

Review of: "Grammatical Aspects of Feminatives Through the Ukrainian Prism"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This article deals with a very interesting topic both on a theoretical level and for its actuality

First of all, not being an expert in the Ukrainian language, my comments will refer exclusively to general social and linguistic phenomena, without considering the specific aspects of the grammatical forms available in this language for the feminatives.

In general, I think this contribution has both several strengths and some weaknesses, as indicated below.

Strengths:

- Correctly the Author proposes to consider different linguistic criteria (phonological /phonotactic, semantic and communicative) to avoid weighting down the linguistic system and making it less clear and effective (degradation of the language expressive ability).
- The observation that it is not necessary to introduce feminatives when, for intrinsic linguistic reasons, this cannot be done, is relevant and sensible (e.g., it seems that in Ukrainian this would give rise to phonotactic absurdities). The same applies to those terms which, although transformable with feminine suffixes (e.g. professor) denote professional, social, political ecc. roles which, as such, are not linked to gender; or they denote general categories (person, member of, personal pronouns, etc.).
- If, on the other hand, one wants to highlight the female gender of the subject, then this can be done in various ways, already available in the linguistic system; this point, however, depends a lot on the grammatical rules of each language; for example in Italian different articles can be added to the same noun: *la* presidente for a woman vs. *il* presidente for a man. It is also true that "the exact one-to-one correspondence between the social and the grammatical gender is not achievable" as in the case of non-binary persons (p. 3-4/7).
- I agree with the Author's statement that the feminine new terms should be applied according to the criteria highlighted by recent literature: **essentiality**, **derivativity**, **good sound**, **organic nature**, **unambiguity** and **brevity**; actually, these criteria are not respected, as it has been found by means an analysis of 257 entries of a specific Ukrainian feminine set in a scientific discourse.

Weaknesses:

- In the introduction a brief overview of the different systems of grammatical gender rules in the main natural languages

would be necessary, in order to better understand the complexity of their substantial arbitrariness.

- Although it is right to consider the issue of social non-discrimination (e.g. non-binary persons) it is equally sensible to consider that it takes much more than changing the words to eliminate discrimination against women. These considerations should be broadened a bit, by making more explicit whether the Author wants to put forwards a general social issue or, rather, a specific linguistic-methodological stance.
- An other point the Author should better clarify is the concept of *general gender*, with respect to *common gender*; this should be done by providing a greater number of relevant examples, in order to identify the underlying criteria differentiating the two concepts.

In conclusion, this article is not easily comprehensible, given the inevitable technicalities it uses, deals with a very relevant but still controversial issue, in which politically correct demands and traditionally biased attitudes play conflicting roles. Therefore, it deserves to be published after a revision according the suggestions given above.