The issues of feminist linguistics in Slavic philology: a fragmentary-aspectual overview

Проблематика феміністичної лінгвістики в слов'янському мовознавстві: фрагментарно-аспектуальний огляд

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Abstract

This article offers a concise overview of feminist linguistics within Slavic philology, focusing on the formation and function of feminitives. It analyzes the influence of national linguocultural traditions, their continuity, and extralinguistic factors on the development of feminine forms in Slavic languages. The study highlights the dominance of masculine forms and the underrepresentation of feminist perspectives in these languages. By examining the evolution of feminitives and the factors driving their usage, the authors argue that feminization is a regular, irreversible process across the Slavic linguistic landscape. The research reveals a significant difference in the degree of feminitive formation between West Slavic languages and East/South Slavic languages, suggesting varying levels of gender equality awareness and feminist activism across these regions.

Анотація

Стаття присвячена проблематиці гендерної лінгвістики, феміністичному мовознавству як її складнику, фрагментарно-аспектуальному огляду особливостей творення і функціювання фемінітивів у слов'янських мовах, зважаючи на національні лінгвокультурні традиції, їх тяглість і вплив екстралінгвальних чинників. Уперше окреслено загальні тенденції поширення фемінітивів у слов'янському мовному просторі, схарактеризовано дослідницькі підходи та аспекти, провідні тенденції процесу фемінізації. Методологійними засадами наукової розвідки є теоретичні постулати, що декларують наявність відмінностей у гендерних лінгвокультурах, водночас домінування маскулінності й наявність феміністичної «дефіцитності». Категорію фемінітивності трактуємо як узагальнене поняття, об'єднане спільним значенням 'особа жіночої статі'. Доведено, що процес фемінізації належить до регулярних і незворотних; найважливішим аргументом фемінізації є вивчення розвитку категорії фемінітивів, що мотивує закономірності творення загальних назв осіб жіночого роду до найменувань чоловічого роду. Фемінітивна підсистема кожної слов'янської мови побудована на спільнослов'янській основі, у якій збереглися

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питомі ознаки, і водночас розвинулися специфічні національні мовні риси. З'ясовано, що західнослов'янські мови випереджають східнослов'янські та південнослов'янські щодо активності фемінітивотворення.

Ключові слова: лінгвістика, лінгвістичні дослідження, мовна зміна, мовний розвиток, слов'янські мови.

Introduction

The problem of feminization. The actualization of research into feminitive issues in contemporary Slavic linguistics is primarily driven by the active and dynamic processes of expanding the system of common feminine nouns and the increase in their functional load, which is particularly evident within the Slavic linguistic continuum.

Feminization in the Slavic context. These processes embody an extension of the development of ancient inherent features of Slavic languages regarding the formation and usage of feminine nouns parallel to masculine nouns. This phenomenon has acquired a distinctive character due to the corresponding development of the linguistic system and the accentuation of specific features in various Slavic languages, influenced by extralinguistic factors that manifest differently across Slavic societies. The processes of dynamization in feminitive lexis are undoubtedly a consequence of the legal provision for gender equality at the international level, as the promotion of equal rights and freedoms for both sexes has been declared in international documents since the mid-20th century. General feminine nouns have been a characteristic feature of each historical epoch in every Slavic linguoculture, demonstrating a tendency towards gradual growth. However, the contemporary period exhibits unique characteristics in this respect. This distinctiveness is motivated by a confluence of processes, including democratization, nationalization, Europeanisation, internationalization, and globalization. The phenomenon of feminization is unequivocally caused by women's active social and professional engagement worldwide. It is aimed at the need to differentiate between masculine and feminine agentive nouns, separating designations for women from those for men. This is particularly relevant when addressing qualities associated with women's professional activities, the need to provide them with objective qualifications, and determine appropriate levels of competence in comparison with the aforementioned masculine categories. This has led to an active increase in nouns denoting female persons and their widespread use in language, speech, and communication. All of the above demonstrates that the issues presented in this study are pertinent to contemporary Slavic linguistics.

The aim **of this scientific study** is to present, in an aspectual and fragmentary manner, the experience of examining feminist linguistics issues in Slavic philology. Specifically, the study seeks to (a) synthesize this experience to elucidate the developmental trajectory of Slavic feminist linguistics and actualize relevant research aspects, (b) highlight certain achievements, and (c) delineate a common research perspective.

This investigation *draws upon* selected works by leading Slavists who have developed feminist linguistics issues in relation to specific Slavic languages (see Bibliographic References), as well as in a comparative aspect with the actualization of various languages (Blaszkowska, 2016; Kosmeda, 2022; Krysiak, 2000; Machek, 2022; Shpit'ko, 2010).

The novelty of this scientific inquiry lies in its attempt to generalize trends in the dissemination of feminitives across Slavic languages, to ascertain the peculiarities of their descriptive vector in the scholarly works of Slavic linguogenderologists, and to describe approaches to the study of feminist linguistics within Slavic philology.

Theoretical Framework

By the end of the 20th century, feminization was merely gaining momentum; however, in the 21st century, it has become manifestly evident (albeit to varying degrees) across all functional styles of Slavic languages. Unsurprisingly, the literary and journalistic styles of speech, and particularly the colloquial style, which embodies virtually the entire lexical wealth of each language, now distinctly present the process of feminization. This phenomenon is fully expressed in these styles, demonstrating a regular and consistent

character (Arkhanhelska, 2019, pp. 298–306; Brus, 2019a, p. 1, pp. 266–270; Styshov, 2012, pp. 23–37; Taranenko, 2015, pp. 103–116; Boknikova, 2000; Janicka, 2015), occasionally exhibiting excessive manifestations that are subject to criticism within academic circles. This is primarily observed in contemporary Ukrainian linguoculture, specifically in the domain of word-formation nomination (Arkhanhelska, 2019, pp. 320–336; Kysliuk, 2017, pp. 333–335). Nevertheless, scientific and official-business styles of speech cannot be considered entirely impervious to the phenomenon of feminization (Arkhanhelska, 2019, pp. 112–119; Brus, 2019a, p. 1, pp. 270–272, 285–295; Karwatowska, Szpyra-Kozłowska, 2005). Some Ukrainian scholars emphasize that currently, there is no discernible demarcation of feminitives based on pragmatic features, particularly stylistic and register-based characteristics (Kosmeda, 2014, p. 164). The question of feminitive lexis acquiring stylistically neutral status is being examined in linguistic feminist Slavic studies, notably in works addressing issues directly related to women's rights and freedoms (gender equality, feminist movement, tolerance, et cetera) (Jurasz, 1994; Shpyra-Kozlowska, 2019).

Researchers focus not only on the study of the current state of feminitive subsystems (Aryzankovska, 2010; Koneski, 2003) but also on the past (Humets'ka, 1958; Janicka, 2015), actualizing the synchronic-diachronic (Baltova, 2010; Brus, 2019a; Kysliuk, 2017) and contrastive (Kovalyk, 1962; Machek, 2022; Radeva, 2010) approaches, particularly involving folklore texts (Khachmafova et al., 2023), as well as considering national and gender stereotypes, which are particularly represented in contemporary women's literature (Bilotserkovets et al., 2023). Linguists focus on the interpretation of feminitive forms through the prism of (1) comparative linguistics (Arkhanhelska, 2022; Shpit'ko, 2010; Blaszkowska, 2016; Krysiak, 2000); (2) linguo-axiology (Drahychevych, 2010; Kosmeda, 2000); (3) linguoculturology (Drahychevych, 2010; Radeva, 2010; Maloha-Krupa, 2018); (4) linguistic stylistics (Boknikova, 2000; Feketa, 1968; Hołojda-Mikulska, 2019; Taranenko, 2021); (5) media linguistics (Styshov, 2012; Taranenko, 2021); (6) sociolinguistics (Ivanova, 1984; Taranenko, 2021; Dubisz, 2021); (7) word formation (Humets'ka, 1958; Drahychevych, & Utvych, 2019; Kysliuk, 2017; Kovalyk, 1964; Pawlenka, 1978; Radeva, 2010; Radeva, 1991; Taranenko, 2015; Grochowska, Wierzbicka, 2015); (8) lexicology (Radeva, 2010; Styshov, 2012), including terminology (Krysiak, & Malocha-Krupa, 2020); (9) morphology (Dvonč, 1972; Grzegorczykowa, 1999; Karwatowska, & Szpyra-Kozlowska, 2005; Maloha-Krupa, 2021; Shticha, 2018); they address the issue of (10) the lexicography of feminine forms in various languages (e.g.: Brus, 2019a; Brus, 2019b; Hodovana, 2009; Desprak, 2020; Kosmeda, 2022; Krysiak, 2000; Maloha-Krupa, 2015).

To the contentious issues of gender linguistics, we attribute debates regarding its metalanguage, particularly concerning the preference for specific orthographic variants of certain terms: *feminative* (Arkhanhelska, 2022; Dubisz, 2021; Pyper, 2014) and *feminitive* (Blaszkowska, 2016; Brus, 2019a; Drahychevych, & Utvych, 2019; Machek, 2022; Shpit'ko, 2010). This issue is further examined with arguments favoring the term *feminitive*. Discussions also arise regarding the productive suffixes of feminitives in various languages and the prospects for developing women's designations by emphasizing suffixal formations or compound nominations (Baltova, 2010; Harbatski, 2016). Questions concerning the stylistic markedness of feminine designations are also debated, as some scholars argue that modern suffixal formations for women's designations belong to the domain of colloquial vocabulary (Arkhanhelska, 2022; Kysliuk, 2017), while others insist on their attribution to neutral speech (Brus, 2019a; Kosmeda, 2022).

Methodology

In contemporary linguistics, the dominant paradigm is a multifunctional pragmatic approach to scientific knowledge. This framework enables researchers in the field of feminist linguistics, as a component of gender linguistics, to employ methods and techniques from sociolinguistics, linguoculturology, linguoconceptology, discourse linguistics, corpus linguistics, and other related disciplines. Linguists utilize these approaches when presenting issues in gender linguistics.

The principles of feminist works are based on the concepts declared by linguogenderologist D. Cameron (Cameron, 1995, pp. 31–44), specifically regarding (a) 'female deficiency', (b) 'male dominance', and (c) 'differences in gender cultures'. The theory of 'female deficiency' emerged under the influence of R. Lakoff's ideas (Lakoff, 1973, pp. 45–79), which posit that the linguistic system is a repressive mechanism that suppresses women and compels them to act according to certain speech tactics, stereotypes, and corresponding practices, which are influenced by gender socialization. National gender culture is instilled from school, actualizing the corresponding gender stereotypes (Kravchuk et al., 2024).

A comprehensive set of research methods is employed in this study to achieve the stated aim: (1) deduction and induction facilitate the transition from analyzing concrete facts and individual research results to broader generalizations; (2) analysis and synthesis enable the identification and differentiation of commonalities and differences in the considered scientific works; (3) the classification method serves to systematize scholars' views aspectually, while (4) the descriptive method is used to present theoretical material sequentially and to formulate conclusions; (5) a comparative-contrastive approach is employed to comprehend the aspectual peculiarities of feminist linguistics development across East, West, and South Slavic linguistics. Finally, (6) the conceptual-analytical method is applied for the methodological comprehension of theoretical and practical developments in Slavic national feminist aspects within gender linguistics studies. This multifaceted methodological framework ensures a thorough and nuanced examination of the subject matter.

Moral and Ethical Interpretation of Gender Issues. Ethics, as is well known, formulates, substantiates, and creates models of ideal human behavior, which also extends to gender behavior. This is manifested in the communicative and activity-based practices of people, reflected in attitudes towards women and the methods of addressing them, highlighting the concept of gendered linguistic thinking. The roots of gender studies trace back to antiquity, a time of prevailing inequality: men and women, slaves and free people, children and adults were not considered equals. Greek philosophers limited women's roles to raising children, maintaining the household, providing sexual satisfaction, and caring for men. The principle of subordinating the feminine to the masculine was central to Hellenistic philosophical teachings. Christianity also contributed to the establishment of gender inequality, as the Bible presents the secondary status of women, created from Adam's rib. Moreover, women were burdened with the "responsibility" for original sin. Scholastic philosophy further viewed the feminine principle as inherently imperfect. In the late 19th century, foreign linguistic philosophy raised the issue of the English pronoun "he," which remains a subject of debate. Between 1900 and 1960, Western linguists developed theories about fundamental differences in male and female speech styles and questioned the use of word forms like *doctress* or *authoress*, though comprehensive research in this area was lacking. It is widely acknowledged that from the mid-20th century, social factors began to play a pivotal role in linguistics, framing language in connection with society and individuals as its members. Anthropocentrism was recognized as a fundamental principle in linguistics. Over time, linguistics expanded its focus to include the socio-cultural differences in male and female mentalities. Consequently, the methodology of gender linguistics is founded on the moral and ethical principles of contemporary society regarding the declaration of gender equality. Importantly, in 1990, the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation to eliminate sexism in language, aiming to neutralize gender asymmetry (Kosmeda, 2014, pp. 9–20).

Results and Discussion

In the article, a review of the development of feminist linguistics in Slavic studies is presented, taking into account both traditional and contemporary trends, as well as the influence of extralinguistic factors. The research is projected onto Western, Eastern, and Southern Slavic languages to determine the degree of activity in the formation of feminitives. The category of feminitives is examined from a multifaceted perspective. Various scientific concepts regarding the interpretation and perception of feminitives, along with an understanding of their functional characteristics, are considered.

In contemporary Slavic linguistics, we observe scholars' efforts directed towards creating a scale of feminine evaluation for individual languages. This approach represents a variant of the psycholinguistic scaling method, which measures characteristics based on the principle of their manifestation to a greater or lesser degree (Kosmeda, 2000). Notably, there is a prevalent view that among Slavic languages, Czech and Slovak are most susceptible to feminization (Arkhanhelska, 2019), while some scholars consider Russian to be among the least feminized (Taranenko, 2021). Taranenko argues that the Ukrainian language occupies an intermediate (median) position in this dimension, noting that the tendency towards feminization is increasing in scope across all Slavic languages. However, this trend is most pronounced in Ukrainian within the Eastern Slavic group and in Western Slavic languages (Taranenko, 2021, p. 63). Information regarding the assessment of femininity manifestation in other Slavic linguocultures has not been identified. Nevertheless, a methodology for creating the aforementioned scale to determine the degree of language femininity has not yet been proposed. One of the proposed parameters for measurement is the existence of feminitive dictionaries, which records the number of feminitives and provides information on the emergence of new feminine personal nouns for each language (look at Fig. 1).

The extent of the prevalence of feminitives in Slavic languages

Figure 1. The emergence of new feminitives in Slavic languages.

The intensification of creating such dictionaries has been observed since the beginning of the 21st century, particularly in Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish languages. Understandably, lexicographers also record identified neologisms in dictionaries of new words and meanings, which should be utilized when determining trends in the feminization of the respective language. Dictionaries of feminitives for a specific language, such as Russian, are also created by scholars from other countries. For instance, in 2006, a dictionary entitled 'Names of Women: A Supplementary Dictionary' (in Ukrainian, 'Назви жінок. Додатковий словник'; in Russian, 'Названия женщин. Дополнительный словарь') was published in Poland, compiled by V. Kul'pyna and Ya. Vavzhynchyk (2006), containing 1,350 names for women. This dictionary was sourced from a Russian explanatory dictionary of women's names (2002) containing 7,000 entries, compiled by M. Kolesnikov. An interesting observation is that most names presented in these dictionaries are not exclusively feminine. They primarily include terms used in the Russian language to denote both male and female persons. As a result, analyzing such publications may not provide an accurate representation of the number of feminisms in the Russian language.

In contrast, Ukrainian feminine lexicography has made notable advancements. Several significant works have been published in recent years. Firstly, in 2009, M. Hodovana compiled a reference dictionary of person names by type of activity. This comprehensive work contains 2,500 entries, of which 712 are feminitives. Secondly, H. Plachynda created a dictionary of feminitives in 2018, specifically for press officers of the territorial departments of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine. This dictionary includes 239 entries, although it has faced some criticism for its perceived incompleteness (Kosmeda, 2022). Thirdly, a significant contribution to Ukrainian feminine lexicography was made in 2019. M. Brus compiled a historical explanatory lexicon of the Ukrainian language, covering the 11th to 21st centuries. This extensive work contains over 8,000 entry words, representing a substantial advancement in the field. This dictionary can be qualified as a complete explanatory normalized dictionary of Ukrainian feminitives, reflecting a diachronic-synchronic cross-section of the Ukrainian language from antiquity to the present day. The authors believe that Ukrainian feminine lexicography can take pride in its achievements, and it enables the tracking of trends in the expansion of the feminitive system. This dictionary confirms that the Ukrainian language stands out among other Slavic languages due to a significant number of feminine forms.

In international linguistics, a notable achievement in feminist lexicography is the dictionary of Polish women's names, edited by A. Maloha-Krupa (2015). This represents the first woman-centric dictionary in the history of Polish linguistics, exclusively incorporating feminine nouns, analyzing their meanings, and demonstrating their practical applications. Special emphasis is placed on the creation of female designations derived from their professional roles and activities. The work demonstrates that in the early developmental stages of Polish studies as a discipline, the creation and usage of feminitives and masculinitives were at virtually equivalent levels (Desprak, 2020, pp. 249–251).

The East Slavic Tradition of Feminisation Research. *In East Slavic linguistics*, the study of feminitives is gaining increasing prominence due to the constant influx of new feminine nouns into the lexicon of various East Slavic languages.

In Russian linguistics, this area of study has a certain historical trajectory, which, during the Soviet period of linguistic development, influenced the interpretation of the feminization process by Belarusian and Ukrainian scholars. It was not considered productive or effective (for a detailed review, see M. Brus (2019a, pp. 21–22). Despite the fact that the formation of feminine nouns from masculine nouns is characteristic of most Slavic languages, this tendency, as previously mentioned, is not developed at the national level in ***the Russian language***. The primary designations for female persons in the literary language remain predominantly masculine nouns, particularly those serving to nominate professional activities and indicate a woman's social status. This persists despite considerable attention being devoted to the study of ***the feminitive word-formation system in the Russian language*** during the previous century (Brus, 2019a, p. 10). However, such formations are predominantly recorded at the colloquial level.

Under the influence of the ***Russian language***, masculine nouns for expressing personal meaning have become established at the literary level in the ***Belarusian language*** despite the long and continuous history of feminitive formation. A comprehensive study of women's appellations in Old Belarusian is the work of M. Pavlenko, which characterizes the methods of word formation, motivational base, word-formation types, and word-forming means of modelling feminitives in the Belarusian language. Pavlenko notes that feminitives can be derived from nouns, adjectives, verbs (including participle forms), and phrasal systems, but the majority are motivated by masculine nouns, which is entirely understandable (Pawlenka, 1978). An intensification of neofeminism formation in the Belarusian language has not been observed; this process in Belarusian linguoculture occurs similarly to Russian, that is, less actively and at a slower pace (Harbatski, 2016).

The systematic study of feminitives in ***the Ukrainian language*** originates from the works of O. Potebnia (although he did not use this specific term). This Ukrainian linguist identified masculinitives (masculine forms) as the primary derivational base for feminitives, emphasizing that most feminine nouns are motivated by masculine nouns of various structures. For instance, he noted that nouns with the suffix *-ък-а* are derived from stems ending in *-ъ, -йь(-ь, -й), -инъ, -ецъ*, as discussed in his work "From Notes on Russian Grammar. On Changes in Meaning and Substitutions of Nouns" (1889) (Potebnia, 2018). Examining the derivation process of feminitives in Old Ukrainian of the 14th–15th centuries, L. Humetska observed that feminine appellations were predominantly formed from corresponding masculine nouns using suffixes such as *-к-а, -иц-я, -н-а, -ыни* (Humets'ka, 1958, pp. 88–89). I. Feketa's work is significant for understanding the history of feminitive studies in Ukrainian. He thoroughly examined the usage of female appellations in different styles of Ukrainian speech, explaining that the majority of derived feminitives are motivated by masculine forms. At the same time, some are influenced by verbs and adjectives (Feketa, 1968). However, the most substantial contribution to the study of feminitive word formation in Ukrainian and other Slavic languages in the 20th century, as will be discussed further, comes from I. Kovalyk's works. The researcher substantiated the suffixal derivation of nouns in relation to most Slavic languages. Kovalyk identified simple and derivative feminitive suffixes in Ukrainian, positing that as a result of word-formational reanalysis, masculinitive formants become components of newly formed feminitive suffixes (*-анк-а, -истк-а, -антк-а, -тельк-а*) (Kovalyk, 1962). It can be stated that the metalanguage of feminitive word formation originates from Kovalyk's derivatological studies.

In the context of East Slavic linguistics, the Ukrainian language has demonstrated the most significant dynamization of feminitive lexis. It is important to emphasize that the specific development of Ukrainian feminitives is influenced by a sociolinguistic mega-factor currently present in the Ukrainian linguistic space – the Russo – Ukrainian war. This factor distinguishes the contemporary Ukrainian linguoculture in terms of modelling neofeminisms. The analysis of online publications from all regions of Ukraine has enabled the identification of the most popular war-related feminitives used by journalists in their materials during October 2022 and 2023. Among these are: *військовослужбовиця* (*'viis'kovosluzhbovytsia'* – female service member) (125 occurrences), *заступниця Міноборони України* (*'zastupnytsia Minoborony Ukrainy'* – female deputy of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine) (96), *речниця Сил оборони* (*'rechnytsia Syl oborony'* – female spokesperson of the Defence Forces) (84), *офіцерка* (*'ofitserka'* – female officer) (44), *медикиня військового госпіталю* (*'medykynia viis'kovoho hospitaliu'* – female medic of a military hospital) (33), *солдатка* (*'soldatka'* – female soldier) (23), *розвідниця* (*'rozvidnytsia'* – female scout) (19), *артилеристка* (*'artylerystka'* – female artillerist) (11), *десантниця* (*'desantnytsia'* – female paratrooper) (8), and *навідниця* (*'navidnytsia'* – female gunner) (6). Additionally, professions such as *генералка* (*'heneralka'* – female general), *сержантка* (*'serzhantka'* – female sergeant), *командирка* (*'komandyrka'* – female commander), *танкістка* (*'tankistka'* – female tank operator), *пілотеса* (*'pilotesa'* – female pilot),

and *співробітниця військового підрозділу* (*'spivrobitnytsia viis'kovoho pidrozdilu'* – female employee of a military unit) were also mentioned (IDPO, 2023).

The West Slavic Tradition of Feminisation Research

The foundation for the establishment of **Polish linguistic feminitive methodologies** was laid by general and specialized linguistic studies, particularly in derivatology, which examined the word-formation of nouns denoting female persons. Considerable attention has been paid to investigating the methods of feminitive formation, identifying the corresponding system of word-forming means, and derivational relationships between primary and derivative appellations (Grochowska, & Wierzbicka, 2015, pp. 45–55). In Poland, the issues of feminist linguistics are being developed by teams of linguists working in research institutes and relevant gender centres. Notably, a group of scholars from the University of Wrocław focuses on studying contemporary aspects of feminitive formation in the Polish language, as well as their lexicographic representation and standardization (Hołojda-Mikulska, 2019; Krysiak, 2000; Krysiak, & Małocha-Krupa, 2020; Maloha-Krupa, 2018; Maloha-Krupa, 2021). Polish scholars conceptualize feminitives as a derivational and semantic category of nouns denoting women, possessing morphological features of the feminine gender, expressing femininity, and predominantly derived from masculine nouns (Krysiak, & Małocha-Krupa, 2020, pp. 230, 234). This interpretation differs somewhat from that proposed by representatives of Polish academic linguistics, which encompasses all nouns capable of expressing femininity (Grzegorczykowa, 1999, p. 422). Wrocław researchers consider the term *'feminitive'* (they use the variant *'feminative'*) to be apt and convenient for describing the category of feminativity within a single linguistic system and in contrastive studies (Krysiak, & Małocha-Krupa, 2020, pp. 232–235). P. Dubisz, in particular, affirms the appropriateness of using the term 'feminitive' and emphasizes that all nominations of women, beginning from Proto-Slavic, can be interpreted as feminitives. He interprets the lexeme 'feminitive' as a linguistic term artificially created for the needs of linguistic science, specifically to denote the aforementioned category of nominations, meaning 'a feminine noun typically motivated by a masculine noun'; the orthographic form *'feminatyv'* is used in this case. According to this researcher, although names for women have undoubtedly been present in the Polish language since its inception, their understanding and proper perception are conditioned by a certain expansion of women's field of activity and employment and increased participation in public life. This process began during the Enlightenment, intensified in the interwar and post-war periods (20th century), and has deepened today due to political, moral, civilizational, and other changes of the 21st century (Dubisz, 2021, pp. 112–113).

Czech linguists are also actively developing the field of feminist linguistics, as the Czech language represents an environment where the tendency to create parallel masculine and feminine nouns is most regularly and consistently maintained, with a clear correlation between them in terms of semantic and functional-stylistic features. The Czech language distinctly demonstrates long-standing achievements and established traditions in feminitive formation, with instances of gender asymmetry in expressing personal meaning reduced to a minimum across various forms of the national language. Throughout most of the 20th century, the Czech linguoculture systematically employed common appellations for both women and men. Discrepancies in the methods of correlating masculine and feminine nouns were overcome in the first half of the 20th century, and the appropriate status of feminitives, equivalent to that of masculinitives, was established. Since then, the process of derivational feminization has become normative for the Czech language. Consequently, the correlativity of masculine and feminine nouns for expressing personal meaning is a productive, vibrant phenomenon in the word-formation system of contemporary Czech (Hrushkova, 1967, p. 551; Shticha, 2018). In Czech feminist linguistics, as in Polish, the term *'feminative'* (feminatyv) has entered the metalanguage of the discipline. Its activation and even prevalence can be observed at the beginning of the 21st century, when, due to the intensified creation and usage of feminine personal nouns, research in the field of feminitive word formation has also intensified (Arkhanhelska, 2022).

Beginning from the 4th century, as researchers emphasize, the Czech language spread across **the Slovak linguistic** terrain, where it began to be used as a literary language. This dominance of the Czech language persisted almost until the end of the 20th century when feminine formations became more active. Since the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, the Czech language, with its tradition of regular and consistent feminitive formation, has systematically influenced the Slovak language (Machek, 2022, p. 210). In grammatical and word-formation studies of the Slovak language in the 20th century, the phenomenon of creating correlative masculine and feminine nouns with personal meaning was thoroughly described, with the exception of words expressing specific characteristics of men or women (status, activity, position) (Horeckyi, 1949; Dvonč, 1972).

When examining the peculiarities of feminitive formation in the Slovak language compared to Ukrainian, linguists note that the processes of feminization in Slovak are more regulated and codified. In cases where Ukrainian demonstrates limited or unstable feminitive formation, Slovak consistently develops feminine correlates to masculine nouns, especially borrowed ones (suffixal or compound), which, moreover, function across all styles of the Slovak language (Shpit'ko, 2010).

The issue of feminitives has been actualized in studies focused on *Sorbian languages*, which have preserved numerous inherent and specific word-formation types. These types continue to be used today to create structurally diverse nouns denoting female persons. Similar to other West Slavic languages, the formation of correlative masculine and feminine nominations is normative in Sorbian languages, with minor exceptions, as in other languages, when referring to specific characteristics of women or men. Ukrainian linguist I. Kovalyk (1964) also contributed to the study of noun word formation in Sorbian languages, dedicating a specific investigation to the word-formation category of feminine personal nouns in contemporary Lower Sorbian (Kovalyk, 1963, pp. 23–29). Analysis of lexicographic and grammatical works by Slavists who have studied Lower Sorbian allows for the assertion that this language possesses the largest number of word-formation types actualizing corresponding derivative feminitive suffixes. This language demonstrates the characteristic formation of feminitives not only from parallel masculine nouns but also from other parts of speech as derivational bases, for which derivative morphemes are employed.

The South Slavic Tradition of Feminisation Research

The development of the word-formation system in *South Slavic languages* has been significantly influenced by ancient literary traditions, which favoured masculine nouns for general personal reference. However, with the establishment of distinct national tendencies, literary languages gradually began to incorporate authentic colloquial elements, including parallel masculine and feminine formations. Notably, the Bulgarian Revival period was characterized by democratization, autochthonisation, and a departure from ancient Church Slavonic or other foreign models (Baltova, 2010, pp. 26–34). Under the influence of colloquial speech, the formation of correlative masculine and feminine appellations intensified in *the Bulgarian language* from the time of the Bulgarian Revival. Nevertheless, the literary language continues to employ masculine nouns for general personal reference to this day. Bulgarian scholars began to pay attention to the category of feminitives as a distinct lexical group in the second half of the 20th century, with increased interest from the late 20th century due to the intensified creation of corresponding nominations. L. Ivanova (1984) discusses the peculiarities of Bulgarian feminitive formation, which reflects women's emancipation. V. Radeva (1991) dedicated her work to the study of word formation in the Bulgarian literary language. She later examined common and distinctive features in the formation of family-related vocabulary at the Slavic level, demonstrating that the Bulgarian language possesses a rich and diverse system of women's appellations, primarily prevalent in dialectal speech (Radeva, 2010, pp. 236–246).

In contemporary *Macedonian*, emerging trends observable across its functional styles reflect the connection between ancient and current word-formation processes. Within conversational speech, feminine forms are being formed and disseminated, primarily derivatives with suffixes such as *-ка (-инка), -ица*, and *-(н)ица / -(н)ичка* (Aryzankovska, 2010, p. 20). Analyzing the derivation of nouns in Macedonian, Koneski characterized and identified feminine nouns that are predominantly derived from masculine nouns (both derived and non-derived) and belong to modification formations. The aforementioned researcher identified the most productive feminine derivational suffixes, namely *-ка, -инка, -ица, -(н)ица,* and *-(н)ичка* (Koneski, 2003, pp. 65–67).

In the field of feminine derivation in *the Serbian language*, significant works have provided a rationale for modification derivation as a method of gender differentiation of words or as a means of forming feminine lexemes from masculine ones and have characterized productive and less productive suffixes (Chorych, 1982, pp. 65–67). Ten primary derivational means of varying productivity that express motion and participate in the derivation of feminine nouns have been identified (Chorych, 2008, pp. 197–202). Researchers have examined the characteristics of how feminine forms become grammaticalized (Pyper, 2014). R. Drahychevych observed that Serbian is characterized by a large number of connotative nominations, among which there are notably more attributive masculine nouns with negative connotations and a significantly smaller number of similar feminine nominations. According to the scholar, this phenomenon is due to the mental and psychological characteristics of Serbian speakers (Drahychevych, 2010, pp. 75–84), which would be worthwhile to trace in the material of other Slavic languages. Studies on

feminine derivation in Serbian reveal that new feminine terms are actively being developed, indicating that Serbian speakers are engaged in this process (Drahychevych & Utvych, 2019, pp. 185–200).

The study of feminine forms in **the Slovene language** dates back to grammatical works of the 16th century (Markezhich & Breznik, 2021, pp. 52–58). I. Breznik and T. Markezhich have proposed a historiographical, sociolinguistic, linguocultural, and linguistic investigation of this category of words as they appear in Slovene (Markezhich & Breznik, 2021). The authors' achievement lies in their identification of the functional productivity of feminine suffixes using a corpus-based method, which enabled a relevant and accurate statistical representation of the actual usage of feminine forms in various Slovene speech styles. The linguists note that the modelling of feminine forms reflects a distinct derivational capacity of the Slovene language: they present a system of suffixes traditionally used to form feminine nouns, including *-a/-á, ˙ica/-íca, -ja, -ulja, -inja/-ínja, -ka, -(ov)ka, -íčna*. Among the productive forms, two methods are distinguished: the *adaptive* method (adding the feminine form to the masculine form) and the *substitutive* method (replacing part of the masculine form with a feminine counterpart) (Markezhich & Breznik, 2021, pp. 9–10).

Scholars in linguistics have established that **the Croatian language** exhibits a relatively high degree of feminitive formation, which, in their opinion, is attributed to well-known extralinguistic and linguistic factors (Shtebin Golub, 2014, pp. 460–478). Researchers of Croatian word formation characterize feminitives as a phenomenon of derivational modification, identifying specific methods of feminitive derivation and characteristic word-forming means. They indicate the peculiarities of their valency with corresponding masculine noun stems and are convinced that this phenomenon is acquiring a regular and consistent tradition in the Croatian language (Shtebin Golub, 2012, pp. 50–51).

Conclusions

Equality between men and women is an integral part of humanity's progress, a cornerstone of democracy, and a crucial condition for its development. For a long time, women were alienated from power, restricted in rights, and unable to fully realize their rights. Only within the framework of building legal states, where not only equal rights but also equal opportunities for their realization are genuinely ensured through various organizational and legal means, is the principle of equality of human rights and freedoms established. This is motivated by the modern moral and ethical foundations of the ontology of human life.

Awareness of gender discrimination, which is reflected through linguistic means, its acknowledgment, and the evidence of its existence, is a complex cognitive activity determined by a set of cultural and historical traditions, including patriarchal stereotypes of speech behavior.

The actualization of sociolinguistic factors mentioned in the introductory part of this article, as demonstrated, has influenced the activation of feminization in Slavic languages, albeit to varying degrees due to the specific manifestations of these factors.

This fragmentary and aspectual review of research experiences in feminist linguistics within Slavic philology demonstrates that linguistic Slavistics is grounded in robust traditions, while contemporary feminitive issues are garnering increasing interest and discussion, as evidenced by numerous linguistic and interdisciplinary studies.

The examination of the historical development of the feminitive category stands as the most crucial argument in elucidating the feminization process as an inherent linguistic phenomenon. This historical perspective provides insights into the motivations underlying the possibility or impossibility of regularly forming general terms for female individuals from masculine terms.

The feminitive subsystem of each Slavic language is built upon a rich common Slavic foundation, which has preserved inherent features (a system of appropriate suffixes for forming feminine nouns, developed in each Slavic language, albeit to varying degrees) while simultaneously developing specific national linguistic characteristics (inherent word-formation models, corresponding morphemic means). This is further facilitated by the manifestation of extralinguistic mega-factors, including the Russo-Ukrainian war, which has motivated the emergence of numerous neofeminitives in the Ukrainian language. Moreover, let us emphasize Ukraine's European choice, which also stimulates the spread of feminine forms. In Ukraine, we observe the activation of the women's movement, Femen. The women's movement in Western Ukraine

was revived over a hundred years ago. Today, the high consciousness of women at that time, their courage, and their determination to defend their rights are striking. What is great is seen from a distance, through the lens of time, and today the women's movement that took place in Galicia at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century is regarded exclusively as a European, progressive phenomenon. This, evidently, also partly explains the activity of feminine forms in the Ukrainian language, in contrast to other East Slavic languages – Russian and Belarusian. In Russia and Belarus, the feminist movement has not been observed; it is virtually absent today and was not present in the past, which is clearly motivated by the lack of a sufficient level of democracy in these countries. And feminism is an essential component of democratization, modernization, and intellectualization of society.

The novelty of this scientific study is motivated by the fact that, based on the aspectual-fragmentary analysis of scientific literature (from the mid-20th century to the present) dedicated to (a) the issues of the peculiarities of the formation and development of linguofeminology, including (b) the development of its methodological foundations; tracing (c) the unique functioning of feminisms in Slavic languages carried out in a diachronic-synchronic perspective. In accordance with the research objective, it has been shown that (1) linguofeminology is a syncretic scientific field that, in recent years, has been actively developing in connection with both modern and traditional linguistic directions and branches of linguistics; (2) the expansion of the methodology of this scientific field is observed, motivated by the changing status of women in the modern world; (3) certain contentious issues in the theory and practice of linguofeminology have been identified (trends toward their resolution are shown); (4) the findings of leading linguogenderologists regarding the general trends in the spread of feminatives in the Slavic linguistic space have been summarized; (5) research approaches and aspects of studying feminatives in Slavic linguistics have been characterized; (6) the leading tendencies of the feminization process occurring in the Slavic linguistic space have been identified (their prevalence in speech styles, the presence of variants, efforts toward codification, an increase in their number, which leads to the elimination of gaps in the gender opposition of male and female designations).

It should be noted that the study of the peculiarities in the process of feminine form formation in different Slavic languages is insufficient, somewhat sporadic, and awaits further development nowadays. There is a lack of contrastive studies and specialized lexicographical publications.

Research in feminist linguistics is motivated by the study of how processes generate and disseminate nouns for female individuals, particularly in relation to nouns for male individuals. This phenomenon is evident in nearly all Slavic languages today and is influenced by both linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

As evidenced by the work of linguogenderologists, (1) West Slavic languages surpass East and South Slavic languages in terms of feminitive formation activity. (2) South Slavic languages more consistently preserve literary written traditions, (3) to which East Slavic languages also tend. Still, the feminization process in them occurs more restrainedly, (4) except for the Ukrainian language, which is close to the general national practice of creating parallel masculine and feminine nouns observed in West Slavic languages. (5) Russian and Belarusian linguistic science adopts a conservative stance on the phenomenon of feminization. It views the masculine gender as a universal, indefinite, and unmarked grammatical category that denotes personhood in the literary language, irrespective of sex.

In Slavic studies, the aggregate of common feminine nouns is examined as an abstracted quantity, a unified category of feminativity, allowing for the systematic classification and analysis of nominative units denoting female persons. The category of feminativity is a generalized abstract concept with subordinate interrelated components united by the common meaning of 'female person'. It is considered a morphological quantity (lexico-grammatical category of nouns), a derivatological one (word-formation category of person), and a lexico-semantic one (as a corresponding macrosystem of words united by a common lexical meaning).

The growing role of women in society has become not just evident but a fully real and progressive phenomenon observed across all Slavic languages. Therefore, linguogenderologists' primary focus is on recording the process of corresponding lexical system renewal, implementing new language policies, standardizing correlative feminine and masculine nouns, and appropriately lexicographing feminitives.

The feminization process is regular and irreversible in most Slavic languages: there are no observations regarding the excessive manifestation of this process, the emergence of unmotivated variability, forced

feminitive formation, or risks in restoring and developing the specified word system. However, this process is also critically evaluated: research discussions are ongoing, motivated by the presence of various concepts in perceiving the feminization process.

The use of masculine forms to denote professions shifts gender identification, and depending on the level of gender equality, as well as the establishment of some new language functioning trends – such as the democratization of norms, expansion of variability, stylistic reorganization of linguistic units, etc. – the situation is gradually being equalized.

The manifestation of feminism in language, as shown, is also conditioned by the gender national program, which is motivated by universal categories and the national specifics of their transformation. However, masculinity and femininity today are not so much opposing categories as they are dialectically connected. At the same time, new phenomena are emerging, such as unisex, which is uniquely presented in language and requires further study.

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