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Communicative and functional intentionality of femininity and masculinity: Grammar and semantics

Abstract

The article discusses the communicative and functional intentionality of femininity and masculinity in terms of grammar and semantics. The research aims to analyze the communicative and functional orientation of femininity and masculinity, examining their relationship and/or lack of correlation with feminine and masculine forms, and their manifestations in discursive practices. The article proposes distinguishing trends in contemporary feminization by diagnosing traditional-normative and gender-sensitive approaches to naming female individuals based on social status, profession, and title. Additionally, it seeks to determine the key factors driving public demand for the use of derived feminine forms. By comparing the functioning of feminine forms in the German language, the article identifies the main psychological, social, pragmatic, cognitive (including cognitive-behavioral and cultural-historical) factors that burden the national memory with noun forms for the nomination of female individuals in the modern Ukrainian language.

Keywords: femininities, masculinities, discursive practice, gender-marked form, androcentrism

Коммуникативно-функциональная интенциональность феминитивности и маскулинативности: грамматика и семантика

Резюме

В статье речь идет о коммуникативно-функциональной интенциональности феминитивности и маскулинативности в семантико-грамматическом аспекте. Цель исследования — анализ коммуникативно-функциональной направленности феминитивности и мас-

кулинативности с выяснением их соотносительности и/или несоотносительности с феминностью и маскулинностью и закреплением в дискурсивных практиках. Предлагается разграничение тенденций современной феминизации с диагностированием традиционно-нормативного и гендерно-чувствительного подходов в номинации лиц женского пола по социальному статусу, профессии, званию, определении главных факторов общественного запроса на использование производных феминитивных форм. На фоне сопоставления с функционированием форм женского рода в немецком языке устанавливаются основные психологические, социальные, прагматические, когнитивные (когнитивно-поведенческие, культурно-исторические) факторы обременения национальной памятью форм имен существительных для номинации лиц женского пола в современном украинском языке.

Ключевые слова: феминитивы, маскулинативы, дискурсивная практика, гендерно маркированные формы, андроцентричность

Introduction

Traditionally, femininity and masculinity are in opposition, rooted in the nominative category of gender, which is reflected in the representational motivation of feminine and masculine noun forms in the structure of morphological (more broadly, grammatical) gender categories. Within this category, we observe:

1. actualized oppositions between relatively equal noun formations for denoting familial relations and kinship (grandfather – grandmother, son – daughter);

2. relatively unequal societally marked oppositions between noun forms for denoting individuals based on social, professional, and other statuses: *kinoloh – kinolohynia*¹ (dog handler – female dog handler), *maister – maistrynia* (craftsman – craftswoman), *ofitser – ofitserka* (officer – female officer), *psykholoh – psykholohynia* (psychologist – female psychologist), *profesor – profesorka ↔ profesorynia* (professor – female professor), *filoloh – filolohynia* (philologist – female philologist) with a general functional load of the morphological form of the male gender. This is motivated by socio-historical and cultural-aesthetic factors, as well as the dominance of androgenous priorities in society.

When considering the issue of communicative and functional intentionality of femininities and their field of impact on the modern Ukrainian language, it is necessary to emphasize that it has social (including age-related and territorial) as well as scientific (↔ scientific-theoretical) relevance and continuity, and applied and/or theoretical-applied dimensions. For instance, in the 1920s, Mykola Sulyma stated that “Professional and similar terms in the Ukrainian language are mostly distinct for men and women” (Sulyma, 1928, p. 41). Equally significant are the observations of Ivan Ohienko regarding derived formations, which are fully developed since “our language has created paired forms for the names of beings: masculine and

¹ Translator’s note: All the examples in the article were transcribed in the Latin alphabet for better readability. Only certain examples were translated into English. It was done selectively to highlight and illustrate the differences between feminine and masculine noun forms.

feminine ones” (Ohiienko, 2011, p. 168). Various aspects of femininities have been studied by Nina Zakhlyupana (1984) — word-formation peculiarities of feminine forms for professional nouns with the suffix *-k(a)*, Maria Brus (2019) — trends in changing the status and role of femininities in the history of the Ukrainian language, Nina Klymenko (2010) — specifics of gender categorization of feminine forms for professional titles, ranks, etc. in a comparative aspect between Ukrainian and Modern Greek languages, and others. Alla Arkhanhelska has proposed a somewhat novel approach to analyzing femininities. She examined the linguistic status of such formations by systematically investigating their discursive establishment, normativity, and the qualification of modern designations for females within the framework of communicative etiquette. Additionally, she consolidated the results of a sociolinguistic survey on the attitudes of speakers from different social groups towards modern feminine noun forms (2019). Significant research has been conducted on femininities in gender and/or discursive-gender aspects (Tararenko, 2021; Kosmeda, Karpenko, Osipova, Salionovych, Khaliman, 2014). Recently, concise dictionaries of femininities have emerged for specific areas of professional use (Plachynda, 2018). Equally noteworthy are the studies of femininities in Polish (Małocha-Krupa, 2018), Serbian (Paunović-Rodić, 2019), Slovak (Shpitko, 2010, pp. 383–388), Spanish (Manuel, 2019), and German (Wippermann, 2017). These studies convincingly confirm the dynamics of their functioning and emphasize the importance of understanding the tendencies of their formation in different languages. It is relevant to explore the status of femininities in discursive practices and determine the motivation for their demand based on the differentiation of relevant psychological, cognitive-behavioral, socio-cultural, ethico-linguistic, and other factors.

The aim of the study is to analyze the communicative and functional intentionality of femininity and masculinity, with a focus on their correlation (or lack thereof) with feminine and masculine forms, as well as tracing the dynamics in the functional load of derivative femininities. The stated objective anticipates the pursuit of the following tasks:

1. qualification of the differential features of femininity and masculinity;
2. disclosure of the functional-normative, functional-visual, and functional-authorial intentions of femininity;
3. identification of semantic and grammatical features of femininities based on status-evolutionary and socio-dynamic factors.

The research novelty stems from the identification and characterization of various types of communicative-functional femininity, encompassing their functional-normative, functional-usage, and functional-authorial intentions of femininity and masculinity. This marks the first instance where such comprehensive categorizations have been undertaken.

The categories of femininity and masculinity are the objects of study, whereas the means of communicative-functional intentionality of femininity and masculin-

ity serve as the primary subject of the study. The examination material includes the language used in contemporary mass media, and works of contemporary Ukrainian writers such as Serhiy Zhadan, Maksym Kindruk, Andriy Lyubka, and others. Additionally, the study uses the resources of the Ukrainian National Linguistic Corpus² and the General Regional Annotated Corpus.³

The scientific validation of the factual material relied on two main approaches. The method of observing linguistic phenomena and the descriptive method was employed to systematically and objectively characterize the identified noun forms. The corpus-based method was also employed to verify linguistic facts and establish the collocation of the investigated units with other elements. The linguistic interpretation method was used to determine the functional load of the analyzed forms through their comparison to their status in other languages. The probabilistic-associative analysis was also applied to determine the likely co-occurrence of the investigated units in relevant contexts. The cognitive-linguistic approach ensures the understanding and identification of mechanisms involved in the selection of morphological forms in discursive practices and the construction of communicative-intentional models. The foundation of the intentional method (sender → intention → text + communicative situation) → addressee → decoding → impact (perlocutionary effect and/or communicative failure) contributes to the understanding of the communicative model within its situational load.

1. Key concepts and terms used

The used concepts and terms cover functional-communicative intentionality, feminativeness and masculinativeness. Feminativeness is defined as a specific type of speech-discursive directive considering the demands and values of socio-corporate groups. Feminativeness (↔ femininity) represents the attribute of femininity expressed through specific morphological and/or syntactic means, while femininity itself refers to the characteristic features, qualities, and behaviors associated with womanhood. Similarly, masculinativeness represents the attribute of masculinity, while masculinity encompasses the ways and forms of socialization, individualization, and identification of males. According to Maria Brus, “linguistic research [...] includes [...] various terms [translator’s note: related to femininity], such as *feminityv*, *feminityv*, *feminityvnyi*, *feminityvnyi*, *feminityvnist*, *feminityvnist*, *feminizuiuchyi*, *feminnyi*, *femininnyi*, and *femininn-*

² See Orhanizatsiya danykh ta funktsional’na struktura leksykohrafichnoyi systemy «Ukrayins’kyy natsional’nyy linhvistychnyy korpus». (n.d.). Naukova elektronna biblioteka periodychnykh vydan’ NAN Ukrainy. Retrieved from <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/handle/123456789/83983> (access: 20.10.2021).

³ See HRAK. (n.d.). Heneral’nyy rehional’no anotovanyy korpus ukrayins’koyi movy. Retrieved from: <http://uacorporus.org/Kyiv/ua> (access: 20.10.2021).

ist,”⁴ while “the terms *feminityv*, *feminatyv* (feminativum) are means of distinguishing appellatives denoting female persons within the lexicon” (Brus, 2007, p. 210). A similar association can be made with the terms *maskulinnyi*, *maskulin-nist*, *maskulinatyvnyi*, and *maskulinatyvnist* (see Arkhanhelska, 2015, pp. 91–94). However, it is worth noting that the derivational range of derivatives from the latter terms is considerably limited.

According to Stefana Paunović-Rodić, in Serbian academic discourse the concepts and terms of *masculinity* and *femininity* are used alongside the terms *muškost* (meaning ‘manliness’) and *ženstvo* (meaning ‘womanliness’). This usage confirms a tendency towards normalizing the conceptual and terminological framework used to denote the opposition between male and female elements in Ukrainian and other Slavic languages. Equally important is the fact that these concepts reflect social and cultural constructs of what is considered a complex set of characteristics associated with expected behaviors for women and men in a society at a particular moment in time (Radulović, 2009, p. 71). Such assertions, along with similar ones, provide evidence of the correlation between the functional significance of femininity and masculinity categories and the social status of men and women, the societal demand for the representation of feminine and masculine traits in linguistic practices, the value orientations of linguistic and social practices of corporate entities, and the needs of territorial communities and so on. The study of femininities is highly dynamic, encompassing both theoretical (Arkhanhelska, 2019; Semeniuk, 2000; Łaziński, 2006, pp. 15–35; Motschenbacher, 2016, pp. 65–88; Małocha-Krupa, 2018, pp. 129–136) and applied aspects (Brus, 2019; Synchak, 2022). Key areas of research include the exploration of feminization (↔ linguistic feminization) (Stepanenko, 2018, pp. 78–90) from the perspectives of stylistic neutrality and/or expressiveness (Małocha-Krupa, 2018), the regularity or irregularity of creating derived feminine forms (Stepanenko, 2018, pp. 78–90; Vondráček, 2011, pp. 570–606), and the usage of language marketing to identify factors influencing the expansion of the functions of derived feminine nouns in representing professions and titles across various discourses.

When examining the usage of femininities in various languages, both mono- and polysystemic, researchers primarily focus on:

1. certain characteristics involved in forming feminine derivatives (see also e.g., when the symmetrical female forms cannot be created because such word already exists: *pilot* (***pilotka***) → *pilotesa*; *plavets* (***plavka***) → *plavchynia*; *dyrektor* (***dyrektrysa***) → *dyrektorka* and so on. The Polish language also exhibits similar patterns, e.g.: *analitik* – *analityczka*, *ekspert* – *ekspertka*, *polityk* – *polityczka*, *superwizor* – *superwizorka*, and *web developer* – *web developerka*, however [translator’s note: it’s worth noting that some exceptions exist]: *dyrektor* – *dyrektorka* (school director) and *profesor* – *profesorka* (school teacher) (see: Klemensiewicz, 1957, pp. 101–119; Kaproń-Charzyńska, 2006, pp. 260–270), and others;

⁴ Italics in this and later quotations were added by the author (A.Z.).

2. defining thematic groups of corresponding femininities: a) political positions (*kantslerka, ministerka, prezydentka, premierka* etc.); b) scientific degrees, academic titles (*kandydatka, doktorka, profesorka, dotsentka* etc.); c) designations for managerial positions (*zaviduvachka, menedzherka, nachalnytsia, ochilnytsia, prokurorka* etc.); d) denominations based on performed functions (*administratorka, vyborchynia, nahliadachka, sluzhbovytsia* etc.); e) denominations based on profession (*vydavchynia, vykladavchynia, dresyruvalnytsia, metalurhynia, plavylnytsia, fakhivchynia* etc.), and so on;

3. the functions of masculine and feminine noun forms (Zahnitko, 2011) and/or the establishment of their functional-semantic paradigms with successive differentiation in recent varieties, such as:

a) generalizing (↔ ‘broadening’): *student* (student), *fakhivets* (specialist):

(1) Nash **student** linyvvyi i skeptychno nalashtovanyi (Zhadan, 2015) [our student is lazy and sceptical].

(2) Adzhe vam znadobytysia ne lyshe **likar**, a y druhyi **pilot z bortinzhenorom** (Avramenko, 2014, p. 104) [because you will need not only a doctor but also a co-pilot with a flight engineer].

b) nominative-situational:

(3) **Student** neporozumilo stysnuv plechyma (Antonenko-Davydovych, 1996, p. 145) [the student shrugged inexplicably].

c) identifying:

(4) Ya on ne **student**, tilky tserkovnoprykhodsku skinchyv (Antonenko-Davydovych, 1996, p. 196) [I’m not a student, I just finished church school].

4. the social perception and/or non-perception of femininities in the surveyed space. Thus Alla Arkhanhelska explores the attitudes of language users towards the feminization of the female lexicon (2019, pp. 198–201) and assesses the opinions of average Ukrainian speakers regarding femininities and trends of feminization (2019, pp. 201–279) by analyzing the contexts in which femininities are used. Additionally, she investigates the attitudes of academic professionals, who act “as language norm legislators,” towards feminist ideas in general, femininities, and the feminization of the female lexicon in particular (2019, pp. 280–298). Taking into account the propositions of Jiří Neustupný, who substantiated his theory of *language management* with the defining concept of *behavior toward language* (Jernudd, Neustupný, 1987, pp. 69–84), the researcher examines two slogans employed by proponents of feminization to describe the resistance against it:

a) the norm of the Russian language, and

b) Soviet-influenced feminizing derivational “pseudo-constraints” (Arkhanhelska, 2019, p. 368).

Despite the spread of noun-based feminine derivatives, it is important to note that a range of socio-discursive practices is not entirely inclined towards the com-

plete saturation of feminizing intentions in various discourses. Thus, for example, the Council of Churches in Ukraine called on the authorities to counteract the “imposition of genders” because “gender ideology and the denial of masculine traits in men and femininity in women pose significant threats to the institution of the family” (Karlov’s’kyy, 30.09.2021). This viewpoint vividly reflects a certain unwillingness of some social institutions to embrace the latest trends in the modification and dynamics of moral and ethical orientations (in contrast with e.g. France, where femininities were granted normative status in March 2022). Therefore, language management should be based on monitoring various discursive practices (Arkhanhelska, 2019, p. 246; Belei, 2015, pp. 9–10), which will enable the development of an optimal language marketing strategy in the use of such derivative forms. One of the manifestations of the rejection of femininities can be observed in the novel *Malyy ukrayinsky roman* by Andriy Liubka, where the main character says:

(5) Ponavyhaduvaly sobi **sotsiolohyn**⁵ i **vchytelyn**, **ministerok** i **vodiiok**, a zvuchyt use tse tak paskudno, niby takym slovom khochesh vysmiiaty kohos. U nykh prykhovano yakus znevazhlyvu obrazu. Ya b ne khotiv, shchob mene nazyvaly yakos tak (Liubka, 2020, p. 37) [They’ve invented all these female sociologists and female teachers, ministers, and female drivers, and it all sounds so disgusting as if you want to mock someone with that word. They have some hidden derogatory offences. I wouldn’t want to be called that way].

In such and similar summaries, the masculinative nature is clearly defined (the protagonist “hates feminized forms”) with the functional-communicative intentionality of patriarchal androgyny (see Taranenko, 2021, pp. 41–56).

In the Ukrainian language, derived feminized forms are produced by certain suffixes *-k(a)*, *-yn(ya)*, *-yts(ya)*, *-es(a)*, *-ev(a)*: *dekan* – *dekanka* (dean – deaness), *poet* – *poetka* (poet – poetess), *uchytel* – *uchytelka* (teacher – female teacher); *mayster* – *maystrynya* (craftsman – craftswoman), *istoryk* – *istorykynya* (historian – female historian), *mytets* – *mystkynya* (artist – female artist), *synoptyk* – *synoptykynya* (meteorologist – female meteorologist), *vyborets* – *vyborchynya* (voter – female voter), *vydavets* – *vydavchynya* (publisher – female publisher), *nastavnyk* – *nastavnytsya* (mentor – female mentor), *pysmennyk* – *pysmennytsya* (writer – female writer), *pidpolkovnyk* – *pidpolkovnytsya* (lieutenant colonel – female lieutenant colonel), *khudozhnyk* – *khudozhnytsya* (painter – female painter), *dekan* – *dekanesa*, *kloun* – *klounesa* (clown – female clown), *patron* – *patronesa* (patron – female patron), *poet* – *poetesa*, *styuard* – *styuardesa* (steward – stewardess); *korol* – *koroleva* (king – queen, wife of a king, female monarch), etc.

The designation may also be reflected analytically: **pani serzhant** (“Mrs. Sergeant”), **pani leitenant** (“Mrs. Lieutenant”), **pani kapitan** (“Mrs. Captain”), **pani pidpolkovnyk** (“Mrs. Lieutenant Colonel”), **pani heneral-leitenant** (“Mrs. Lieutenant General”). Some of these suffixes are regular and quite common: *-k(a)*, *-yn(ia)*, *-yts(ya)*, while others are irregular and less frequently used: *-es(a)*, *-ev(a)*. The

⁵ Emphasis in bold quotations were added by the author (A.Z.).

latter encompass a relatively narrow range of noun formations (e.g. *koroleva*), or they have ‘competitive’ parallel forms: *advokatka* – *advokatesa*, (female lawyer); *dekanka* – *dekanesa*, meaning ‘deaness’; *poetka* – *poetesa*, meaning ‘poetess’; *klounka* – *klounesa*, ‘female clown’). Moreover, these derived forms accumulate the usage markedness of the suffixes, where *-k(a)* is colloquial, but *-yn(ya)* is solemn, and *-es(a)* is expressively rich.

According to O. Synchak’s statement, the increase in the derivational potential of the suffix *-yn(ya)* indicates the return of the Ukrainian language to the “Central European language union” (the concept created and used by Yurii Shevelov), as well as active decolonization (Synchak, 2022). Occasionally speech forms with the suffix *-sh(a)* such as *dekansha* (deaness), *dyrektorsha* (female director), *heneralsha* (female general), *prokurorsha* (female prosecutor), *profesorsha* (female professor) belong to discursively established and rarely used forms. For example:

(6) **Dekansha** v mene — pani rozumiiucha (Karpa, 2004, p. 12) [I have a ‘dekansha’⁶ — a knowledgeable lady].

(7) **Prokurorsha** zaprosyla po dva roky khimii piatiom (Pashkivskyi, 1993, c. 68) [The ‘prokurorsha’ requested two years of chemistry for five people].

(8) A yak pochuvaie sebe **profesorsha**? (Bahmut, 1973, p. 27) [And how does the ‘profesorsha’ feel?].

(9) A smoly b vam hariachenkoi. Z atsetonom, z melenym sklom, z protertym polynchykom-chornobylem, — nazloblyvo prokomentovala **dyrektorsha** (Yavorivskyi, 2008, p. 78) [I would offer you some hot resin. With acetone, ground glass, and crushed wormwood, ‘dyrektorsha’ commented good-naturedly].

When discussing the functional-communicative intentionality of femininity, it is worth considering that a number of claims regarding the absence of feminized forms from corresponding noun forms with verb roots: *zynorob* (winemaker), *zemlemir* (land surveyor), *obrobliuvach* (processor); affixoids *-hraf*, *-loh*: *rentgenohraf* (radiographer), *fotohraf* (photographer), *astroloh* (astrologer), *stomatoloh* (dentist), *travmatoloh* (traumatologist); or military ranks and positions: *leitenant* (lieutenant), *maior* (major), *maister-serzhant* (master sergeant) (Shpitko, 2010, p. 383) require significant revision in a very short time. For example:

(10) Raisa-**leitenantsha** stoit u vikni v bilii nichnii sorochtsi (Yavorivskyi, 2008, p. 142) [Raisa-‘leitenantsha’, stands at the window in a white nightshirt].

(11) **Polkovnytsia** vyklykala mashynu z adiutantom (Zahrebelnyi, 1978, p. 101) [‘Polkovnytsia’ called for a car with an adjutant].

Derived formations, as evidenced in (10) and (11), had emerged in authorial practices prior to O. Shpitko’s publication, but this did not alter the researcher’s cautionary remarks, as her assertions pertaining to a range of institutional and discursive practices, including official, business, administrative, and managerial etc., as well as their full functioning in other status-related contexts. The latter are usually in-

⁶ Translator’s note: These and the following sentences, including the examples, have been translated into English, but the feminized forms have only been transliterated.

fluenced by Soviet practices. Furthermore, one could include additional mitigating arguments in support of the researcher's claims that feminized forms have:

1. a low level of aesthetics (certain discomfort, provocativeness etc.);
2. excessiveness (forms of masculine nouns within the functional-semantic paradigm encompass the designation of female individuals, serving a nominative-actualizing function, e.g.:

(12) **Khirurg** shvydko **ohlianula** poraneno (Stepko, 12.11.2001, p. 5) [The female surgeon quickly examined the wounded].

and designations of male individuals etc.;

3. non-systematic nature (the non-systematicity of such formations was imposed in the 1930s due to the forcible reorientation of Ukrainian orthographic practices towards Russian-language influence (Zahnitko, 2020, pp. 46–68). It remained relevant until the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, until the adoption of the new orthographic rules in 2019 (see *Ukrainskyi pravopys*, 2019);

4. blur the normativity of noun morphological forms.

The latter argument about blurring the normativity does not entirely correlate with Ukrainian literary continuity because the foundation of norms in the Ukrainian literary language is based on the popular colloquial element, which easily produces feminine lexemes. For example, the dictionary edited by Borys Hrinchenko includes 935 such formations (Feketa, 1968, pp. 165–167), and in the Dictionary of 1970–1980, there are about 3500 of them (although a significant portion of them are marked as *disparaging*, *rare*, or *colloquial*). The Web Dictionary by Olena Synchak already contains 2000 femininities, which the author interprets without reference to masculine derivative forms, such as **humoresnytsia**, *humoresnyts*; m. **humoresnyk** — *avtorka abo vykonavytsia humorystychnykh tvoriv* [female humorist — author or performer of humorous works] (Synchak, 2022). The trend of ‘feminizing’ nouns to indicate profession, status, and rank was prominent in the 1920s (as highlighted by Ivanna Blazhkevych in the article “Yak pysaty?” [How to write?] in the magazine *Zhinocha Dolya* in 1931). However, it faced strong suppression in the 1930s, driven by the directive of unification, essentially amounting to colonization, through the use of masculine noun forms.

According to Yaryna Puzyrenko, the use of femininities clearly reflects both traditional and gender-sensitive approaches. The traditional approach encompasses a conservative stance, which involves the consistent preservation of the functional status of masculine forms, as well as a neutral approach where femininities are used only in specific discursive practices, such as literary and partially journalistic contexts. Within the gender-sensitive approach, there are further differentiations, including a moderate variant (that avoids masculine forms only in pragmatically marked situations) and a radical variant (that advocates for the widespread use of feminine forms in singular and plural).

2. Femininities and gender values

Unlike Ukrainian, for example, in the German language, out of social necessity, practically every noun in its masculine form has a derivative feminine form: *der Dichter* → **die Dichterin** (*poet – poetesa*) [poet → poetess], *der Graff* → **die Gräfin** (*hraf* → *hrafynia*) [count → countess], *der Kanzler* → **die Kanzlerin** (*kantsler – kantslerka* ↔ *kantslerynia*) [chancellor → female chancellor], *der Kellner* → **die Kellnerin** (*ofitsiant* → *ofitsiantka*) [waiter → waitress], *der König* → **die Königin** (*kniiaz* → *kniahynia*) [king → queen], *der Lehrer* → **die Lehrerin** (*uchytel* → *uchytelka*) [teacher → female teacher], *der Prinz* → **die Prinzessin** (*prynts* → *pryntsesa*) [prince → princess], *der Student* → **die Studentin** (*student – studentka*) [student → female student], *der Schüler* → **die Schülerin**⁷ (*uchen* → *uchenytsia*) [pupil → female pupil]. All of these derived feminine forms in the German language are fully functional. The suffix *-in* in them does not carry any emotionally charged connotations. The use of femininities is driven by a range of discursive practices, including journalism, information and analytical data dissemination, etc. This significantly reduces gender asymmetry. Furthermore, unlike Ukrainian, the derived feminine forms in German have a complete paradigm in the plural. They are formed regularly by adding the particular suffix: *die Lehrerin* → **die Lehrerinnen**, *die Studentin* → **die Studentinnen**, *die Schauspielerin* → **die Schauspielerinnen**⁸. The German-speaking world has adopted the social practice of using two noun-morphological gender forms in both singular and plural when referring to individuals based on their profession, social status, etc.

Due to the increasing influence of queer theory and the advocacy for the recognition of gender diversity, the concept of the “gender gap” has emerged in the German language. It involves using symbols, such as asterisks or dashes, inserted between the stem and the ending of a word to inclusively represent all genders. This practice acknowledges that gender extends beyond the traditional binary of male and female. For instance, in corporate addressing, one may use variations like *Liebe Schüler_innen/ liebe Schüler*innen/ liebe Schülerinnen und Schüler* (example from Feminativy, 2020). Similarly, the phrase *liebe_r Mitarbeiter_* (gender gap, ‘respected employee’) can be transformed into → *liebe*r Mitarbeiter*in* (common masculine form ↔ generic masculine form), which can further be expanded to → *liebe Mitarbeiterin, lieber Mitarbeiter* signifying both genders —

⁷ In this case, the question of internal transformation of noun forms is not being explored: 1. a change in stress (*der Professor* [pro'fesoe] → *die Professorin* [profe'so:rin]); 2. the conversion of a vowel to umlaut in the derived form (*der Arzt* [a:rtst] → *die Ärztin* [ɛ:rtstin]; *der Koch* [koch] → *die Köchin* [k'o:chin]).

⁸ The qualification of the suffix *-innen* requires clarification, as in this case, the feminine plural is considered a derivation of masculine forms, while the suffix itself is viewed as a unified entity, although a controversial one. To provide a more accurate assertion, it is important to recognize the presence of a specific formant *-nen*, which has an established morphological role and represents the morphological meaning of the word.

‘respected female employees, respected male employees’. The gender gap (and its variations) is widespread in feminist, educational, university, and other discursive practices. Within contemporary German studies, there is an ongoing debate questioning the relevance of the gender gap. A letter expressing concerns about the practicality of using such forms was written by Rudolf Taschner, Chris Lonner, Konrad Paul Liessmann, and signed by approximately 800 experts from Austria. A similar perspective can be found in the work of Peter Eisenberg (Eisenberg, 2013, p. 101). It seemed that the democratic tendencies in German society were effectively reflected in the language and would experience consistent development. However, various obstacles have emerged:

- a) entrenched social stereotypes;
- b) deviations from the principle of linguistic economy;
- c) departure from the tradition of employing masculine gender forms;
- d) the creation of emotionally charged derivative forms and constructions to represent “otherness,” and so on.

3. Social Factors of Femininity

The social demand for noun-morphological derivative forms of the feminine gender is determined by:

1. psychological factors (such as achieving gender parity, increasing the status of gendered individuals, and consistently combating misogyny):⁹

(13) Na 12 posterakh rozpovidaietsia pro vyznachnykh **biolohyn, neurofiziolohyn, matematykn ta fizykn** (Katayeva, 14.09.2021, p. 3) [Twelve posters showcase renowned female biologists, neurophysiologists, mathematicians, and physicists].

2. social ↔ social-political factors (advocating for equality in all areas of public life and state governance):

(14) **Premierka** Finliandii zaklykala obhovoryty mozhlyvist 4-dennoho robochoho tyzhnia (Prem’yerka Finlyandiyi khoche..., 8.01.2020) [The Prime Minister of Finland called for a discussion on the possibility of a four-day workweek].

(15) “Yevropeiska pravda” zustrilasia z **prezydentkoiu** Estonii Kersti Kaliulaid u Kyievi 23 serpnia (Sydorenko, 25.08.2021) [*Yevropeiska pravda* met with Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid in Kyiv on August 23rd].

⁹ Taking into account Alla Arkhanhelska’s statement that femininities “are not semantically, pragmatically, and stylistically equivalent to their masculine counterparts” (2013, p. 298). It should be noted that such a status is a result of social attitudes towards femininities, which are rooted in the persistence of the patriarchal (or rather, androcentric) tradition. However, there is potential for gradual transformation towards a more gender-balanced society (Motschenbacher, 2016, pp. 65–68). This progress is most evident within the German-speaking tradition, characterized by its dominant Protestant values, despite encountering resistance along the way. Furthermore, the expansion of discursive practices, specifically the full utilization of femininities in the Ukrainian language, indicates a gradual alignment not only of formal but also functional binary of societal perspectives.

(16) Video vystupu **posadovytsi** poshyrylos u sotsmerezkhakh (Sitnikova, 15.09.2021) [The video of the government official's speech spread on social media].

3. gender and/or sexual (overcoming prejudice, sexism, etc.):

(17) Inna Kuznetsova: 25 liutoho — 150 rokiv z dnia narodzhennia **lytsaresy** ukrain-skoi literatury Lesi Ukrainky chy Larysy Petrivny Kosach (Radio Svoboda, 20.02.2021) [Inna Kuznetsova: February 25th marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Ukrainian 'lits-aresa' (esteemed lady) Lesya Ukrainka, or Larysa Petrivna Kosach].

(18) DBR u Kyievi vstanovylo, shcho **advokatesa** vyrishyla obmanom zavolodity hroshy-ma pidpnyiemtsia (Адвокatesa за «вирішення» земельних питань..., 23.04.2021) [The State Bureau of Investigations in Kyiv found that the 'advokatesa' (lawyer) decided to fraudulently obtain money from the entrepreneur].

(19) Mariia Karpil — vidoma ukrainska **fotografynia** u zhanri portrait wedding (A. Taranenko, 1.04.2021) [Mariia Karpil — a well-known Ukrainian 'fotografynia' (photographer) in the wedding portrait genre].

4. cultural-historical ↔ cultural-evolutionary (interrupted continuity of natural development):

(20) **Viiskovosluzhbovytsia** brala uchast u vyvezenni liudei z Kabula (Prystyans'ka, 25.09.2021) ['Viiskovosluzhbovytsia' (The servicewoman) participated in the evacuation of people from Kabul].

(21) **Medykynia** poradyla zamynty zhyrne miaso yizheiu z nyzkym vmistom khol-esterynu (Kardiolog nazvala try shkidlyvi produkty..., 11.10.2021) ['Medykynia' (The female doctor) advised replacing fatty meat with low-cholesterol food.].

5. cognitive-behavioural (perception of one's own *self* in relation to others, but not an attempt to put oneself in the place of the interlocutor):

(22) Ya **nutrytsiolohynia**. **Nutrytsiolohynia** Anna Drobysheva povidomyla, shcho v rasi-ioni potriben ovoch, yakyi dopomozhe pechintsi ta vporaietsia z pidvyshchenym tyskom (Yaremchuk, 3.11.2021) ['Nutrytsiolohynia' Anna Drobysheva has stated that including vegetables in the diet is essential for supporting liver health and managing high blood pressure];

and other factors. Furthermore, the expansion of societal recognition of femininities, as one of the of manifestations femininity, is supported by specific normative acts.¹⁰ This trend is also observed in other languages that have undergone gradual decolonization. For example, in Moldova, the government has approved a new professional classifier in which femininities in the Romanian language have emerged symmetrically: *filosofi* ↔ *filosoafe*, *regizori* ↔ *regizoare*, *ingineri* ↔ *inginere*, *meteorologi* ↔ *meteorologe*, *agricultori* ↔ *agricultoare*, and so on. The classifier also allows for the use of femininities in the Russian language in Moldova.

¹⁰ On January 18, 2020, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine officially permitted the use of femininities titles for female employees in personnel documentation (derivatives should be formed in accordance with spelling rules and align with the professional classifier).

In the modern grammatical context of the Ukrainian language, and to some extent in other Slavic languages, we can observe varying trends of socio-cultural fashion. These trends partly involve self-identification through a certain level of extravagance reflected in derivative femininities. The naturalness or artificiality of their usage in different discursive practices remains a subject of debate. The increasing number of such formations does not undermine the foundations of androcentrism in Ukrainian and other Slavic languages. Instead, it reflects the influence of new factors on the grammatical norm of gender categorical forms. These factors also blur the chronological boundaries of their codification. The heightened opposition between femininity and masculinity in the grammatical structure of language, across its various functions, does not fully address the requirements of each monolingual persona and polylingual persona in general. This is because linguistic personalization already determines not only the imposed usage of a particular gender form by the language community but also dictates the right to independent choice. This choice involves the application of linguistic individualization in socio-gendered nomination.

Conclusions

A linguist should consider that the issue of using femininities is socially engaged and attracts the attention of politicians, managers, media professionals, and others. This attention shapes various power dynamics in their usage, ranging from nominal to real. Femininities are one of the manifestations of the categorical field of femininity and contribute to the overall framework of societal structure. The nominal usage of feminized forms encompasses diverse trends in their usage, influenced by the idea that conventions vary over time. On the other hand, their actual usage involves several significant factors. These factors include the functional expansion of women's status in society, the emphasis on their equality within official and managerial contexts, and the diminishing influence of Soviet-influenced traditions that were oriented towards neighbouring linguistic practices, predominantly Russian-speaking, and others. The establishment of grammatical norms is a lengthy process, therefore actively generated neofemininities should undergo not only the test of time but also the examination of their reception by different generations, and subsequently, their usage in all discursive practices.

It is promising to establish a parallel register of femininities in various Slavic and non-Slavic languages. This will allow us to identify common and distinctive trends in their formation. Furthermore, by diagnosing their status in national corpora of texts, we can trace their integration into discursive practices.

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