

## Grammatical gender and gender parameters as constituents of the text composition

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**Abstract.** The article deals with grammatical gender parameters as constituent elements of text. Grammatical categories of gender are established as a result of the language cognition of native speakers and are not always directly correlated with sex division. Notwithstanding the fact that gender is still considered an excessive grammatical category, it should not be considered useless simply because of its text-forming potential. This essay argues that gender categories are also highly connotative and are often used as a means of displaying polyphony in a work of fiction. Such connotations are usually revealed in marked members of the opposition. Implied meanings are perceived on the basis of the presuppositions and as a result of logical thinking. Gender is a parameter of cohesion and it transfers the text from one register to another.

[Makerova S.R. **Grammatical gender and gender parameters as constituents of the text composition.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(9s):85-90] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 16

**Keywords:** category of gender, text-formation, implication, cohesion, message

### Introduction

It is well known that in Indo-European proto-languages two gender systems are reconstructed: the oppositeness of "animate - inanimate" genders and the oppositeness of "masculine-feminine-neuter" genders. These two systems belong to different epochs (the second one is later) and are heterogeneous. Subsequently, the "animate" gender was converted into masculine and feminine genders, whereas the ancient "inanimate" gender was transformed into neuter gender with respect to masculine and feminine genders. "Secondary" character and derivation of feminine gender in this new gender system is clearly manifested in the semantic content of the generic correlates: masculine gender = whole class (generic term) and not only male sex, whereas the feminine gender in correlative cases always shows exactly female sex. Generic oppositeness in Indo-European languages is mostly considered as privative oppositeness (at least, for animate nouns, where feminine gender is clearly marked, while the masculine gender leaves the sex trait unexpressed and serves an indication of the class in general).

Gender motivation based on natural sex was mentioned by many grammarians (even after a syntactic coordinated nature of this category was established, and the languages that did not have the gender category were described, see writings of J. Grimm, Wilhelm von Humboldt, A.A. Potebnya, I.A. Baudouin de Courtenav) [see, for example [1]].

Ancient anthropomorphism affected generic distribution of inanimate nouns; in most languages, words that fall into the feminine category are connected to principles of producing and bearing. In Indo-European languages, names of trees—especially

fruit trees—are predominantly words of feminine gender (because the tree was regarded as something that gives rise to progeny), whereas the names of fruit are of neuter gender (in Russian *apple tree* is of the feminine gender, while *an apple* is of the neuter gender). Linguistic consciousness of carriers of languages having the category of gender, are simply penetrated by anthropomorphic and animistic conceptualizations associated with this category: *Mother Volga, Father Don, Mother Moscow, Mister Great Novgorod* etc. For French children, mice, frogs and owls are "girls", while rats, toads and eagle-owls are "boys", notes A.M. Shahmaykin [2: 231], referring to the close correlation between gender perception and grammatical gender.

Gender category of personal names is highly informative in diachrony: thus the conflation of the noun gender with the person's sex that it denotes makes it possible to find the status and the role of men and women in society. Harkening back to the Old English period, we see that all key positions (administrative and political functions, the state protective function, etc.) were held by men, and this is reflected in the developed masculine nominations designating rulers and soldiers of various ranks. Masculine nouns reflect adherence of male persons to the position of priest and other senior positions in the hierarchy of the church organization, as well as the engagement in skilled professional activities. Thus, in the language of the Old English period, the function of generic differences in personal nouns is not limited to the designation of the biological sex of the individual, though the function does show the status of people of different sex in society [3: 91]. Gender that from a semantic point of view was sometimes considered "redundant category" (J. Lyons, E. Sapir,

etc.) is certainly not a "semantically empty" concept even in connection with nouns that are beyond the category of animateness. It is this fact that determines text composing capabilities of the gender category [see, for example, [4]].

Compare: *A few words about Marina. She is 32. Age of trials and mistakes. Another "mistake" (feminine gender), turned and walked away, or rather, gone. And to be more exact, got into his (masculine gender) car and left* (V.Tokareva, "Pasha and Pavlusha").

Most often the gender of nouns is not referred to as a communicatively caused category even in studies that are based on the idea of communicative oriented grammar; gender is solely determined based on formal syntactic grounds. The category of gender is investigated beyond the components of the communication act, because gender conformance rules are prerequisite of grammatical correctness. Meanwhile, generic correlates can be used as a resource to purposefully create the integrity of the text, as well as the polyphony inherent to literary text [see, for example [5]].

Compare the case when the change from a standard notation to a notation marked by pejorative assessment is associated with a substantiation of a character profile: **Female tour guide**, *without dropping pointer, turned to talking children. Kate felt the heavy look, which gave rise to a desire to hide in Troubetzkoy Bastille.*

- *So. Let's agree: Now I 'm speaking and you will be speaking after the tour. Crimplen coat went silent and pulled into the cathedral. Ekskursovodsha (the word of feminine gender meaning female tour guide) guided tourists to the king's gate, but even here, at the altar, she could not calm down.*

- *Everybody stay to make semicircle. Do not come closer than a pointer. Scrubby children come forward. I said scrubby children come forward!*

*"A bad case" - Kate turned and walked to the exit* (N. Tolstaya, "Spare Day").

Thus, as long as the tour guide did not come in full force, the narrator calls her a neutral name. Then, when the nature of her character becomes clear (thanks to just two but very revealing replicas), the author introduces a marked designation, i.e. "**ekskursovodsha**". Compare similar literary pattern in another story "Culture Shock" by N. Tolstaya:

*The next senior tourist was a prime minister's wife. Short blue skirt and a straw hat with a ribbon. She was the premiere's new wife and the previous one left at home . < ... > "Where do we start? - I ask. - Italian Renaissance or the Impressionists? Rembrandt or Malachite Hall?" - "I would prefer first the store", - says the prime*

*minister's wife. The guards got worried: the shops are closed, the sellers long since gone home. I hear the screams through Rastrelli enfilade: "Bring back sellers! Remove the seals! Take away the dogs!"*

*As we walked to the shop, it opened. High guest wandered listlessly along the sales case, asked to show the egg from jasper, ring of bark, flipped through the calendar with a picture of Russian fish and bought nothing. Fifteen minutes left before the end of tour. < ... > Mrs. **ministersha** (the word of feminine gender meaning a minister's wife) smiled, asked me my name and we left for the hotel* (Tolstaya, "Culture Shock").

Ability to transmit vivid connotations is primarily peculiar to marked forms:

*But you cannot hide coterie from the head teacher (acerbic woman teaching civics). She caused the rumors in the district that an **instructorsha** (instructress) came from methodical department, sat like a toad, at a meeting of the coterie... And the conclusion of the toad was: stop to chew over the classics! No doubt that it distracts pupils from life* (A.Solzhenitsyn "Nastenka").

Here in the convergence of stylistic means (acerbic toad) is used pejorative *instructorsha*. Compare also: *There are plenty of words that do not have the necessary parallel derivations: "Doctor", "Associate professor", "Editor", and "Manager". Unfortunately, language gods did not remove a feather from these "male" words to make female versions* (V. Novikov "Affair with a Language").

Women's correlates of profession titles often act as a carriers of implicit pragmatic information, the most frequently pejorative ones [see, for example, [6]]:

*A few months later, however, this office furniture, to say honestly, for a long time to be writing off, showed a legitimate owner, who returned after a year's stay in Poland, energetic **doktoritsa** (the word of feminine gender meaning Ph.D.) of our sciences. < ... > It is possible, of course, to torment the soul by failures of "Spartacus" or our national team, but the same energy can be spent to root for your own sole wife, who is seriously struggling with **zamdirektorsha** (the word of feminine gender meaning deputy director) of the Institute. < ... > Elderly doctors of sciences and **doctorshas** somehow appealed to young and absolutely confident writer as to certain pythia ...* (V. Novikov, "Affair with a Language").

Female correlate of personal nomination, posed in the header position, most clearly connotes pejorative meanings. Compare story by A. Chekhov "Yuristka" (female lawyer), where it comes to the European minister's daughter, who helped her parent in drafting legislation, including the articles

concerning the marriage. At the age of 18, she asks to ban young people to marry before 35 years, while at the age of 20 years she offers to lower the age to 30 years, etc.

Even occasional generic forms, created by "reverse derivation" technique (and, used just once in the composition) may be considered as a text phenomenon. The ad "Wanted Needleman" (in Russian this word has only feminine gender), which appears in the C. Dovlatov's novel, is far from a grammatical curiosity. If we recall the circumstances of the story "The Zone", this form seems to be deeply motivated and closely related to the most important category of the text, namely informative value.

The word *Zolushok*, came from jokes of the KVN (Club of cheerful and smart guys) and stood for a man who followed the fate of Cinderella, someone who met a "princess" and changed his life mainly in terms of financial status. This proved popular as thrifty "summarization" of the whole story.

The expressive capabilities of neuter gender are poorer than those of words of feminine and masculine gender, especially in occasional use. Neuter gender is interesting as an expression of the semantics of passivity, inanimateness, asexuality and marginality. Neuter gender plays an important characterological role in A. Chekhov's story "Late Flowers":

*The servant has long been accustomed to seeing in his master something that should be carried, undressed and shawled.*

Compare also: *And while his wife cooks, it sits at a table and reads a book* (D.Harms, "Pashkvil");

*... rummaging in geography textbook, I came across the line: "In the northern zone of the country 0.6 of a human falls per space of square mile... Since that it became a custom that 0.6 of a human walk up to me in the days of voids. In my black intervals* (S.Krzhizhanovsky, "Autobiography of a Corpse").

Compare also the pejorative nature of using the neuter gender in the translated text:

*He came several times and he thought quite an adventure when they asked him to have a luncheon with them which was cooked and served by scarecrow of a woman whom they called Evie* (W.S. Maugham, "Theatre"); *Compare translation offered by G.Ostrovskaya: He came to him a few times, and it was a real adventure, when he was invited to lunch, that they were fed by the shaped scarecrow named Evie, which served as their maid* (in Russian, the word *scarecrow* is of neuter gender).

In English, nouns that do not indicate the sex formally belong to the neuter gender, and the lack of inflections provides the author with broad opportunities for attributing gender characteristics to certain characters. Shakespeare's elf from

«Midsummer Night's Dream» is a Mustard Seed. «Elf, apparently, is a male, but if the reader would like to perceive him as a girl, Shakespeare does not prevent this, especially because in Elizabethan theater, all characters were played by males anyway. Perhaps, the idea was in elf's asexuality, which concludes not in assigning him a neuter gender, but in the fact that in English in such cases the transition from neuter gender to masculine and feminine genders is provided with equal probability and equal ease" [7: 4].

The use of the pronoun *it* (along with *she*) with regard to Eve by a character of Mark Twain's story "Adam's Diary" is also indicative.

Common name of the person (such as a *human* or *friend*) can be a source of communicative difficulties that are overcome by progression of text:

*Sixteen years old son of grandmother and grandfather then was going to bring seventeen years old girl to his mother's mud hut. Mom, I came to love with a human* (pause, mother nods, suspecting God knows what). *Mom, this human is pregnant* (mother nods almost with relief), *Mom, we have a baby - well, okay, sonny, will bring him up"* (L. Petrushevskaya, "Children's Party").

Compare also:

*Michael went out to the corridor.*

- *Good afternoon, Lera. Do you mind if I have a friend on a visit?*

*Friend also left the room. Short skirt, slightly parenthetic legs in high heels. Humble face without makeup. These kind of girls conquer with a stranglehold.*

- *Snezhana. – the girl held out soft as cloth hand. – Michael and I are studying English* (N. Tolstaya, "Woman's Movement").

Thus, the use of gender forms of personal nouns in the text is not rigidly defined, constant and independent. Replacing the generic forms can determine the presence of "someone else's consciousness" in the author's text, they are able to transmit movement from the unknown, officially distant and alien to the known, familiar and close, from the uncertainty (summarized, generalized) to a specific (individual).

Powerful line in the development of the semantics of many languages concludes in the transfer of animal names to human and is reflected in literary texts. In the novella "An Evening with Claire" by G. Gazdanov, representatives of the animal world such as mammals, birds, reptiles and insects are mentioned 140 times [8:129].

So-called "zoomorphic code" has its own specifics in every language, defined by cultural and historical parameters. At the same time, metaphors and comparisons involving this code are

characterized by universal features. Compare correspondence of animalism genders in original and translated texts:

*Wounded vanity can make a woman more vindictive than a lioness robbed of her cubs* (W.S. Maugham, "The Painted Veil").

If in the objects being compared there is no concordance in terms of gender-sex, then additional implicit meanings are emerged. "In verse *Haroun ran faster than deer* explicitly is emphasized an external feature, common for two objects, which is fastness; though the structure of the image includes also a hidden common symptom, which is timidity, lack of courage (note that the poet takes a noun of feminine gender)" [9: 51].

In a parody of A. Arkhangelsky on M. Koltsov we read:

*Lloyd George, this old fox with decorous manners of a gentleman from a big road, waged his liberal scruffy tail. < ... > Finally, Chamberlain, this venerable monkey with a monocle and Shanghai hyena in a smocking, demonstrated steadfast hard head of double-dyed conservative* (A. Arkhangel'skiy, "On Zaholustinsk Morals").

Here newspaper stamps of 30s' are also parodied. The comic effect is knowingly achieved based on zoomorphic images. Compare change of zoomorphic images as a means to achieve the most accurate statements and the text as a whole:

*I find myself against Kurosawa. Mature Japanese chews and looks ahead blankly. I would gladly ask him a few questions, but I do not know Japanese. And he does not speak Russian < ... > I'm going circle-wise and looking for my friends. But everybody is somehow busy. It turns out that the reception in the Kremlin or in another territory is a place where things work. People meet, acquaint, agree, wash down with vodka, chaise down with caviar, exchange phone numbers.*

***I am a lone wolf. Rather, the bitch-wolf. A dog, more truly. A dog without a master. I go and look around. There is no power behind me. No pack. I am in and on myself, a single specimen.***

*However, I am a screenwriter, looking like a Japanese girl. So what? Screenwriter's fame no shame. All glory goes to actresses. As for screenwriter, only the name appears in the captions. Who out there is reading it ...* (V. Tokareva, "Cinema and Round About").

Thus, in a story written from the first person and having quite explicit autobiographical background, it is about a Kremlin reception of XI Moscow International Film Festival winners. Tokareva expresses her sensations from the reception, of which the main is a feeling of loneliness and emptiness because of the fact that her high-day

(the film produced by her screenwriting won the main prize of the festival) did not become for her a real feast (compare the text: *... I wouldn't mind to stay at master's foot... And not to hang out as not sewn sleeve. I walked down the hall. I liked the tall thin Englishman. I went up to him, for no special reason, just to welcome him on the celebration of life. He looked over my head, listened politely my English and waited when I turn away. I turned away < ... > I would like to see at least someone in this hall watching me and thinking, she is the best. She is unique. There is no another woman like her. Look. But no one was looking ...*).

It is important to note that zoomorphic code in this story is used in the context of amplification: a description in the selected fragment develops from less accurate to more accurate image. Moreover, semantic and pragmatic potential of zoomorphisms actually does not leave the author any other way for the progression of the text. The point is that the comparison (metaphorical identification) with a dog without preliminary explanation may have absolutely different connotations (compare: *evil like a dog*, recorded in the Dictionary of Stable Comparisons [10:134]. As for a wolf, two cases are indicated in this dictionary: *hungry as a wolf* and *to look like a wolf; both of you are fine and brightest people, though gazing at each other like wolves*, A. Chekhov, "The Duel"; - *Did he live poorly? Why did he look at the parents like a wolf?* V. Tendriakov, "Beyond the Household" [10 68 178 ]). That is, the figurative picture of the world, created by means of sustained zoomorphic comparisons, presents somewhat different meanings than those needed by V. Tokareva.

As is known "in everyday language the word 'compare' means to express one's attitude, to 'assess', to 'measure', guided by our senses and our passions" [11: 112]. As for stable comparisons, their function actually is intensification of the comparison criterion. Therefore, beyond the context (in this case, amplifying context), zoomorphic identification yields little information.

Metaphorical nominations, expressed explicitly, are immediately perceived by the reader with a linear **discovery of the text**. Though semantic relations between given nominations (in this case *a wolf – a bitch wolf – a dog*) and other components of the text are understood by the recipient on the basis of presuppositions and logical implications [see, for example, [12]].

Compare also:

*Life somehow evolved. The only thing that had been like a nail in the heart was Lisa. How is she? What happened to her? No one appreciates her endeavors except of hysterical grandmother. And*

*what she can, this grandmother? Just grab her head and cluck like a **chicken bad** (V. Tokareva, "Piggy's Victory");*

*- Pasturing, - says Tamara. - Like a **cow** in the meadow. And ringing a bell: clink - clink ... (V. Tokareva, "Paramecium Caudatum").*

It is well known that the zoonyms have unequal connotations in different linguistic cultures. Thus, for the British, a cat is a symbol of freedom and independence, and since in Russian linguistic culture this image joins also the idea of lustful inclinations, in the translations of famous Rudyard Kipling's fairy tale *The Cat that walked by himself* instead of a tom-cat always appears lady-cat: *The Lady-Cat that Walked itself*. In translation practices, the pragmatic adaptation plays an important role. It suggests the creation of a text, equivalent, coherent and comprehensible for a native speaker of translated version that matches the original and represents its rightful replacement.

Translated text, certainly has a double pragmatic orientation: on the one hand, it reproduces the original pragmatics, on the other hand it takes into account the specifics of lingo-cultural community, which the translation is addressed to. On the one hand, translated text must reproduce the communicative situation in which the original is perceived, and provide the same perlocutionary effect, and hence the goal is to reproduce the world view and the attitude of the author. On the other hand, the translated text is aimed at creating a new communicative situation, secondary situation, corresponding to the background knowledge of readers and their ideas about the connotations of certain linguistic units. It is these Russian connotations that are forcing translators to go even through a "generic mismatch":

*"And how does Your Eminence suppose he answered me? He lay looking at me a minute, like a wolf in a cage, and then said quite softly: "Colonel, I can't get up and strangle you; but my teeth are pretty good; you had better take your throat a little further off". **He is as savage as a wild cat**" (E. Voynitch "The Gadfly").*

Compare two versions of the following translation, where the gender component is absolutely identical: - But what do you think, Your Eminence, he said to me? For a minute he was looking at me, like a wolf caught in a trap, and then whispered: "Colonel, I cannot get up and strangle you, but my teeth are quite strong. Keep your throat out. He is invincible, **like a wild cat** (Translated by N.Volzina).

- But what do you think, Your Eminence, he said to me? For a minute he was looking at me, like a wolf caught in a trap, and then whispered: "Colonel, I

cannot get up and strangle you, but my teeth are quite strong. Keep your throat out. He is invincible, **like a wild cat** (Translated by R. Bobrova and N.Visotskaya).

In the Russian-English dictionary of emphatic word-combinations, compiled by V.V. Ubin, it is shown (using notes "masc." and "fem.") that in some cases, comparative stable collocations are associated with the sex of possible referent. In other words, the dictionary indicates to whom, a man or a woman, one or another stable word-combination can be applied. According to this dictionary, in Russian we can say about a man: *healthy as an ox, strong as an ox, strong as a bear, awkward as a bear, awkward as a hippopotamus, thick as a hippopotamus, dangerous as a buffalo*. We say about the woman: *thick as a cow, thin as a roach*, and compare with plural: *restless as chickens* [13: 37]. That is, to transmit the same pragmatic meaning we use different names applied to men and women. Thus, meaning "beautiful" in relation to the woman is transmitted by the word *peafowl*, while in relation to a man we use the word *falcon* (but by no means the *peacock*). The word "otter" in the sense of "ugly person" applies only to a woman. However, for example, the *crocodile* is used with respect to both women and men. The word *shark (capitalist shark)*, despite of the feminine gender, has no relation to female persons.

Gender is involved in structuring the text as a cohesive parameter; relationships of anaphoric cohesion are directly based on the nominative or syntactic elements of grammatical semantics of antecedent noun: the identity of the gender (and number) is the minimum condition for co-reference referential identity of name and pronoun. However, participation in these categories in composing the text is by no means limited to this circumstance, it is much more significant and varied [see, for example [14]].

Since generic correlates of personal nouns constitute non-rigid, flexible parts of the norm, the choice of these forms in the utterance and the text is not a rigid, permanent and independent, allowing them to perform specific pragmatic functions.

They can participate in the creation of polyphony of the text (determine the presence of "someone else's consciousness" in the author's text), they are able to transmit in the text the movement from officially-distant communication style to a more amicable, from alien to clear and close, from the indefinite (generalized) to specific (individual and even unique). Correlates of women's individual titles denoting the profession often act as carriers of implicit pragmatic information, most often of pejorative connotations.

The orbit of gender relations in a fiction text involves animalisms of metaphorical character that are interesting from the viewpoint of how the cognitive activity of the text author is represented in the language structures. "Zoomorphic code" in each language has its own peculiarities, determined by cultural and historical parameters. Grammatical gender, being the category with developed interpretive component and creative capabilities, allows one to "condense the sense" of the literary text.

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5/27/2014