

# Uvodnik: o rodu, jeziku i rodolektologiji

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**Bertoša, Mislava; Pišković, Tatjana**

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## Foreword: on gender, language and genderlectology

Even though the Croatian academic community has been discussing gender as a social category, publications on how language shapes gender identities are sparse, scattered among various different publications with a primary focus on sociology, stylistics or social sciences in general. This issue of *Suvremena lingvistika* is the first Croatian publication dedicated entirely to the domain of language and gender that has so far been eluded, either because of refraining from its provocative nature, prejudice about the triviality of the subject matter, or insufficient insight into relevant recent research within this domain. The contributions in this issue are diverse in their topics, which lends itself to creating an international forum in order to articulate many avenues of research into language and gender: in the tradition of feminist criticism of language, it discusses the necessity for women to be included in language and the so-called gender differences in language use between men and women; within the framework of the Zagreb school of terminology, insight is provided into gender-marked idiomatic expressions and how the notions of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ are shaped in these expressions; furthermore, the traditional approach to gender as a grammatical category still prevails and brings forth its respective semantic and social dimensions. All the topics listed – which have been studied from the very beginnings of research into language and gender – are further developed by using recent perspectives expanding into new areas, especially gender ideologies and queer linguistics. Linguistic overviews of femininity and masculinity as well as homosexual and queer identities are derived from research into corpora and are shedding light on gender both on the level of individual performance and the level of institutions and ideologies as well. In that way, these contributions have avoided (and in a way have also unraveled) the outdated discussions on language and gender in Croatian public discourse so far. These discussions were frequently determined by exhausting essentialist picking through common syntactic and lexical structures that were deemed sexist and armchair nitpicking of constructed examples of language use in order to show the supposedly binary nature of language use by men and women. In the following paragraphs we will present these seven contributions in more detail.

The problematic practice of authors relying on personal experience and intuition when analyzing women’s and men’s speech rather than using representative, accurate data persuaded Shala Barczewska and Agata Andreasen to conduct a study of gender differences in language based on corpus data (*Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English* – MICASE). In their article “Good or marvelous? Pretty, cute or lovely? Male and female adjective use in MICASE” the authors compare the use of eight basic adjectives (*good, bad, big, small, pretty, ugly, important, and different*) and their synonyms in order to test two claims about the use of adjectives in men’s

and women's speech made by Robin Lakoff in her seminal pioneering work in gender linguistics *Language and woman's place*, published in 1973. The two claims have been perpetuated ever since, without proper critical stance in this sociolinguistic field of research. The first claim is that women use more adjectives than men do, while the second claim is that there are more 'feminine' and more 'masculine' adjectives. The authors' corpus analysis confirm some of the assumed gender differences (for example, women really did use more of the adjectives that were analyzed than men did, i.e. they more frequently used the adjectives *pretty* and *cute*). However, the authors also show many similarities in use, i.e. both men and women equally frequently use the adjectives *good* and *different* and are more prone to using adjectives with positive connotations rather than adjectives that carry negative connotation.

In his article "Speech play, gender play, and the verbal artistry of queer argots" Rusty Barrett presents a comparative analysis of queer argots in different languages and language communities marked by non-normative gender. The nine argots that Barret compares are all based on typologically different languages (*bahasa gay* – Indonesian, *gayle* – South African English, *isiNgqumo* – Zulu, *kaliardà* – Modern Greek, *khabal'stvo* – Russian, *lubunca* – Turkish, *oxtchit* – Israeli Hebrew, *pajubá/bajubá* – Brazilian Portuguese, *polari* – English, and *swardspeak* – Tagalog and Cebuano). By comparing these argots, the author concludes that their creation and development include frequent use of language play and various verbal skills in morphological innovations, borrowing and taking items from other languages, linguistic innovations and substitution of standard lexemes with the more local ones. Furthermore, the author concludes that language play and verbal art play a significant, yet understudied role in queer cultures across the world. Considering that the authors who study topics in queer culture and queer linguistics largely focus on secret varieties as products of marginalization, shame, rejection, hiding, and secrets, the author suggests a complementary approach that would provide balance by studying pleasure, fun and humor – in short, queer joy and fun in creating argots as sociolinguistic phenomena that bring into question the normative assumptions of gender and sexuality and which enable their speakers to experience freedom and solidarity.

Although phraseology is a prolific research domain in Croatian linguistics, gender elements in Croatian idiomatic expressions have not been in its focus until recently. This gap is addressed by Anita Hrnjak who compared Croatian and Russian gender-marked idiomatic expressions in her article "Croatian and Russian phraseology through the lens of gender". Hrnjak analyzed how gender stereotypes are reflected in these expressions and how they shape the concepts of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. The results of her study confirm the similarity in the conceptualization of woman and man in Croatian and Russian androcentric cultures, which is then reflected in phraseology. Both Russian and Croatian idiomatic expressions code, on one hand, the stereotype of the importance of female beauty and protective maternal instinct in relation to other people, the negative stereotypes of women's low

intellect, their chattiness, contentiousness, gossiping and overly emotional nature, while on the other hand the stereotypes of men show their male physical, but mental strength as well, courage, initiative and the image of the man as the breadwinner who is focused on work and public action.

In their article “Geschlechtergerechte Personenbezeichnungen in deutscher Wissenschaftssprache. Von frühen feministischen Vorschlägen für geschlechtergerechte Sprache zu deren Umsetzung in wissenschaftlichen Abstracts”, the authors Christine Ivanov, Maria B. Lange and Tabea Tiemeyer study the contemporary uses of gender sensitive language in written German. Their analysis is based on a corpus of conference abstracts from two scientific conferences held in September 2017. The participants at the conferences were researchers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Within the contextual framework of feminist language policy in Germany from the 1970s onwards, i.e. in the context of the guidelines with recommendations for gender–fair language and language correctness when referring to persons, the authors of the article analyze written academic discourse by focusing on how (successfully) these guidelines are implemented in gender–fair language use. Although gender–fair language use in the period analyzed has changed substantially from a diachronic perspective, and its synchronic use is conditioned by speakers’ attitudes and motivations, the examples they analyze (*Arzt/Ärztin, Patient/Patientin, Therapeut/Therapeutin, Student/Studentin*) show how it is possible to avoid gender–based stereotypes by using these nouns and that their use enables clear and unambiguous reference. The results of the analysis show that gender–fair language really does function as a precise tool in text production in academic discourse if it is used to establish accurate and unambiguous reference.

In her article “Ideologies of language and gender in the Croatian women’s magazines from the first half of the 20th century”<sup>41</sup> Tatjana Pišković uses critical discourse analysis in order to study language gender ideologies in the Croatian women’s magazines from the first half of the 20th century and provide insight into how language became viewed as a gender–related phenomenon in Croatian newspaper discourse. The author had abundant material, never studied previously, to conduct her study and present the ideological foundations of different linguistic behavior in men and women. In the corpus she analyzed the models of their linguistic behavior function as symbolic affirmations of male and female traits and gender roles as well as the nature of their mutual relations. The author concludes that language gender ideologies are at the same time founded on ideologies of biologism and evolutionism, and ideologies of faith, family, and nation, but also intertwined with them, so it is not possible to interpret them separately. The author also draws attention to the new biologism of the contemporary era, which still perpetuates the age old idea that language miscommunication between men and women is caused by their different approaches to verbal communication. To sum up, the author emphasizes

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1 As Editor–in–Chief of the journal *Suvremena lingvistika* Mislava Bertoša confirms that the co–editor’s contribution was accepted for publication after double–blind peer review.

that there is no real or authentic subject that creates the so-called women's language, that is, there are no perfect speakers of it. The construct of how women are supposed to speak is not a natural or an expected consequence of evolution and biological differences between men and women – the creation of such construct is a product of social expectations, norms and consumer culture, within which the so-called women's magazines emerge as a valuable source for linguistic research.

In their paper "Challenges of Adopting Gender-Inclusive Language in Slovene", Damjan Popič and Vojko Gorjanc present the development of gender-inclusive language in Slovenia in the past 20 years through an overview of the main tendencies and language elements included in its formation. Special attention is paid to the use of underscore on online websites of Slovenian organizations and associations that aim to make all gender identities visible as well as bring into question the generic use of the masculine grammatical gender and the gender binary through such orthographic practice, and by using the grammatical morphemes for male and female genders (*bile\_i*, *vabljene\_i*, *partner\_ka*, *vse\_i*, *migrantke\_i*, *vprašale\_i*, *zdravnice\_ka*). By analyzing two corpora created exclusively for the purpose of studying the use of underscore in the formation of gender-inclusive Slovene language, the authors conclude that this symbol is most frequently used in LGBTQ+ communities and they single out the most frequent groups of words that are used in this orthographic practice (pronouns, auxiliary verbs, verbs related to cognitive functions, nouns for people, nouns denoting professions, nouns for migrants and other underprivileged groups, nouns for health professionals, nouns denoting marital or romantic status).

In her article "Russian evaluative nominalizing suffixes and change in gender", Olga Steriopolo uses the framework of Distributed Morphology to observe and analyze how evaluative suffixes (*-an-*, *-jash-*, *-jon-*, *-ul-*, *-un-*, *-ur-*, *-us-*, *-ush-*, *-ag-*, *-jak-*, *-al-*, *-jar-*, *-akh-*, *-il-*, *-in-*, *-ob-*, *-ot-*, *-okh-*, *-jug-*, *-uk-*, *-ukh-*) influence the change in category features of Russian nouns, such as animacy, declension class and grammatical gender. Evaluative suffixes carry affective and vulgar meaning and are frequent in Russian colloquial language; suffixes of this kind can be added to various syntactic categories, but they always form second declension nouns. The author specifically focuses on the question of the grammatical gender, i.e. whether the grammatical gender of the noun made by using the evaluative suffix will have the same grammatical gender as the original word. Steriopolo observes and puts forward an interesting regularity: if the evaluative suffixes are added to the base of the noun that denotes kinship (e.g. *syn* 'son', *mama* 'mum', *papa* 'dad', *ded* 'grandfather', *baba* 'grandmother'), the grammatical gender of the derived word will not change in relation to the pre-existing word. However, if the evaluative suffixes are attached to the base of nouns that do not denote kinship (e.g. *vor* 'thief', *krasota* 'beauty', *chort* 'devil'), the grammatical gender of the derived word will sometimes remain the same, but sometimes it will be different from the grammatical gender of the pre-existing word. The author concludes that the derived

nouns that denote kinship retain the grammatical gender because the meaning of the lexical morpheme is inherently determined by the sex of the referent, and this is more important in assigning grammatical gender to the noun than the morpho-syntactic features of the noun.

Issue number 86 of the journal *Suvremena lingvistika*, dedicated to the topic of language and gender, is the first such thematic issue of a linguistic journal in Croatia, and the third publication so far in 2018 on this topic. After two books of proceedings published by the Zagreb School of Slavic Studies – *Rodni jezici* (edited by Tatjana Pišković), which consists of translations of the canonical texts of gender and queer linguistics, and *Izvedbe roda u hrvatskome jeziku, književnosti i kulturi* (edited by Ivana Brković and Tatjana Pišković), which comprises written versions of the keynote lectures delivered at the Zagreb School of Slavic Studies held in the summer of 2017 – the journal *Suvremena lingvistika* wishes to continue the discussions within the field of linguistics and fill a very visible gap, until recently, in this broad, challenging, and understudied area of research in Croatian linguistics.

*Mislava Bertoša and Tatjana Pišković*