



Gender and Education in Luxembourg and Beyond

Local Challenges and New Perspectives

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Vocational aspirations and gender: Fighting the normative impact of language and stereotypes

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Introduction

During childhood, vocational interests begin to develop (Hartung et al., 2005) and, later in life, emerge as vocational choices. These choices are typically made by considering various individual factors such as interests, values, personality, and skills (Paa & McWhirter, 2000). External factors, such as socioeconomic status, family's point of view and/or stereotypes (Lent et al., 2000), may also play an important role. In fact, gender stereotypes have commonly been cited as an important catalyst of vocational differences between girls and boys (e.g., Blanchard & Lichtenberg, 2003; Gianettoni et al., 2015). As a result, although many professions have become more gender diversified in Europe, the European Institute for Gender Equality recently reminded us of the permanency of gender discrimination in career choices (2018). Women predominate the field of education, health, and welfare (EHW) and men the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

In this chapter, we argue that although gendered vocational interests may arise from various sources, language plays an important role, even if it has received little attention so far. Previous studies (Stout & Dasgupta, 2011; Vervecken et al., 2013; Vervecken et al., 2015), although scarce, have demonstrated that language (meaning and structure) can influence how children and adolescents perceive professions. We also argue that gender stereotypes interact with language in intricate ways, and that in all, both may well interfere in shaping personal interests, as well as academic and professional choices.

In this chapter, we start by reviewing literature about the development of vocational interests and vocational choices. We then explore how gender stereotypes about professions develop in children and adolescents before we focus on the impact of language on those gendered interests. We conclude with a thorough discussion of interventions, as well as possible research avenues to study the neglected link between language, stereotypes, and vocational interests.

Vocational interests, choices, and identity

As the link between language and vocational interests has, to the best of our knowledge, received little attention, both fields first need to be apprehended separately. More specifically, before examining the different ways language may act as a vehicle of biases in vocational interests, we must understand how vocational identity, interests, and subsequent vocational choices, develop over time. Vocational identity refers to the sense of the self in the world of work (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). It is dependent on vocational interests, and both interests and identity affect vocational choices (Paa & McWhirter, 2000). Different theories have been suggested to account for the intricate relationship between vocational identity, interests, and vocational choices, and we present the ones we believe are most adapted to understand how language and stereotypes can influence vocational choices.

Trait-factor theories

Trait-factor theories were the first to emerge in the vocational field, emphasising the importance of the interactions between individuals and their environment. Holland (1985), for example, suggested that interests, as a major catalyst of vocational choices, were built on an interaction between heredity, environment, activities, personal dispositions, and experiences. He suggested that individuals with similar personalities would have comparable job interests. Su, Stoll and Rounds (2019) further suggested that interests constituted the bridge between cognition and other factors, such as values and objectives, together defining motivation. The authors added the important concept of motivation, central not only in starting an activity, but also in pursuing it (Sun, 2013). As such, when interests can be considered as strong, they appear to be fairly stable over time (Hirschi, 2010).

Socio-cognitive theories

Although individual traits and characteristics undeniably influence vocational interests and choices, some researchers have also focused on the external factors, as barriers or social support, at the foundation of these interests and choices. The explanation of those external factors' impact is essential to apprehend how language could impact vocational interests. Bandura (1977) suggested that a person will grow throughout their life by learning how to act depending on their interaction with their environment. As such, vocational identity may be strongly influenced by (a) the way children explore their own environment (Porfeli & Lee, 2012), through television, books and/or adults' behaviours (including discourse), but also by (b) the way their own behaviours are perceived by others. For example, Lent et al. (1994) argued that interests develop through positive feedback and/or positive feedback expectations. This implies that when someone thinks they would not be able to have good outcomes in a profession, their interest in that profession will decrease. Other variables may impact these interests, such as ethnicity, health, and gender. Lent et al.'s model implies that a person is influenced by many variables – some of which will be discussed in detail later (e.g., context and gender) – that will guide them through life.

Developmental theories

Other theories, although based on similar ideas, have focused on the actual growth of vocational identity, which refers to the actual process of choosing rather than a specific moment of choice. Understanding the development of vocational identity is therefore central in elaborating effective interventions to act on individuals' vocational interests.

Although the number of stages suggested do vary from one theory to another, all follow a similar sequence, through which children are affected by individual as well as external factors. For example, Gottfredson (1981, 2005) presented three stages. During the first stage – cognitive growth –, around 6 to 8 years old, children create their own

mental map, which classifies professions according to gender and prestige. During the second stage – circumscription –, individuals decide what they would accept, or not, in a job according to their cognitive map. Finally, during the last stage – compromise – a choice has to be made, and gender, prestige and interests are all taken into consideration. Blanchard and Lichtenberg (2003) further added that individuals are, in fact, more likely to prioritise gender and prestige, rather than interests, when making a compromise, illustrating how external factors such as stereotypes, or language, can creep into vocational choices.

Constructivist theories

More recently, some theories – known as constructivist theories – have addressed the evolution of the vocational identity throughout one's entire life. The validation of a possible evolution of one's vocational identity throughout life can justify the possibility of actually acting on it (i.e., implementation of interventions). For example, Guichard (2004) postulated that an individual will evolve throughout their life influenced by their perceptions, learnt through socialisation. Savickas (2005) also suggested that individuals have to constantly adapt and therefore need to have specific resources, such as curiosity to explore, concern (projecting into the future), planning their future and confidence in their competencies.

Provisional conclusions on theories of vocational interests and choices

To sum up, interests, which evolve through life, are undoubtedly at the very foundation of making vocational choices. Bringing together all the theories we discussed so far, interests can come from models, expectations, personal perceptions and stereotypes, all factors potentially fed by and conveyed through language. Now that these rather global theories on vocational interests have been presented, let us concentrate on particularly important periods of life transitions in terms of vocational interests – childhood and adolescence – as these periods are also most sensitive to external pressure, such as that from social injunctions.

Children's and adolescents' vocational development

Maybe quite surprisingly, since 1995, only 3% of the research articles on career development have focused on child populations (Watson et al., 2015). Most of them were based on children over 9 years of age (e.g., Cinamon & Yeshayahu, 2020), although some have advocated that vocational development begins earlier (e.g. Hartung et al., 2005) and may be precursory to career development in adolescence (Ginevra et al., 2018).

Children's knowledge

Although sparse, some studies on children have suggested that 3-year-olds already have some knowledge about professions (e.g., Cinamon & Yeshayahu, 2020), and that this knowledge grows denser and more accurate (e.g. earnings, physical strength needed) from the age of 8 (e.g. Walls, 2000). Importantly, knowledge and interests are not necessarily related to children's anticipated vocation (Primé et al., 2010). For example, 4-year-old children seem to use mostly their imagination to think of professions, unlike 11-year-old children who can acknowledge their personal interests and abilities (Howard & Walsh, 2010), and are able to reason more about vocational aspirations and to show more realistic vocational identities (Helwig, 2001; Porfeli & Lee, 2012). True realistic vocational interests seem to emerge later during adolescence (Helwig, 2001).

Recognising influencing factors

Children may recognise that their vocational interests are influenced by external factors. Namely, children between 5 and 10 years of age start to recognise influences that have an impact on their vocational interests (e.g., Howard et al., 2015).

Variables such as interests, values, personality, abilities, peers, teachers, parents, media, models, ethnicity, gender (Paa & McWhirter, 2000), age, health, beliefs, social economic status (SES) or family (Patton, & McMahon, 2014) seem to play – and at times seem to be recognised by adolescents as playing – an important role in their vocational interests (Lent et al., 1994). For instance, one third of high school students (14-18 years of age) interviewed by Helwig (2004) explained that teachers influenced career aspirations. Similarly, some authors have suggested parents as influencing children's vocational interest, as illustrated by children having similar vocational interests as their parents (Etzel et al., 2019), even wanting to be in the same job as their parents (Trice, 1991). The mechanisms underlying these influences are not entirely clear, yet it seems quite intuitive that the way adults talk about, and act on, their job may have an impact on the way children or adolescents perceive those activities.

Problematic barriers

Some of the variables identified, such as gender or ethnicity, have been described by some as problematic, representing barriers that have a negative impact on career development (Savickas, 2005). For example, women – or girls – and ethnic minorities tend to identify more barriers than others (Cardoso & Marques, 2008). Consequently, as women or girls think that they will encounter many barriers, their vocational choices are less impacted by their own interests than men's choices are (Lent, 2005). More globally, the higher the number of perceived barriers, the lower a child's career status expectations (Creed et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2006; Kenny et al., 2003).

As suggested by socio-cognitive approaches (Bandura et al., 2001; Lent et al, 1994), different variables therefore constrain adolescents' vocational interests and choices, such

as gender stereotypes, particularly prominent during vocational development (Blanchard & Lichtenberg, 2003; Gottfredson 2005). In the next section, we examine those stereotypes more closely, and the way they typically develop.

Gender stereotypes and their emergence

A stereotype can be broadly defined as the pairing of one or multiple characteristics to a group, pairing that can be inaccurate, yet at times be cognitively useful (e.g., Kurylo, 2012). Importantly, gender is a social construct related to cultural perception (e.g., Torgrimson & Minson, 2005). In the development of gender, gender norms – or gender stereotypes – play an important role because they specify what counts as appropriate or inappropriate characteristics for female and male individuals (e.g., Miller et al., 2006). Those characteristics most often originate from particular social roles adopted by members of each sex and via observing daily life situations (see Social Role Theory by Eagly, 1987; Bosak et al., 2012).

Early signs of stereotypical knowledge

Numerous studies have documented the early emergence – in childhood – of gender stereotypes. For example, some have shown that 24-month-old toddlers were surprised to see women doing activities typically associated with men (e.g., shaving), and men doing activities typically associated with women (e.g. putting on make-up) (Hill & Flom, 2007; Poulin-Dubois et al., 2002). Others have shown that toddlers’ – between the ages of 2 and 3 – perceptions of professions were already guided by stereotypical expectations (Lévy et al., 2016). Baker et al. (2016) further suggested that 3- to 6-year-old children already think that only boys can use tools, illustrating that opinions about what girls and boys can or cannot do are already anchored at this age.

Those gender stereotypes are most likely learnt by children through various channels, such as parents, school, peers, media and/or literature (e.g., Aina & Cameron, 2011; Dawson et al., 2015; Halpern, 2014). For example, picture books typically depict women as less likely to be the main character of a story and with less paid jobs than men (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2006). Some authors did suggest, though, that the media have improved, in that they reflect fewer stereotypical differences than previously (e.g., Paynter, 2011). For example, in television shows, women are less often pictured with no career, or with less prestigious professions than men (e.g., Signorielli, 2009).

Still, Chapman (2016) further suggested that toys play an important role in learning about stereotypes. For example, the brand LEGO® designed toys which encouraged domestic activities, professions related to beauty or shopping and hobbies for girls (i.e., Lego Friends®) while emphasising construction and role-play of various skilled professions for boys (e.g., Reich et al., 2018). Very importantly, these gender stereotypes are internalised from a young age and have been shown to have an impact on children’s and adolescents’ academic life and career aspirations (e.g., Aina & Cameron, 2011; Bian et

al., 2017). For example, in Bian et al.'s (2017) study, girls aged 6 thought that women were not especially smart, therefore did not wish to participate in activities they judged being only for smart children. In terms of the previously discussed developmental theory of Gottfredson (2005), this illustrates the importance of gender in children's perceptions of professions.

Gender stereotypes and vocational interests

As shown by the extensive literature on adult populations, gender stereotypes also play an important role in the way professional activities are perceived (e.g., Carreiras, Garnham, Oakhill & Cain, 1996; Duffy & Keir, 2004; Kennison & Trofe, 2003; Sturt, 2003; White & White, 2006). As such, it is not entirely surprising that gender stereotypes have also been identified as central in adolescents' vocational interests. In Switzerland, for example, in 2015, 70% of Swiss adolescents seemed interested in a profession stereotypically associated with their own gender (Gianettoni et al., 2015). Worldwide, several studies have shown that adolescents were more likely to be interested in culturally gender-related professions (e.g., Buchmann et al., 2008; Su et al., 2019; Weisgram et al., 2010). These gender differences in career aspirations seem to increase as children grow older (Buchmann et al., 2008) and the influence of gender seems strongest in early adolescence (approximately ages 11–14, e.g., Hoff et al., 2018). Note that some studies have suggested that older children may show less stereotypical gendered vocational aspirations than younger ones (e.g., Auger et al., 2005), and that girls, as opposed to boys, may see their stereotypical aspirations decrease during adolescence (e.g., Lawson et al., 2018). Essentially, this means that boys may be less likely to consider atypical careers than girls (e.g., Nhundu, 2007; Shapiro et al., 2015). Although these studies document some level of asymmetry in vocational aspirations and stereotypes, girls' atypical aspirations have generated far more studies than boys' (Forsman & Barth, 2017).

To account for stereotypical vocational aspirations, in children but also in adults, several variables have been identified. Next, we discuss four of them that we argue are particularly important when envisaging interventions to address stereotypical aspirations: occupational attributes, sense of belonging, feeling of competency and vocational counselling.

Occupational attributes

Gender stereotypes have been shown to be strongly associated with specific vocational attributes (e.g., Glick et al., 1995). For example, the attributes linked to mechanics – such as physical strength – have also been associated with masculinity. As predicted by Social Role Theory (e.g., Koenig & Eagly, 2014), professions in which either women or men are clearly overrepresented are undoubtedly associated to gender stereotype attributes. For example, women are traditionally seen as 'communal' (i.e., nurturing, or well-

intended), and are therefore more easily associated with nursing, which requires such an attribute (e.g., Diekmann & Eagly, 2000).

The implications of these strong associations are numerous. For example, as women have been shown to value more family-oriented attributes and men to be the financial pillars of the home (e.g., Cemalcilar et al., 2019), men are more likely to be interested in and choose professions for which wages are higher (e.g., Weisgram et al., 2010). In a similar vein, Savig (2002) suggested that some stereotypical values were strongly associated with vocational interests. For example, enterprising has been shown to be of high value for men, as it has been associated with power and achievement (e.g., Schwartz & Rubel-Lifschitz, 2009).

Sense of belonging

The mechanisms underlying the maintenance of gender stereotypes and their association with vocational interests are numerous and complex, but one possible explanation lies in the notion of sense of belonging. Sinclair et al. (2019) suggested that gender differences in choices were the results of wanting to belong to a group, having same-sex friends and/or doing something congruent with their own gender. In terms of sense of belonging, some studies have even shown that the longer a child, girl, or boy, spent with girls or women, the more likely they were to develop aspirations for female stereotyped occupations (e.g., Lee et al., 2018). Similarly, longer and more regular time spent by girls with their father, led to less gendered aspirations (Lawson et al., 2015). In fact, sense of belonging has been pinpointed as explanatory factor for girls' lower interest in STEM and boys' lower interest in health care, elementary education, and the domestic spheres (HEED) (e.g., Cheryan et al., 2013; Tellhed et al., 2017). Interestingly, sense of belonging can actually be influenced by the gender of the person presenting the profession (e.g., Liben et al., 2001; Weisgram et al., 2010). For example, in Hadjar and Aeschlimann (2014), girls were more interested by male stereotypical subjects – such as mathematics – when the teacher was a woman. We will come back to this notion of belonging when we address the influence of language on vocational aspirations more directly.

Feeling of competency

Complementary to that of sense of belonging, the notion of feeling of competency is intrinsically related to the association between vocational interests and gender stereotypes. In fact, feeling of competency has been central in socio-cognitive approaches such as those presented earlier. Namely, children's perceptions of their own success in a profession will influence their career choices (e.g., Bandura et al., 2001), and those perceptions may be heavily biased by stereotypical expectations. For example, children aged 5 already expected women and men to be more competent in professions stereotypical of their own gender (e.g., Levy et al., 2000). Similarly, Vervecken et al. (2015) showed that

adolescents aged 14-17 perceived women and men as more likely to succeed in gender stereotypical professions.

Note that some authors refer to the notion of feeling of competence as self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura et al., 2001), and have also linked it to gendered vocational interests. For example, Barthelemy and Knaub (2020) suggested that lower self-efficacy predicted lower chances to undertake graduate studies, and others have suggested that lower self-efficacy of women in STEM partially explained their lower interest for it (e.g., Lent, 2005; Tellhed et al., 2017). Note that, as it will be discussed later, self-efficacy has also been shown to be impacted by language (Chatard et al., 2005).

Vocational counselling

So far, we presented gender stereotypes as directly impacting children or adolescents in their vocational interests and choices, but it is important to understand that these stereotypes also influence the way children and adolescents receive occupational guidance. Seem and Johnson (1998), for example, raised this issue by demonstrating how strong beliefs about being a mother – for example – was impacting how counsellors themselves would encourage women to (not) pursue a career. Iskander et al. (2013) also showed that gender did have an impact on how school counsellors guided otherwise similar students.

Provisory conclusion

We have argued that occupational attributes, sense of belonging, feeling of competency and vocational counselling all participate in shaping gender stereotypes, interacting with vocational interests and choices, as advocated by different approaches to vocational interests, such as trait factors theories (Holland, 1985), socio-cognitive theories (Bandura et al., 2001; Lent et al, 1994), developmental theories (Gottfredson, 2005) and constructivist theories (Guichard, 2004; Savickas, 2005). Now, in order to promote vocational interests, and to dissociate them from gender stereotypes we believe that different avenues are possible, one of which of particular interest, inasmuch as it is relevant to all interventions in constructing vocational interests: the use of language.

We find surprising that only few studies have considered the impact of language on vocational interests. Considering the prominence of language in most communicating devices (i.e., media, school books, parents...), and the idea that language shapes the way we perceive the world (e.g. Gygax et al., 2020; Slobin, 1996, 2003), it would appear quite intuitive that language influences vocational (gendered) aspirations. Importantly, the ways language influences vocational aspirations can be numerous (i.e., the words chosen, the quantity of information given...), yet we will not cover all possibilities, as we are mostly interested in the biases introduced by formal characteristics of language linked to gender, such as the use of grammatical masculine forms as generics in grammatically gendered languages, such as French, German, or Spanish.

Language, gender systems and their impact on vocational interests

Languages vary in the number of possibilities to mark gender when referring to humans. Whereas it is possible in most (if not all) languages to mark gender semantically (e.g., by providing different words for mother and father) and lexically (e.g., by adjectives or lexical compounds), some languages mark gender additionally by gendered pronouns (e.g. English she vs. he) and in fully grammatically-gendered languages, such as French or German, most human referent nouns, pronouns or adjectives change form in agreement with the gender of the referent. In fully grammatically gendered languages, the form used to indicate the male gender is also often used when no specific gender is intended; this is referred to as the generic use of masculine forms (GM) (Gabriel et al., 2018).

The use of the masculine form as generic and vocational interests

There is mounting evidence that the generic use of the masculine form in grammatically marked languages is associated with male biases in information processing (for reviews see Gabriel & Gyga, 2016; Sato et al, 2017). In terms of vocational interests and choices, we would argue that this is highly problematic, as it constrains language users to envisage certain occupations in the same way stereotypes do, in a biased way. In Stout and Dasgupta (2011), for example, female participants in a mock interview reported a lower sense of belonging and less motivation when the interviewer used the masculine ‘he’, which was supposed to be interpreted as a generic, than when the interviewer used gender-neutral form (‘one’; ‘he or she’). The authors argued that the use of the masculine pronoun alone signalled to women that they were not members of the relevant category, even when it was intended as a generic.

The impact of certain language forms on the sense of belonging (to a group of workers or to an occupation) is negative because, as we have been discussing so far, the sense of belonging is important for children to develop vocational interests (Cheryan et al., 2013; Sinclair et al., 2019). Similarly, some authors have shown that women were perceived as less suitable (i.e., not belonging) for high status occupations when they were presented in the masculine form compared to when they were presented in the pair form (e.g. female or male director; Horvath & Sczesny, 2015).

For grammatically gendered languages, different strategies to overcome the generic use of masculine forms have been suggested (see Gabriel, Gyga & Kuhn, 2018), and some of them have been tested, especially regarding their impact on the way adolescents perceive different stereotypical and non-stereotypical occupations. For example, in Verweken et al. (2015), French-speaking pupils were orally presented with job descriptions either in the masculine form only, which intended a generic interpretation, or in pair-form (i.e., the feminine and masculine form). When presented in the masculine form only, participants’ representations were stereotyped when the occupations were gender-stereotypical (i.e., women are expected to be more successful in stereotypical female oc-

occupations, and men in stereotypical male occupations), and male-biased for non-stereotypical occupations (i.e., men are expected to be more successful than women). Showing the impact of language on perception of success revealed a possible influence on language on vocational interests. Indeed, as discussed earlier, the perception of competency in a profession partially explains the interest expressed for it (e.g., Tellhed et al., 2017). Second, when presented in pair-form, all gender-stereotypical occupations were considered as less stereotyped, and non-stereotypical occupations as less male. Vervecken et al. (2015) were the first to show that a language-based change – in a fully-gendered language such as French – could have an impact on the perceived success of women and men in the occupations described. More importantly, they showed that using a particular language form (pair form¹) to present occupations could potentially alleviate stereotype biases. Note that Vervecken et al.'s manipulation of language did not have an impact on perceived competence (measured using Fiske et al.'s, 2002, warmth and competence scale), which remained equal not only across language forms, but also across stereotypes.

Still, in the same vein as Vervecken et al. (2015), Chatard, Guimond, and Martinot (2005) assessed the impact of the masculine-only form and alternatives to it (i.e., often referred to as gender-fair language forms) on adolescent's motivation (aged 14 to 15), confidence and self-efficacy judgements about their own ability to undertake studies that would lead to various occupations. The adolescents were presented with occupation descriptions, written either in the masculine form, or in a gender-fair form. Generally, the participants were more confident when the occupations were stereotypical for their own gender. However, both girls and boys felt more self-efficacy when the occupations were presented in a gender-fair form. Moreover, Chatard et al. (2005) also demonstrated a strong stereotypical effect in the lack of confidence of both gender groups to undertake studies leading to occupations stereotypical of the other gender group.

Liben et al. (2002) found a similar pattern when they investigated young children's interpretations of occupations in English. In Liben et al.'s (2002) first study, children of different ages were presented with gender marked (e.g., policeman or postmaster) and unmarked (e.g., doctor or librarian) occupation titles and were simply asked whether they thought that the job titles could be applied to both men and women. Generally, the results showed that responses depended on gender marking (marked occupations were less likely to be interpreted as applicable to both men and women), and on gender stereotypes (gender-neutral occupations were more likely to be interpreted as applicable to both men and women). Interestingly, however, Liben et al. (2002) also demonstrated that gender-neutral titles were not always considered as universally applicable to both men and women, and whether they were depended on whether the children held strong stereotypical attitudes (Bigler et al., 1992). Interestingly, in a study on university students, Forsman and Barth (2016) showed that men were more likely to show interest

1 In their study, Vervecken et al. (2015) used a female first order in their pair form. See Hegarty, Mollin, & Foels (2016) for an extensive discussion on the effect of word order in binomials, and its impact on attention and perceived importance.

for a description of a feminine occupation if stereotypes were minimised in the description and the title of the occupation was not given at all.

Future avenues

In the present paper, we have argued (a) that vocational interests and choices are influenced by several important factors, (b) that gender stereotypes are relevant in the factors influencing vocational interests and choices, and (c) that language is an important catalyst of gender stereotypes, and more generally of gender biases. As such, we would argue that it is crucial to target both stereotypical representations and language-based biases, as they are detrimental for individuals to fulfil their genuine vocational interests. A good fit between vocational interests and vocational choices is essential, as it predicts income, grades, persistence and success (e.g., Su, 2012).

In order to decrease gender stereotypes, and their impact on vocational interests and choices, various interventions have been tested. For instance, Tracey and Caulum (2015) revised an inventory of children's activities (Children's Activities-Revised; Tracey & Ward, 1998) to reduce gender differences. King et al. (2020) suggested that showing counter stereotypes to children could moderate the gender disparities discussed in the present paper. The UNESCO (2017) also shared various examples of interventions to promote STEM subjects to girls, although these interventions have not been experimentally tested. In the UK, for example, girls have a specific day to discover STEM professions. In Nigeria, women holding a position in STEM have been asked to participate interventions and act as role models.

However, despite these interventions, vocational interests and choices are still often gendered. We would therefore argue that there is considerable room for improvement. First, to our knowledge, only few interventions have targeted boys such as in Germany where a day has been created during which boys can discover jobs in the EHW fields (boys-day, 2020). Such an asymmetry in the number of interventions is highly problematic and may illustrate a level of androcentrism. Second, to the best of our knowledge, interventions targeting language – or more globally communication – have been quite rare in vocational interest and choices research. As discussed in this paper, some studies have documented the effect of language specificities on the way occupations were perceived, on feelings of belonging and on feelings of competencies (at least in terms of perceived success). As those are closely related to vocational interests and choices in adolescents, we argue that addressing language and communication may be a promising avenue of research. Of course, this is assuming that, as put forward by different approaches to vocational interests and choices (e.g., Guichard, 2004; Savickas, 2005), vocational identity may fluctuate, and may thus be subject to possible changes. Hopefully, pursuing these research avenues on language may also lead to possible applied interventions, for guidance counsellors, editors of vocational interest inventories, as well as more globally, editors of schoolbooks, which often portraying ranges of vocations.

Ethics and Consent

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The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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