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**POLITICAL CORRECTNESS IN GENDER LINGUISTICS:
A TERMINOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract. This paper explores the complex field of gender linguistics, concentrating on the issue of political correctness with regard to terminology. The terminology we use to define gender identities and expressions is changing dramatically in today's conversation, reflecting societal understanding and sensitivity to a range of gender experiences. Political correctness, which emphasizes deferential communication and inclusive language that recognize the range of gender identities outside conventional binary definitions, forms the foundation for this change. This article's goal is to critically examine the relationship between gender linguistics and political correctness, paying special attention to the language used in conversations on gender-related topics. It investigates the development of language around gender, emphasizing how considerate and polite language is used as a vehicle to promote acceptance and understanding.

The study analyzes the impact of political correctness on gender linguistics through a terminological perspective, examining examples of gender-neutral vocabulary from media sources and the development of feminitives in English and Russian languages. Research methods include textual and comparative analysis, observational techniques, and descriptive approaches.

The theoretical significance of the work: modern linguistics must research into the foundations of gender reflection in language, because language plays a significant role in the mechanisms of cultural representation of gender, which makes linguistics one of the most important scientific disciplines through which the process of knowledge of gender can be examined.

The practical significance of this study extends to various areas of linguistic research and applications. One of its main contributions is the promotion of gender-neutral language in both spoken and written communication. As language evolves to reflect societal shifts, an understanding of gender-sensitive terminology and its proper usage becomes increasingly important in creating inclusive discourse.

As awareness of gender diversity grows, this study can also guide the development of policies and educational resources aimed at enhancing the use of gender-neutral language in public and private communication, contributing to broader cultural changes toward equality and respect.

The work's scientific value stems from its examination of the complex interactions among gender linguistics, political correctness, and the specialized language used in gender discourse.

Keywords: linguistics, language, feminitives, gender identity, social identity, gender linguistics, political correctness, and terminology

Introduction

Comprehending “Political correctness in gender linguistics: A terminological perspective” is highly pertinent in the current age. The terminology we use to define multiple gender identities has a significant impact on people as a whole and on communities, especially when knowledge of these identities among the general public grows. Promoting equality, encouraging understanding, and making sure that everyone feels noticed and respected – regardless of gender identity – all depend on the use of inclusive and courteous language. Having respectful conversations is now essential to advancing inclusion and diversity. Through the adoption of politically correct terminology in the field of gender linguistics, society can establish more secure environments for all individuals, regardless of their gender identification, ultimately cultivating a more accepting and caring global community.

The landscape of language is continuously evolving, often reflecting the social and cultural dynamics of the time. In recent years, the realm of gender linguistics has seen significant transformation, largely driven by the principles of political correctness. This movement, which champions language that minimizes offense and promotes inclusivity, particularly influences the terminology used to discuss and describe gender. Traditionally, gender-specific terms and expressions have been deeply rooted in societal norms and biases. However, as awareness grows regarding the complexities of gender identity and the importance of respect and equality, there is an increasing push towards the adoption of more inclusive and neutral language. This shift in terminology is not merely a matter of semantics but reflects broader efforts to acknowledge and validate diverse gender experiences. As Judith Butler (1990) argues, language plays a pivotal role in constructing gender identity, making the shift toward inclusive terminology a fundamental act of recognition rather than mere semantics [1]. Understanding the impact of political correctness in gender linguistics requires an exploration of the changes in terminology, the motivations behind these changes, and the implications for both linguistic theory and everyday communication. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper investigation into how politically correct language is reshaping our understanding of gender and fostering a more inclusive society.

The concept of feminist linguistics, often known as language criticism, emerged as a new field of study in the middle of the 20th century. The Latin word

“femina,” which means “woman,” is where the word “feminism” originates. The movement demanding equal rights for men and women in culture, politics, and the economy is referred to as “feminism” in its entirety.[2]

Feminist movements, since the late 1980s, have demonstrated how problematic it is to refer to “women” and “men” in distinctive, generalizing terms. Robin Lakoff (2004) emphasized how language both reflects and reinforces societal power imbalances, especially in gendered dichotomies[3]. Other social identity categories including sexual orientation, race, social standing, and geography are all influenced and intersected by gender.

Feminist linguistics’ own standards are as follows:

1) The primary focus of study is how men and women behave linguistically; 2) the unequal depiction of different sexes in language is viewed as a form of sexism; and 3) achieving linguistic equality is a primary objective of feminism.

The significance of the language component in political correctness is highlighted by outlining the primary goals of feminist linguistics.

The phrase “political correctness” refers to language usage that avoids offending or embarrassing vulnerable groups of people, such as members of the community, people with disabilities, and national minorities [4].

A phenomenon known as political correctness emerged in the United States of America almost simultaneously with the start of the new women’s movement.

This study aims to: 1) define political correctness from a gender linguistic perspective; and 2) explain the characteristics of gender terms.

Materials and methods

This study examines the impact of political correctness on gender linguistics, particularly through the perspective of terminology usage. The analysis utilizes a range of sources that highlight important problems with politically correct gender language in modern conversation, rather than depending only on the originally intended journals and databases.

The primary resources for this research consist of a wide variety of materials apposite for political correctness and gender linguistics that have been chosen for their portrayal of contemporary language usage and the employment of gendered terminology in politically and socially conscious circumstances.

These consist of: 1) scholarly resources that offer theoretical and analytical viewpoints on gendered language 2) media content that demonstrates the practical application of politically correct vocabulary, such as news articles, internet posts, and social commentary; 3) Style guides and policy documents that provide information on institutional standards for gender-sensitive and inclusive language.

The following analytical techniques were used in this primarily qualitative methodology:

Textual analysis: to determine the usage of gender-specific and gender-neutral terminology, selected texts from newspaper articles and media sources were analyzed. Comparative commentary: To illustrate changes brought about by political correctness, terminology from the examined sources were, when appropriate, contrasted with more archaic or traditional versions.

Results

The analysis revealed significant shifts in the use of gendered terminology in contemporary discourse, reflecting the influence of political correctness on language practices.

Across media sources and there is a clear trend toward adopting gender-neutral expressions. Terms such as “chairperson,” “firefighter,” and “spokesperson” are increasingly replacing traditional, gender-specific equivalents like “chairman,” “fireman,” and “spokesman.” This shift demonstrates a conscious effort to promote inclusivity and minimize gender bias in everyday communication.

Although there is a widespread endorsement of politically correct language, inconsistencies remain, especially in informal media content such as online posts and social commentary. Some sources demonstrate thorough application of inclusive terminology, while others continue to reflect traditional usage, suggesting that while political correctness influences language norms, its application is still uneven across different contexts.

A comparison between traditional and current terminology shows that politically correct language often involves either the neutralization of gendered terms or the introduction of entirely new expressions. This evolution not only reflects changing societal attitudes but also highlights the dynamic nature of language as a tool for social representation and cultural sensitivity.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a clear and ongoing shift towards politically correct terminology in gender linguistics, driven by both societal advocacy and institutional policy changes. This section will discuss the implications of these findings, the challenges that remain, and the broader cultural impact of adopting inclusive language. Despite the positive trends, there remains a notable portion of the population that resists the adoption of politically correct terminology. This resistance often stems from a perception that these changes are unnecessary or overly prescriptive. Addressing these concerns requires ongoing education and dialogue to demonstrate the importance and benefits of inclusive language.

Specific features of the study are produced by the practical significance, and these features can be applied in general linguistics, special courses and seminars on gender linguistics and political correctness, translation practice, oral and written speech practice, and text interpretation.

It is well recognized that language and culture are intimately linked in all forms, and as a result, language is directly impacted by the continuous changes in culture. Because of the constant shifts in society, English is currently one of the languages that is used the most throughout the world.

This makes the reason behind the emergence of a strong language and cultural movement known as “political correctness” in the English-speaking world evident.

According to Russian linguist S.G. Terminasova, “political correctness in language is the desire to find new, appropriate expressions to replace those that can hurt a person’s dignity and feelings...” [5]. From a lexical standpoint, this process involves the replacement of marked or pejorative vocabulary with more neutral, inclusive, or euphemistic terms. Terminasova’s proposal to substitute “linguistic tact” for “political correctness” underscores the growing awareness of how lexical choice reflects power dynamics, politeness strategies, and sociopolitical alignment.

Similarly, L. V. Tsurikova views political correctness as a behavioral and linguistic phenomenon that attempts to eradicate embedded societal discrimination through vocabulary reform [6]. This reform manifests stylistically in multiple domains, particularly concerning gender, race, and social vulnerability.

Drawing from the analyses, it is possible to categorize politically correct vocabulary into three categories: language pertaining to women; language pertaining to racial and ethnic minorities; and language pertaining to socially vulnerable populations.

Gender-neutral vocabulary has become so common in society because feminist movements from the historical era onward have won and will continue to win significant victories at various linguistic levels and in nearly all varieties of English, starting with American. The Russian language reflects the influence of this wave as well.

The feminist movement has played a pivotal role in the lexical reform of English by reshaping gender-marked vocabulary. For instance, earlier dichotomies such as *man/mankind* are now regularly replaced by neutral alternatives such as *human/human being* and *humankind/humanity*. These replacements mark a shift not only in morphology but also in the semantic field associated with inclusivity and equality:

- “...migration paths of early humans...”
- “...crimes against humanity...”

These lexical items are chosen for their inclusive semantic scope, avoiding gendered implications.

From a morphological perspective, suffixation is a common method of creating gendered or neutral counterparts in English:

- -ess: actor → actress

- -ette: suffragist → suffragette
- -ine/ina: tsar → tsarina

Yet many of these feminine forms are now considered archaic or even condescending, with the masculine or neutral form preferred (e.g., actor used for both genders).

This preference illustrates a semantic leveling, where the goal is to eliminate unnecessary gender markers that have no bearing on a person's competency or role.

A word or descriptive expression with neutral meaning and emotional "load," euphemisms are derived from the Greek ἐυφώνη "gloriousness" (← other Greek εὖ "good" + φῆμη "speech, rumor") and are typically used in texts and public statements to replace other words and expressions deemed offensive or indecent. Euphemisms are frequently employed in politics to soften particular words and sentiments in an effort to deceive the audience and distort the truth. For instance, the Nazis used the phrase "action" to cover up their practice of carrying out mass killings, or they used the phrase "interrogation with passion" in place of the word "torture" [7].

Feminatives in English are most frequently generated in two ways: either by appending a suffix to a noun or by substituting a masculine gender suffix.

2. -ine/ina (chorist - chorine, tsar - tsarina, ballet dancer - ballerina); 3. -ette (suffragist - suffragette, bachelor - bachelorette, poet - poetette, usher - usherette). 1. -ess (waiter - waitress, deity - goddess, host - hostess, count - countess, actor - actress).

The phenomenon of linguistic political correctness in regard to the usage of gender terms, in particular, the names of professions, issues with word formation, and cross-cultural variations in the use of gender-neutral terms, are closely linked to the formation and functioning of feminatives.

In Russian, the emergence of feminatives—female-gendered versions of occupational nouns—has triggered significant linguistic and social debate. Lexically, Russian often lacks gender-neutral terms, and many occupational nouns default to the masculine grammatical gender, regardless of the referent's sex.

Lexical formation of feminatives occurs through:

1) the existence of feminine word-formation types in the noun-formation field, i.e., feminine words meaning person, inspired by masculine nouns meaning person (steward - stewardess, учитель - учительница);

2) the formation of complex words (медсестра, медбрат, chairman, chairwoman);

3) The expressions (женщина-врач, doctor woman) [8].

The names of some occupations and job posts that contain the "gendered" suffix "man" have also been changed. Lexemes like spokeswoman/spokesperson/

spokespeople, congresswoman/congresspeople, chairwoman/chairperson/chairpeople, and businesswoman/businessperson/businesspeople have become common in English.

For instance: “This puts Oqual’s chairwoman, Kathleen Tattersall, in the role of both critic and cheerleader for upholding the standards of England’s examination, assessment, and qualification system”; “US Congresswoman Scanlon Carjacked at Gunpoint After Meeting in Philadelphia - Statement”.

As M.D. Glinskaya held, there is a trend in American newspapers and magazine articles these days to use less improper vocabulary when referring to women. This is particularly noticeable in connection with work titles and professions [9].

Language units for police officers of both sexes are commonly used in America. Examples include: “He was charged with impersonating a police officer and disrupting school activities”; “Kansas Police Officers Reportedly Injured in Explosion in Downtown Wichita”[10];

- “Insurgents regularly kill police officers and attack soldiers and civilians with mortars and car bombs in Mosul, just 15 miles north.”

The lexical units mentioned above are frequently utilized in literary works, everyday speech, and newspapers as well as magazines.

Changes in courteous ways to address women have also been observed as a result of the gender direction of political correctness. The politically correct Ms. stands in for the customary Mrs. and Miss since it does not reveal a woman’s marital status and does not discriminate against her. Deborah Cameron (1992) views the use of “Ms.” as part of a broader linguistic trend to decenter male-centric social norms embedded in everyday language [11]:

- “Ms. Merkel feels that the EU should have more authority to arrange the “orderly insolvency” of nations like Greece that impose lavish spending plans without having the resources to cover them” [12].

However, some feminitives (e.g., президентка, министрша) are viewed as diminutives or even derogatory, raising concerns about lexical degradation or loss of professional dignity. For instance, the use of президентка may imply not just female identity but a reduction in authority, highlighting how morphological innovation can carry semantic implications that challenge gender equity.

From the perspective of the Russian language, such words sound much better and more professional while remaining masculine, like “президент”.

When we call women “президентка” it seems to misstate the importance and significance of her profession, which has the opposite effect and it will not be possible to maintain gender equality in the word. Many believe that the use of some feminitives in the Russian language completely spoils the history and meaning of some words. They sound unprofessional, because when a woman is addressed with the word “президент,” she is not addressed by her gender, but by her professionalism and position in the specific sphere. So, on the one hand, this implies the indispensability of feminism in the Russian language, since

many words and professions are already established in society and in the minds of people as masculine, and similar innovations in the structuring of words are necessary in the linguistics of the Russian language.

On the other hand, in many Russian social platforms such as V Kontakte, Facebook, and Instagram, comments about feminism and the need to use femininitives in the 21st century are more common. One rationale for their belief is as follows:

«Лента.ру»: Многие считают, что новые феминитивы — «прокурорка», «министерша» и так далее — неблагозвучны. Почему? Ведь именно из-за этого, как мне кажется, общество их пока не принимает. При этом, скажем, слово «комбайнерша» не вызывает таких эмоций. [13]

In the Russian language there are no specific expressions (femininitives) in relation to women, even the term “политик” is expressed in the masculine gender, we have to add the word “женщина” before the word “политик” to specify gender «женщина-политик». According to the all opinions above, it must be noted that 80% of Russian speaking people will agree that femininitives like “врачиха, спикерша, ученая, министерша, etc., are insulting or humiliating.

One example of noticed usage of femininitives in the Russian language was most recently seen in media’s portrayal of the murder of Saltanat Nukenova. Where, while researching my dissertation topic, studying femininitives and gender linguistics, we came across one Instagram post where feminine was clearly used:

“#batyrjatal_news: Прокурорка Айжан Аймаганова 4 апреля на судебном заседании зачитала заметку из телефона Салтанат Нуkenовой, в которой она говорит о придирках и контроле со стороны Куандыка Бишимбаева” [14].

In this instance, *прокурорка* marks a feminine neologism, which, while common in feminist platforms, is still considered controversial in broader usage. Generational divides further exacerbate this lexical shift: younger speakers tend to embrace femininitives, while older generations resist, citing their nonstandard status, ugliness, or semantic awkwardness.

One reason as to why femininitives cannot be attached to the Russian language is the so called “generation gap” and the example above clearly highlights this.

The reason for the rise in education of feminists is largely related to the expansion of professional areas and activities of women. E. A. Chelak notes: “By the middle of the 18th century, there was a rapid growth of the professional sphere in Russia, where a woman could find a use for herself, as a result of which a large number of such feminists were formed, such as «портретистка», «переводчица», «гардеробищица», «наборщица», «акушерка»” [15].

In many Russian social platforms, such as V Kontakte, comments about feminism and the need to use femininitives today are more common. One argument for their use is as follows:

“I noticed different people and editorial offices using feminitives and realized I like it. Now, having read a lot and formed my own opinion, I believe feminitives are necessary. They emphasize a woman’s importance without making a silly specification like ‘женщина врач’ or ‘женщина ученый.’ Words like ‘врачиха,’ ‘докторша,’ or ‘учёная’ don’t sound insulting or humiliating; they sound normal, just like in the masculine form” [15].

Comparative lexis shows that English prefers reform through lexical minimization and generalization, while Russian explores lexical specification through suffixation, though often with controversial results. For instance, English renders президентка as female president—a periphrastic form that avoids morphological gender marking.

Example:

“Tsai Ing-wen made history in 2016 as Taiwan’s first female president - now, as she prepares to leave office, her defence of Taiwan’s sovereignty may arguably define her legacy” or “woman leader”

The shift in English toward lexical unmarkedness is consistent with the larger social goal of gender neutrality. Russian, on the other hand, is still bound by grammatical gender systems, which affects words’ perceived meanings and social acceptability in addition to their form. This is a result of the social idea of equality that English-speaking cultures have developed. Because of the prevailing ideology and moral values, governmental language policies are now based on them.

Conclusion

This study has explored the evolving field of gender linguistics with a focus on the impact of political correctness on gender-related language. The findings highlight the crucial role politically correct terminology plays in promoting inclusive communication and in shaping societal attitudes toward gender identity and expression.

The analysis emphasizes the growing use of gender-neutral terms and the emergence of feminitives, particularly in English and Russian, as a reflection of broader cultural movements toward gender equality. The study shows that linguistic structures — such as the ability of a language to create feminine or gender-neutral forms — are key to understanding how gender is represented and negotiated in language.

These linguistic developments are closely tied to wider social changes. The increasing presence of gender-neutral and inclusive language in media, institutional policies, and public discourse signals a significant shift in how society perceives and communicates gender. The adoption of gender-neutral vocabulary is not merely a linguistic trend but an indicator of evolving cultural values and identity frameworks.

As media influence and cultural advocacy continue to promote inclusive language practices, it is likely that gender-neutral terminology and feminitives will become even more prevalent. This ongoing evolution of language underscores the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and identity. Future research

could further explore how these changes are adopted across different languages and social contexts, offering deeper insight into the role of language in advancing gender inclusivity.

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ГЕНДЕРЛІК ЛИНГВИСТИКАДАҒЫ САЯСИ ДҰРЫСТЫҚ: ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЯ ТҰРҒЫСЫНАН ҚАРАСТЫРУ

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада гендерлік лингвистика саласындағы күрделі мәселелер қарастырылады, атап айтқанда, терминология тұрғысынан саяси дұрыстық мәселесіне баса назар аударылады. Қазіргі қоғамдағы әңгімелерде гендерлік сәйкестік пен оның көріністерін анықтайтын терминология елеулі өзгерістерге ұшырап отыр, бұл өзгерістер қоғамның түсінігі мен әртүрлі гендерлік тәжірибелерге деген сезімталдығын көрсетеді. Әдеттегі бинарлы ұғымдардан тыс әртүрлі гендерлік сәйкестіктерді мойындайтын, құрмет пен инклюзивтілікті баса көрсететін саяси дұрыстық ұғымы осы өзгерістердің негізін құрайды.

Мақаланың мақсаты — гендерлік лингвистика мен саяси дұрыстық арасындағы байланысты сыни тұрғыда талдау, гендерлік мәселелерге қатысты әңгімелерде қолданылатын тілге ерекше назар аудару. Зерттеуде гендерге қатысты тілдің дамуы қарастырылады, мұнда тілдің ұқыпты әрі сыпайы қолданылуы қабылдауды және түсіністікті арттыру құралы ретінде сипатталады.

Зерттеу саяси дұрыстықтың гендерлік лингвистикаға терминологиялық тұрғыдан ықпалын талдайды, бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарындағы гендерлік бейтарап лексика үлгілерін және ағылшын мен орыс тілдеріндегі феминитивтердің дамуын зерттейді. Қолданылған зерттеу әдістеріне мәтіндік және салыстырмалы талдау, бақылау және сипаттамалы тәсілдер кіреді.

Жұмыстың теориялық маңызы: қазіргі лингвистика тілдегі гендерлік бейнеленудің негіздерін зерттеуі қажет, өйткені тіл гендерді мәдени тұрғыда көрсету механизмдерінде маңызды рөл атқарады. Бұл лингвистиканы гендерлік білімді зерттеудің аса маңызды ғылыми салаларының біріне айналдырады.

Зерттеудің практикалық маңызы лингвистикалық зерттеулер мен олардың қолдану аясына кеңінен таралады. Бұл жұмыстың басты үлестерінің бірі — ауызша және жазбаша коммуникацияда гендерлік бейтарап тілдің

қолданылуын ілгерілету. Қоғамдағы өзгерістерге сай тілдің дамуына байланысты гендерлік сезімтал терминологияны дұрыс түсіну мен қолдану инклюзивті дискурс құруда маңызды рөл атқарады.

Гендерлік әртүрлілік туралы түсінік кеңейген сайын, бұл зерттеу қоғамдық және жеке коммуникацияда гендерлік бейтарап тілді дамытуға бағытталған саясат пен білім беру ресурстарын әзірлеуге де ықпал ете алады, осылайша теңдік пен өзара құрметке негізделген кең ауқымды мәдени өзгерістерге жол ашады.

Жұмыстың ғылыми жаңалығы — гендерлік лингвистика, саяси дұрыстық және гендерлік дискурста қолданылатын арнайы тіл арасындағы күрделі өзара байланысты кешенді түрде зерттеуінде көрінеді.

Тірек сөздер: лингвистика, тіл, феминитивтер, гендерлік идентификация, әлеуметтік идентификация, гендерлік лингвистика, саяси дұрыстық, терминология

ПОЛИТКОРРЕКТНОСТЬ В ГЕНДЕРНОЙ ЛИНГВИСТИКЕ: ТЕРМИНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается сложная область гендерной лингвистики с акцентом на проблему политической корректности в отношении терминологии. Терминология, которую мы используем для определения гендерной идентичности и выражений, в современном дискурсе претерпевает значительные изменения, отражая общественное осознание и чувствительность к разнообразным гендерным переживаниям. Политическая корректность, акцентирующая уважительное общение и использование инклюзивного языка, признающего широкий спектр гендерных идентичностей за пределами традиционных бинарных представлений, составляет основу этих изменений. Цель статьи — критически проанализировать взаимосвязь между гендерной лингвистикой и политической корректностью, уделяя особое внимание языку, используемому в обсуждениях гендерной проблематики. В работе исследуется развитие гендерной лексики, подчеркивая роль вежливого и уважительного языка как средства содействия принятию и пониманию.

Исследование анализирует влияние политической корректности на гендерную лингвистику с точки зрения терминологии, рассматривая примеры гендерно-нейтральной лексики из средств массовой информации, а также развитие феминитивов в английском и русском языках. Методы исследования включают текстовый и сравнительный анализ, методы наблюдения и описательные подходы.

Теоретическая значимость работы заключается в необходимости для современной лингвистики исследовать основы гендерного отражения в языке, поскольку язык играет важную роль в механизмах культурной репрезентации гендера, что делает лингвистику одной из важнейших дисциплин для изучения процессов гендерного познания.

Практическая значимость исследования распространяется на различные сферы лингвистических исследований и практического применения. Одним из основных вкладов является продвижение использования гендерно-нейтрального языка как в устной, так и в письменной коммуникации. По мере того как язык развивается, отражая общественные сдвиги, понимание гендерно-чувствительной терминологии и правильного её использования становится всё более важным для создания инклюзивного дискурса.

С увеличением осведомлённости о гендерном разнообразии это исследование может также служить основой для разработки политик и образовательных ресурсов, направленных на расширение применения гендерно-нейтрального языка в публичной и частной коммуникации, способствуя таким образом более широким культурным изменениям в направлении равенства и уважения.

Научная ценность работы заключается в изучении сложных взаимодействий между гендерной лингвистикой, политической корректностью и специализированным языком, используемым в гендерном дискурсе.

Ключевые слова: лингвистика, язык, феминитивы, гендерная идентичность, социальная идентичность, гендерная лингвистика, политическая корректность, терминология

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