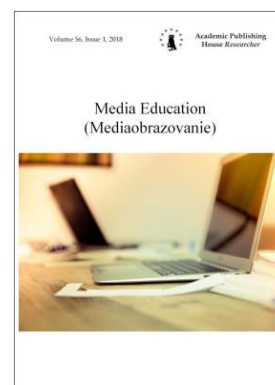




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Feminitives Activation in Modern Media Discourse: Linguoecological Aspect

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Abstract

The formulation of the research topic is dictated by the tendency to investigate feminitives as destructive phenomena of the modern Russian language, contradicting the linguistic ecology and good language taste. Traditionally invectives, obscenisms and English-language inclusions were considered to be such destructive phenomena. In this connection, it is urgent to analyze the grammatical essence and pragmatic functions of feminitives in media discourse and, on this basis, to find out to what extent they can meet the ecological criteria. The conclusion is that feminitives are not equal in their ability to convey certain pragmatic co-meanings, and it is on these abilities the place of a particular female correlate in the language system, and the correspondence to the linguistic and ecological parameters of communication depends. The question of female correlates from the names of persons by profession, occupation, etc. is not new in grammar and linguoculturology, but new communication techniques, in particular, the features of word usage in Internet blogs, have given a new impetus to this topic. In the study of the language material, retrieved from traditional media texts and internet media content, such techniques as contextual linguopragmatic analysis and the method of pragmatic interpretation, which consists of identifying the features of connotational increments, were used.

Keywords: feminitives, grammatical category, gender, normativity, pluralism of norms, pragmatic functions, linguoecology.

1. Introduction

The question of female correlates from the names of persons by profession, occupation, etc. is not new in grammar and linguoculturology, but new communication techniques, in particular, the features of word usage in Internet blogs, have given a new impetus to this topic. New feminitives have become the subject of numerous discussions, and sharply negative evaluations of this phenomenon, which in fact is the natural elimination of grammatical lacunae, have become widespread (Akay, 2020). The eternal dispute between opponents and supporters of feminization has received a new impetus today, it encourages a detailed study of the origins and prospects for solving this problem.

The peculiarities of the representation of linguistic-ecological principles and linguistic-ecological thinking in media discourse still need clarification. The specificity of these phenomena is determined by

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the interaction with the categories of tolerance, political correctness, and socio-cultural lacunarity, which must be taken into consideration in the specific linguistic cultures analyse.

These phenomena specificity is determined by the interaction with the categories of tolerance, political correctness, and socio-cultural lacunarity. It is important to analyse definite linguistic cultures. The description of used in media communication feminines as units of the language system according to linguoecology seem to make their linguocognitive and linguopragmatic parameterization.

2. Materials and methods

Using a sociometric technique that makes it possible to show the conditionality of grammatical forms by cultural and social parameters, the authors attempt to explain the features of feminines in the modern Russian language, especially in the media space. An adequate analysis of Russian feminines is possible only in comparison with the corresponding trends in other European languages. The authors take into consideration a methodological approach to the widest possible extralinguistic, psycholinguistic and cognitive factors in the analysis of feminines used in media communication. In the study of the language material, such techniques as contextual linguopragmatic analysis and the pragmatic interpretation method, which consists in identifying the features of connotational increments, were used. The examples are retrieved with the continuous sampling method use from current materials of traditional media and the Yandex Zen Internet platform, as well as other blogs. This choice of language material sources is determined with declaring blogs as a part of media discourse, the rapid replenishment of such materials and the diverse socio-cultural status of bloggers.

3. Discussion

In numerous works analyzing female correlates from masculine names in diachrony, the extralinguistic conditions for their occurrence are clarified. The formation of feminines as correlates is determined extralinguistically: female person nominations in accordance with social status were connected with new social conditions. According to lingual taste and orthology, most of such forms did not meet the formed criteria, but they were used in official practice: *avtorka* (author – female), *advokatka* (lawyer – female), *istorichka* (historian – female), etc.

Newspapers of the early XX century give examples of forms such as *pedagogichka* (pedagogy – female), *filologichka* (philologist – female), *istorichka* (historian – female), *inspektorsha* (chief inspector – female) and *yuristka* (lawyer – female).

As a special group of feminines used from the second half of the XIX century, there are feminines that reflect worldview features (political, cultural, social, etc.) such as *nigilistka* (nihilist – female), *boevichka* (militant – female), *darwinistka* (Darwinist – female), *neprotivlenka* (non-resisting person – female), *burzhuzka* (bourgeois – female), *ateistka* (atheist – female), *slavyanofilka* (Slavophile – female), *liberalka* (liberal – female), *feministka* (feminist – female), *yakobinka* (Jacobin – female) in the Russian language.

It is this group of feminines that is actively replenished. New feminines joined this group in the first years of Soviet power: *ptitsevodka* (poultry breeder – female), *vuzovka* (university student – female), *vtuzovka* (technical university student, who studies and works after classes in the evening at the factory – female), *skotovodka* (cattle breeder – female), *beekeeper* – female), an employee who organizes mass cultural recreation, and games – female), even some words such as *chlenikha ispolkoma* (the executive committee member – female), *narobrazikha*, *narobrazikha* (employee of the Department of Public Education – female). These examples of feminines are presented in the newspaper “Red tulyachka” (resident of Tula – female), published in 1924.

The "Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language" by D.N. Ushakov (1935–1940), in which the word usage of the first two decades of Soviet power is represented, practically has no old feminines meant a wife by her husband's occupation. Such correlates began to appear in the era of Peter the Great – *dvornichikha* (a janitor's wife), *slesarikha* (a locksmith's wife), *admiral'sha* (an admiral's wife), *ministersha* (a minister's wife), and so on. Since these are discriminating names, but many words with the suffix-k meant new professions and, as a result, new opportunities for Soviet women – *vuzovka*, *vtuzovka*, *krasnoarmeika* (Red Army soldier – female), *shakhterka* – (miner – female), *brigadirka* (brigadier – female).

In our time, we can see a new splash in this area – new feminines in Internet blogs, first of all in feminist ones: *redaktorka* (editor – female), *terapevtka* (therapist – female), *illyustratorka*

(illustrator – female), *animatorka* (animator – female), *multiplikatorka* (multiplier – female), *geimerka* (gamer – female), *reperka* (rapper – female), *personazhka* (character – female), *professorka* (professor – female), *skul'ptorka* (sculptor – female), *avtorka* (author – female), *doktorka* (doctor – female), *donorka* (donor – female), *liderka* (leader – female), *blogerka* (blogger – female), *frilanserka* (freelancer – female) and so on. The work: (Sekerina, Zakharova, 2017) even contains examples such as *cheloveka* (person – female), *rebenka* (child – female), *tovarishchka* (friend – female), *geniya* (genius – female).

Often such word formation is naturally perceived as corruption, destruction, even ugliness, as presented by lively discussions in the media and on the Internet (Deligiaouri, 2018; Lehmann et al., 2017; Sengul, 2019; Tandoc et al., 2019; Van Duyn, Collier, 2019; Wenzel, 2019). Such evaluations are indicative: *The word avtorka* (author – female) *is unnatural; blogerka* (blogger – female), *poetka* (poet – female), etc. – *are the fads of feminists; feminitives are disgusting, there is no word avtorka* (author – female) *and, I hope, there will not be* (Tatiana Tolstaya), etc. Even somebody talks of a "feminist reform of the Russian language" that must be resisted.

First of all, many of the forms appear to be the product of the last (fourth) wave of feminism flashed in the domestic press 150 years ago. For example, at first the word "poetka" (poet – female) was used in 1842 (see about this: Berkutova, 2018: 6-22; 2019: 7-26).

Feminitives are regularly and productively used in the media space (Boulianne, 2019; Harcup, O'Neill, 2017; Hoffmann, Suphan, 2017; Van Duyn, Collier, 2019), includes both traditional media and Internet-mediated texts and discourses. But the functioning of such pairs and marked elements is determined by the following principles:

1. High communicative freedom, primarily typical for special media discourse such as blogs or hypertexts based on blogs. These hypertexts are the discursive combination of a blog and its comments.

2. The desire of the authors of blogs and comments to consistently implement the phenomenon of tolerance and political correctness, in the part determining the feminitives use. The author's idea correlates with the necessity to express evaluation, to ensure the choice of the correct and clear nomination of a female person. The specificity of feminitives is connected with the fact that as a rule they express a category of evaluativeness, but this evaluation is ambivalent by its essence and it can be perceived by communicants in different ways (from positive to negative). The evaluation can change almost to opposite one, and the context not always makes it possible to identify this evaluativeness unambiguously.

3. Media discourse has a high pragmalinguistic potential, and strives to implement pragmatic and informative functions in various combinations, according to the type of media discourse. This obligatory characteristic determines the choice of pragmatically oriented, expressive multi-level linguistic units, including feminitives. These parameters determining the feminitives functioning in the media discourse (Deligiaouri, 2018; Tandoc et al., 2019; Temmermanet et al., 2019; Tully, Vraga, 2018) explain such functioning regularity, but it is not possible on their basis to form a view about the completed orthological system of feminitives implementation in various types of discourse, first of all, in media discourse.

These recent innovations in the Russian language are more harmless, although they can also contain the potential for conflict. The main idea of linguoecological thinking is to prevent speech conflicts, and the authors investigating linguistic ecology problems convincingly stated its necessity in their works (Kara-Murza, 2014, Skovorodnikov, 2013, 2019, and many others).

It is important to investigate in more detail the pragmatic peculiarity of Russian feminitives in the aspect of linguoecological thinking.

4. Results

As an obligatory parameter for feminitives it is necessary to take into consideration the linguocognitive, and therefore linguoecological, aspects for the creation and for the functioning of such units. Thus, to investigate correlative pairs in the nomination with connotatively, stylistically and pragmalinguistically marked feminitives it is necessary to investigate such units in linguoecological mental and functional features aspect. With this approach, the media discourse is a communicative space in which both systemic and asystemic feminitives can be used creatively, but at the same time media discourse is characterized by a tendency to stabilize such intentionally chosen linguistic units.

Female correlates to anthroponyms have always reflected the peculiarities of the text author worldview (Baek et al., 2019; Jang, Kim, 2018). For example, in the novel by M. Bulgakov, Professor Preobrazhensky corrects Shvonder that about a woman Shvonder should use *headmistress* and not *headmaster*. A.I. Solzhenitsyn consistently uses female correlates, and this shows not only the desire for an accurate nomination, but also the desire to get away from one of the features of totalitarian language with its people leveling. Feminities can be used as elements of an idiostyle, for example, the lexeme *leitenantka* (lieutenant – female) in one of the A.I. Solzhenitsyn's texts. But this is one of the author's specific idiostyle manifestations; other manifestations are connected with special punctuation and even spelling. Feminities are often characterized by pejorative connotation.

For example quite fair remark: "The Russian language is arranged in such a way that if we say *professorka* (professor – female) instead of *professor*, *rektorka* (rector – female) instead of *rector* or *deputatka* (deputy – female) instead of *deputat*, we will not only lower the status of this person to whom we attribute such a nomination, but also clearly violate the of language taste criteria" (Annushkin, 2021: 11).

Non-usual feminine correlates are characterized by the pejorativeness (Brichacek, 2017), which is important for various media texts creation, in particular, secondary ones (translated texts).

Now Prince Harry and Meghan Markle cheerleader Nicola Brentnall quits her role as chief executive of Queen's Commonwealth Trust (Eden, 2021).

This information is translated into Russian in two ways on the Internet. In the conversational style, the feminine *chirlidirsha* (cheerleader – female) is appropriate. To compensate this feature of the unit during the secondary texts creation in Russian, traditional, systemic properties of units can be used, in particular, the choice of the feminine form in the past tense verb for updating the gender identity of a person (Semenova, Grigoryeva, 2017) in the professional nomination:

In six weeks after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle had been deprived of their positions as president and vice-president of the Queen's Commonwealth Fund, Nicola Brentnall, the Fund's ispolnitel'nyi direktor (chief executive – male), ushla (left – the verb in the feminine form of the past tense) her (feminine possessive pronoun) post, too. She was accused of being too worried about the California Dukes (Style..., 2021).

Thus, feminities in the Russian language system are marked members of gender correlations, including from the point of style, they have signs of colloquialism, informality. And not the feminities themselves contradict the linguoecological approach, but their inadequate use, leading to stylistic eclecticism.

And stsenaristka (screenwriter – female) Alexandra Zharkaya explained her position in detail... (Glebova A, 2021: 13).

But these differences are not always recorded even by the special dictionaries. Thus, in the "Explanatory Dictionary of Women's Names" by N.P. Kolesnikov, the lexeme *direktorsha* (director – female) in all the lexical and semantic variants has a stylistic mark "colloquial", while the lexeme *diktorsha* (announcer – female) does not have such marks. It makes it possible to suppose its stylistic neutrality, common usage, and no dependency on communicative genres and spheres, and therefore, the so-called zero pragmatics. The words *radetel'nitsa* (guardian – female), *demokratka* (democrat – female) have the mark "colloquial".

According to E.V. Melikhova's fair remark of (2008), the system of marks for such lexemes should be supplemented with an indication on the regular representation of the irony figure. Therefore, it is necessary to use two stylistic marks "colloquial" and "ironic". In the Russian language of the last decades, a complex palette of emotive feminities has been formed. However, media, especially electronic media, today have an interstyle eclecticism, and feminities are used not in accordance with their style-forming capabilities. For example, how haphazardly masculinisms and feminities alternate in an article devoted to the fate of one of the all-Russian scientific foundations – the Russian Foundation for Basic Research:

Anastasia Proskurina, sotrudnik (fellow worker – male) of the Novosibirsk Institute of Cytology and Genetics, vzyala (was given – the author used the verb in the feminine gender) the floor.

For the first time, addressing the President, an *ordinary uchenyi (scientist – male) of the country otkryla (revealed – the author used the verb in the feminine gender form) the truth about the real salaries in the field of science. This is what Anastasia Proskurina told in her brief speech at*

the council meeting. The President always makes notes. Was the young *uchenaya* (scientist – female) convincing for him who showed the courage of a hero to tell the leader of the country the truth to his face. Or would his advisers explain everything to him in their own way again? (Ivanov, 2021: 4).

It was quite possible to use the standard correlate *sotrudnitsa* (fellow worker – female) in the first sentence, but, in any case, the rule of coordination with the verb-predicate in the feminine gender was followed.

In the second sentence, for some reason, this rule is not: *uchenyi* (scientist – male) *otkryl* (opened – male). In this case it was incorrect to use the masculine gender form relating to the woman. It would be correct "*Uchenyi* (scientist – male) *otkryla* (opened – female)". Such a norm has been formed recently. In the sixties of the XX century, scientists debated on that score, but the time for discussions has passed, and this is the standard fixed by modern grammars, including school ones.

But in the last sentence, the form *uchenaya* (scientist – female) was used again. This form is neither pragmatically nor stylistically motivated. There is not any irony in the author's text (on the contrary, only piety towards the heroine of the story), the text about science in modern society, which does not assume such strange deviations from the standard. This is an example of "normative chaos hindering the word usage accuracy", this is "a trend diametrically opposed to the language cultivation" (Khazagerov, 2020: 17). It is this chaotic use of feminines that is contrary to ecological principles. Thus, it is possible with these parameters to regulate the feminines use.

5. Conclusion

It is possible with the anthroponymic language system analysis to point out a distinction in the essence of the information transmitted by the muscular and feminine elements of gender correlations naming a person at the same time by gender and other parameters of social status. Feminines represent connotative and pragmatic layers of information, including layers of information determined by the context. As a rule, oppositional elements of gender correlations express denotative layer of information, for updating other types of information, it is necessary to use specialized contexts.

Feminines correspond to the principles of linguoecology and the features of linguoecological thinking, therefore they as the elements of the language system are universal.

Such units potentially can specify names, forming marked elements of sociocultural gender oppositions or more complicated language microsystems.

The degree of both pragmatic and connotative markedness itself, fixed in the semantics of feminine linguistic units, is different. It makes it possible to note not only the universality, but also the compliance of the feminines with linguistic and cultural specifics and linguistic and ecological principles. Thus, lexemes such as *avtorka* (author – female), *rezhisserka* (director – female), *poetka* (poet – female) have no negative connotations, for example, in Bulgarian and in Polish and can function as linguo-ecological, normative elements of the system in all the spheres of communication. In the Russian language, such units retain negative connotations, they are pragmalinguistically aimed at the actualization of destructive communication strategies and tactics. These characteristics are supported by the linguoculturally determined semantic features of the anthroponyms with the same word forming formant (for example in Russian personal names). Thus, we can say that in the Russian language, feminines are not functionally equal, neutral elements of the opposition: they correspond the main linguistic and ecological principles, but their functional ambiguity, linguistic and ecological thinking represented in different cultures determine the development trends of language systems, the worldview perception specifics, while it may be possible for such systems not to have intentional regularities of the feminines functioning stabilization.

The feminines activation itself rather can be evaluated positively (as "the language living space expansion", its "linguovitalism", "the ability of the root to branching" (according to Epstein, 2016). V.I. Novikov in his "Novel with Language" wrote that many words of masculine gender such as the *manager* and so on do not have feminine pairs, that "the language gods, unfortunately, did not pull the edge out of these masculine words to make female pairs." Today, we must confess that there are no anthroponyms, from which, in principle, it would be impossible to form a feminine. And these new feminines themselves, which we meet in the media and Internet communication, demonstrate increasing capabilities of the language system for the most adequate representation of

grammatical and pragmatic content. But their use should be the result of intentional, reasonable, determined with linguocultural parameters preferences of the text sender.

The stabilization and the orthological validity of the gender-oriented correlates functioning in the media discourse will make it possible to intentionally choose such units in the future in forming other types of discourse.

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