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**THE PROBLEM OF GENDER IN MODERN LINGUISTICS:  
RESEARCH FACETS**

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**Abstract.** *The article deals with the notions of «gender» and «concept». The historical aspects of the formation and development of these notions and their functioning in modern linguistics are analyzed. The study contains information on theoretical approaches to the study of gender in linguistics. Features of the relationship and interaction of the «language» and «gender» notions, grammatical methods and lexical means of expressing gender differences in language are considered and analyzed. The aim of the article is a comprehensive analysis of gender-marked vocabulary as a means of verbalizing the concept of «woman» in the world language picture. The theoretical significance of the work consists in displaying the lexical features of the concept of «woman» which, being one of the central concepts of cognitive linguistics contains information on what an individual knows, suggests, thinks, who displays objects of the world. The concept of «woman» combines knowledge about a woman: as a female of different ages (from an infant, girl, to an elderly woman), as a person, as a subject that performs various social roles (mother, wife, sister, daughter), etc. The subject and problems of research extend the range of linguoculturology study aspects.*

**Keywords:** *gender, concept, linguoculturology, picture of the world, linguistic gender studies*

**Introduction.** Language is aimed at reality and at the world of images, lining up between reality and human, speaking as a multitude of knowledge that together form a picture or model of the world. This picture of the world, localized in the mind, is constantly replenished and «corrected» in the form of knowledge about certain fragments of the world. Language plays an important role in the accumulation of knowledge and its storage in memory,

contributing to its streamlining, systematization, that is, participating in its processing. In this way, human cognitive activity and the cognitive function of the language are provided.

The language system is not only a reflection of reality, being, traditions and innovations of public life, but it also imposes certain stereotypes and patterns of behavior and judgments about reality. As D. Spender notes, «language is not

neutral. It's not just a vehicle, it represents our thoughts. At its core, it's a device that forms; it's a program for mental activity» [4, p. 776]. The language is also explained as a way of communicating through the system of symbols. It exists as an objective reality, a structure that people use in their desire to understand each other. Thus, language is not just a system of signs, but a separate action in its content.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** At the beginning of the XX century the topic «Language and Gender» attracted the attention of Mautner and Jespersen. Mautner explained differences in language by social and historical reasons. According to Mautner, the creative use of language is the prerogative of men, while women can only assimilate the language created by men. Espersen also believed that women are conservative in their use of language. It was illustrated by the example of the immigrant communities, where the native language is stored and at the same time the new one is learned. In this case, men quickly learn a new language. However, it was taken into account that the study of a foreign language by men was dictated by the need to work and give explanations in a new language. There was no such need for women engaged in domestic work [3, p. 51-54].

At the next stage (1900 – the end of the 1960s), according to the classification of C. Gray (Clive Gray), the study of gender was being conducted in the following areas: the hypothesis about the fundamental difference between male and female speech types; the question of the validity of new word forms, such as *Lehrerin*, *Ärztin* (in Ukrainian, doctor, teacher, cook). The works of V.M Telii, A.I. Horoshko, I.V. Zykova, A.V. Kyrlyna, Yu.V. Abramova, T.M. Sukalenko, A.Yu. Gette, Liu Bo and others focus on different aspects of the expression of the concept

«woman» in Ukrainian, English, Russian, and other languages.

However, there is still no work, that would analyze the lexical means of expressing the concept of «woman» on the material of the German language (with partial comparison with other languages). The topic of the article is extremely relevant, as modern linguistics is aimed at integrating comparable linguistic-typological and culturological approaches, in particular in the need for a more detailed and in-depth description of gender-marked vocabulary, which is a unique fragment of the linguistic picture of the world in terms of semantic content and cultural significance.

**The purpose of the article** is a comprehensive analysis of gender-marked vocabulary as a means of verbalizing the concept of «woman» in the German language picture of the world.

The following research **methods** have been used: comparison method, synthesis method, typological and comparative historical methods.

**Results.** As early as the beginning of the 20th century, Sigmund Freud declared: «Anatomy» is fate, bearing in mind that the physiological differences between the sexes determine their difference as subjects of history. But in 1949, Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* was published in France, where the author said about stereotypes associated with the man's belonging to the spheres of «constructing the meaning of life» – culture and society, and the woman – to the sphere of life reproduction, that is, the sphere of nature.

In the late 60s and early 70s, gender studies in language received a powerful impetus, due to a new women's movement in the USA and Germany, resulted in a new sphere of linguistics – feminist linguistics. The work of R. Lakoff became the main one that substantiated androcentricity (focus on man) and the imperfection of the woman image in the

picture of the world, reflected in the language. There are two approaches in feminist linguistics: the first relates to the study of language in order to identify language asymmetries directed against women, otherwise referred to as the language sexism. We are talking about patriarchal stereotypes, which are fixed in the language and impose on its bearers a certain picture of the world, in which women play a secondary role and are mainly attributed to negative qualities, that contributes to the ignoring of women in the picture of the world. The study of language in this direction is based on the theory of Sapir-Wolf: speech is not only a product of society, but also a means of shaping its thinking and mentality. Such assumption allows representatives of this approach to assert that the languages that exist at the moment are masculine and are built on the basis of the masculine picture of the world.

The second direction of feminist research is gender-specific communication in the same-sex and mixed groups. Various communication aspects are analyzed: television talk shows, dialogues of doctors and patients, verbal communication in the family. At the heart of the study lies the assumption that on the basis of patriarchal stereotypes fixed in the language, different strategies of behavior of women and men develop. Within this framework, the influence of gender on the language socialization of the individual is also being investigated.

One way or another, feminist studios are faced with a contradictory attitude to the results of their research, since many scientists have been confused by the open political engagement of feminists.

In recent decades, a linguistic-cultural approach has been emphasized (I.I. Khaleieva, A.V. Kyrlyina, D.Ch. Malishevskiy), which includes the study of masculinity and femininity as basic cultural concepts. The social significance of the concept of «gender» justifies its application to all linguistic phenomena

related to gender issues. «Sex and its manifestations are not simply recorded in language, but become axiology, evaluated from the point of view of a naive picture of the world. Therefore, it is legitimate to establish how sex is fixed in the language: by what means, semantic fields, assessments, and its relevance in different languages» [1, p. 34-36].

In general, when studying the problem of the relationship between language and gender and the presence of certain features in male and female verbal behavior, three main approaches can be distinguished:

1. An exceptionally gender approach is reduced to interpreting only the social nature of the language of women and men and is aimed at identifying those semantic differences that can be explained by the redistribution of social power in society. At the same time, speech is defined as a kind of functional derivative of the main language, used in cases where communicative partners are at different levels of the social hierarchy. The theoretical basis of this approach was the concept of M. Foucault's power and the sociological concept of I. Hoffman's genderism.

2. The second approach reduces «female» and «male» language from a scientific point of view to features of men and women speech behavior. Statistics or the definition of average parameters are accordingly of great importance and constitute the framework for constructing psycholinguistic theories (which to some extent reflect the real connections of lexical units in a person's lexical memory).

3. The third approach focuses on the cognitive aspect of these differences. According to it, determining the frequency of differences and operating on their characteristics is not the only main one, but also establishing what is difficult to explain, since it goes beyond the standard.

Gender is one of the few really important categories for humans, the

perception of which almost does not depend on language and culture, but only in the sense that speakers of different languages basically distinguish between two types of creatures – female and male. In fact, already the answer to the question of what, in fact, each of these sexes and sex in general represent, arises a set of complex scientific and philosophical problems. Obviously, from the viewpoint of culture, the contrast between the female and male sexes in humans is more important than the sex differences of other creatures and is fundamentally different from them at least in the presence of a huge number of cultural associations, patterns of behavior and perception associated with both sexes. In relation to human, modern science uses the special term «gender», which implies not only physiological («sex» in its pure form) phenomenon, but also the social and cultural differences associated with it.

Subsequently, the gender of a person was transformed from a biological into a socio-psychological characteristic. Thus, the notion of «gender» has emerged, denoting the totality of social and cultural norms that society imposes on people depending on their biological sex [2].

The notion of «gender» has long gone beyond grammar frames. This phenomenon is widely regarded as a sociocultural, discursive, and psycholinguistic one.

However, we can say that gender is a natural category that covers all kinds of creatures distributing them into two classes. This classification is represented, of course, in different ways. In general, for a language, one can speak about the universality of the semantic category of sex, and for particular languages, about its certain transformations, the specificity of expression, and even individual grammatical categories. In particular, in the Ukrainian language the semantic category of gender correlates with the

grammatical category of the gender of nouns denoting living beings.

The gender factor in connection with language arose for the first time in antiquity when it came to understanding the category of the grammatical gender. The most ancient and for a long time the only hypothesis about the causes of the emergence and functioning of a category of a genus in the language was symbolic-semantic, which is based on the correlation of the natural biological category *sexus* with the grammatical genus. Proponents of this hypothesis believed that the grammatical gender arose under the influence of natural reality – the presence of people of different sexes (Herder, Humboldt, Grimm). At the same time, the researchers used their non-linguistic experience to explain the extralinguistic correctness of the category of the genus. This led to the emergence of evaluation in the interpretation of the category of the genus: the masculine gender turned out to be of the highest priority through the attribution to the names belonging to it, the semantics of force, activity, and energy. Female names, on the contrary, were characterized by passivity, subordination.

The functioning of the semantic category of gender in the German language, as well as the ways of expressing the female and male sexes, the semantic and formal structure of lexical groups formed by words whose meaning coincides with the semantic component «sex», is connected to the groups that can be considered a kind of sexual (gender) paradigms of words denoting persons and creatures that differ in gender [2, p. 25].

Linguistic gender science is a new scientific approach, which is characterized by the specific features of any new direction, that is, the insufficient development of the conceptual apparatus and categories. A new scientific discipline is only in the process of developing own research methods and techniques unique

for it. However, working in the linguistic scientific field, scientists use mainly the methods of analysis developed for linguistic research, using, however, data from other scientific disciplines – both closely related and other human sciences. New knowledge can be obtained on the verge of science, and then the principles of interdisciplinary research «grow out of it» [5].

One of the most significant factors in studying the gender aspects of language and communication today is overcoming the straightforward interpretation of gender. The linguistic study of the design of femininity and masculinity shall take into account the specifics of the object, which is the language in linguistics, inherently multifaceted and complex system.

A large group of nouns is made up of names of females, formed not independently, but from male names by means of movement. For example, Lehrer – Lehrerin, König – Königin, Herr – Herrin.

A movation (Movierung, Motion) is an explicit derivation of nouns of a different kind. The name of a person or animal functions as a formative basis. As a rule, derivatives are the names of females, formed from the corresponding names of males [6]. In this method of word formation there are only three exceptions – Hexe, Witwe, Braut. Only in these three cases, the name of the woman is the original word from which the name of men is formed: Hexer, Witwer, Bräutigam.

The standard suffix of movable nouns is -in: Wirt – Wirtin, Schneider – Schneiderin. This is a modification suffix with the meaning of femininity, the generic compatibility of which is completely limited. Nouns, in which the suffix -in appears as a derivational formant, are motivated only by masculine nouns: Gemahl – Gemahlin. Restrictions of the genus in this case are accompanied by lexical restrictions: motivating words are noun-living beings.

Since the dichotomy of sex is a sign of many kinds of creatures, people express

this difference with the help of linguistic codes. In German, one of these codes is the suffix -in, which gives derived names a definite list of grammatical categories: living being, feminine gender, singular.

The fact that the names of males are primary, and the names of females are secondary, is not accidental: this way the priority of a person in the historical development of society is fixed in the language.

Over the past 40-50 post-war years, the language situation in Germany has changed dramatically, and now we are witnessing the rapid development and restructuring of the language in line with feminist linguistics. The language tendency to call a woman for her profession, position, that is, the form subjected to the movation, reflects not only the desire to reconcile gender and sex, but, above all, the desire to reflect the equal status of women in society, her social role. When analyzing the means available in modern German to designate males and females belonging to any profession, we are dealing not only with dynamic synchronization of language means, but also with changes in social reality. The change in the situation on the labor market, the large functional structuring of labor activity, when women acquire professions that were previously performed only by men, raises the question of how this situation is reflected in the sphere of language [6]. The language reacts and at this stage there are a lot of female names of professions, in particular those that end in -in: Beamtin, Doktorin, Fernsehansagerin, Polizistin, Rektorin, Schulrätin, Ministerin, Präsidentin, Staatsanwältin, Regierungsschefin.

Today there are at the same time almost identical distribution of the Minister and Ministerin, Professor and Professorin, Botschafter and Botschafterin lexemes.

Language as the primary communicative means of an individual and

a group develops and functions in a biological and social context; therefore, whenever a change in word usage is noted, it should be kept in mind that along with intra-language reasons there are always extra-linguistic factors. In the situation with names that have been subject to movation, in the German language today, we are dealing with linguistic changes as a special form of social transformations.

**Conclusions and perspectives of further study of the problem.** The newest form of feminism has brought this issue to the first place. Increased attention to the gender aspects of language and communication, observed in recent years, suggests that from the general theory of

gender, gender studies are gradually moving to a more stable state. However, the application of a gender approach is also based on a number of methodological principles, the most important of which is the understanding the gender as a social and cultural phenomenon.

The influence of gender on a person is considered in various fields of science. This topic is interesting and significant equally from the point of view of both psychology and sociology. Genetics, theology, philosophy, linguistics, and many branches of science study gender theory, interpreting it in their own way, in accordance with their research interests.

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## ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ГЕНДЕРУ У СУЧАСНІЙ ЛІНГВІСТИЦІ

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**Анотація.** У статті розкривається поняття «гендер» та «концепт». Аналізуються історичні аспекти формування та розвитку цього поняття і його функціонування у сучасній лінгвістиці. Дослідження містить інформацію щодо теоретичних підходів до дослідження гендеру у лінгвістиці. Розглянуто та проаналізовано особливості взаємозв'язку та взаємовпливу понять «мова» і «стать», граматичні способи та лексичні засоби вираження гендерних відмінностей у мові. Метою статті є комплексний аналіз гендерно маркованої лексики як засобу вербалізації концепту «жінка» у мовній картині світу. Теоретичне значення роботи полягає у відображенні лексичних особливостей концепту «жінка», що будучи центральним поняттям когнітивної лінгвістики (з цього фрагменту випливає, що оперативною одиницею свідомості є не концепт взагалі, а конкретий концепт «жінка», а це не є коректним, йдеться про концепт взагалі) вміщує відомості про те, що індивід знає, припускає, думає, уявляє про об'єкти світу. У концепті «жінка» сполучаються знання про жінку: як істоту жіночої статі різного віку (від немовляти, дівчинки, до літньої жінки), як особистість, як суб'єкта, що виконує різні соціальні ролі (матері, дружини, сестри, дочки) тощо. Предмет та проблематика дослідження розширюють коло аспектів вивчення лінгвокультурології.

**Ключові слова:** гендер, концепт, лінгвокультурологія, картина світу, лінгвістична гендерологія