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EXPRESSION OF THE SEME “MALE” IN ENGLISH, GERMAN AND CHINESE

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The article deals with some linguistic and phonetic means of transmitting the concepts “man” and “woman” in English, German, and Chinese. The study shows that many gender-marked neologisms appear due to women’s unity, like-mindedness and solidarity within the women’s liberation movement alongside its supporters who tend to demonstrate their emotional-evaluative attitude to the masculine sex through expressive lexical and phonetic means. It was determined that the other reason for appearing the lexicon under study is the factor that the fair (weaker / softer) sex do not want to be weak any more. The author presents a four-group classification of the words expressing “male” / “female” characteristics of men and women according to people’s appearance, character traits, behaviour model, the temperament: 1) the presence of feminine outer traits in men’s characteristics – “an effeminate man”; 2) the presence of masculine features in women’s characteristics – “a mannish woman”; 3) the words describing both men and women with untypical appearance of their gender; 4) the words rendering double features of a man’s / woman’s appearance / behaviour.

It has been proved that the colloquial level is the most productive one in generation neologisms of the semantics under study, especially slang which embodies lexical units with emotional and attitudinal characteristics. Phonetic means perform a gender-differentiating function in the communication process.

The researcher sees the perspectives of further research in the study of the educative function of a male / female speech behaviour in the modes: a teacher (a man / a woman) – a pupil / a student (a boy / a girl); a he-boss / a she-boss – a person under his / her supervision; an acquaintance (a male / a female) – a person he / she is not familiar with; a husband – a wife.

Key words: *speech neologisms, slang, thematic group / row, intersection of sems, universal definitions, emotional and evaluative characteristics, male and female, English, German, Chinese.*

Попова Олександра. Відображення семи «чоловік» в англійській, німецькій та китайській мовах

У цій статті розглядаються деякі лінгвістичні і фонетичні засоби передачі семи “чоловік” у поняттях “чоловік” та “жінка” в англійській, німецькій і китайській мовах. Дослідження показує, що багато гендерно маркованих неологізмів виникають на користь жіночої єдності, однодумства та солідарності в рамках жіночого визвольного руху, а також його прихильників, які схильні демонструвати своє емоційно-оцінне ставлення до чоловічої статі через експресивні лексико-фонетичні засоби. Визначено, що іншою причиною появи досліджуваного лексикону є те, що представниці прекрасної (слабкої/ніжної) статі більше не хочуть бути слабкими. Авторка репрезентує класифікацію слів, що виражають «чоловічі»/«жіночі» ознаки чоловіків і жінок за зовнішністю людей, рисами характеру, моделлю поведінки, темпераментом: 1) наявність жіночих зовнішніх рис у характеристиках чоловіків – «жінкоподібний чоловік»; 2) наявність маскулітних рис у характеристиці жінки – «чоловікоподібна жінка»; 3) слова, що описують як чоловіків, так і жінок з нетиповою для своєї статі зовнішністю; 4) слова, що передають подвійні риси зовнішності/ поведінки чоловіка/жінки.

Доведено, що найбільш продуктивним в утворюванні неологізмів такої семантики є розмовний рівень, особливо сленг, який наділяє лексичні одиниці емоційно-оцінювальними характеристиками. Фонетичні засоби виконують гендерно-розрізнявальну функцію в процесі комунікації.

Перспективи подальших досліджень авторка вбачає у вивченні виховної функції мовленнєвої поведінки чоловіка/жінки в модусах: викладач (чоловік/жінка) – учень/студент (хлопець/дівчина); начальник/начальниця – особа, яка перебуває під його/її керівництвом; знайомий (чоловік/жінка) – особа, з якою він/вона не знайомий/знайома; чоловік – дружина.

Ключові слова: *мовленнєві неологізми, сленг, тематична група/ряд, пересічення сем, універсальні визначення, емоційно-оцінювальні характеристики, чоловіки та жінки, англійська мова, німецька мова, китайська мова.*

Introduction. For the recent decades, the role of a woman has achieved a top status in the surrounding environment (as the result of our rapid life, growth and development of industry, commerce, expansion of the international relationship and many other factors). A woman may occupy a commander-in-chief position equally with a man; the most significant fact is that she is able to cope with arising tasks and problems. Nowadays, by virtue of current circumstances, the majority of women fulfil masculine work (heads of different establishments, business ladies, political leaders, military women, police servants...). They gain unintentionally male character traits: strength, endurance, analytical mind, courage, intrepidity, organizing skills. Thus, such phenomena reflect on our everyday life. They cause changes not only in spoken language but in its written form as well.

It is not an easy task to keep pace with the processes going on around us, especially if it concerns the spheres of linguistics. Language is constantly developing and evolving and it is topped up with new lexical units, which substantiates the **aim** of our investigation – to trace the process of appearing neologisms related to the theme “male” in English, German and Chinese. The aim of the study stipulates the **goals** to be considered:

1) to define the reasons and sources causing the appearance of neologisms related to the theme “male”;

2) to find out the most productive variant of English and Chinese in the domain of colloquial and slang neologisms. It is conditioned by the fact that nowadays the problem of peculiarity of the word meaning structure and investigation of the word functioning regularities in the process of communication come on the first plan in linguistics.

The emergence process of English, German and Chinese gender-marked vocabulary is **the object** of the study.

The morphological structure; semantic content; stylistic, etymological and culture-related peculiarities of the words expressing “male”/“female” characteristics of men and women according to people’s appearance, character traits, behaviour model and their temperament are **the subject** of the study.

Materials and methodology. The method of complete selection of words (word combinations,

phraseological units, set expressions) from different kinds of dictionaries (slang, colloquialisms, taboo lexicon and euphemisms), printed press and belles-lettres was used to achieve the aim. Interviewing native speakers (the British English and Americans, Chinese) helped us to clarify both cultural and linguistic aspects of the problem under investigation. Consultations with psychologists made us pay a greater attention to the differences of genders (male and female) and to understand the main reasons of their behaviour patterns. Analysing their historical backgrounds, we can classify the reasons of appearing new words as well as group these words and word combinations. The semantic-stylistic and comparing analyses makes it possible to determine the morphological structure; semantic content; stylistic, etymological and culture-related peculiarities of the words under focus.

Results and discussions. This work deals with the intersection of these semes: “*masculine*” in a woman and “*feminine*” in a man. Consequently, all possible means of expressing the seme “male” in the notions “*man*” and “*woman*” are represented in this work. Having analysed the above-mentioned material on the topic, we’ve come to a conclusion that the most frequent “actualization” of the seme “*male*” according to the greater reveal of this or that character peculiarity has its reflection in these spheres: a person’s appearance, a character type, the temperament, the behaviour pattern, the speech behaviour (conducting a conversation), his/her occupation.

The occurrence of new words started with arising women’s suppositions that “men underestimate women’s abilities, mistrust them and demonstrate their superiority over women”. Such status quo spurred the weaker sex to prove their capabilities and to “implement” their self-realization. Thus, a very popular women’s movement started its existence called “feminism” where all women are able to rank with men in many social, everyday life and scientific spheres.

This movement gained a great popularity in the USA. As a result of women’s unity, like-mindedness and solidarity, many American neologisms appear in the lexicon expressing the attitude of fervent women’s liberation movement supporters to the masculine sex which is very frequent of a negative character. For example,

macho (Spanish word) – an energetic man, strong, possessing male “qualities”. (Compare: machismo – masculinity, male origin, arrogant indulgence to a woman; Chinese 猛汉 / *měnghàn* – мачо, справжній чоловік). But this meaning has undergone changes and acquired emotional-evaluative colouring of some scornful and mocking character “Hiaasen seems to be uneasy about satirizing dumb, *macho*, red neck attitudes” (Sunday Correspondent, 10 June 1990).

In the 60–70th of the XX century, the fair (weaker/softer) sex didn’t want to be weak any more (= to be / wear a petticoat). (That was the second reason, and perhaps the most significant one, of appearing not only new words concerning the “male” subject-matter but also of further more decisive measures from the women’s side). The representatives of the women’s movement call their supporters bra-burners (those who burn bras) and they gave a name “*Aunt Tabby*” (=Aunt Thomasing – amer. jarg. scorn.) to those who do not support feminism. Women didn’t want to put up with the biased and derogatory attitude of men to the opposite sex. Such an attitude got a name male chauvinism or supremacism. They were not inclined to bear so-called women’s segregation either or to live in the society like that (Jane Crow society). They even pretend to serve/work in the military forces of their country. (Americans refer to a military woman as *Jane* – amer. mil. jarg.; compare: Tommy Atkins = an English soldier) [4].

On the other hand, the typical women’s characteristics such as femininity, weakness, subordination to men etc., so called “eternal feminine” (= das ewig-weibliche) [6] lose their actuality. Though it’s not the news that the regime known as “matriarchy” occupied a firm position in history for a long time. Women realized men’s functions: government, control, establishment and maintenance of the living conditions, provided the evolution of the society they lived in, while men had to assist them in “female” duties and even fulfilled their orders. All this influenced the vocabulary used both by men and women, adjectives describing them and words expressing their specific traits and the choice of tone by the representatives of male and female sexes.

Nowadays, a “woman” is a complicated complex of femininity and, indeed, male constituents of her character, which lately has

found its reflection not only in America but in other Asian and European countries. It is because of women that great changes in men’s life have taken place. They are forced to carry out the work that used to be exclusively female. A good example to it is mastering by men such “professions” as a “househusband” (家庭主夫 / *jiāting zhǔfū*), a *baby-sitter*, a *nurse* and other ones. It should be noted that in Chinese the word “*baby-sitter*” can be used only when speaking about women: 月嫂 / *yuèsǎo* – woman hired to take care of a newborn child and his/her mother in the month after childbirth. The word “*nurse*” is gender-marked and can be referred both to women and men: 病房女护理人员 / *bìngfáng nǚ hùlǐyuán* – hospital ward, *female*, medical orderly; 病房男人护理人员 / *bìngfáng nánrén hùlǐyuán* – hospital ward, *male*, medical orderly.

If we compare “the thematic group/rows” of words defining young men and girls (or young women), we may assume that the semantic field variation is not typical of them. Here are some examples of the words defining young men:

- (man) – English: *cove*, *Johnny* – amer. sl., *bloke* – amer. sl., *fellow*, *guy* – amer. coll., *chap*;
- (der Mann) – German: *Kerl*, *Mannsstück*, *Männeken*, *Bulle* [8];
- (男人 / *nánrén*) – Chinese: 爷们儿 / *yéménr* (хлопец, мужик) – Chinese sl., 小伙子 / *xiǎohuǒzi* (малий, хлопец) – Chinese sl., 哥们儿 / *gēménr* (in male conversations) (хлопец, хлопчина, чувак, друже, друг, бро; брат (про хорошего друга), 硬柿子 / *yìngshìzi* (крутий хлопец, крутий пацан) – Chinese slang [1].

See some examples of the words defining girls and young women:

- English: *girl* – styl. neut., *lass* (*lassie* -emot., dial), *crumpet*, *maiden*, *chick*, *baby*;
- German: *Mädel*, *Mädchen*, *Weibsbild*;
- Chinese: 年轻的姑娘 / *niánqīng de gūniáng* (дівчина, панночка; coll. дочка), 姑娘 / *gūniang* (jarg. чикса; дівчина), 妞 / *niū* (coll. дівчина, дівчинка (often dismissively)), 时髦女郎 / *shímáo nǚláng* (молоденька дівчина, модниця, дівчина вільної моралі, “емансіпе”).

In English and German, similar denotative meanings can name one and the same person but the usage of a word referring to the given rows will be defined not necessarily by man’s (fellow’s)/woman’s (girl’s) qualities but by the speaker’s attitude to the everyday life situation. In Chinese, such meaning are obtained by adding an epithet.

In American English in order not to offend a woman possessing the same privileges as a man does (social status, position occupied, some traits of character), the Americans use different epithets: *commanding* – for men, *domineering* – for women; *strong*, *decisive* – for men, *bossy*, *overly authoritarian*, *dictating* – for women. One of the meanings of the word “*madam*” is “a woman who is inclined to be dictatorial”: “Mrs. Sharp is not exactly popular with the other members of the society; she is such a *madam*!” [5]. Charles Dickens in his novel “David Copperfield” calls Betsy Trotwood “*battle-axe*”, that denotes “a middle-aged or elderly woman of a somewhat masculine character, and rather sharp-tongued and domineering”: Our landlady’s real old *battle-axe*”.

Frequently notions become degenderized. They avoid “heaving” a certain representative of a male / female sex, addressing them *they*, for a concrete one, phrases like *he-boss* or *she-boss* will do (compare with Chinese 女上司 / *nǚ shàngsī* – жінка-начальниця, жінка-начальник, жінка-бос; German die *Cheffrau*, *weibliche Chefin*). It is conditioned by cultural, national and political peculiarities or a country where all women struggle for equal rights. One can insult a woman if he / she renders her “essence” by addressing her using, for example, a word corresponding to male realities. The results turn against men (court examinations and a like).

The actualization of the domineering meaning “male/a man” is possible if an object is given some additional modifying-evaluative connotations. The connotative component contains “an emotional filling”, an evaluative aspect or stylistic colouring of a word. The essence of a word is usually determined by its correlation with the surrounding world, some extralinguistic reality which reveals denotative components in the semantic structure of a word. The cognitive mode, idea and the notion formation of a subject and its connections in the real world, consolidation of the notion with this or that lexical unit are the essential attributes of the first nomination.

To distinguish themselves, very often men and women use subconsciously definite terminal tones: “the falling tones dominate in men’s speech, but women tend to precede the falling tones by the rising ones. Men usually operate with the main, basic scales (falling, descending, rising), whereas women are apt

to change them using the combinations of the elements of different scale types (descending + “straight”, falling-stepping + descending etc.)” [4, p. 85–89]. Still in the process of becoming a respectful, qualified and strong personality much depends upon a person’s voice no matter if it is a man or a woman. That’s why women pay a great attention to their voice and speech training and rhetoric if they are going to occupy a high post. The most important attribute of a successful person in his/her prestigious career is not only *what* he/she says, but *how* he/she says it [9].

Having analysed a great deal of lexical units on the investigating problem, it was discovered that the prevailing characteristic to describe men and women is their “appearance”. Moreover, a very interesting fact is that the two semes “*a mannish woman*” and “*an effeminate man*” intersect. The presence of feminine outer traits in men’s characteristics caused the occurrence of the following words: *dykey mod* sl., *gal-boy* amer. sl., *butch* sl., *pelican* sl., *dike* sl. and other words (compare: German – *femininer Mann*, *weiblicher Mann*, *Weichei*; Chinese – 奶油蛋糕 / *nǎiyóu dàngāo* and 奶油 / *nǎiyóu* (sl. «жіночий» чоловік, гомосексуаліст)). All these words denote “*an effeminate man*”. The colloquial level is the most productive one. However, strange as it may seem, men may possess female character traits and even appearance, so people call “*a mannish woman*”: *yoo-hoo* amer. sl., *duckie* amer. sl., *Ethel* sl., *fag* sl., *milquetoast* sl., *pood low*, *spurge* sl. and other words (compare: German – *männliche Frau*, *Androgynie*, *eine schwule Frau* associated with *Zwitterhaftigkeit*, *Doppelgeschlechtigkeit*; Chinese – 不男不女 / *bù nán bù nǚ* (людина, що виглядає як чоловік, і як жінка; чоловікоподібна жінка, женоподібний чоловік), 女汉子 / *nǚhànzi* (пацанка, бій-баба, чоловікоподібна дівчина, дівчина з чоловічими манерами)). Articles of clothes women prefer to wear have also found their reflection in men’s description with “an effeminate appearance” and character by means of the words “*collar and cuff*” sl., “*panty-waist*” sl. [3].

There is the whole row of words, universal definitions, reflecting the intersections of the enumerated semes that can describe both men and women with untypical appearance of both representatives. Thus, in the words “*buttercup*” sl., “*fairy*” sl., “*fluff*” sl., “*goody*” sl., “*geranium*” sl. and other words both semes “*an effeminate*

man” and “*a mannish woman*” interact. These words are emotionally coloured. The people who possess such characteristics are likely to get offended being addressed this way.

The words rendering double features of a man’s/woman’s appearance and behaviour pattern draw more attention and interest. The “representatives” of this people group have much in common. For example, neutral gender sl., hesh(e) sl. = he + she, gentlemiss sl. = gentleman + miss (compare: German: *Herr Fräulein*, Chinese: 不男不女 / *bù nán bù nǚ*, 二椅子 / *èryǐzi* (dial. груба людина, що виглядає і як чоловік, і як жінка, людина, яка зробила операцію щодо зміни статі; гермафродит), she-man slang. These words are also interesting from the viewpoint of word-building (a composition type). Using them, a speaker expresses his / her negative and diminutive attitude to a person who has an exceptional appearance. The words of this category [7] are highly emotional and have evaluating features.

Modern English, slang in particular, has “absorbed” a great number of American slangy words and expressions including the ones that existed in England many centuries ago and were “reserved” only in American slang: *guy* – amer. fellow from amer. *yuck* – “*friend, fellow*”, this word was formed on the basis of inverted reading of the word (compare: “*vegg*”) *gazabo* – amer. *fellow*.

Dialectically coloured word formation can penetrate into colloquial speech free from territorial attachment. For example, *guy* – USA coll. = *a chap, a fellow*. “I don’t like your *guy*. He is too self-assured.”; *lad* – dial. or coll. = *a boy or a young fellow*. “Look at this *lad*. He’s so funny”. However, one and the same word can be used with different semantic structures existing in different variants of the English language. In this connection, let’s investigate some instances of Australian and American slang. The essence is identical but it is expressed by different means: “A bonzer *sheila* and a dinkum *bloke* got squashed by a push before the Johns mooched along. It was a fair cow” (Australian slang.)

“A knock out sketch of a hot *baby* and an ace-high *sport* got beat by some tough eggs before the cops woke up. It was a dirty meal” (American slang.) In literary language it will sound: “A fine *girl* and a nice *boy* were attacked by ruffians and severely beaten before the police arrived at the scene. The assault was an outrage”. Though a word “*sport*” taken separately from the others in the American variant of English denotes “a good natured and obliged person” (more often used of a man than of a woman).

Sometimes it turns to be very difficult to find a universal, common notion to characterize simultaneously both a man and a woman. For example, a word *cuss* (compare: German – *der Kauz*, Chinese – 人疴 / *rénkē* (дивна (дивакувата) людина)) denotes a person without any concentration on his/her sex belonging (an awkward *cuss*, an odd *cuss*). Moreover, its usage is more frequent while speaking about a man than about a woman; still both variants are possible. This factor causes the necessity to broaden the classifications of lexical units reflecting male and female attributes in the nomination “*man*” and “*woman*”.

The presence of directly evaluating attribute with the corresponding noun “endows” the latter with some additional connotation. On the other hand, idioms and phraseological units alongside colloquial words are emotive themselves. Prosodic elements intensify their meaning. It depends upon who speaks (a man or a woman), in the change of pitch contrasting, the duration of pronouncing, loudness, acceleration or slowing down, speech tempo, break in pronouncing, pausing, marking semantic and emphatic stresses more or less prominent [9]; though intonation depends on a speaker comparatively less. Sounds and prosodic elements remain in unity with their meaning.

To this group we would like to refer the phraseological units possessing nominative characteristics (they contain male and female names as their components). They have elements of idiomacy: in German – *Suse* (umg. abwert.) possible to use describing both men and women, = langsamer träger und weinerlicher Mensch; in Chinese – 美 / *měi* (= a beautiful girl), 詹吉 / *zhānji* (a handsome man, an outstanding person); in British English – *John Thomson’s man* (obs.) = a husband who obeys any order of his wife, he is afraid of her (*John* is a distorted variant of *Joan*), it can be compared with the word *hen-pecked husband*. Female names are also met equally with male’s names. Their usage is conditioned by typical traits of character, appearance, behaviour etc. of a person: *big Bertha* (amer.sl.) = a very strong masculine woman. Often proper nouns gradually become common ones.

Conclusions. The results of the study are as follows:

1. This investigation enabled us to classify the words expressing “*male*”/ “*female*” characteristics of men and women according to people’s appearance, character traits, behaviour model, the temperament into four groups: 1) the presence of feminine outer traits in men’s characteristics – “*an effeminate man*”; 2) the presence of masculine features in women’s characteristics – “*a mannish*

woman”; 3) the words describing both men and women with untypical appearance of their gender; 4) the words rendering double features of a man’s/woman’s appearance/behaviour. American English makes a great contribution into spoken language.

2. The study shows that many gender-marked neologisms appear due to women’s unity, like-mindedness and solidarity within the women’s liberation movement alongside its supporters who tend to demonstrate their emotional-evaluative attitude to the masculine sex through expressive lexical and phonetic means. It has been determined that the level of phraseology on the investigating subject matter needs a further examination, as it is constantly replenishing. We are to follow the processes of their occurrence and principles of their formation. The domain of people’s names attracts our attention as well.

Perspectives of research. It would be of educational value to combine the study of

prosodic elements with the lexical material on the topic “male/female” because such phenomena as voice, stresses of all kinds, nuclear tones, pausing, inner state and mood of a person (no matter if it is a man or a woman), tempo and other ones may reflect on the meaning of words (connotative and denotative).

The perspectives of further research are seen in the study of the educative function of gender-related issues, a male/female speech behaviour in situations to be more precise, in the modes:

1) a teacher (a man/a woman) – a pupil/a student (a boy/a girl);

2) a he-boss/a she-boss – a person under his/her supervision;

3) an acquaintance (a male/a female) – a person he/she is not familiar with;

4) a husband – a wife.

Emotional-evaluative factors alongside the abilities to operate speaker’s voice and intonation will play an important role in them.

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