



## FACTORS AND CHALLENGES IN THE STUDY OF GENDER IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

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**Abstract:** This study aims to identify the factors and problems of gender patterns, as well as the formation and consolidation of social roles for men and women in the public consciousness. The worldview expressed in language considers the male element as primary and the female element as derivative.

**Keywords:** gender, sociolinguistics, gender factors, and associative experiment.

### **Факторы и проблемы изучения гендера в социолингвистике**

**Аннотация:** В данном исследовании выявление факторы и проблемы гендерных закономерностей, а также формирования и закрепления в общественном сознании социальных ролей мужчин и женщин. При этом проявляющееся в языке мировоззрение рассматривает мужской элемент как первичный, а женский – как производный.

**Ключевые слова:** гендер, социолингвистика, факторы гендера, ассоциативный эксперимент.

The range of sociolinguistic studies of gender is quite broad. The need to refer to early sociolinguistic works, despite the fact that many of the ideas expressed in them are “morally outdated,” is due to the fact that a deeper understanding of the current state of the scientific field is determined by the ability to look at some of the tasks it has set in a historical context. If one does not know how and where certain issues and approaches emerged, it is impossible to satisfactorily assess the validity and relevance of new approaches to studying the interaction between language and gender.

Today, it can be said that modern sociolinguistics has developed its own scientific direction for studying the gender aspects of language and communication, which is somewhat different from Western trends — linguistic gender studies, or gender linguistics.



Like language, the word “gender” as a social category has come to be perceived as something very changeable or less defined than it used to be. According to gender theory as a whole, linguists who study language and gender are increasingly focusing on the plurality and diversity among women and men who use language, as well as on gender as a performative — something that is “accomplished” in context rather than being a fixed characteristic.

The gender factor has played a significant role in the study of language over the past decade. The social and cultural marking of gender-specific characteristics is attracting increasing attention from linguists and sociologists. Gender, as a concept significant for linguistics, has its roots in antiquity, when the first contrasts related to biological sex began to appear in language.

In order to examine in detail the significance of this factor for language learning, we should refer to the definition of the concept itself.

So, gender is a set of social and cultural norms that society assigns to people to perform depending on their biological sex; a social construct that can be viewed as a product of social institutions: family, education, medicine, law, language, art, science, and literature; sex, considered as a social or cultural phenomenon — a socially or culturally loaded sex.

A significant place in sociolinguistic research on gender is occupied by works that analyze politeness in the verbal behavior of men and women. The thesis that women are more polite stems, on the one hand, from the research of W. Labov and P. Traugott, who emphasized the tendency for women to use more prestigious standard forms (their speech is more formal, while men’s speech is more familiar), and, on the other hand, from the work of R. Lakoff, where the politeness of women’s speech is linked to their subordinate position in society, a sense of insecurity, and, as a result, an abundance of mitigating forms [6].

In the last years of the 20th century, active study of gender as a sociocultural category began, along with attention to a comprehensive examination of men’s and women’s socio-cultural roles and their interrelationships.

In many ways, the emergence of the feminist movement served as a catalyst for the development of gender studies in various fields of science.

As a social phenomenon, feminism attracted considerable attention from researchers in various fields. For linguistics, the so-called feminist critique of language was significant. It was representatives of this movement who were the first to draw attention to the differences and contrasts in language associated with gender



differences, to identify the specific features of communication and interaction in same-sex groups, and to draw parallels and contrasts between male and female speech.

Sociolinguistic studies have revealed that each individual's speech is influenced by various factors. Below are the most significant of them.

1. As mentioned earlier — gender and the speaker's social role.

2. Women are more prone to emphatic speech acts; they switch more easily, “changing” roles in communication.” Men find it harder to switch, displaying a certain “psychological deafness” — becoming absorbed in the topic under discussion, they do not respond to remarks unrelated to it.

3. In male speech, there is a greater tendency towards terminological precision, a стремление to use precise nominations, and a strong influence of the professional factor; in contrast to female speech, there is a greater tendency to use expressive, coarse means, including profanity and abusive language.

5. Women's speech is more rich in emotional and evaluative vocabulary. Women are more likely to use statements with a positive connotation and positive assessments, while men are more likely to adhere to neutral or negative judgments.

6. Typical features of women's speech include exaggerated expressiveness and frequent use of interjections and expressive particles, as well as diminutive suffixes. (little table, little cabinet, little puppy)

7. Women are more likely to use indirect speech acts; their language contains more etiquette forms. Very often, women use statements in a question form.

8. In their speech behavior, women do not seek to dominate; they are much better at listening and empathizing with the interlocutor, and they are more inclined toward empathetic perception than logical reasoning.

Thus, a person's gender-based ideas about various qualities (ranging from psychological to social roles) and about each other's speech behaviour include not only stereotypical (i.e., socially shared) but also personal ideas about “masculinity” and “femininity,” as well as about “male” and “female” speech behaviour, which are formed through subjective experience. Based on this premise, a person can not only reproduce the existing “civil servants” in society but also transform them and even destroy them [2, pp. 90–127].

E. G. Golyan notes that an important feature of women's speech and speech behaviour is their susceptibility to phatic communication, which leaves its mark on



retellings: in women's retellings, associative connections and a large number of inserts related to the situation dominate.

Men's retellings, by contrast, have only one goal: to fulfil the request (i.e., to retell the material they have received) and to convey the information they have received during the listening session clearly and concisely [1].

Thus, the results of the analysis of the functioning of gender speech stereotypes (GSS) in the minds of men and women allow us to conclude that gender is a sociolinguistic variable. It should be noted that identifying methodological principles for studying gender phenomena is of paramount importance when analyzing the functioning of the "gender" factor in the human cognitive sphere.

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