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GENDER MARKERS SYSTEM IN THE TEXTS OF POETIC DRAMA (BASED ON *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE)

The problem of gender in the English language is treated with two approaches. The former states that in Modern English there is no category of gender as there are no formal means of its expression (N.M. Rayevska (1956)), whereas the latter holds that gender in Modern English is a lexico-grammatical (M.Y. Blokh (2003)), syntactical (L.A. Tympko (1985)) or even a social category (O.B. Khanas (2002)). The diachronic development of gender was studied by K. Brunner (1955) and A.I. Smirnitski (1955; 1965).

The object of investigation is the influence of poetic discourse on the choice of language means and their dependability on the cultural environment of the discourse. The subject of investigation is the semantic connection between the nouns of definite gender with the pronouns they correlate with and their dependability on the cultural and literary tradition.

The actuality of the paper is conditioned by the absence of complex investigation and analysis of the given topic. The problem of noun gender has been studied separately, whereas in the present paper we analyze the correlation of nouns of the definite gender with the respective pronouns in different discourses. Special attention is paid to the fact that regularities or deviations of correlation largely depend on the author's intention in his/her work, thus the definite instances of correlation are analyzed within the definite context. The results of the investigation show the contradictory character of the gender of the English nouns and how this contradiction is manifested at the level of discourse.

The category of gender in general can be manifested in a language by a variety of different grammatical and lexical means or forms of expression. When the inflexions are no longer there, gender does not automatically cease to exist, for there are others morphosyntactic ways of indicating gender and first of all by bringing together the anaphoric words that still retain the gender distinctions with certain nouns.

Thus it is important to understand the difference between the *overt* and *covert* expression of gender, using the terminology of Benjamin Lee Whorf. So the *overt* is lexical or morphological gender, e.g. *enchantress*, while the *covert* expression is the use of referential pronouns to refer to words. These are the most typical historical cultural situations where the covert category of gender is expressed very regularly [4, 39].

Sometimes the same notions are referred to as intrinsic and referential gender. *Intrinsic gender* is the gender assigned to lexical units as a constant. In this case particular genders – such as male, female – are viewed as inherent characteristics of given entities and are manifested through various means in the nominal expressions. *Referential gender* is the gender that is expressed indirectly or covertly by using *he, she, it* to allude to all kinds of things [4, 23].

It is to be noted that when morphological gender distinctions disappeared the

classification of nouns according to their gender was preserved. The division into genders remained, but the very character of the given category was changed – it came to be expressed not in the grammatical form but lexically and syntactically.

There is still a number of nouns in English capable of expressing their gender lexically, i.e. gender distinction underlies their meaning and coincides with their biological sex. These are animate human names such as *man, father, husband, warrior, king, woman, mother, bride, queen* etc. Their number remains comparatively unchangeable in the course of language development.

Moreover, a great many person nouns in English are capable of expressing both feminine and masculine genders depending on the context. These are referred to as *nouns of the dual or common gender*. Here belong such words as *person, parent, friend, cousin, president,* etc. As society develops, the number of nouns of common gender increases. This is connected with the tendency to avoid politically incorrect lexis. Thus we can state that while morphological way of gender expression was reduces due to language development, lexical expression may be ousted due to the changes of the social environment. However, in poetic texts the nouns of common/dual gender can follow any correlation due to the absence of need to be politically correct.

In most poetic texts the *syntactic way* of expression is the most frequently occurring. In other words the category of gender is expressed by the obligatory correlation of nouns with the personal pronouns of the third person singular.

Gradually, in the completely new language relations the original grammatical distinctions were completely ousted and replaced by the so called *cultural-historical category of gender*, i.e. when gradually certain classes of words, expressing certain classes of concepts and references came to be regularly alluded to or coordinated with the feminine, masculine or neuter genders respectively. [4, 25]

Consequently, we can state that the category of gender is a *diachronic constant*, i.e. it exists on every stage of language development. Synchronically it is the dominant way of its expression that changes with the changes in language structure, from morphological in Old English to syntactic in Modern English. It should be mentioned that such a shift is exclusively inner, as no change in the notion of gender in the worldview occurs.

As it was mentioned above in English the personal pronouns of the third person singular serve as specific gender classifiers of nouns, being potentially reflected on each entry of the noun in speech. Notably, these correlations do not necessarily depend on the lexical meaning of the noun, the shift in genders being possible and rather frequent. This shift is referred to as irregular correlations.

If we speak about irregular correlation, i.e. the use of a pronoun of one gender to correlate with a noun of another gender, we apply the term *grammatical personifying transposition,* which is very typical of English. This kind of transposition affects not only animate nouns, but also a wide range of inanimate nouns, being regulated in everyday language by cultural-historical traditions. Compare the reference of *she* with the names of countries, vehicles, weaker animals, etc.; the reference of *he* with the names of stronger animals, the names of phenomena suggesting crude strength and fierceness, etc.

Apart from cultural-historical tradition we differentiate between two types of such transposition: upgrading and downgrading. *Upgrading* is observed when a non-personal animate noun or inanimate noun is turned, respectively, into *he* and *she*. In the reverse process, when animate personal nouns are referred to as *it* we speak about *downgrading*. [4, 36] The principle of using the personal pronoun of neuter gender to substitute nouns denoting non-

person is often violated. The forms of the pronouns of masculine and feminine gender are used with the inanimate nouns, whereas the personal pronoun of neuter gender is used to substitute nouns denoting living beings if there is no need to specify their gender. These phenomena were not observed in Old English and Middle English and are exclusively characteristic of the Modern English period throughout. Here we try to explicate the peculiarities of the above mentioned notions in the poetic discourse of drama.

As it has been already stated above, the choice and organization of the language means are determined primarily by the author's worldview and communicative intention, which are realized in a definite social context. We can account for the use of definite semantic and syntactic structures in a definite discourse if we base our interpretation of the use on the author's aim in creating his/her work, i.e. the intention of the work itself. Thus, before starting to analyze functional realization of the category of gender it is necessary to define the above mentioned in the chosen texts.

Today there is nothing particularly outlandish in asserting that literature is a communicative domain for creating and contemplating alternative worlds. Viewed as discourse, the literary work is rooted in a cultural and rhetorical context in which meaning is a collaborative construction involving the author and culture environment he/she lives in. The notion of the alternative worlds is particularly well observed in the works of poetic drama where the worlds created tend to differ from the real one by the fact of their mere existence only in the author's vision.

If *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can be said to convey a message, it is that the creative imagination is in tune with the supernatural world, and is best used to confer the blessings of Nature (writ large) upon mankind and marriage. Another fact Shakespeare wants to make clear is namely that the theater is nothing more than a shared dream. [5, 276] Consequently, exactly like in a dream, everything in the play comes to be alive, so all inanimate objects are personified. Let us specify in what way this personification is reflected in the gender correlations of nouns with the respective pronouns.

We start with the most widely applied notion in the whole play – the notion of *love*. It appears in two aspects: when one of the characters speaks about his/her beloved, and when Love is regarded as a personificated feeling. In the former case it naturally appears to be masculine and correlate with the pronoun *he* if a woman is speaking, and to be feminine if applied in the words of a man. Cf. the words of Titania:

Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently [6, 289].
And the word of Oberon concerning Demetrius:
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy [6, 290].
In the latter case, i.e. when characters speak of Love and do not associate it with a definite person, it appears to be masculine:
e.g. And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled [6, 281].
This comes in contradiction to the genaral supposition that the reference of *he* is applied to the names of phenomena suggesting crude strength and fierceness. Here only childishness and naïveté is implied.

Moreover, it is interesting to mention that other inanimate notions, for example, *sleep* and *duty*, are masculine as well.

e.g. Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest! [6, 286].

So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow

For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe:

Which now in some slight measure it will pay,

If for his tender here I make some stay [6, 290].

The masculine character of the word *duty* can be possibly be understood as the only one possible, since in the time of Shakespeare it was hard to imagine association of duty with feminine concept (unless it was referred to family and marriage).

e.g. I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged

And duty in his service perishing… [6, 297].

The next correlation to deal with is the correlation of the nouns denoting animals. Only two examples can be cited here, concerning a domestic and a wild animal respectively. The former goes in accordance with the supposition that the gender of domestic animals is always specified, though really in the play the gender of *ox* is not at all important. More probably here *ox* is naturally masculine in the opposition to the naturally feminine word *cow*.

e.g. The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,

The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn

Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard [6, 283].

The word *snake* is here feminine – perhaps because used in the abstract describing Titania's sleep. The whole passage thus is associated not only with feminine beauty but also with fairy delicacy, the word *snake* being used in accordance with this association.

e.g. And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,

Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in [6, 285].

As for the words of common gender, the instances of the use of *child* and *youth* can serve as an example. The masculine correlation of the word *youth* is understandable as it almost never denotes a woman can only theoretically be considered the noun of common gender, and in the given context it denotes the beloved of "a sweet Athenian lady" thus being synonymous to *man* or *fellow*.

e.g. A sweet Athenian lady is in love

With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;

But do it when the next thing he espies

May be the lady [6, 285].

The word *child* is substituted by the masculine pronoun *he,* which can be accounted for by the fact that in the play the child in question being "the fairy's possession" belongs mainly to Titania and not to Oberon, thus logically being a boy.

e.g. Set your heart at rest:

The fairy land buys not the child of me.

His mother was a voteress of my order [6, 284].

Thus, the mentioned examples show that most words which underwent personifying transposition in the play correlate with the masculine pronouns which proves the statement that English is usually defined as "he-man language", i.e. the language of the society orientated on a man as its main and dominant element. This is especially true in the period when Shakespeare created his play. Even the word fairy usually denoting both genders or even more often – feminine becomes exclusively masculine in Oberon's chant:

e.g. Every fairy take his gait [6, 301].

One of the most important and interesting correlation regularities is the literary tradition of personification the Sun and the Moon. Traditionally in poetry the Sun is masculine and the Moon – feminine, though in the texts pertaining to Old English tradition (like epic fantasy) the Sun is feminine and the Moon – masculine. Shakespeare in his play follows the former tradition (though only the word *Moon* is used in the play):

e.g. O, methinks, how slow

This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires [6, 279].

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.

The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;

And when she weeps, weeps every little flower [6, 289].

Thus, we may conclude that gender peculiarities of the nouns used in the play are determined by Shakespeare's intention to present his play in the form of a dream. Moreover, we must keep in mind that his work is an example of poetic drama, thus personification is widely used in it transforming the inanimate nouns into animate.

Here we also see that most instances of the gender usage can be interpreted and explained only referring to the segments larger than a sentence where they occur of even to the whole text, i.e. the discourse. Further investigation may concern the influence of mythopoetic and epic discourse on the choice of language means the semantic connection between the nouns of definite gender with the pronouns they correlate with.

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СИНОНІМІЧНІ ЗАСОБИ МОВИ І ВЕРБАЛІЗАЦІЯ КОНЦЕПТІВ

У світлі загальної спрямованості лінгвістичних розвідок у руслі когнітивізму інтерес до концепту не тільки не вщухає, а набуває все нових і нових обертів. Хоча деякі дослідники (Селіванова О. О., Залевська О. О.) таку надмірну зацікавленість вважають невиправданою [10, 419; 2, 36] і, навіть, називають її епідемією, хворобою [10, 419]. Разом з тим, серед широкого кола проблем, що вирішуються концептологами на даному етапі (структура концепту, актуалізація в різних типах дискурсу, типи концептів і методологія їх дослідження), чільне місце належить мовним засобам вербалізації концептів, зокрема синонімії [6; 9].