GENDER IDENTITY IN MEDIA AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Annotation. *In this article, the rapid development of traditional mass media in the second half of the twentieth century, as well as the development of the Internet in the late twentieth and early twenty–first centuries, led to the creation of a single information space, a special virtual environment formed by a combination of many media streams. This affected the peculiarities of speech use and the nature of language changes. According to T.G. Dobrosklonskaya, the bulk of speech use falls today precisely in the field of mass communication, and media texts are one of the most common forms of modern language usage.*

In this regard, attempts to present gender studies as pseudoscientific in theory and harmful in practice should be strongly rejected. Gender studies are polymethodological and interdisciplinary in nature. The issue of gender is now increasingly acting as a question of gender identity, since gender reveals itself as a phenomenon of self-awareness, although it also has such a component as ascription. Gender identity is formed by the person himself in the course of socio-cultural communication. Gender determines the social development and behavior of a person, and biological sex is the mainstay of this construct. Gender is a sociocultural construct that is not identical to gender and has no 152 isomorphic correspondence with it, and acts as an important foundation of social relationships.

*Keywords***:** *political communication, political discourse, political linguistics, gender factor, gender construction, gender identity, masculinity, femininity.*

Introduction.

The transformation of mass media into one of the key areas of modern speech use has contributed to the concentration of academic interest on the problems of language functioning in the field of mass communication and the focus on media and political discourses. Characteristic features of the image of a female politician in the media of political discourse After reviewing analytical articles in the high-quality British and American press, we came to the conclusion that the image of a politician consists of highlighting by various linguistic means the most characteristic features of female politicians. These qualities can be divided into groups, which we have conditionally designated as follows: - external characteristics; professional and personal qualities of a politician.

A literature reviews

In the process of studying the object of research and solving the tasks set, such *methods* were used as: the method of analysis and synthesis, which allows us to study various approaches to the study of gender aspects of political discourse and summarize the information obtained in the form of appropriate conclusions; the inductive method, which allows us to move from specific observations of linguistic facts to their systematization and generalization, and then to making assumptions about the phenomenon under study; methods of descriptive, comparative analysis (methods of observation, interpretation, generalization and classification of linguistic material); the method of critical discourse analysis, which helps to identify the implicitly expressed attitudes of agents of different sexes; the method of quantitative calculations.

External characteristics

The external characteristics of a female politician include:

1) gender;

2) marital status;

3) age;

4) having children/childlessness;

5) appearance;

6) Voice and pronunciation.

1) Gender as an external characteristic is expressed lexically grammatically: through the use of feminine proper names, lexemes *woman, female,* as well as the personal feminine pronoun *she* and its object form *her,* as well as the possessive pronoun *her*. By itself, the lexical and grammatical expression of gender does not carry any evaluative information and does not have an influencing potential that contributes to the formation of one or another attitude to the image. However, emphasizing gender, indicating the fact that a particular politician is a woman (in the world of politics, which, for the most part, is still male) may contain implicit information and serve as an expression of the author's attitude. For example, emphasizing the fact that one or another female politician is the first female leader in the country, a pioneer who broke the "glass ceiling", can express a positive assessment, which implies such positive qualities as courage, determination, determination and the like, for example:*Under the deal, Angela Merkel, the CDU's leader, will become Germany's first woman chancellor—and its first from the former East Germany—while the SPD's Peer Steinbrück, a former premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, will be finance minister. (E, 14.11.05.) When she takes the reins of the world's fourth largest democracy on Jan. 1, Rousseff will become the South American country's first female president. (T, 02.11.10.) Australia's first female PM knows she will be overscrutinised in office and while campaigning, says Laura Liswood.* (G, 13.08.10.) Of the analyzed examples with the *female* token, only 28% of the examples contain a negative assessment, the vast majority (72%) demonstrate a positive assessment. Such results are explained by the fact that the female lexeme is mainly used in combination with *leader* (or synonymous nouns) and *first*. Most of these contexts emphasize the fact that a woman has become a pioneer in a particular

country. However, there is a tendency to emphasize the fact that a female politician has achieved heights despite the fact that she is a woman, despite her gender. For example, it is emphasized that Julia Gillard has achieved success in a country that is a "bastion of male chauvinism," and thus a positive image is formed: *She [Julia Gillard] will give a country once branded as a bastion of male chauvinism its first female prime minister.* (E, 26.06.10.)

In another example, the achievements of Angela Merkel, who became not only the first female chancellor of Germany, but also the first chancellor from the former GDR, are positively evaluated by comparing them with the achievements of Obama, who also broke through a kind of "glass ceiling" by becoming the first black president of the United States: *Her election in 2005 as G's first female chancellor and the first from the ex-communist east had Obama-esque novelty.* (E, 27.06.09.) Nevertheless, a woman, no matter what heights of big politics she reaches, still plays on someone else's, men's field. The expression of evaluation in political discourse is inextricably linked with the actualization of the conceptual opposition "friend – foe", which also finds expression through an emphasis on gender. Consider the following example: *Gro Brundtland, the former prime minister of Norway, once said it took about two years until people saw her as a leader, not a female leader – something Julia Gillard will have encountered during her time in power.* (G, 13.08.10.) This example once again confirms the thesis that the prototypical, or ideal, leader is a male representative, while the female *leader* is perceived as a kind of deviation, as a representative of the "alien" camp. In the example above *(Australia's first female PM knows she will be overscrutinised in office and while campaigning, says Laura Liswood.* (G, 08/13/10.)) it is also emphasized that due to the fact that Julia Gillard is the country's first female leader of this level, she will have to face the fact that all her activities in office and during the election campaign will be under particularly close attention (overscrutinised).

It is no coincidence that Hillary Clinton, in her fight for the Democratic presidential nomination, emphasized that her belonging to the female sex does not matter: *She repeatedly emphasizes that she is not running as a female candidate.* (E, 06.10.07.) Often, the authors of analytical articles openly declare that belonging to the female sex is a disadvantage and that gender can become an obstacle to achieving success in the political field: *Her (Clinton's)biggest potential negative is her sex (тамже).*

2) *Age*

It should be noted that a characteristic feature of most modern women in politics is their relative youth. Age is entered using numerals, the noun youth, the adjective *young*: *What separates Angela Merkel from her predecessors is not so much her sex, her relative youth (at 51), her preference for quiet methodical work over snazzy media savvy, or even her east German background. (E, 13.10.05.) The novelty value of a fresh-faced woman of only 46 from the former communist east has worn off.* (E, 30.11.00.) The stereotypical idea that older people play the main role in politics, who already have a fairly large stock of knowledge and experience by their age, allows the authors of articles, when mentioning the relatively young age of a politician (and

especially if this politician is a woman), to raise doubts in the reader's mind about his professional qualities and the ability to become the head of a political party, government or state. It should be emphasized that age is not mentioned separately, but surrounded by other characteristics (such as gender, marital status, motherhood): *The 42-year-old, twice-divorced, mother-of-three is so popular that several polls show her (Marine Le Pen) topping next year's French presidential first round and sailing through to the final round run-off.* (G,21.03.11.) In this example, a contrast is implied: "although Marine Le Pen is young, twice divorced and also a mother of three children, she is very popular."

The analysis of the material shows that although youth in politics is perceived as a minus, women can turn this weak side into a strong one: *Ms Le Pen's ascension is all the more remarkable given the nature of the National Front. She is a woman in a party with a strong macho current. She is divorced, in a far-right milieu with traditional Catholic overtones. She is young, at 42, in a movement that draws heavily on older voters. Yet this lawyer and member of the European Parliament seems to be turning all this to her advantage, rejuvenating the Front and ridding of the jackbooted imagery that clung to her father* (E, 19.03.11.).

In this example, the author gives Marine Le Pen a positive assessment: mentioning her weaknesses, which, in his opinion, include not only age, but also gender and marital status (divorced), the author nevertheless concludes that Le Pen was able to use them profitably. In addition, thanks to her youth, she managed to "rejuvenate" the party, as well as get rid of the negative aggressive image of the party that she had under Marin's father. Despite the fact that Le Pen does not match (by gender, marital status and age) the image of the party *(a woman in a party with a strong macho current; divorced in a far-right milieu with traditional Catholic overtones; young in a movement that draws heavily on older voters),* She achieved success and became "her own" for the members and supporters of the party. Although Le Pen is given a positive assessment in this example, emphasizing that she has achieved success despite her gender, marital status and age indicates that the female gender, divorce and youth of a politician themselves imply a negative assessment.

Thus, the trends regarding the emphasis on age are as follows: 1) age is emphasized if it is young enough for a politician; 2) age is usually mentioned in combination with other external characteristics such as gender, marital status, motherhood; 3) the emphasis on age does not automatically mean a general negative assessment, since in most of the examples we found there is an implicit opposition - "although she is quite young for a politician, she has achieved a lot," but this implication means a negative assessment of the youth of a politician as such.

3) *Marital status*

Media texts devoted to women politicians reflect the tendency to depict a woman in the usual role of a wife, a life partner (that is, to mention her in connection with her husband or partner), thereby reducing her importance as a full-fledged individual figure. Thus, media texts devoted to Hillary Clinton's election campaign emphasize her role as the former first lady of the United States and the influence of her husband, former US President Bill Clinton: *Mrs Clinton is hardly a self-made*

woman – she rose to power on his (her husband's) coat-tails (E,17.06.08). In this example, it is explicitly stated that everything that Hilary has achieved is not her merit, but the merit of her husband. Also, articles dedicated to Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner often mention her husband and predecessor Nestor Kirchner: *She won the 2007 vote as the chosen successor of Nestor Kirchner, her husband, who did not run for a second term* (E, 22.10.11.). Interestingly, even after her husband's death, he continues to help Cristina Fernandez (she, according to journalists, benefits from the wave of public compassion for her in connection with her husband's death: his death made Cristina more popular with the population): *In addition, she has benefited from a wave of sympathy after the sudden death last October of Nestor Kirchner, her husband and predecessor as president. (E, 20.08.11.) The third factor behind Ms Fernandez's political revival was a personal tragedy: her husband's death from a heart attack last year. Mr Kirchner alienated voters by leading the government's battle with farmers in 2008, and his control over the economy and Peronism undermined Ms Fernandez's leadership. But his death led Argentines to venerate him, and turned his wife into a victim. Her approval rating rose by 25 points after he died.* (E, 22.10.11.)

In addition to her husband or father, mentors are mentioned who helped build a political career. For example, the role of Helmut Kohl in the political fate of Angela Merkel, the role of Lula da Silva in the success of Dilma Rousseff in the political field and the influence of Oscar Arias on the political career of the first female president of Costa Rica, Laura Chinchilla, is emphasized.: *This is not the only reason why some foreign-policy analysts talk of the second coming of Helmut Kohl, a former chancellor and Ms Merkel's mentor (E, 12.01.06.). President-elect Rousseff is largely viewed as Lula's creation. (N, 01.11.10) She (Laura Chinchilla) is a protégé of Oscar Arias, the outgoing centrist president.* (E, 13.02.10.) The reference to the "mentor", which serves to form the image of a not completely independent politician in a certain sense and belittles the achievements of this politician, reflects the stereotypical idea of a woman as an object of action, not a subject, in other words, as a weak, independent being in need of protection and guardianship.

4) *Having children / childlessness*

Continuing the analysis of the category "external characteristics", it should be noted that an important place in the corpus of examples is occupied by contexts that emphasize the motherhood of a female politician (in 275 analytical articles on women politicians, the mother lexeme and its derivatives are mentioned 65 times): Segolene Royal - *a mother of four* (E, 14.01.07); Michelle Bachelet - *the twice separated mother of three children* (E, 21.01.06); Sarah Palin - *a working mother of five* (N, 13.09.08). It is interesting to note that many authors present motherhood as an advantage rather than as something that hinders women's political careers, as one might assume. For example: *Palin somehow manages to come across as a strong mother of five, not a politician who happens to have kids. She validates motherhood by reviving the archetype of the impossibly confident supermother, simultaneously managing teenagers, teething and the trials of a vice presidential campaign. <...> Her working-mother feats—giving a speech after amniotic fluid had started to leak,*

marching back to work three days after giving birth, running a state while tending to a sleepless newborn—seem almost superhuman, and unreal. But somehow, unlike Ferraro, instead of making women feel inadequate, she inspires them. To many mothers she is empowering: she wields motherhood with pride, as something that doesn't diminish ability but enhances it—a sign of competence, indeed a qualification to speak on a national platform (N, 13.09.08).

In this fragment, the image of super-mom Sarah Palin is created, who manages to successfully combine her maternal duties and political struggle. This example is an illustration of how a journalist uses the image created by the politician himself (and/or his image makers): The author emphasizes that Sarah Palin's image is not just "a woman politician who has children." Motherhood is brought to the fore by her as the highest value in accordance with the archetype of supermaterial, and is presented as an advantage in the political struggle. In one of the analyzed articles (Politics and the tyranny of parenthood, G, 09/3/10), the author concludes that motherhood is now considered as a necessary element for success in the political field. Childlessness, on the contrary, is often distrusted and even condemned. For example, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard is criticized for her childlessness and is even recognized as unable to govern the country because of this: *The Australian prime minister Julia Gillard is attacked for being "deliberately barren". A nasty little tyranny is developing, one that demands parenthood as the price of political power. Parenthood is the new norm. If you aren't one, you are weird, and even worse – at least according to the attack on Gillard – unqualified to run the country. По мнению автора статьи, проблема Гиллард (в глазах австралийских мужчин, придерживающихся правых взглядов) заключается втом, что она женщина, которая к томуже и не является матерью: Gillard's problem, at least in the eyes of a handful of rightwing Australian men, is that she is a woman who is not also a mother. (If she was a mother, then she would also be unfit to run the country, obviously).*

In this passage, the author, referring to the opinion of "a handful of Australian right-wing men," in fact, actualizes two

stereotypes: "a woman who does not have children is inferior" and "running

a country is not a woman's business."

5) *Appearance*

The mention of a female politician is inevitably accompanied by a description (in one form or another) of her appearance (hairstyle, clothes, makeup, accessories). In some cases, elements of appearance, such as hairstyle (for example, its frequent change in the case of Hillary Clinton), accessories (such as Margaret Thatcher handbags and Madeleine Albright brooches), become a defining feature and go beyond just an emphasis on appearance, becoming some symbols, attributes of a particular politician, begin to play a kind of political role. It is no coincidence that media texts write about the language of Margaret Thatcher's handbags and Madeleine Albright's "secret diplomatic weapon" – brooches. Media texts dedicated to women politicians almost certainly contain certain information about the appearance and physical attractiveness of the heroine of the article. The emphasis on external

attractiveness contributes to the lowering of the status of a female politician, since it reduces her to the object of male attention, while a politician should be an active subject, and not the object of someone's admiration/lust. Thus, the emphasis on beauty does not contribute to a positive assessment of a female politician. Thus, in many publications devoted to the candidate for the post of vice-president of the United States in the 2008 election campaign, Sarah Palin, attention is drawn to her appearance and at the same time to a biographical fact (in the past she was the winner of a beauty contest): *Men have a more favorable view of her than women do. Her beauty-queen looks are undoubtedly part of the reason* (N, 18.10.08). It is characteristic that men, rather than women, have a higher opinion of Sarah due to their physical attractiveness. By emphasizing Sarah Palin's physical attractiveness, her status as a politician is being lowered.

The actualization of the representation of a female politician as an object, rather than an independent actor, is enhanced if not just the physical attractiveness, but the sexuality of a woman is emphasized. In this case, a woman can no longer be perceived as a serious leader, since she is primarily perceived as an object of men's lust, and her achievements in the political field are thereby belittled.: *A Palin action figure has actually just been released, but it is more sexual fantasy—tartan miniskirt, cleavage prominent in a red bra —than a working woman superhero.(N, 13.09.08.) Даже такой серьёзный политик как «железная леди» Маргарет Тэтчер представлена в некоторых медиатекстах как сексуальный объект: Margaret Thatcherexudedastrong, sexualcharisma. And she was not shy about using it. Ordering Aquascutum to revamp her entire wardrobe, she had her skirts pulled up, her décolleté lowered, and began showing more of her good legs.* (DB, 11.01.12.) Bringing such external characteristics to the fore contributes to belittling the achievements of a historical personality and transferring the image to the philistine level.

6) *Voice and pronunciation*

As a rule, any deviation from the normal timbre of the voice or the generally accepted pronunciation norm is emphasized. Such deviations serve to individualize the image, giving it a certain flavor. However, as a rule, they contribute to a negative assessment (the image falls into the "outgroup", which attributes negative qualities). For example, Julia Gillard speaks in a raspy voice with a pronounced accent: *broad accent and gravel-meets-steel voice (G, 25.06.10.) When she entered parliament in 1998, the Welsh-born Gillard was mocked for her nasal voice, her hairstyle, her dress sense and her failure to embrace domestic life.* (G, 24.06.10.) In the following example, the negative assessment is veiled by irony. *Even her screechy voice—I know some Republicans here for whom that is a major obstacle in supporting her— works to her advantage, at least with audiences such as this one. It is an ambulance siren in what conservatives regard as a catastrophe.* (N, 09.04.10.) On the one hand, the shrill voice of Sarah Palin (*her screechy voice*) is not perceived as a disadvantage in this audience, since this is an audience consisting exclusively of her supporters. On the other hand, her voice is compared to an ambulance siren. By doing this, the author achieves a comic effect, which, together with the negatively colored noun

catastrophe, contribute to the removal of a positive assessment. Summing up the consideration of external characteristics, it should be noted that such features as gender, age, marital status, children/childlessness, appearance and voice are important for shaping the image of a female politician. The emphasis on these parameters contributes, firstly, to the feminization and attribution of the image of a female politician to the camp of "strangers" in the world of politics, and secondly, to the actualization of stereotypical ideas about a woman as a weak, independent being in need of protection and help, as an object, not a subject. However, a positive assessment is possible even in the case of mentioning characteristics that, according to stereotypical ideas about politics, should be perceived negatively (for example, relatively young age or female gender). This happens when emphasizing the fact that a female politician has achieved success despite these characteristics, which indicates that the characteristics themselves are still endowed with a negative assessment.

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