

# Dichotomy "Our/Others" in the mass media discourse of feminism

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this study is to identify common patterns and national characteristics of modeling the linguocultural category of Our / Others in feminism discourse.

The object of this article is a metaphorical representation of the images of Our own and Others in the feminist discourse of Russia and the United States. The subject of the research is the General laws and national features of metaphorical modeling of linguocultural categories of Ours - Others in the feminist discourse of Russia and the United States. The scientific novelty of the study is determined by a comprehensive study of conceptual metaphors that function in the Russian and American feminist discourse to model the bipolar category of Our - Others. The paper identifies and characterizes, on the one hand, metaphorical models used to characterize both Our own and Others (military and bestial models), and on the other hand, models that are used only to characterize Others (family model) or Their own (religious and economic models). Metaphorical models reflecting General trends in the development of feminist discourse of the two countries (they are aggressors, they are animals, we are victims, we are warriors) are identified and systematized. Analyzed the metaphoric model, reflecting the national specificities and the impact of national socio-political situation in the feminist metaphor (they are sick, they are children, we are representatives of a higher power, we're animals, we – goods consumption).

Cognitive-discursive study of metaphorical modeling allows to identify the conceptual content of linguistic and cultural category of Our own and Others in the feminist discourse. For supporters of feminism Our - is, first, women, and secondly - people who share the ideology of feminism. Respectively of Others is, first, men second - the opponents of feminism, proponents of the traditional society, the distribution of gender roles, which proponents of feminism define as Patriarchal and sexist.

**Keywords**—Cognitive-discursive study, our-other, feminist discourse, opposition "male-female"

## I. INTRODUCTION

Opposition "male-female" is fundamental to human culture, and there is numerous evidences, originating in the ancient ideas of the world. The advent of civilization not only did not eliminate the division of the world into "male" and "female" principles, but also deepened it. However, only in the second half of the XX century, researchers drew attention to the human not just as a generalized subject but recognized the importance and relevance of gender identification in the discussion of various problems of the Humanities [1]. The appearance of these lexemes in the language, as well as the ambiguity of opinions of citizens of Russia and the United States, are associated with the long-term process of formation of democratic consciousness during the XX-XXI centuries., as well as with modern political and social events in the country [2].

The gender metaphor is the result of the cognitive juxtaposition of two spheres: the first is the cultural concept of "man/woman", and the second is a concept with a completely different meaning. It is important to distinguish between two opposite types of gender metaphors. In the first case, the gender concept plays the role of the source sphere: this type corresponds to the representation of a country, plant, car or computer in the form of a woman or a man, in which the relevant phenomena (for example, birch, maple, truck or nation) are endowed with gender qualities. In the second case, the gender concept plays the role of a target sphere: this type corresponds to the metaphorical representation of a man in the form of an eagle, a tank or a rag, and women - in the form of a bun, a fish, a shark or a flower. It is equally important for this study to distinguish between gender metaphors and feminist metaphors. Tender metaphors are metaphors whose source or target sphere is the tender and its associated

realities. Such metaphors can be used in scientific, artistic, journalistic, political and other texts.

It should be borne in mind that feminism is an organizationally weakly structured movement that includes a variety of different directions. It is important to distinguish between militant and moderate feminists, the latter seek not so much to full equality, but to ensure that men appreciate women more and treat them more vaguely. In the most generalized form, feminist discourse is understood as a complex of texts created by feminists taking into account their authorship, targeting, audience perception, distribution channel and other discursive factors. The feminist texts were intended to discuss issues of discrimination against women, gender inequality and the need to improve the relationship between men and women.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

As a material for the study, 3087 metaphorical word-uses were used (including 1495 English-speaking and 1689 Russian-speaking) recorded in 524 texts. The texts under study are characterized by thematic unity (a reflection of the feminist worldview and the activity of feminist movements). The relevant texts are posted on Russian and American websites and portals representing the feminist movement (<http://www.feminist.com>, <http://feminist.org>, <http://accion-positiva.ucoz.es>, <http://vywww.ifeminists.com> and others); materials of blogs and individual pages of representatives of the feminist movement of Russia and the USA were also used (<http://www.natasha-bitten.ru>, <http://gelios.livejournal.com>, <http://feministblogs.org>, etc.). The study took into account not only the fact of the location of the corresponding text on the feminist website, but also the content of this text, i.e. his real correspondence to the ideology of feminism.

When choosing and substantiating the method of describing specific metaphorical models functioning in the feminist discourse of the USA and Russia, it is advisable to use the methodology developed for the study of political discourse [1-5] and has been successfully used to study other types of discourse - mass media, pedagogical, medical, domestic, religious. For our study, it is very important that the cognitive analysis of metaphorical models eliminates all the restrictions that determine the features of the traditional structural approach, including not only the requirement of belonging to one lexical-semantic group or at least one part of speech, but also the restrictions associated with the levels of language: within a single system, the actual lexical units, phraseological units and their components, as well as other reproducible units (Proverbs, sayings, aphorisms, etc.) are considered [6]. Thus, it appears that within a single continuum considers not only the metaphors, and other comparative tropes, including comparison, many of the epithets and phraseology.

## III. DISCUSSION

The concept of "woman" is not just opposed to its counterpart – the concept of "man", and is counter-radical on many conceptual grounds man as such. This

contra-radicality of concepts, of course, is clearly manifested in the language, as well as in the cultural and national connotations characteristic of the figurative foundations of phraseology and Proverbs that characterize a woman, her intellectual abilities, appearance and behavior [5].

Gender studies focus on stereotyping of women's and men's roles and qualities. Emotional evaluation of people, their properties, feelings and situation - all this is refracted through the prism of the linguistic consciousness of the people at a certain stage of its cultural, historical and social development.

If we focus on the concept of V. I. Karasik, the feminist discourse considered in this dissertation is among the status-oriented institutional discourses [4].

This discourse has the following features of institutionality: typical participants, chronotope, goals, values, strategies, genres, case texts and discursive formulas. It is characterized by a specific Arsenal of discursive formulas (nominations, clichés, designs, etc.). The feminist text is easily recognized by such communicative units used in specific meanings as "Patriarchy", "sexism", "Domostroy", "machist", etc. For example, "Patriarchy" for feminists - it is not "replaced the era of matriarchy in the development of primitive society..." [7], and the modern system of relations between men and women, in which men dominate in family, economic and political life, enslaving women. Accordingly, the Russian feminists called the Domostroy is not a "set of everyday ideas that existed in Russia many centuries ago", a typical modern views of the relationship between men and women. One of the most common areas of modern feminism is the search in the natural language of "traces of Patriarchy", the desire to prove the presence of discriminatory elements in it and making proposals to improve speech practice. Under the influence of the methodology of critical analysis of discourse [8], which was created to search in the language of manifestations of social, racial, class and other inequalities, feminists argue that the language of modern society not only reflects the existing gender inequality in society, but also constructs it. According to this concept, modern languages are not anthropocentric, as it is proclaimed by leading linguists, but androcentric, that is, they Express the male point of view and the male attitude to reality.

According to I.V. Groshev, advertising symbolically reproduces the stereotypes of "femininity" and "masculinity". Thus, no matter what story is told in the commercial, the image of a woman is presented as dependent on a man, weak, self-fulfilling either in household chores or in ensuring her attractiveness. A man is presented as a leader, strong, subjugating others to himself for the sake of affirming his "I" [9].

When addressing the discourse of feminism, it is necessary to distinguish between linguistic analysis of feminist texts and feminist analysis of texts whose creators are not related to the ideas of feminism. In the first case, the researcher uses traditional linguistic

(linguo-cognitive) methods for the study of feminist texts: it can be discursive analysis, stylistic analysis, conceptual analysis, analysis from the standpoint of the theory of the text, the method of metaphorical modeling, etc. [5]. With this approach, the researcher, as a rule, does not show his political or civil position, including his attitude to the theory and practice of feminism [10].

#### IV. RESULTS

When it comes to assessing the situation in which the communicant determines his attitude to the subject, the speaker is free, using the language means known to him, to submit his assessment statement either as extremely intense, or, on the contrary, as smoothed, softened, leveled. Categorical evaluation is a pragmatic category, which is based on the social roles of communication participants and their individual characteristics. In several communicative situations, there is a need to convey a cautious statement in the statement, to Express a certain amount of doubt, incomplete confidence in the fairness of the reported.

The leading regulatory function of feminist discourse is its use as a tool in the struggle for power and for its preservation. The private functions of feminist discourse are the manipulation of public consciousness, integration within the movement, the expression of disagreement with the current situation and protest the actions of the authorities, the dissemination of information; projection into the past and the future [11]. All this directly affects the content and form of the feminist text.

Studies of language and gender asymmetries in it are based on the Sepir — Wharf hypothesis: language is not only a product of society, but also a means of forming its thinking and mentality.

The authors distinguish a complex of superficial and deep signs of male and female speech and their statistical processing by means of multilevel selection of material, selection of a number of features. The surface includes a competent description of the fragments of reality, where traditionally dominated by women: cooking, orientation in the problems of fashion, education, household (we emphasize that the reasons for this division of labor are not considered as irrelevant) - or men: repair of equipment, domestic labor with the help of locksmiths and similar tools, knowledge of sports teams, etc. Such signs can be relatively easily falsified. The General underlying symptom simulation the authors considers "the presence in the text, drawn from the woman's face (men) characteristics, largely reflecting the psycholinguistic skills of male (female) writing". These authors include:

##### **men's written speech**

- use of army and prison; - jargon's
- a large number of abstract;
- nouns';

- frequent use of introductory words, especially those that have the meaning of statements: obviously, of course;
- the use of words with the least emotional indexation in the transmission of emotional state or evaluation of the object or phenomenon;
- monotony of techniques in the transmission of emotions; combinations of formal and emotional;
- marked vocabulary when referring to relatives and friends;
- use of newspaper and journalistic clichés;
- use obscene words as;
- introductory (Love, fucking, fuck) and other;
- monotony used obscene;
- words, as well as the prevalence of obscene;
- invective and designs, indicating;
- activities and processes, as well as the predominance of active voice and transitive verbs;
- punctuation mismatch;
- the emotional intensity of the speech.

##### **women's written speech**

- the presence of a set of introductory words, definitions, circumstances, pronominal subject, additions, as well as modal constructions expressing a different degree of supposition, uncertainty (may be, apparently, in my opinion);
- propensity to the use prestigious, stylistically heightened forms of, clichés, book lexical lexicon (experienced sense of disgust and disgust; a sharp conversation; silhouettes teenagers);
- the use of connotatively neutral words and expressions of euphemisms (foul language instead of swearing; drunk instead of drunk);
- the use of evaluative statements (words and phrases) with the deictic lexemes instead of naming the person by name (the bastard);
- great imagery of speech in the description of feelings, the variety of invective and their accentuation with the help of amplifying particles, adverbs and adjectives (and what a bitch you are; fucked as it should be; hot fucking);
- Invective, as a rule, affect the biophysiological characteristics of women: appearance age, sexuality. The invectives of the high frequency detect zoonyms (scatty sheep); dominated by swear words-nouns and verbs in the passive voice (his singing moonshine; taking her home from work every day in a wheelbarrow);
- high frequency is also the use of adverb+adverb constructions (too ruthless; very good), simple and compound sentences, syntactic turns with double negation; frequent use of punctuation, high emotional coloring of speech in General.

Our studies have shown that women are more sensitive to the semantic structure of the text - their restored samples show greater coherence. Women tried to restore as much as possible the original text, and

men - to build a new one; their texts deviate from the standard more than women. By gender stereotypes we mean "culturally and socially conditioned opinions and presuppositions about the qualities, attributes and norms of behavior of both sexes and their reflection in the language" [12]. Asymmetries, in turn, are interpreted as various kinds of mismatches (associative, connotative and other plans) in the semantic volume of formally and lexically similar units.

Gender stereotypes are the basis for the formation of certain social expectations towards the sexes, encouraging some and negatively assessing other features and qualities of people depending on their biological sex.

Most of the phraseological units do not differ by gender, it does not reflect the nomination of the person nominated for action (to get a hand). A significant part of them is based on a bodily metaphor (according to Lakoff) - to get up from the left leg, to get under the arm, to lay down the head, etc. That is, their internal form is applicable to all persons regardless of gender. All people can sing praises, scratch the tongue, do not come out snout that show contextual examples contained in the words. In this regard, it is significant, for example, the use of the word girl in the phraseology of girl boy to give the idiom a negative connotation [10]. Also, the word mum/mummy may have a negative connotation, uncharacteristic of the equivalent concept of dad. The idiom mummy's boy has a pronounced derogatory color precisely because it includes the word mummy's (the boy's proximity to his mother is regarded as something unacceptable, inconsistent with the generally accepted canons of masculinity). Similar connotations have the idioms old woman and play the woman. Tearfulness, softness, etc. are considered attributes of female behavior and are considered as unacceptable for a man. It is noteworthy that if the word woman can be used to describe a man, the word man is not used to describe a woman. Thus, the paired phraseological units play the woman and play the man are used exclusively to characterize men, the first in the negative, the second in the positive sense ("behave like a man").

Emotional evaluation of people, their properties, feelings and situation - all this is refracted through the prism of the linguistic consciousness of the people at a certain stage of its cultural, historical and social development.

## V. CONCLUSION

Mass media offer the information that is in demand. Therefore, a woman chooses from the proposed media those materials that meet her needs, values, needs. The results of the undertaken analysis of the preferences of women in the field of mass communication has shown that the thematic areas chosen, regardless of their age, correspond to the content of the tender stereotypes that tells about the existence of them in the minds of Russian women, reproduction and the formation of gender stereotypes is not unimportant role is played by the content of the information broadcast by the media.

A substantial analysis of women's issues in the mass media shows that materials on the role of women in society are not fully represented. Mass media present information with a strong emphasis on several problem - thematic areas (psychology, physiology, appearance). At the same time, the list of problems affecting the interests of women, and requiring reflection in the media, is very large [13]. At the same time, we must not forget that the mass media are a powerful tool for shaping public opinion. Consequently, the way in which the mass media present the problems of gender relations, the social roles of women and men, has a huge impact on their social status and lays stable tender stereotypes in the younger generation.

Currently, gender is becoming the same key concept as the class, race, nation, the study of this problem is engaged in leading linguists, sociologists, cultural scientists, political scientists, psychologists from different countries.

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