OCCUPATIONAL NOUNS DENOTING GENDERALOGIC MEANING IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the lexical means of expressing gender-related meanings in English, with a specific focus on occupational nouns. Furthermore, the core semantic meaning of some occupational nouns is analyzed.

KEYWORDS: *occupational nouns, genderalogic meaning, lexical means, grammatical gender, gender stereotypes, language evolution, gender equality, inclusivity, linguistic modernity.*

INTRODUCTION

Modern linguistics explores gender-related issues across diverse avenues, encompassing various disciplines, such as investigation into vocabulary and phraseology, exploration of gender dynamics in fiction, analysis of gender nuances in speech, study of gender in relation to nonverbal communication, examination of gender stereotypes in language, investigation into gender as a cognitive phenomenon, exploration of the intersection between gender and linguistic modernity and analysis of gender within the cultural context.

Expressing genderalogic (gender-related) meaning involves both lexical (vocabulary-related) and grammatical (structure-related) elements in a language. Lexical elements include gender-specific nouns, occupational titles, personal pronouns, titles and honorifics, relationship-related words and others. Whereas, grammatical Means encompass grammatical Gender, as some languages assign gender to nouns based on grammatical rules, unrelated to biological gender. For example, in Spanish, "table" (mesa) is feminine, while "car" (coche) is masculine. Another means of grammatical gender is the concept of gender Agreement. Adjectives, articles, and other modifiers may need to agree with the gender of the noun in some languages. For instance, in French, "grand" (big) becomes "grande" when modifying a feminine noun.

However, in English, the main way of expressing the grammatical gender happens with the help of word Formation. Derivational processes may involve gender-specific suffixes or prefixes, creating words that explicitly indicate gender.

However, in this paper we mainly pay attention to lexical means of expressing genderologic words in English, in particular occupational words.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The issue of gender specifications in terms occupational units have been studied by foreign scientists, including S.Lipovsky [3], K.Lassonde [2], J.Oksanen [4], J.Sibanda, M.Begede [5] and others. According to J.Kim "occupational stereotypes were determined, with gender stereotypicality found to affect the perceived importance of each stereotype to at least some degree. Along with traditional gender stereotype categories (i.e., feminine and masculine), the categories of unfeminine and unmasculine also emerged [4]". It means that the identification of occupational stereotypes and their correlation with gender stereotypicality highlights the complex interplay between societal perceptions and professional roles. The acknowledgment that gender stereotypes impact the perceived importance of these occupational stereotypes underscores the pervasive influence of societal norms on our understanding of different professions.

As the literature analysis show, the main direction of the studies on occupational nouns is the neutralization of gender-specific words.
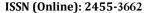
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Many occupational nouns in English have distinct titles for men and women, indicating gender specificity, such as actor/actress, waiter/waitress,steward/stewardess,host/hostess,waitstaff/waitress,manager/manageress,author/authoress,poet/poetess,policeman/policewoman,fireman/firewoman,congressman/congresswoman,chairman/chairwoman,salesman/saleswoman,businessman/businesswoman,mailman/mailwoman,cameraman/camerawoman, electrician/electricianess. Gender-specific suffixes, such as "-ess" or "-man," are employed to create female counterparts for certain occupations. Examples include "steward" and "stewardess" or "waiter" and "waitress."

Actor/Actress: Both terms refer to individuals involved in acting, with "actor" being the gender-neutral term and "actress" denoting a female actor.

Semantic Aspect: The terms are semantically linked to the profession of acting, irrespective of gender, emphasizing the performance aspect.

Waiter/Waitress: "Waiter" is the gender-neutral term, while "waitress" is the feminine form used to denote a female individual serving in a restaurant or similar setting.

Semantic Aspect: Both terms refer to individuals engaged in serving food and drinks, with gender-specific language.

Steward/Stewardess: "Steward" is the gender-neutral term, while "stewardess" is the feminine form used for a female flight attendant or ship crew member.

Semantic Aspect: These terms denote individuals responsible for passenger services on planes or ships, with the gender distinction historically present.

Host/Hostess: "Host" is the gender-neutral term, while "hostess" refers to a female host or presenter.

Semantic Aspect: Both terms are associated with the role of hosting, presenting, or welcoming guests, with a gender-specific distinction.

Waitstaff/Waitress: "Waitstaff" is a gender-neutral term encompassing all individuals serving in a restaurant, while "waitress" specifically denotes a female server.

Semantic Aspect: Both terms refer to individuals involved in serving food, but "waitress" carries a gender-specific connotation.

Manager/Manageress: "Manager" is the gender-neutral term, while "manageress" refers specifically to a female manager.

Semantic Aspect: Both terms denote individuals in a managerial role, with "manageress" highlighting the gender of the person in the position.

The commonality lies in the use of gender-specific suffixes ("-ess") to denote the feminine form of the occupation. Historically, these distinctions were prevalent, reflecting societal gender norms in occupational language.

Historically, the balance of gender-specific occupational terms has been skewed, with many professions having male-dominated titles. However, efforts towards gender-neutral language are influencing changes, encouraging more inclusive and balanced terminology. Societal changes and increased awareness of gender equality are leading to shifts in perception, influencing language use. Some occupations, once exclusively associated with one gender, are now adopting gender-neutral terms to reflect changing societal norms. For example:

Flight Attendant. Traditionally known as "stewardess" for women and "steward" for men, the term has evolved to the gender-neutral "flight attendant," reflecting the inclusive nature of the profession.

Server: In the hospitality industry, the traditional terms "waiter" and "waitress" are increasingly replaced by the gender-neutral term "server" to encompass individuals of any gender.

Police Officer: The term "policeman" is being replaced by the more inclusive "police officer" to acknowledge and embrace the increasing representation of women in law enforcement.

Firefighter: The shift from "fireman" to "firefighter" signifies the acknowledgment of women serving in firefighting roles, challenging the previously male-centric language.

Salesperson: In retail and sales, the term "salesman" has given way to the more inclusive "salesperson" to accommodate individuals of any gender working in the field.

The adoption of gender-neutral terms in certain occupations reflects a semantic shift driven by changing societal norms. This evolution is rooted in the recognition that professional roles should not be confined or defined by gender. The semantic analysis of these examples reveals inclusivity, which shift to gender-neutral terms promotes inclusivity by recognizing that individuals of any gender can excel in a particular profession.

This semantic change signifies a move towards gender equality, dismantling stereotypes that traditionally associated specific jobs with a particular gender. Gender-neutral terms emphasize the professional identity of individuals over their gender, contributing to a more egalitarian representation in various fields. They acknowledge and reflect the diversity within professions, eroding the notion that certain jobs are exclusive to one gender.
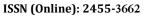
CONCLUSION
In conlusion, the analysis of occupational nouns in English reveals a dynamic interplay between traditional and evolving language norms. Gender-specific titles have historically dominated certain professions, but efforts towards inclusivity are driving a shift towards gender-neutral language. The influence of gender stereotypes on occupational perceptions highlights the broader societal impact on linguistic choices. The adoption of gender-neutral terms in occupations exemplifies a linguistic response to societal changes, demonstrating a commitment to equality and breaking away from traditional gender stereotypes in professional contexts.

Historically, gender-specific suffixes and titles have created distinct occupational terms for men and women. However, contemporary linguistic trends emphasize the importance of gender-neutral language to promote inclusivity and equality. Examples such as "flight attendant" and "police officer" illustrate this semantic shift, reflecting changing societal norms and challenging traditional gender associations in professions.

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