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The Embodiment of the Political Correctness Ideas in the Modern Media Space (Based on Feminities)

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Abstract

The anthropocentric approach to language involves increased attention to all the parameters of a human person reflected in the language. The androgyny of European languages is corrected by including a human nouns correlative to the vocabulary on the basis of grammatical gender. The spread of political correctness modern ideas restricts the use of sexist words and expressions. The main way of the modern languages' development is to eliminate the discrimination of women reflected in the language. Due to the globalization influence and significant feminism arise the significant correction of gender nominations has become possible. The gender-marked anthroponyms with a feminine affix index, even if they correspond to the system grammatical standard, are outside the official business style in modern Russian, but they are widespread in other styles and genres of the modern Russian literary language such as colloquial speech, fiction and media discourse. Media space nowadays is the widest territory of any linguistic directions' development in general and the media discourse in particular due to the fact that it involves a large scale of the population into communication, and the female part is a half of it.

Keywords: gender space, media discourse, political correctness, internet, feminism discourse, media.

1. Introduction

The globalization makes it possible the significant correction of gender nominations. The gender-marked anthroponyms with a feminine affix index, even if they correspond to the system grammatical standard, are outside the official business style in modern Russian, but they are widespread in other styles and genres of the modern Russian literary language such as colloquial speech, fiction and media discourse. The desire for a politically correct way to designate (without emphasizing the gender) often met the resistance of the well-established (for a certain period of time) style standard. According to some authors "the term of political correctness has not taken root in the Russian language", the use of this expression is ironic in media and it is only associated with the excessive use of euphemisms (Denisova, 2009: 10). We believe that the situation is completely different and the positive meaning of this phenomenon in Russia is quite clear. Its linguistic embodiment has been the scientific reflection subject for many times. Today, in the globalization context, the question whether national cultures can become so close as to form a single world culture is for the first time being raised.

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In the radical manifestation, political correctness requires rethinking and changing language standards, even grammatical ones (connected, for example, to the morphological category of gender). According to this point of view, artificial nominating is considered to be useful. It is obvious that moderate manifestations of political correctness ideas are more consistent with environmental principles. Naturally, following the principles of political correctness can sometimes have its own problems. For example the negative compatibility of the term "political correctness":

"I am afraid that with its cowardly political correctness, Europe will be swallowed up by a colossal giant wave very quickly (Gladilin, 2017).

2. Materials and methods

The methodological basis of the presented study was the provisions on the distinction between external and internal linguistics (Baudouin de Courtenay, F. de Saussure), on the constructive and destructive influence of society on the language (Alpatov, 2015; Larin, 1977; Miloslavskiy, 2018, etc.), on the connection of vocabulary with "Ideocratic" systems of the XX century (Epstein, 2000; Khazagerov, 2018), as well as the ideas of modern linguo-pragmatics, reflected in the works of J. Searle, J. Austin, A. Wierzbicka and others. The linguistic material was extracted from the actual media sources: Internet and newspapers.

The purpose of the article is a comparative analysis of the political correctness phenomenon linguistic aspect based on the feminitives' material of several modern language extracted from the media space resources. The comparative analysis reveals the main tendencies in the languages to soften the unified literary norm concerning the human perception of women and their place in the modern world.

The specific research objectives are:

- to identify the functional and pragmatic essence of politically correct vocabulary concerning feminitives;

- the method of pragmatic interpretation;

- the method of linguistic and ideological analysis.

Internet space as the main media engine nowadays gives a unique opportunity to observe and analyze the main tendencies in the language development from the point of view of feminitives' emergence, uprising and usage in modern languages.

3. Discussion

In spite of the wide spread opinion concerning the "Stable Literary Norm", language is a moving and developing structure: it reflects not only reality, but also the changes taking place in it (Wierzbicka, 1997). The language modernization ongoing now, is not always painless. Feminists are now at the forefront of this process: women are increasingly entering the "male territory", occupying the posts of directors, managers and presidents, which were previously considered exclusively or mainly male. And language, being involved in the reality perception process reflects these changes, including reinforcing the idea that such professions and roles for a woman are normal.

In Russian there is no consensus even regarding the use of feminitives, enshrined as a dictionary norm: many still believe that the "hudozhnik" (artist – male) sounds more powerful and professional than the "hudozhnitsa" (artist – female).

The same can be said about the new forms like "directorka" (director – female), "avtorka" (author – female) or "managerka" (manager – female), which seem to the opponents of the process dissonant, and the suffix -kis fixed in the Russian cognition as neglectful. It is not surprising that feminists are often called "language mutilations," without delving into the idea that their task is to make women in certain social roles and professional communities visible and respected.

At the same time, there are professions in which the feminitive does not cause rejection: for example, the usual "pevitsa" (singer – female) or "uchitelnitsa" (teacher – female). The reason is simple: the tradition of seeing women in "appropriate" roles ("semetarsha" (secretary – female), "ballerina" (ballet dancer – female), but not in respectable positions by professors, diplomats or surgeons. And although there is no fundamental aesthetic difference between "sportsmenka" (athlete – female)" or "vipusknitsa" (graduate student – female) and "managerka" (manager – female), one word provokes protests, and the other does not. Similar problems exist not only in the Russian language, but not only in the Russian reality: women try to fight different ways with traditionalist linguistic gender bias in different languages. It is interesting that the quantitative

growth of modern Nomina professionalia does not affect the spread of standard formation of female correlates from them. For example, the new words of the thematic sphere “Economics. Business”: *distributor*, *merchandiser*, *realtor*, *brand manager*, *broker*, *dealer*, *jobber* (Grigorenko, 2005: 76-79). Many names of persons by profession used in media are considered to be fashionable words.

The similar processes occur in Ukrainian: it is common to use common feminines that have taken root in the language – although less common words such as “*doctorka*” (doctor – female) still cause rejection. All Ukrainian media use feminines for the formation of which the suffix -k is used. In television credits it is customary to write common feminines – “*expertka*” (expert – female), “*journalistka*” (journalist – female). To name a woman “*journalist*” in Ukrainian is considered illiterate. All this applies specifically to Ukrainian-language media, and if a guest who speaks Ukrainian comes on the air of a Russian-language media, she may specifically ask to use the feminine.

The processes taking place in the English language are more or less visible: the gender-labeled names of professions are gradually being replaced by the gender-neutral ones. Neutral vocabulary in the language has taken root quite successfully, except, perhaps, for the word “actor”, which is now increasingly used for both sexes. This fact is reflected in different discourse spheres: in the newspapers (*The Guardian*) or in movies:

The character of the latest Tarantino’s film “Once in Hollywood” – a little girl, colleague of the Leonardo Di Caprio’s character in the film shooting, mentions: “*I don’t wanna be called an actress, it’s an empty word, call me actor*”.

This model is often proposed to be introduced in the Russian language, but it is an ambiguous way for a Russian native speaker: the gender category of nouns is absent in English; therefore, “*friend*”, “*surgeon*”, “*teacher*”, and “*firefighter*” are perceived neutrally. In Russian, “*surgeon*” is primarily a male surgeon and it can be substituted by the pronoun “*he*”. But these initiatives are far from being completed: word “*girl*” is recommended not to be referred to girls over 18, considering it demeaning, it is suggested to say “young woman” or just “woman”, depending on the woman’s age instead. In addition, the form *Ms.* has been introduced to address strangers instead of *Mrs.* and *Miss*, which were previously used depending on marital status.

Another feminine movement in the English language is to introduce “*she*” as a neutral pronoun when the gender of the person we are talking about is unknown or reasoning abstractly. There are three generally accepted options: “*He wakes up at 5 am*”, “*He or she wakes up at 5 am*”, or “*They wake up at 5 am*”. Feminists offer the fourth option: use “*she*” as the neutral pronoun. This form is already widespread in scientific articles.

In Spanish a category of gender is presented by the two forms – male and female. In matters of feminines, Spain did not follow the neutral English gender example, but, on the contrary, introduces the missing feminines, as it is proposed to do in Russian. For example, now in Spanish newspapers “*la presidenta*” is used for female presidents (instead of the old form, when the female article “*la*” was added to the word “*presidente*”).

At the same time, the division into masculine and feminine in the Spanish language remains in the plural. There is a rule in classical grammar: if there is at least one man in a group, then the whole group is called masculine. There is no consensus on the issue – someone suggests simply using the female form as a generalization, while someone advocates repetition with a different kind: “*Nosotros y nosotras, chicos y chicas, profesores y profesoras*” (“men and women, boys and girls, professors and professors”).

At the same time, feminists in Spain are arguing in large numbers – historians, politicians, writers. One of the active supporters of the use of the female form “*nosotras*” is the political party Podemos, which in third place in the Spanish parliament. One of their slogans is “*Un país para nosotras!*” (“A country for us women!”). “*Nosotras*” is used by both women and men as “we” in Podemos. The contradictions can be seen when even the state institutions cannot find the solution of the problem: in 2019 a real battle over the plural form broke out between the Spanish Royal Academy members: some call feminines “ridiculous”, while others advocate fighting gender imbalance in the language and finding new forms, even if it’s difficult at times.

The situation with changes in the French language is very unusual by world standards: the French Academy – an ancient institution maintains the French language purity. For example, the colloquial word for weekend in French is “*le weekend*”, but the French Academy condemns this and requires the use of the French phrase “*fin de semaine*”.

The French Academy also considers feminist issues. The French language began to come up with the female variants for such professions, for example, “*sénateur*”/“*sénatrice*” (“senator”/“senatrix”), or put a feminine article in front of the word “*la présidente*”.

The French Academy is often blamed for opposing feminists and calling “*la présidente*” and “*la ministre*” surfeit and excess.

In France there is a problem with plural pronouns, where “*elles*” (they) or “*toutes*” (all) are used to describe a group of women, and “*ils*” (they) or “*tous*” would be described as a group consisting humans including at least one male. Lesbian magazine Wel Wel Wel recalls that this provision was introduced only in the XVII century; Bose’s grammar pointed to it like this: “The masculine gender is considered more noble than the feminine one, because of the superiority of men over women”. The editors propose and apply on the journal pages a set of more “equal” grammatical rules used in the language earlier. For example, when transferring, coordination does not occur with the masculine word – because of the “prevalence of masculine over feminine”, but with the word that is the last when enumerated.

It is not entirely correct to speak of a single Arabic language as there is the so-called Arabic diglossia: a common literary language that is used in the official media, “normative” literature and science language and the dialects that differ from literary Arabic, like Russian from Ukrainian or Polish. In general, there are relatively few gender biases in Arabic. In the Qur’an there are words in the masculine and feminine gender in the neighborhood, for example, “the believer (male) and the believer (female) must ...”.

In Arabic, if there is at least one man in a group, the whole group should be spoken of as masculine, usually the Qur’an is followed in the speech, and in the announcements of men and women they always highlight separately: “Every student (male) and every student (female)...”. To formulate a feminitive in Arabic, it is necessary to add a special letter *ṣ* – “ta-marbuta”: and it is possible to form a feminitive of the majority of “male” nouns. There are exception words such as “*calipha*” (caliph), or “*allyama*” (great scientist): they are masculine, despite of the ta-marbuta presence.

Fem-initiatives in the Arabic language are practically non-existent: there are two types of feminism movements: Western feminism, traditional feminism. “Western” feminists use English or languages, which are considered to be the languages of the elites. And feminists who speak Arabic, are not so popular and deal with local social problems – literacy wide spreading or starvation death prevention. At the same time, the local dialect is not officially regulated in any way, and Fusch (literary) is not used in everyday life.

In Polish most masculine words have a female form: “*autor*”/“*autorka*”, “*scenograf*”/“*scenografka*”, “*scenarzysta*”/“*scenarzystka*”, “*historyk*”/“*historyczka*”. Nevertheless, many words do not have a feminine form, the suffix –ka is considered to be dismissive in some context, and women themselves often consider the “masculine” name of the profession to be more harmonious and prestigious.

At the same time, in the 19th century, feminitives in Polish were more familiar and were used more often: “*doktorka*”, “*profesorka*”, “*docentka*”, “*redaktorka*” were quite used in the media. Nevertheless, in the 2nd half of the XX century, attitudes towards feminitives changed. Social extralinguistic factors (men and women equality at work) caused the perception of the masculine variants of professions’ names more prestigious.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the point of view that “*profesorka*” and “*dyrektorka*” were colloquial words began to prevail, and now the forms “*Mrs. Professor*” and “*Mrs. Director*” are preferred.

Polish society has not reached the feminitives consensus yet (Dubrovskaya, Sowińska, 2018). In 2013, a media survey about the need to create feminitives from the male occupational names was conducted in the country – and only half of the female population answered in the affirmative. Some Polish feminists try to use feminitives without the –ka suffix: “*ministra sportu*”. Polish linguists consider the form “*ministra*” to be wrong, and the form “*ministerka*” more preferable. The problem was analyzed by Wikipedia representatives and the Polish Language Council who concluded that “*ministra*” is an irregular form, like “*profesora*”, but it seems more solid.

There are two plural forms of the third-person pronouns in Polish – “*oni*” and “*one*”. “*Oni*” is used to define a group of people with at least one man. “*One*” is used for all the rest: women, children, objects, animals. This form literally refers women to inanimate objects, things. Now these two forms are called personal-masculine and impersonal-masculine (previously it was called female-real). The urgency to rectify the situation is obvious now, so the Polish language needs a

radical structural change in grammar. Many researchers in frameworks of the modern linguocultural situation (Alba-Juez, Larina, 2018; Alemi et al., 2018; Borisova et al., 2018; Brusenskaya et al., 2018; Gornostaeva, 2018; Guinda, 2018; Shakhovskiy, 2018; Wierzbicka, 2018) claim that replacing "sexist" nouns determining persons by profession with "non-sexist" ones is non frequent in the Russian language. In modern culture, as well as in traditional culture, the concept "human" is associated with the idea of a man. However, anti-sexist expressions are sometimes preferred in Russian scientific discourse. The androgyny of European languages is considered today to be a universal feature; at the same time, it is considered to be a dynamic feature, and this is an area where adjustments are possible and even desirable.

4. Results

The habitualization of grossly indoctrinated vocabulary has become common, addiction to such vocabulary is forming (partly supported by lexicography). The system of thematic taboos is noticeably shaken. In general, the degree of publicly acceptable in colloquial speech in media discourse has significantly increased. Sexism is discrimination based on sex, mainly in relation to women (in employment, in payment, etc.); manifestation of a disparaging attitude to a woman, her role in society. The derivative is *sexist* (male – a man with sexist views); a characteristic illustration is given: *We are somehow used to being ashamed of racism, but sexism still dominates and develops* (Neva's time, November 2, 2002). In the judicial practice of our days, there are cases when women deputies appealed to the courts with statements of claim, in which they regarded the words "deputatka" (deputy– female) and "izbrannitsa" ("chosen person"– female) addressed to them in media as offensive. The manipulateness of the personal nouns gender grammatical category is formed not only by the grammatical forms themselves, but also by the lexical content. For example, the use of occasional feminisms in the media discourse that contribute to the pejorative evaluation of the nominating subject and the situation as a whole:

Can someone doubt that Gref has retired, and that the new Ministritsa (minister– occasionally formed female) will pursue a policy different from that of a teacher, guru, mentor, etc. (Soviet Russia, September 27, 2007).

Everyone is outraged, especially damy-deputatki (the ladies-deputies– occasionally formed female): do not give, tighten. It's easy to say!" (Russian notes, October 11, 2007).

What is worth at least the statement of the new economic Ministressa (minister – occasionally formed female) – if we increase export duties, and prices will fall. Yeah, right now. What country did this chinovnitsa (official– occasionally formed female) live in? (Soviet Russia, October 13, 2007).

In this example, female correlates act as a means of creating irony in the author's polemics with authorities which ideas seem to be absurd to him.

However, there is also the opposite – "oncoming" – tendency to "soften" the speech norms. So opposite in terms of goals, results and strategies of the used language means is the political correctness phenomenon.

5. Conclusion

According to our observations, the correlative female suffix nouns are highly popular in modern texts, especially in media texts. They can be used with "zero" pragmatics, for example: in the show "Minute of Glory", Vladimir Pozner and Renata Litvinova brought to tears a girl who performed Zemfira's song "To live in your head" to her own accompaniment, as if only they have the right to perform and interpret the work of their favorite *bardessa* (Literary Newspaper, 2017, No 10), and as rather subtle pejoratives that are in tune with all the context of the situation:

In the final, the *deputatsha* (deputy – occasionally formed female) and *prokurorsha* (prosecutor – occasionally formed female) at the request of the hosts, sits down at the piano ("do you play the piano?" – "Well, so a little") with a student's seriousness "plays a little" something classic. (New Newspaper, March 17, 2017).

So, I.P. Muchnik outlined the situation 35 years ago (Muchnik, 1971: 181): a posted in a children's department store, inscription "Gift to a first-year student" (male) caused a complaint from the customers, because it "ignored the first-year student-girls". The Russian system of female correlates to masculine personal nouns was formed under special conditions, but it was always influenced by the extralinguistic factors. According to Bragina (Bragina, 1981: 77) the category of gender nouns is "a mirror of social change". The masculine gender of most nouns of intellectual

professions is a socially determined fact. Even in the Peter's era, a special lexical and word-forming group of nouns with the meaning 'wife by position, title of husband' was formed in the Russian language. In media and literary texts, the above forms, in our opinion, fully correspond to the contextual norm. In the Russian language with a developed category of gender, which manifests itself at all the language system levels – lexical, word-formation, morphological and syntactic – replacing the "sexist" affixal variant with a neutral one is impossible in principle. Special attention has always been drawn to those "author's" word not complying with the rules established by grammars and dictionaries, but which, however, had an important aesthetic meaning. "Writing well means constantly eroding the generally accepted grammar, the existing language norm. This is an act of permanent rebellion against the surrounding society, subversive activity. Writing well requires a certain fearlessness" (Ortega y Gasset, 2005: 29). The understanding of "the author's uses" in media and literary texts as deviations contrary to the standard made flawed the very understanding of the norm.

The performed study has revealed the changes, inevitably oncoming in the most stable speech norm – grammar in different languages. These displacements are provoked not only by the changes in humans' mind and reality perception but also by the shifts in cultural, political and social spheres of human life.

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