a convincing attitude when trying to defend a theory or alternative to the way a relevant matter in the field is approached nowadays by society, so that the necessary changes and improvements in people's practices and conceptions can be reached.

To be able to prove the students' ability to do their work correctly, teachers must organize several practical activities related to what has been taught in class. These tasks can be addressed to the whole class to be done collectively, or they can focus on each individual's preferences. This latter option is aimed at encouraging each student to find their passion in the field to be able to focus on more specific content and achieve more effective results.

Basically, what interests teachers the most is that students keep a motivating and engaging attitude during the lessons and their learning. This can be achieved through the presentation of tasks in a motivating way, setting specific learners' goals, making the teaching materials relevant, and promoting cooperation. Also, by increasing learners' self-confidence providing them with meaningful, motivating feedback and positive comments, teachers will recognize a greater success in the outcome of the course.

## **5.2. Methodology**

The methodology that will be incorporated in this course considers the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) equally relevant in the development of a student's ability to become actively engaged in the field. In this way, this section aims to

propose a series of content within the topic under study to be covered and practiced according to the four skills of language acquisition and, more specifically, in English L2.

### **5.2.1. Reading**

In this aspect, students will be taught not to just read texts but also to look for the key elements of the different texts typical from the genres present in feminism and gender roles (novels, reviews on feminism, essays, reports, etc.). In this way, students will learn how to identify tiny nuances present in written language such as the author's point of view or characters' attitudes towards a particular matter, among others.

### **5.2.2. Writing**

This practice will be carried out to master the ability to apply the new terminology and theories that have previously been taught in a written format. Furthermore, students will also be provided with the instructions needed to be able to distinguish what kind of language and the register they should apply when writing an informative, descriptive, historical, or analytical text.

### **5.2.3. Listening**

This discipline will be a matter of interest for students since a large percentage of them are usually interested in actively participating in meaningful debates or conversations regarding feminism. Therefore, several videos, tracks, or even podcasts will be played so that students learn and interiorize different techniques to expose the desired information according to the addressee or situation at hand. These techniques will be further applied and practiced in speaking activities in which they will be able to prove their acquired knowledge.

#### **5.2.4. Speaking**

Teachers will encourage students not to be shy and get used to speaking in front of a big audience using the right speed and voice tone, as well as using their previously acquired ability to persuade and maintain the listeners engaged in the speech they are producing. They will be asked to practice the different ways in which feminist knowledge can be transmitted orally to be able to fully interiorize the proper way to do so and successfully attain their objectives.

#### **5.3. Practical exercises**

A set of didactic and meaningful activities that teachers can use throughout the course will be provided in this subsection. The main goal or expected outcome of such activities is that students prove to themselves and teachers that they have understood the knowledge that has been previously taught and show how they can succeed in putting such interiorized information into practical activities or tasks.

##### **5.3.1. Fill in the gaps**

Some sentences or several extracts from different texts will be provided in order to be completed with key words or short phrases which are typically associated with feminism and gender roles terminology. It is done with the purpose that the practitioners not only learn vocabulary but also are aware of how, when and where it must be applied.

Example:

- (1) Jane Austen's characters in *Pride and Prejudice* live in a (.....) society because men have more power, appear as dominant figures and have more privileges in the community than women.
- (2) Elizabeth Bennet can be considered an (.....) female figure since in Jane Austen's novel she is portrayed as capable and confident enough to question and

challenge the imposed ideas about marriage and the role/conception of women in society.

- (3) The notion of (.....) is of little importance in the society that Jane Austen depicts, provided that men will make their choice of partner to marry without even allowing women the possibility to agree or disagree with such imposition.
- (4) Elizabeth Bennet questions the (.....) that society has upon the conception of (.....) since she is presented as a woman who has characteristic traits that are more attributed to male figures in the society of the time, such as wit, intelligence... and does not seem to care that much about showing herself as a very feminine character.

### **5.3.2. Text analysis**

Students will be provided with several fragments of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* and will be asked to analyse such texts adopting a feminist approach. Afterwards, they will have to provide a written extract in which they comment on the different ways that feminist theory and terminology that has been previously acquired can be identified in such texts.

Example:

- (1) Take a close look at the following passage from chapter nineteen of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and comment on the way the message conveyed through Austen's words allows for a better understanding of the impositions of the society of the time regarding marital engagements and the consequent female submission to male figures in order to survive. Make sure you use the terminology and ideas explained in class to construct your answer.

“The next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words:

“May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning?”

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs Bennet instantly answered,

"Oh dear! - Yes - certainly. - I am sure Lizzy will be very happy - I am sure she can have no objection. - Come, Kitty, I want you up stairs." And gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out,

“Dear ma'am, do not go. - I beg you will not go. - Mr Collins must excuse me. - He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.”

“No, no, nonsense, Lizzy. - I desire you will stay where you are”- And upon Elizabeth's seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, “Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr Collins.” Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction - and a moment's consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal by incessant employment the feelings which were divided between distress and diversion. Mrs Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr Collins began.

“Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it would be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying - and moreover for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did” (Austen, 1813, pp.122-123).

### **5.3.3. Debate**

Students will be divided into two groups and will be asked to perform and engage in several debates around specific topics involved in the field. For instance, they will be

asked to present their opinions towards certain behaviours that some of the characters in Austen's novel reinforce.

Example:

- (1) Discuss about the way in which Charlotte's decision to marry Mr. Collins is one based on need rather than want. There will be one group defending the fact that she had no choice or voice in such a decision, and another one discussing how she could and should have presented more opposition.

## **6. Conclusions**

Overall, it can be concluded that ESP is, in fact, a useful and effective technique to apply in education in order to achieve students' proficiency in specific domains of learning. Accordingly, ESP applied to feminism and gender roles in society is a field which is increasingly gaining relevance and interest among people nowadays, and which is expected to continuously evolve to reach a society in which its members are consciously aware of the impact that the difference in treatment of men and women in society has. It is indeed a branch of ESP learning which is very relevant for many people, and which aims to create a sense of awareness in society of the need to question imposed ideas and educate us on the basis of respect and integration. Indeed, throughout the present study it has been proved how a deep understanding of the changing and ongoing perspectives towards feminism and gender roles in society throughout time have contributed to a general awareness of the necessity to keep on fighting and raising our voices to achieve gender equality in terms of treatment and opportunities in our communities. Certainly, the relevance of ESP for feminism and gender roles in society relies on its emphasis on the importance of educating people on the basic concepts and terminology involved in the field to have a society grounded on the principles of gender justice and equality in all

domains of life, both public and private. Furthermore, the work of Jane Austen has proved to be effective for a deeper understanding of the terminology involved in the field and has also proved to be a useful and meaningful source to gather examples and even put into practice the concepts and ideas that have been exposed throughout the whole study.

As for future research that could be developed regarding this topic, it might be interesting to consider other works by the author Jane Austen, as well as other contemporary writers, to see their applicability to the field of ESP for feminism and gender roles. Furthermore, it must be highlighted that, as the approach to women's treatment in society and the proper use of language to address their situation is rapidly and continuously evolving, it is important not to cease in the investigation and analysis of updated terminology, to address and better explain gender distinctions and treatment in society.

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This last section is destined to list the different sources that have been considered or included in the present study to justify or complete the ideas that have been exposed.

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Furthermore, the notes taken in the following three subjects of the degree in English Studies by the UAB have been largely considered and helpful to develop the content of the present TFG:

English for Specific Purposes, by Sònia Oliver. 2022-2023

English Romantic Literature, by David Owen. 2020-2021.

English Teaching Methodology, by Elisabet Pladevall. 2022-2023.