



CURRENT ASPECTS OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND GENDER IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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Abstract: *This article discusses specific peculiarities of gender and anthropocentrism in modern linguistic and culture studies. Moreover, the relation between these notions will be analyzed by means of examples found in foreign and local media recourses published recent years. Viewpoints of different scholars on the interconnection and interrelation of gender specific and anthropocentric issues will be highlighted in this paper.*

Keywords: *anthropocentrism, anthropocentric approach, culture studies, language, linguistics, gender, gender studies, gender characteristics, stereotype, archetype*

It is common knowledge that the problem of gender naturally follows from anthropocentrism, i.e. the recognition of human as the center of linguistic, social, and cultural reality in the 21st century that has brought to the surface the aspect of sexual identity, which manifests itself both in the linguistic world picture and in socio-cultural relationships. Gender characteristics and stereotypes in modern studies are registered in language in a variety of ways: in the form of phonetic features, in phraseological and lexical units, in the features of speech behavior. The anthropocentric approach in linguistics considers language in the context of human existence, in an inextricable connection with human consciousness, thinking, and spiritual world, since modern anthropocentrism is based on the idea that language is a mirror of culture, reflecting human ideas about the world around us. In this regard, language is involved in national-cultural creativity, recording and subsequent comprehension of this creativity, therefore, modern scientific research in general, and linguistic research in particular, is characterized by an anthropocentric orientation as T.M. Nikolayeva writesⁱ. Thus, the study of gender and gender relations from the point of view of the equal distribution of social roles between men and women in the life of society, in modern culture is dictated by the need for a new look at existing gender issues. Since the topic of gender is aimed at reinstalling the established social model of relations between the sexes, where the hierarchy of power is built on patriarchal attitudes, the destruction of the aforementioned historically established model creates a problem of gender identification, which consists in the erasure of the usual stereotypes of understanding female and male nature.

The gender equality policy pursued in Europe and the United States over the past two decades, associated with a revision of approaches to the social burden of women and men, conditioned by their different levels of responsibility and percentage



presence in legislative, political, economic and other social institutions, yields various results, both positive and negative. On the one hand, positive social transformations for women are taking place. On the other hand, not only is the traditional hierarchy system being destroyed, but gender differences as qualitative characteristics of gender, entrenched in cultural stereotypes, are gradually being erased, which can distort people's consciousness, their individual perception and national-cultural attitudes, in which the traditional worldview through the dualism of male and female principles is fundamental. It can be said that today we live in an era of international gender scandals; this was most clearly demonstrated in the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris. For example, during the opening ceremony of the Games, "... numerous singers, dancers and other artists performed. In one segment of the show, several drag queens (the name given to male performers who dress in women's clothing and wear garish makeup) performed a scene that many saw as a reference to the Last Supper.ⁱⁱ This caused outrage not only among many Christian believers, but also among the representatives of other religions. Furthermore, among other scandals, the world's attention was drawn to a scandal in women's boxing involving a transgender boxer, who was described in one of the headlines of sports news as "Failing the Gender Test." "A boxing match between Italian Angela Carini and Algerian Iman Khelif, who was disqualified by the International Boxing Association (IBA) in 2023 after a biochemical test for gender conformity, but who was allowed to compete in the Paris Olympics by the IOC. Carini refused to continue the fight against Khelif in the 46th second. The Italian boxer called the fight unfair. During the short fight, Carini took several punches and asked to stop the fight. When the winner was announced, the Italian refused to shake her opponent's hand, and then knelt down in the middle of the ring and burst into tears"ⁱⁱⁱ

A.V. Kirilina in the scientific review "Gender and Genetic Linguistics at the Turn of the Third Millennium" described in detail the processes and qualitatively new leaps in the social and cultural life of European and American societies, as a result of which a non-binary model of gender is established in Western countries (agender, bigender, etc.; today - more than 60 types), the third gender is institutionalized, the attitude towards homosexuality is criminalized, the forms of the planet are ritualized, especially in relation to masculinity, when beautiful media personalities are created in women's dresses or world-famous models dress men in women's clothing in their collections, etc.^{iv} Just four years later, we can see the culmination of information processes in one of the first executive orders of the new US President Donald Trump, which is called "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government" redefines "sex" as an immutable, binary concept (male and female) based on biological sex at conception. This order impacts federal agencies by requiring them to use sex-based definitions in all policies and documents, and it restricts funding for programs promoting gender ideology. It also

directs agencies to enforce sex-based rights and protections, and to prioritize the use of “sex” over “gender” in all contexts.

Thus, at present, gender studies are not only a promising and rapidly developing field of science, but also represent a field of heated debate between the legitimacy of gender and traditional models of constructing society, within the framework of which the question of the legitimacy of analyzing human history and culture through the prism of gender is considered obvious and justified. Gender studies are now actively used in the fields of sociology, psychology, cultural studies, anthropology, intercultural communication and many others, which emphasizes its social and cultural determinacy. In this regard, Russian linguist I.V. Zykova writes that gender should be viewed as a cultural and historically relative phenomenon, whose meaning and interpretation may vary within different cultures, and be the cause of historical changes in the language system^v.

The notion of “gender” arose in the United States in the late 60s - 70s of the 20th century, and was caused by the understanding of the “sexual difference” of individuals. Psychology researchers were interested in the possibility of using this term in the social sciences that study different aspects of human life, for example, in rhetoric, political science, psychology, cultural studies, and anthropology. In particular, in anthropology, the term “gender” expresses social differentiation in behavior dictated by natural differences, that is, the biological sex of individuals^{vi}. Gender is based on the binary opposition “male – female”, a kind of archetypal tool by which society historically perceives and evaluates the world and human relations. In the course of historical and socio-cultural development, the concept of gender has been modified and transformed, forming new traditional attitudes reflecting the understanding of the role, place and functions of men and women both in a particular society and in the world community as a whole.

It should be noted that the concept of “gender” also appeared in linguistics in the second half of the twentieth century. One of the factors that influenced the introduction of the term “gender” was the fact that in English the word “sex” is identical to the notion of “sex”, whereas in Russian the concepts of “gender” and “sex” do not fully correspond with each other, as the latter reflects only a specific area of interaction between the sexes. It should also be noted that gender studies in linguistics began earlier than the term “gender” appeared. This is primarily due to the category of gender in language, which is the distribution of words and forms by classes, and, as a rule, coincides with the characteristics of gender or their absence. At present time, several directions in linguistic gender studies are distinguished^{vii}:

1. The direction associated with the study of relations of dominance and subordination, formed on the basis of feminism and postmodernist philosophy.
2. Diagnostic research (authorial forensic examination, research on expert phonoscopy).



3. Experimental research related to psychology and neurolinguistics, the purpose of which is to establish cognitive differences caused by different hormonal balances of men and women.

4. Sociolinguistic research.

5. Cross-cultural and linguacultural research.

Summarizing all above mentioned, it is possible to draw a conclusion that the study of the specific features of anthropocentrism and gender issues is one of the most actual and disputable problems in modern linguistic and cultural investigations.

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