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THE NOTION OF GENDER-MARKED LANGUAGE UNITS AND THEIR CLASSIFICATION

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The anthropological approach to language studies that has prevailed in the humanities, particularly in linguistics in recent decades, enables to consider linguistic phenomena in close relation to a person, his/her culture, thinking, cognitive and practical activities. Modern linguistic research is characterized by an increased interest in the gender aspect of language. The aim of the paper is to consider the essence of gender-marked units and their classification.

Gender-marked language units realize the associative potential reflecting the historically established content of the categories of masculinity and femininity, i.e. the conceptions of the unity of typical anatomical-biological, emotional, mental, socio-cultural and psychological characteristics associated with an individual's belonging to the male or female gender [2].

A. P. Martyniuk considers gender-marked language units functioning in the discourse of the linguistic and cultural community to be the main source of socio-cultural information [3]. The linguist defines the meaning of a gender-marked unit of the English language as “a frame-structured socio-cultural knowledge of the designatum, i.e. a prototypical male and female, as well as the conceptual content of cognitive categories of masculinity and femininity, metaphorically associated with the meaning in the collective consciousness of the English-speaking cultural community” [3]. A gender-marked unit is based on the cognitive evaluation of the referent on the assumption of knowledge of its compliance or noncompliance with certain gender standards [3].

Behavior patterns of men and women designated by gender-marked units are qualified on the basis of normative motivation, which is derived from his / her compliance / non-compliance with human universal and culturally specific norms within a certain normative field: moral and ethical or utilitarian, as well as compliance / non-compliance with culturally specific masculine / feminine standards, based on which these attributes or actions receive a positive, negative or neutral evaluation. Thus, compliance with norms or standards is assessed positively, while deviation is assessed negatively. Compliance with norms or standards may also be assessed in a neutral manner, expressing an indifferent attitude towards the actant [1]. A. P. Martyniuk notes that a gender-marked unit “functions in the discourse as a gender-differentiated regulatory attitude encoded in a language sign, which causes structural influence on the subject's perception of social reality and forms gender-differentiated models of behavior” [3].

Gender-marked units are classified into nominal gender-marked units and grammatical gender-marked units. In turn, nominal units can be grouped into lexical and phraseological gender-marked units. Nominal gender-marked units include words and phrases reflecting the gender identity of the referent [3].

In accordance with the way the gender feature is expressed, linguists distinguish structurally and semantically marked nominal units [3]. Thus, semantically marked units are used primarily with male or female references, traditionally assigned to them in the English system, but they do not contain a gender marker, for example: *tart* - *a*.

A prostitute. b. A woman considered to be sexually promiscuous [5]; *ram – a sexually aggressive man* [6].

Structurally marked nominal units contain morphological or syntactic gender markers [3]. Morphological markers include the suffixes *-ess, -trix, -euse, -ette, -ine, -enne, -en, -e, -a* that form feminine nouns from common nouns, for example: *actress, executrix, usherette, heroine, ballerina*, etc., as well as semantically marked masculine and feminine bases, which help to form complex nominations, for example: *policewoman, she-wolf, bell-boy* etc.

Syntactic markers include male and female reference lexemes, such as *man, woman, male, female, lady*, which help to construct word combinations of different degrees of stability ranging from free collocations to phraseological units, for example: *lady doctor, apple woman* [3].

Grammatical gender-marked units are a component of a grammatical gender that is manifested “via the syntactic subordination of personal, possessive and reflexive pronouns of the third person singular to a noun on the basis of a person's biological sex” [4].

Summing up the aforesaid, we can draw conclusions that gender-marked language units fix the referent's gender identity and realize the associative potential reflecting the historically formed content of the categories “masculinity” and “femininity”, i.e. the notions about the totality of typical anatomical-biological, emotional, mental, sociocultural and psychological characteristics associated with the individual's belonging to the male or female sex.

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