

**LINGUISTIC FACTORS OF FORMATION OF FEMINITIVES AND GENDER-
NEUTRAL WORDS IN PROFESSIONAL LEXICON IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

*M. Davlyatova*¹

Abstract:

In this article author studies the development and functioning of gender-neutral vocabulary and feminatives in English. The problem of the formation of feminatives in different languages is relevant due to the nature of the anthropocentric paradigm of modern linguistics, in the framework of which considerable attention is paid to gender factors in the development of modern languages, their androcentrism, which causes the predominance of masculine over feminine in language.

Key words: androcentrism, feminatives, gender-neutral lexicon, gender political correctness, English language

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Linguists studying English have noted that recently there have been tendencies to form and widely spread gender-neutral words in English. In this article we will consider the causes and consequences of this phenomenon, paying special attention to the functioning of feminatives in modern English. Gender political correctness is the reflection in language of the struggle against discrimination on the basis of sex.

Feminitives (from Latin femina - "woman"), feminatives or nomina feminine are feminine nouns that denote women, derived from and paired with masculine nouns denoting men. Usually feminatives denote occupations, social affiliation, and place of residence. Many feminatives refer to "potential words" - words that are not registered in dictionaries, but when used in speech, speakers understand their meaning. In the "Explanatory Dictionary of Names of Women" by philologist N. P. Kolesnikov, published in 2002, there are more than 7000 feminatives[1].

The formation of feminatives is studied by word formation, usage - by gender linguistics. The modern formation of neologisms-feminatives and their introduction into speech occurs due to the increase in the number of available opportunities for women after the beginning of their emancipation in the XX century and is associated with the demands for greater "visibility" of women put forward by feminist movements [2].

The linguistic feature of feminatives is that "they are feminine words, alternative or paired with analogous masculine concepts, referring to all people regardless of their gender" [3]. The problem of feminatives formation in different languages is relevant due to the nature of the anthropocentric paradigm of modern linguistics, in the framework of which considerable attention is paid to gender factors in the development of modern languages, their androcentrism, which causes the dominance of the masculine over the feminine in language.

¹ *Davlyatova Madina Shakirovna, Termez, Uzbekistan*

Such dominance is understood as "an age-old linguistic tradition objectively established in post-patriarchal cultures, according to which language prefers masculine forms" [4]. Another direction of the study of feminatives is the consideration of their structural features.

The problem of formation and functioning of feminatives is closely related to the phenomenon of linguistic political correctness with regard to the use of gender-marked words (especially names of professions), the problems of word formation and intercultural differences in the use of gender-neutral and gender-marked words.

In many languages it is manifested in the active spread of feminatives - feminine nouns formed from masculine nouns and denoting women. The word "feminative" exists in two graphic varieties. The variant "feminative" is mostly used by scientists, while in the media the variant "feminitiv" is more common. Many people believe that feminatives were formed relatively recently against the background of women's struggle for equal rights with men, but this opinion is wrong. The category of gender occupies a rather complex position in the English language. Already in the ancient period of language development (7th-9th centuries) it was not stable enough and gradually degenerated because of the apparent contradictions of real and grammatical gender. At present it is observed only in pronouns. The following suffixes are traditionally used as indicators of gender in nouns: -ess (prince - princess), -ine (hero - heroine), -ette (cosmonaut - cosmonette) -trix (administrator - administratrix) - in all these examples, the first word denotes a male and the second a female person [4]. Often the indication of gender is contained in the meaning of the root of the word: boy - girl, man - woman. This principle is the basis of many new English feminatives. Some nouns denoting men received a "feminine" analogue. Such pairs as policeman - policewoman, barman - barmaid, salesman - saleswoman, businessman - businesswoman and many others appeared. The emergence of female equivalents of nouns denoting representatives of a particular profession became necessary when female representatives began to work on an equal footing with men.

However, nowadays many people refuse to use both words from the above-mentioned language pairs, replacing them with gender-neutral analogues. This process began in the 80s of the XX century, and in 1999 UNESCO issued a list of recommendations - Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language - where it is suggested to use gender-neutral words, avoiding gender specifics [5]. Thus, flight attendants were called flight attendant instead of steward and stewardess, firefighters were called firefighter instead of fireman and firewoman, and salespeople were called salespeople (in the singular salesperson). This process marked a new stage in the development of gender-politically correct vocabulary, showing that the gender of a representative of a particular profession does not matter. In addition, it helps to avoid complications in cases where a person does not identify with any gender, or when it is impossible to recognise a person's gender accurately from their name (due to the large number of gender-neutral names in English). Nevertheless, when it is necessary, an indication of gender is still left. For example, if a restaurant owner is looking for waitresses who will wear traditional costumes to create a special atmosphere in the establishment, the job description will indicate the gender of the employee by using the word waitress rather than the gender-neutral waitperson.

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The formation of feminitives in different languages is conditioned by both similar and different factors. Feminitives denoting professions, with a few exceptions, are paired with masculine nominatives.

The formation of paired feminitives in languages is ensured by various linguistic means: 1) the presence of word-forming types with the modifying derivational meaning of femininity in the sphere of noun formation, i.e. nominations with the meaning of female person, motivated by masculine nouns with the meaning of person (steward - stewardess); 2) the formation of compound words (chairman, chairwoman); 3) the use of word combinations (woman doctor, woman worker).

In 2008, the European Parliament adopted the so-called "Gender-neutral language guidelines" (Gender-neutral language in the European Parliament), which states: "Gender-neutral language is a generic term covering the use of non-sexist language, inclusive language or gender-fair language. The purpose of gender-neutral language is to avoid word choices which may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning by implying that one sex or social gender is the norm. Using gender-fair and inclusive language also helps to reduce gender stereotyping, promotes social change and contributes to achieving gender equality" [6].

"Gender Neutral Language Guidelines" provide recommendations on the use of gender-neutral vocabulary instead of gendered vocabulary, e.g.:

Administrator (for both genders),

Assistant (for both genders),

Doctor (for both genders-avoid lady/woman doctor),

Author (not authoress),

Manager (not manageress),

Mayor (not mayoress),

Midwife (for both genders; there is no accepted alternative for male midwives),

Nurse (for both genders; avoid male nurse),

Police officer (not policeman/policewoman unless the officer's gender is relevant).

As for compound words with the supporting components man and woman, the manual offers different options: "Business person/executive (plural: business people) (not businessman; businesswoman only if the person's gender is being stressed; alternatively, and in plural contexts, use business circles or business milieux)".

Labelling by gender according to this guideline is an exception:

1) "Fisherman/fishermen ('fisher' and 'fisherfolk' are not widely accepted)";

2) "Priest (only use 'woman priest' if relevant; 'priestess' only in a historical context, e.g. ancient Rome)";

3) "Waiter/waitress (no gender-neutral term has been successfully proposed)" [6:12-13].

It is known that the linguistic norm and real language use do not always coincide. It is characteristic that the possibility and even the necessity of using feminitives instead of gender-neutral words is justified by linguists. Thus, E.N. Vasilenko states: "...feminitives are a kind of linguistic means of struggle for gender equality, and feminisation of language is not only (and probably not so much) a linguistic, but also a cultural, socio-economic phenomenon. Innovations in general, and in language in particular, are always perceived by society with

wariness, but it is necessary to realise that the use of feminines is a significant step towards achieving gender equality".

The English language tends to be politically correct and to use gender-neutral words, which is due to the social ideology of equality that has developed in English-speaking societies on the basis of levelling the gender labelling of concepts in linguistic expression. The established ideology and moral norms have led to the fact that they have become the basis for the formation of language policy of states. [7]

In this way, we can conclude that significant changes are taking place in the vocabulary of the English language, caused by the need to harmonise the language with the existing non-linguistic realities. Gender political correctness imposes special requirements to the modern English language, and for effective communication with its speakers it is necessary to closely follow its development and check with modern usual and linguistic norms.

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