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Language, gender and social change: the case of gendered neologisms in English

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Język, gender i zmiany społeczne na przykładzie neologizmów nacechowanych płciowo w języku angielskim

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Introduction

Language is an intrinsically social phenomenon as it is used by humans, who create society. Humans' interactions through language reflect the worldview of the society. Language is something more than a fixed set of symbolic signs with a system of rules used to manipulate the symbols to convey a message – the rules and symbols that any language possesses are given by its users and, apart from its communicative function, language is also used to express people's attitudes, or to maintain relationships between speakers. Language can also serve purely creative purposes (see Jakobson 1990).

Every language undergoes changes over time, e.g., some words change their pronunciation or their spelling**,** some words become obsolete, and some new words are added to a language**.** The need for new words highlights the social dimension of language. The relation between language and society is two-way – language is both influenced by society and can influence a society's view of certain topics, which this dissertation aims to demonstrate. The gendered words discussed in this dissertation are an example of this bidirectional relation because they should not only be considered to be terms describing a new reality to be shared with others but also to be terms allowing to address the social issue of gender, the current depiction of gender in language, and the depiction of the social roles assigned to men and women.

The main research aim is the exploration of the form and the functioning of gendered neologisms. To reach this goal, gendered neologisms are identified and classified. Next, samples of their used are analysed. All is done with the objective of revealing what morphological forms gendered neologisms acquire and how they may function in the social world.

In this dissertation, the label *gendered neologisms* refers to relatively new terms that have been created through the addition of the nuance of gender to the meaning of already existing words. All these terms have entered dictionaries within the last decade or have not entered "formal" dictionaries yet. Gendered neologisms use already existing lexemes such as *man*, *female*, *she*, *he*, *bro*, or *girl* to coin new words from previously (supposedly) gender-neutral ones, e.g. *mansplain* (*man* + *explain*), *femspiration* (*female* + *inspiration*) or *SheEO* (*she* + *CEO*).

Although the present study focuses on two genders, male and female, it does not presuppose that these are the only genders that can be discussed. Some people have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, or a gender that is different from either male or female, and some people do not identify with any gender identity. Gender identity is also something that can change over time. Moreover, even if someone thinks of herself as a woman, it does not mean that she considers herself as possessing all qualities stereotypically associated with womanhood as dictated by society. Therefore, gender is not a binary concept, but it still has two clear extremes, masculinity and femininity. These extremes are often imposed on people based on their potential reproductive function, which has its real-life consequences for each individual (e.g., bring expectations about their behaviour, or social roles). For this reason these two extremes, masculinity and femininity, are in focus in this dissertation.

Any analysis of gender issue-related vocabulary is interdisciplinary and requires combining the linguistic with the social. The research presented in this dissertation will fall within the field of sociolinguistics, or, more specifically, sociopragmatics – the area of research concerned with the role of social conditions and variables in determining the use of language to convey meaning and perform changes in the real world (cf., e.g., Haugh, Kádár & Terkourafi 2021).

Chapter 1 of the dissertation is dedicated to the exploration of the study of lexical meaning in communication and refers to two main approaches to meaning, *semantics* – the study of dictionary meaning of words, and *pragmatics,* i.e. the study of the meaning(s) that a word gains when used in an utterance. Although this dissertation is written with the belief that it is not possible to make a clear-cut distinction between the fields of semantics and pragmatics, referring to these two levels of meaning is performed to highlight, on the one hand, the semantic, i.e. lexically decontextualised, meaning of chosen terms, and on the other, their potential to perform actions in the real world and the meaning sensitivity to the social environment (cf, e.g., Witczak-Plisiecka 2013a, 2013b). The topic of lexical meaning is crucial in the following discussions on the meaning of gendered neologisms, their evolution and how the meaning is shaped by the context of use. The chapter thus contains basic information about selected theoretical approaches to lexical meaning.

Chapter 2 reviews the terminology concerning the study of morphology and word formation. It presents chosen word-formation processes, such as affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, abbreviation, conversion, coinage and eponymy. It also discusses the topic of new lexical items entering a language, whether they are newly created words or borrowed from other languages. The exploration of the field of morphology and word formation provides the tools necessary to analyse how gendered neologisms are built in order to reveal certain patterns of their creation, i.e., how users are able to add a new layer of gendered meaning.

Chapter 3 focuses on the relation between gender and language. This area of research includes both differences in language use between men and women and the problems of gender representation in language, which is intrinsically connected to how society perceives representatives of either gender. The chapter reviews two main approaches in feminist linguistics – the difference approach and the dominance approach. It includes a description of the problems with language to which the feminist literature refers and potential solutions to gender inequality in language. Moreover, it places linguistic innovation and the need for new words, including gendered neologisms, in the context of feminist theory. This approach is necessary to understand the motivations behind creating and using gendered neologisms.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the use of language on the Internet – the environment in which gendered neologisms are created and the source from which they enter everyday language. In this chapter, the definition of Internet language and its characteristics are provided. The chapter also discusses how technology has influenced language and how it currently spurs linguistic innovation. It is believed that the online environment has become a place where people who had not been given a voice before could start sharing their experiences and connect with others who faced the same problems and, therefore, it is especially important to refer to the issue in the context of the research.

Chapter 5 concentrates on gendered neologisms as a phenomenon – it discusses such aspects as, e.g., how gendered neologisms are construed and what new layers of meaning a word gains by the addition of the nuance of gender, which is more than a simple association with one sex. The chapter also provides a discussion on how gendered neologisms portray: different genders, their roles in society and relations between men and women. The examination of such aspects is made in an attempt to discover the motivations behind creating gendered words.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis of chosen gendered neologisms in context. The main problems that the corpus-assisted analysis intends to solve are: 1) whether the words are used outside of social media, and if so, 2) how they are used and, finally, 3) whether the motivations with which they are used coincide with the motivations for their creation, such as the ones discussed in chapter five. For this purpose, two types of gendered neologisms have been chosen: those naming undesirable behaviours associated with maleness and female appropriation of stereotypically male domains.

The dissertation is closed with a concluding section that summarises the results of the research. It is hoped that the theoretical considerations combined with the corpus-assisted analysis provide a tentative answer to the question whether the gendered neologisms under scrutiny function as catalysts for real social change or are merely results thereof.

PART 1: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 1: Words and their meanings

In linguistics, the study of meaning in human language is often divided into two main domains. One of them is *semantics*, which Saeed sees as “the study of meaning communicated through language” (Saeed 2016, p. 3). Kroeger, however, argues that “[i]t might be more accurate to define it as the study of the relationship between linguistic form and meaning” (Kroeger 2019, p. 4) when he evokes *pragmatics* as another domain of the study of meaning, concerned with the meaning that is attributed to the words when used.

The first person to identify semantics and pragmatics as key research areas complementary to syntax was Charles Morris (1938). Since then, many linguists and philosophers have proposed their own divisions between the scope of either area (cf., e.g., Stalnaker 1972, Katz 1977, Barker 2004, see Section 1.1. for a more detailed discussion).

This dissertation is written in the belief that there is no clear-cut borderline between semantics and pragmatics, and that these two domains are necessarily interwoven. In a linguistic analysis of vocabulary items, it is, thus, advisable to consider both the word’s default meaning, which can be understood as its dictionary meaning, maximally abstracted from any context of use, and the meaning(s) that such a word gains when used in an actual utterance.

This first chapter offers an overview of selected theories of lexical meaning including, e.g., the theory of a linguistic sign from the perspective of de Saussure (1983 [1916]) and the one of Peirce (1932), Frege’s (1994 [1892]) reflection on sense and reference, the theory of descriptions, denotative and connotative aspects of meaning and prototype theory. It also reviews the problem of conceptual semantics and linguistic relativity. Next, the focus is shifted to the speech act theory and conversational implicature. Finally, it discusses possible motivations behind expanding the already existing lexicon of a language.

1.1 The study of meaning: between semantics and pragmatics

The terms *semantics* and *pragmatics* denote related and complementary fields of study that concern the transmission of meaning through language. Even if they are two fields of study, drawing the line to indicate where one ends and the other starts is difficult and often controversial. Charles Morris (1938), who was the first to use the term *pragmatics* in the context of systematisation of the study of meaning, proposes the following distinction:

- *syntax* – the formal relation of signs to each other;
- *semantics* – the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable;
- *pragmatics* – the relation of signs to their interpreters.

As Witczak-Plisiecka points out "[a]lthough Morris's ambitious agenda to integrate all sciences of signs, whether linguistic or not, was never to be accomplished, his work evidently paved the path for pragmatic research however modified and limited in comparison to what he had envisaged" (Witczak-Plisiecka 2009, p. 86). Morris's intention was to provide an account of signs that could be applicable for many disciplines, not only linguistics, as in his understanding of pragmatics, it is the study of the relation between signs and their users.

Narrowing the focus to the field of linguistics, most definitions of pragmatics (and its position vis-à-vis semantics) are related to the notion of a speech act or a linguistic act (Witczak-Plisiecka 2009). For example, Stalnaker (1972) sees pragmatics as the study of linguistics acts and the context in which they appear, whereas for him, semantics is the study of propositions. Katz (1977), along similar lines, limits semantics to the study of information available without the burden of a particular context in which utterances are produced. Barker (2004), a speech act theory-oriented researcher, defines pragmatics as the study of speech acts in broad communicative structures and semantics as the study of propositional content.

If one was to narrow signs to linguistic signs, a commonly acknowledged approach is that pragmatics would be defined as the study of the interlocutors' interpretation of language and semantics would refer to the study of meaning abstracted from users (Saeed 2016). What this can mean in practice is that a speaker can utter the same sentence to a listener, e.g. "It is hot in here", with the meaning of a simple statement or as a request to a hearer to, for example, open a window or turn on the air-conditioning. There can be a plethora of uses for one simple sentence, depending on the speaker's wishes and intentions and the circumstances in which the participants of a linguistic exchange find themselves. As Saeed (2006) points out:

> Some semanticists would claim that there is some element of meaning common to all of these [i.e. different] uses and that this common, non-situation-specific meaning is what semantics is concerned with. On the other hand the range of uses a sentence can be put to, depending on context, would be the object of study for pragmatics. (Saeed 2016, p. 16)

Thus, the distinction between semantics and pragmatics could be regarded as an attempt to separate *sentence meaning* and *speaker meaning*. The underlying idea to this approach is that words and utterances have a meaning independently of any particular use. When a word is used by a speaker, it is incorporated into the meaning he or she wants to convey at a particular time. This can be illustrated with the case of pronouns (and other indexicals), which are dependent on contextual support. For instance, if someone asks "Is he here?", the listener must know at least two things to understand the meaning of the sentence: the first one is to know that in English *he* refers to a male entity, who is not the speaker nor the hearer (which would be a part of semantic knowledge), and the other one is to know, or guess, who right now is being referred to by *he* (which would be a part of pragmatic knowledge).

Saeed (2016) points out that the distinction between semantics and pragmatics is useful as "it might free the semanticists from having to include all kinds of knowledge in semantics" (Saeed 2016, p. 16), as investigating the interaction between purely linguistic knowledge and general or encyclopaedic knowledge falls on pragmaticists. In this way, semanticists can focus on just the linguistic element in utterance comprehension. Pragmatics would be understood as the field of study concerned with how hearers fill out the semantic structure with contextual information and infer the meaning that goes beyond what has been said. The downside, according to Saeed (2016), is the difficulty of making a precise distinction which phenomena are semantic and which are pragmatic, as much of meaning depends on the context of use.

As it has been mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, drawing a line between semantics and pragmatics is a controversial matter. Some theorists are not convinced that such a distinction should be made (e.g., Lakoff 1987, Langacker 2008). Others accept it, but there is no consensus on where the line should be drawn.

1.2. Lexical meaning

One domain of the study of meaning is semiotics, which is the study of the relationship between signs and their meanings. Two dominant intellectual strands have been the cornerstone of contemporary research in semiotics. These strands stem from the work of an American mathematician Charles S. Peirce and a Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, both of whom are discussed in this chapter. Let us start with a purely linguistic account proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure.

1.2.1. De Saussure's theory of the linguistic sign

Ferdinand de Saussure is best known for being a follower of structuralism and a founder of the discipline of semiology. The defining characteristic of a structural approach to language is the claim that language must be studied as a self-contained system rather than a tool analysed in connection with other disciplines, such as history, philosophy, sociology, or pedagogy. Nonetheless, if language is not merely a tool of mind, society, or education, what is language? The solution proposed by de Saussure is to view language as a sign system. Thanks to him, language has received its own place in scientific research – the science of signs, named semiology. "Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them" (Saussure 1983 [1916], p. 16). Therefore, de Saussure puts a *sign* in the centre of the analysis of language.

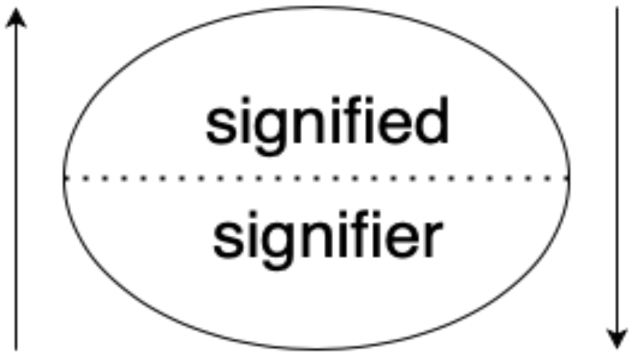

Figure 1. Diagram of Saussure's relationship between signified and signifier
Source: adapted from Chandler 2002, p. 14

The model of the sign proposed by de Saussure is a dyadic model. In his account, a sign is composed of a *signifier* (the original French term used by de Saussure is *signifiant*) and a *signified* (the original French term used by de Saussure is *signifié*). The association of these two components results in obtaining the *sign* (de Saussure 1983 [1916]). The arrows in the de Saussurean diagram represent the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which is identified as *signification* and the horizontal line between the two elements of the sign is called *the bar* (see Figure 1) and represents the distinction between the linguistic and the conceptual.

Following de Saussure's theory, a sign must have both a signifier and a signified and is a recognizable combination of the two (de Saussure 1983 [1916]). The same signifier can have different signified depending on the context. Similarly, many signifiers can stand for the same concept. Each unique pairing constitutes a different sign. The Swiss linguist describes a sign as follows:

> A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern. The sound pattern is not actually a sound; for a sound is something physical. A sound pattern is the hearer's psychological impression of a sound, as given to him by the evidence of his senses. This sound pattern may be called a 'material' element only in that it is the representation of our sensory impressions. The sound pattern may thus be distinguished from the other element associated with it in a linguistic sign. This other element is generally of a more abstract kind: the concept. (de Saussure 1983 [1916], p. 66)

The linguist gives a privileged position to the spoken word, referring specifically to the sound pattern, as he considers writing as a separate, secondary, dependent but comparable sign system (de Saussure 1983 [1916], p. 15, 23-24, 117). Thus, for de

Saussure, the written form of a word relates to the spoken form similarly as the signifier to the signified.

Most researchers who adopt de Saussure's model of the sign treat the *signified* as a mental construct, noting that it may refer indirectly to things in the world. The original model, however, excludes reference to objects existing in the world. For de Saussure the *signified* is not to be identified directly with a referent but is rather a concept in the mind.

De Saussure emphasizes the fact that for him signs and ideas can never be considered singular or isolated entities and therefore should not be approached separately. Meaning cannot exist without a sign as the two are different forms of the same mental concept.

Furthermore, he puts forward the idea that language is irrational at its core in the sense that there are no structural grounds that could motivate the patterning of the linkage between meaning and a related sign, and no external grounds other than conventions of the speech community. Hence, for de Saussure the unmotivated or arbitrary nature of the most elementary linguistic sign depends fully on the established bond between a sign and meaning. Therefore, his conception of meaning is structural and relational rather than referential — no sign makes sense on its own but only in relation to other signs (de Saussure 1983 [1916], p. 121). This view can be seen as particularly important in the context of the dynamic relations of gendered vocabulary (as discussed in Section 3.8.)

Additionally, de Saussure introduces the concept of the *value* of a sign, which depends on its relations with other signs within the linguistic system, in other words it is dependent on the context (de Saussure 1983, p. 80).

> The notion of value (...) shows us that it is a great mistake to consider a sign as nothing more than the combination of a certain sound and a certain concept. To think of a sign as nothing more would be to isolate it from the system to which it belongs. It would be to suppose that a start could be made with individual signs, and a system constructed by putting them together. On the contrary, the system as a united whole is the starting point, from which it becomes possible, by a process of analysis, to identify its constituent elements. (de Saussure 1983, p. 112)

De Saussure demonstrates the distinction between signification and value on the example of the French word "mouton" and the English word "sheep". As he explains, they can have the same meaning in the referential sense, but their value is different for several reasons, one of which being that in the English language there is a separate word for meat of this animal whereas the French word covers both meanings.

Another aspect of the sign described by de Saussure is that the signs differ between each other. “In a language, as in every other semiological system, what distinguishes a sign is what constitutes it” (de Saussure 1983, p. 119). It would be impossible to have a language with only one word because “its single term could be applied to everything and differentiate nothing; it requires at least one other term to give it definition” (Sturrock 1979, p. 10). De Saussure argues that what characterizes each sign is representing whatever the other signs do not — “concepts (…) are defined not positively, in terms of their content, but negatively by contrast with other items in the same system” (de Saussure 1983, p. 115). He explains this idea drawing parallels between language and the game of chess – different parts of language depend on each other similarly to how a chess piece is affected by other pieces on the board and the functions that they perform within the game. Thus, moving one piece has its effects on the entire system.

De Saussure also emphasizes the arbitrariness of the link between the signifier and the signified and, therefore, the arbitrary nature of the sign, which for him is the first principle of language (de Saussure 1983, p. 67). Arbitrariness has been also acknowledged by Hockett (1958) as one of 13 original key design features (he later expanded it to 16) of language, next to such features as vocal-auditory channel, broadcast transmission and directional reception, transitoriness, interchangeability, total feedback, specialization, semanticity, discreteness, displacement, productivity, cultural transmission, and duality of patterning.

What de Saussure means by arbitrariness of the sign is that there is no inherent, essential, transparent, self-evident, or natural connection between the signifier and the signified; in other words, there is no connection between the sound or shape of a word and the concept to which it refers (de Saussure 1983, 67-69, 76, 111, 117). The principle of the arbitrariness, however, is not anything new. It had been noted by Aristotle, Plato, or Shakespeare, inter alia. Nevertheless, the emphasis which de Saussure gives to this notion in the context of his theory can be considered an original contribution. Moreover, the arbitrariness principle can be applied not only to a singular sign but to an entire system of signs. As Chandler points out “there are no ‘natural’ concepts of categories which are simply ‘reflected’ in language. Language plays a crucial role in ‘constructing reality’” (Chandler 2002, p. 27).

This stays in agreement with the general cognitive approach to how language means and echoes in other theories, primarily in speech act theory discussed in further sections of the present thesis, but also in, for example, *conceptual metaphor* (or *cognitive* *metaphor*) theory, where one idea or conceptual domain is understood in terms of another, e.g., IDEAS ARE FOOD (e.g., "raw facts", "half-baked ideas"), LOVE IS MADNESS (e.g., "I'm crazy about her", "He drives me out of my mind"), LOVE IS WAR (e.g., "She is known for her many rapid conquests", "She is besieged by suitors") (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) or PEOPLE ARE PLANTS (e.g., the classic figure of the Grim Reaper) (Lakoff and Turner 2002). Lakoff (1987) argues that without the ability to categorize, humans would not be able to function in the physical world or lead social and intellectual lives.

Fauconnier (1994) proposes another theoretical construct of *mental spaces*. They are structured by frames and cognitive models, constructed as we think and talk, which allows us to establish meaning. Mental spaces are constructed and modified as thought and discourse unfold. Mental spaces are not lonely islands but are connected to one another by various kinds of mappings (identity and analogy mappings in particular) (Fauconnier 1994). Mental spaces are one of the key components in *conceptual blending theory* proposed by Fauconnier and Turner (see Fauconnier and Turner 1995, 2002). The scholars refer to conceptual metaphor as a "two-domain" model, in contrast to their "many-space" model, where mental space is replaces Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual domain (Fauconnier and Turner 1995). According to conceptual blending theory, elements and important relations from diverse scenarios are subconsciously "blended", creating *an emergent structure* in the blended space. For example, when seeing an apprentice butcher at work who takes too much time as he cut up a piece of meat, one could comment "He's not a butcher, he's a surgeon". Presenting the butcher as a surgeon highlights the incongruity between the methods uses by two professionals, a butcher and a surgeon, and, in a particular context, the sentence could be understood as a negative evaluation of the butcher's competence. Thanks to the fact that the same lexical items in different contexts can give rise to different mental spaces, we are able to account for multiple, often incompatible interpretations of utterances and explain that the same referent may be "understood" along different lines in a person's cognition.

Returning to Chandler's discussion on the arbitrariness of the sign, he sees it as a "radical concept" (Chandler 2002, p. 28). As he further explains "[t]he Saussurean model, with its emphasis on internal structures within a sign system, can be seen as supporting the notion that language does not 'reflect' reality but rather *constructs* it" (Chandler 2002, p. 28). De Saussure himself follows his provocative declaration that "the entire linguistic system is founded upon the irrational principle that the sign is arbitrary" with the comment that "applied without restriction, this principle would lead to utter chaos" (de

Saussure 1983, p. 131). The concept of arbitrariness of signs has proved itself useful in the domain of their interpretation and the importance of context, as there is no one-to-one connection between the signifier and the signified. There have been, however, some critical comments on the idea of complete arbitrariness, which mention e.g., onomatopoeic words, which seem to provide counterevidence to this theory. Total arbitrariness is, in fact, unachievable in language devoid of the feature it would not function as a system (Chandler 2002). That is why de Saussure introduces a distinction between degrees of arbitrariness and he explains that "not all signs are absolutely arbitrary" (de Saussure 1983, p. 130) and that in the principle of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign there is room for making a distinction between an intrinsically arbitrary sign and these which are relatively arbitrary.

Philosophically, the relationship of the signifier and its signified is arbitrary, meaning that the name given to the entity does not change the status of the entity. Chandler argues:

> Natural languages are not, of course, arbitrarily established, unlike historical inventions such as Morse Code. Nor does the arbitrary nature of the sign make it socially 'neutral' or materially 'transparent' - for example, in Western culture 'white' has come to be a privileged signifier (Dyer 1997). Even in the case of the 'arbitrary' colours of traffic lights, the original choice of red for 'stop' was not entirely arbitrary, since it already carried relevant associations with danger. (Chandler 2002, p.30)

Jakobson (1980) criticises de Saussure's choice of terminology and argues that "arbitrary" is not the most suitable term for the relation between a signified and a signifier. "The relation between a *signans* and a *signatum*, which de Saussure arbitrarily described as arbitrary, is in reality a habitual, learned contiguity, which is obligatory for all members of a given language community" (Jakobson 1980, p. 33). One may notice the principle of similarity in the area of derivations and word families, where words share a root, and, therefore, it is impossible to treat them as fully arbitrary. The same, Jakobson continues, applies to, e.g., sound symbolism or patterns of distribution and selection of phonemes in roots, and other types of prefixes or suffixes.

Lévi-Strauss posits that the sign is arbitrary *a priori* but ends to be arbitrary *a posteriori*; in other words, after the sign has become a part of the system it cannot be arbitrarily changed (Lévi-Strauss 1972). Every sign is socially used within a code and through this use it acquires a history and connotations of its own which are known to members of the sign-users' culture. De Saussure acknowledges this process noting that although the signifier "may seem to be freely chosen", when functioning in the linguistic community it is "imposed rather than freely chosen" because "a language is always an inheritance from the past," which must be accepted by its users (de Saussure 1983, p. 71-72).

This theory of arbitrariness proposed by de Saussure leads semioticians to the conclusion that the relationship between the signifier and the signified depends on social and cultural conventions, which is particularly clear in the case of the linguistic signs—a word has its meaning because of the social, i.e., collective agreement that a form should be associated with one and not some other meaning.

1.2.2. Peirce's theory of signs

If one was to compare Peircean and de Saussurean theories, s/he would observe that for de Saussure language is a system of names for pre-existing ideas and things. For Peirce, however, ideas are indeed signs, and the meaning of a symbol is provided by the mind (Parmentier 2016). According to Peirce all human thoughts are made of signs (Peirce 1932), which can take the form of images, sounds, odours, flavours, acts, objects, or, indeed, words. Anything can be considered a *sign* as long as it is interpreted by someone, even unconsciously, as *signifying*, in other words as something that refers to or stands for something else than itself.

All ideas or thoughts are *representations* for two reasons: firstly, because they stand for the things they signify and secondly, because when succeeding one another in time according to a general rule of inference, they must always appear to other cognitions, or at least they must always have the capacity for being interpreted or translated into further cognitions (Peirce 1932). Peirce defines *meaning* as what is conveyed from one idea-sign to an interpreting sign, or *interpretant*, about some object of cognition.

Peirce's model of the sign is triadic. It consists of:

1. the *representamen* — which is the form (not necessarily material) taken by the sign
2. an *interpretant* — which is the sense made of the sign
3. an *object* — to which the sign refers

The interaction between the aforementioned three elements of Peirce's model of a sign is referred to as *semiosis*. Peirce gives the following definition:

A sign (…) [in the form of a *representamen*] is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen". (Peirce 1932, p. 228)

Peirce's *representamen* can be compared to de Saussure's *signifier* whilst the *interpretant* has similar meaning to the *signified* (Silverman 1983). However, there is no concept in de Saussure's model that would represent Peirce's *object* (Silverman 1983). Nonetheless, the *interpretant* has an additional quality to the *signified* as it is a sign in the mind of the interpreter. Peirce points out that "a sign (…) addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign" (Peirce 1932, p. 228). This concept is revised in the 1920s in the works of Bakhtin (1981).

The base of the triangle (Figure 2) consists of a broken line which is meant to indicate that there does not have to be any observable or direct relationship between the representamen and the object. The object is where Peirce gives room to an objective, i.e., physical, reality, which is not included directly in de Saussure's model.

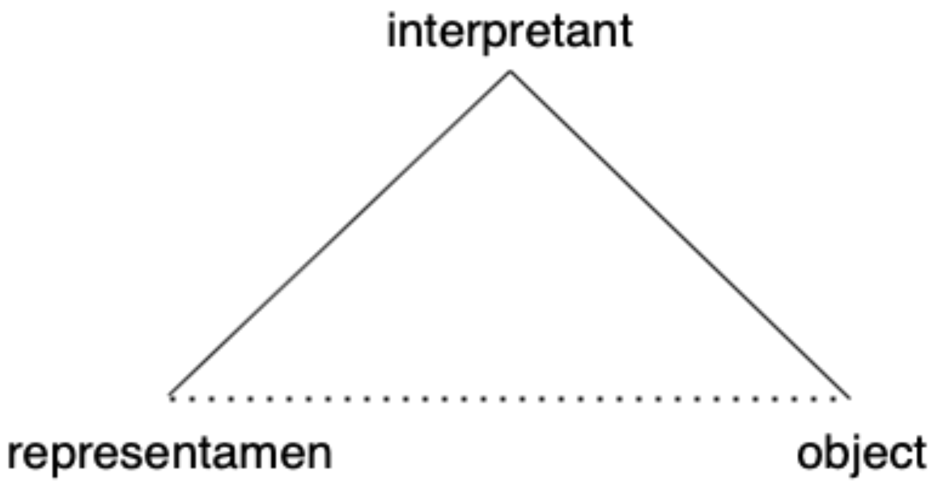

Figure 2. Peirce's semiotic triangle
Source: adapted from Chandler 2002, p. 30

Nonetheless, the triadic model is sometimes accused of being inconsistent and unclear, for example Lyons points out that the model does not define, e.g., whether *representamen* is a physical or a mental entity nor the psychological or ontological status of *sense* (Lyons 1977, p. 99). It is worth stressing that semioticians make a distinction between a sign and *representamen* to Peirceans or *signifier* to de Saussureans as these are the forms which the sign takes whereas the sign itself is the whole meaningful ensemble.

Peirce's theory leads to the idea that a signified can itself become a signifier and it can be interpreted as going beyond de Saussure's stress on the relation of a sign to other signs as defining the sign's value (Chandler 2002). Another concept that refers to the discussed theory is the notion of dialogical thought, which is explicitly excluded from de Saussure's model of a sign (Chandler 2002).

Whether looking at a dyadic or triadic model of a sign, it is crucial to account for the role of the interpreter, either within the formal model of the sign or as a vital part of the process of semiosis, as the meaning of a sign is not contained within it but arises in its interpretation (Chandler 2002). Thibault points out that even within the model of de Saussure the interpreter is given an essential role (Thibault 1997). Sless writes that "statements about users, sigs or referents can never be made in isolation from each other. A statement about one always contains implications about the other two" (Sless 1986, p. 6).

It has been mentioned when discussing the dyadic model of a sign (see Chapter 1.2.1.) that de Saussure stresses the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Most semioticians, however, emphasize the importance of paying attention to the level of their arbitrariness. It is also the case that although Charles S. Peirce offers a typology of signs (e.g., Peirce 1932, p. 243), his divisions are extremely complex, which makes it almost impossible for other researchers to apply them in their studies in their original form (see Sturrock 1986).

Nonetheless, there is a general classification that has been evoked in many semiotic studies, "the most fundamental" as Peirce himself calls it (Peirce 1932, p. 275). This division delineates relations between sign vehicles and their referents rather than classifies distinct types of signs (Hawkes 1977). The discussed classification consists of three modes, namely *symbol*, *icon* and *index*.

The signifier takes a form of a symbol when it does not resemble the signified. For Peirce, a symbol is "a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object" (Peirce 1932, p. 249). The examples of symbols are numbers, traffic signs or language. It is the most conventional relation from the discussed three, thus the meaning must be learnt. It is noteworthy that when using the term *symbol* Peirce and de Saussure refer to different concepts. De Saussure avoids referring to linguistic signs as symbols as in his understanding of this term symbolic signs "show at least a vestige of natural connection" between the signifier and the signified (de Saussure 1983, p. 68, 73), which is in contrast with what he argues — that the linguistic sign is arbitrary in nature.

A sign is treated as an icon when the signifier imitates or resembles the signified. Peirce argues that an iconic sign represents its object "mainly by its similarity" (Peirce 1932, p. 276). Icons have qualities similar to those of the objects they represent and the "excite analogous sensations in the mind" (Peirce 1932, p. 299). The examples of icons are portraits, metaphors, small-scale models of buildings.

A sign is considered as indexical when the signifier is not arbitrary but there is a direct connection to the signified, either physical or causal. Compared to other two modes, it involves the smallest degree of conventionality. Natural signs, such as footprints, echoes, smoke, or recordings, like (unedited) films, audio-recorded voice, are examples of indexical signifiers, ones that "point" to the signified.

The three forms do not necessarily exclude one another, in other words a sign can be any combination of an icon, a symbol and an index. Peirce himself mentions that "it would be difficult if not impossible to instance an absolutely pure index, or to find any sign absolutely devoid of the indexical quality" (Peirce 1932, p. 306). As Chandler points out "[a] map is indexical in pointing to the locations of things, iconic in representing the directional relations and distances between landmarks, and symbolic in using conventional symbols (the significance of which must be learned)" (Chandler 2002, p. 44).

1.2.3. Sense and reference

Gottlob Frege's investigations into mathematics and logic has led him to developing a theory which has become a reference point for many other theories in the domain of the philosophy of language.

Frege (1994 [1892]) makes a distinction between two aspects of meaning: *sense* (original term in German is *Sinn)* and *reference* (the original term used by Frege in German is *Bedeutung*). *Sense* is the meaning which does not depend on the context of use, i.e., a dictionary or default meaning. *Reference* (sometimes also referred to as *denotation*) is the meaning that depends on the context. It is a set of all the objects in the universe of discourse which the lexical item could be used to describe, e.g., the word *your mother* will depend on the identity of the speaker and/or addressee.

In addition to having a denotation, a word also expresses a *sense*, which accounts for its cognitive significance. Venus is sometimes described as "the Morning Star" but it is also named "the Evening Star". These two names denote the same planet, Venus, but express two separate ways of conceiving the planet, thus they have different senses, (while the name "Venus" provides the third one).

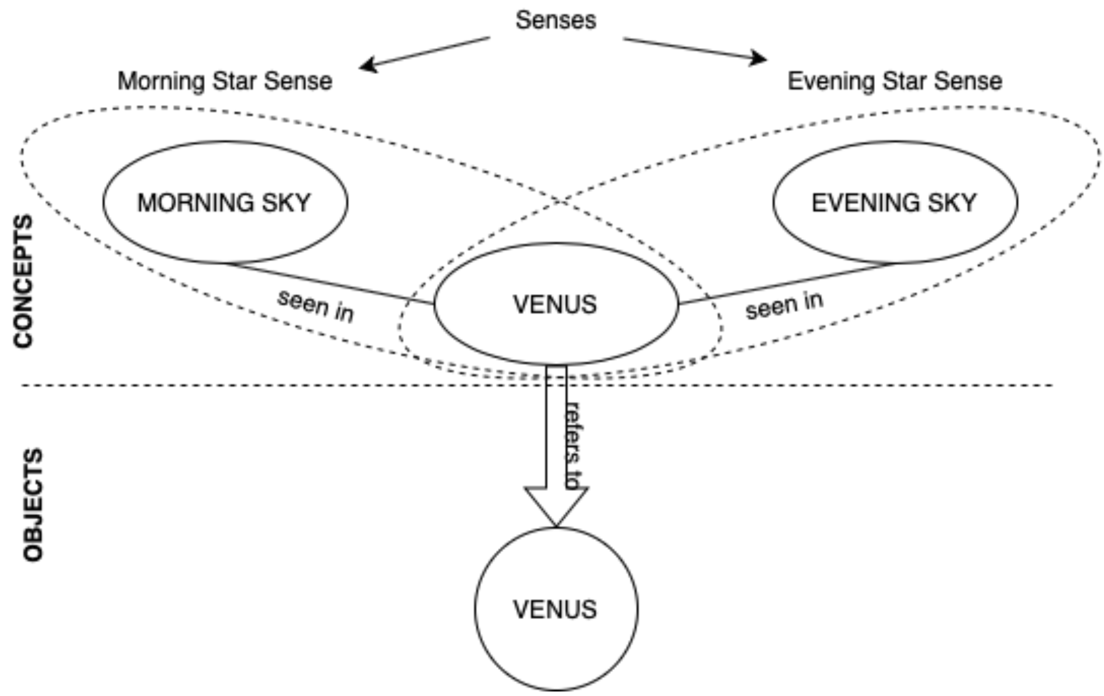

Figure 3. Venus's meaning map
Source: adapted from Partridge 2005, p. 89

The theory pairs expressions with the contribution those expressions make to the determination of the truth-values of sentences. It can be presented on the following example:

(1) Donald Trump was the 45th president of the United States.

(2) Barack Obama was the 45th president of the United States.

Taking into consideration the truth-value of the sentences (1) and (2), the sentence (1) is true, whereas the sentence (2) is false. The difference between the sentences is attributed to the difference between the expressions “Donald Trump” and “Barack Obama”, where the former refers to the man who was indeed the 44th president of the United States and the latter stands for the man that was not. It leads to the conclusion that the reference of a proper name is the object for which that name stands.

It is possible to assess the truth-value in the following pair of sentences:

(3) Barack Obama is a Democrat.

(4) Barack Obama is a Republican.

The sentence (3) is true and the sentence (4) is false. The reference of “Barack Obama” is the man for which the name stands and the following part of the sentence is influenced by that reference, affecting its truth-value. In order for the reference of “is a Democrat” to be true an object must be a member of the Democratic party and if it is not, the truth-value would be false. Analogically, in order for the reference of “is a Republican” to be true an object must be a member of the Republican party and if it is not, the truth-value would be false.

Frege’s theory of sense and reference is further developed into a complete philosophy of language. Considering the sentence “John loves Mary” in Frege’s view, the words “John” and “Mary” are names and the lexical item “loves” signifies a function. Furthermore, the sentence as a whole is a complex name. Each of these items has both a sense and a reference, both the individual names and the sentence as a whole. The sense and reference of the sentence can be described in terms of the sense and reference of the words and the way in which those words are arranged. Through the described approach to language, Frege can give a general account of the difference in the cognitive significance between identity statements of the form *“a = a”* and *“a = b”.* Frege’s approach therefore allows the speaker to believe that s/he saw the morning star without believing it was the evening star even if they both refer to the same object. Moreover, there are expressions that may have no referent in the world at the present time, but it does not mean that they are meaningless as they have sense, which is derived in a predictable way by the normal rules of the language.

The theory of reference assigns to each sentence a truth-value and to each sub-sentential expression a value describing the contribution that expression makes to the truth-values of the sentence. There are, however, more semantic values beyond what a theory of reference assigns to them.

Let us take an example provided by Quine (1970 [1986], pp. 8-9):

(5) All cordates are cordates.

(6) All cordates are renates.

"Cordates" refers to the set of animals with hearts and "renates" to the set of animals with kidneys. Applying the theory of reference for (5) and (6) they are not true and in the light of the theory the two sentences are the same as they differ only in the substitution of "renates" for "cordates" — the two expressions stand for the same objects. Looking at the sentences, however, it is clearly perceptible that there is a difference in the meaning between them. It points to the incompleteness of the theory of reference. The argument can be reinforced by giving another pair of sentences:

(7) John believes that all cordates are cordates.

(8) John believes that all cordates are renates.

Once more, the difference between the sentences (7) and (8) is only substitution of the last word "cordates" for "renates", which as it has been noted, have the same reference. In spite of this, (7) and (8) distinctly differ in truth-value (one may believe that all cordates have a heart but not necessarily believe they all have kidneys). It shows, however, that the references of these words do not explain the contribution to the determination of the truth-value of a sentence in which it occurs. It leads to a conclusion that the difference between (7) and (8) lies in some other aspect, some sort of meaning that goes beyond reference.

The expressions can be categorized as *belief ascriptions* because they ascribe a belief to a subject, and further as one sort of *propositional attitude ascription* (other types being e.g., ascriptions of knowledge, judgement, desire). This type of sentences, exemplified by (7) and (8), can differ in truth-value even if they differ only with respect to one word, which as it happens have the same reference. For this reason, they have been playing a vital role in semantic discussions. Following this way of reasoning it seems that there must be some other value assigned to sentences than a truth-value, which is not provided within the theory of reference.

Not all words can be used to refer to things in the real world, such as *so*, *maybe*, *if*, *not*, or *very*, which Saeed (2016) calls *intrinsically non-referring items*. These words, however, contribute meaning to the utterances in which they occur, therefore they help utterances denote, but they do not denote entities in the world. In contrast to non-referring lexical items, there are such words that are used to identify entities, for example the noun *cat*. However, a word can be referring or non-referring depending on how it is used, i.e., a nominal can refer to an individual entity or have a generic interpretation and be used in this way.

Another distinction among referring expressions can be made in terms of whether they have *constant* or *variable reference*. Some expressions have the same referent across a range of utterances, for example *the Eiffel Tower* or *the Pacific Ocean*. There are, however, other expressions whose reference is completely dependent on context, for example personal pronouns like *I*, *you* or *it*. These words' denotational capability needs contextual support.

An entity that an expression refers to when it is uttered in a particular context is called *referent* of an expression. The set of things that can be the referent of an expression is called *extension* of an expression. For example, the referent of a *dog* in "I'm seeing a dog" is an animal at which you are currently looking. The extension of the word *dog* is the set of all dogs. The relationship between an expression and its extension is called *denotation* (Lyons 1977).

The simplest example of nominals, linguistic elements used to refer, are names (Saeed 2016). Names are labels that often seem to have little other meaning than just serving to talk about a person or a place. Of course, when using names, the context is important – the speaker's assumption, when using a name, is that the audience can identify the referent. Nouns and noun phrases can be used to refer as well. They can, for example, be used to refer to an individual, e.g.,

(9) I spoke to *a woman* about the noise.

(10) I spoke to *the woman* about the noise.

In these examples, taken from, Saeed (2016, p. 27), the difference between the nominals is based on whether the woman to whom the speaker refers is known to the listener and/or has been identified earlier in the conversation. Definite noun phrases can also be used as definite descriptions where the referent is an entity that fits the description. There are also cases in which there is no referent to fit the definite description or where the referent is not a real entity existing in the world, but an imaginary figure.

Noun phrases can be used to refer not only to individual entities but also to groups of individuals. They can do it *distributively,* with the focus on the individual members of the group as in the example (11) or *collectively* with the focus on the aggregate, as in the example (12) (examples taken from Saeed 2016, p. 27).

(11) *The people in the lift* avoided each other's eyes.
(12) *The people in the lift* proved too heavy for the lift motor.

As shown in the examples (13) to (15) (adopted from Saeed 2016, p. 28)

(13) Who can afford *coffee*?

(14) *Sleeping* is his hobby.

(15) She has a passion for *justice*.,

nominals can denote to substances (13), actions (14) and abstract ideas (15).

One approach to the theory of meaning can be that meaning is reference – the meaning of a word shows what it denotes in the real world. Kempson (1977, p. 13) describes such an approach as follows:

- proper names denote individuals
- common names denote sets of individuals
- verbs denote actions
- adjectives denote properties of individuals
- adverbs denote properties of actions.

She points out that there are several problems with this simplest version of the theory of semantics. First, it seems that there are many words that have no meaning because many words, like but, or, so, do not refer to entities in real world. Secondly, many nominal expressions used by speakers refer to entities that do not exist or have never existed, as in the examples (Saeed 2016, p. 29):

(16) In the painting a *unicorn* is ignoring a maiden.

(17) *World War III* might be about to start.

(18) *Father Christmas* might not visit you this year.

The expressions like *unicorn* or *Father Christmas*, even if they do not refer to existing entities, are not meaningless. However, such would be an assumption, if we agreed on the theory that meaning is a relation between words and items in the real world. With this assumption in mind, sentence like (16), (17) and (18) would be considered meaningless and they clearly are not.

Another limitation of this theory is that even when referring to things in the real world, there is not always one-to-one correspondence between a linguistic expression and the identified item. Two expressions can share the same referent, but they have different meanings. Therefore, the theory of meaning must be something more than the simple referential theory.

Furthermore, the sense-reference theory backgrounds the fact that a sign is a part of the system, and, for that reason, acquires a history and certain connotations – culturally or emotionally associated meanings that a word or a phrase carry (see Chapter 1.2.5.). Therefore, it is not the case, or rarely the case, that reference should exhaust meaning.

1.2.4. Description theories of meaning

Another approach to the connections between language and the world that has been widely discussed by language philosophers is Bertrand Russell's Theory of Descriptions (see Russell 1905). The theory is an attempt to account for the meaningfulness of sentences in which occurring entities do not necessarily exist. The central idea of the theory is "that denoting phrases never have any meaning in themselves, but that every proposition in whose verbal expression they occur has a meaning" (Russell 1905, p. 480).

For Russell, a *denoting phrase* is a semantically complex expression that can serve as the grammatical subject of a sentence, both *definite descriptions* and *indefinite descriptions*. Russell posits that the semantics of a definite description in a sentence involves an *existence claim*, a *uniqueness claim*, and a *maximality claim* (see Ludlow 2020). An expression of the form (19)

(19) The *A* is *B*.

carries the meanings of (19a), (19b) and (19c)

(19a) There is an *A*.

(19b) At most one thing is *A*.

(19c) Something that is *A* is *B*.

Russell (1905) observes that a sentence (20) might be true even if sentence (21) was false and (22) was true

(20) George IV wished to know if Scott is the author of Waverly.

(21) George IV wished to know if Scott is Scott.

(22) Scott is the author of Waverley.

If (20) is true, George IV would be uncertain about the truth of (22) and if (21) was true, George IV would be uncertain about the truth of (23).

(23) Scott is Scott.

Moreover, if (22) is true, and the expression “the author of Waverly” would function as a proper name in (22), then (22) would appear to state the same as (23). Yet, if (22) and (23) stated the same, it would be impossible for (20) to be true while (21) was false.

Russell (1905) also observes that the sentence (24) is not true because France is not a monarchy. He also maintains that (25) is not true as there is no such entity as a present king of France.

(24) The present king of France is bald.

(25) The present king of France is not bald

The law of excluded middle implies that there is no middle ground, as for any proposition p, either p is true or its negation/denial is true. However, even if (24) is not true, its apparent denial (25) is also not true.

Russell also addresses the issue of two names denoting the same entity on the example of “the Morning Star” and “the Evening Star” also used by Frege (see Section 1.2.3.). To solve the problem, Frege proposes the introduction of senses, which are abstract objects having a different cognitive significance that fix the referents of these expressions. For Russell, on the other hand, what is important are scope relations. When uttering:

(26) George wondered whether the Morning Star is the Evening Star,

the speaker wants to convey the meaning of:

(27) George wondered whether the star that appears in the morning is identical to the star that appears in the evening,

rather than say that George wondered whether Venus was identical to itself.

The Russelian truth conditions have been challenged by, for example, Strawson (1950 as cited in Ludlow 2020), who claims that the sentence "The present king of France is bald", regarded by Russell as false, cannot be viewed as either true or false in the world where there is no present king of France. Another problem that the classical Russellian theory of descriptions faces is that is has been accused of failing to account for the problem of *incomplete descriptions*:

> The worry, initially raised in Strawson (1950), is that if I say 'the table is covered with books', I do not mean to be suggesting that there is only one table in the world. Unfortunately, that seems to be precisely what the Russellian theory of descriptions is committed to. (Recall that on the Russellian analysis my utterance is shorthand for 'there is a table and only one table and every table is covered with books'.) (Ludlow 2020)

Russell's theory when applied to natural languages seems unlikely – constructions with definite and indefinite articles do not carry out the logical roles described by Russell. Nonetheless, as Ludlow (2020) points out "Russell's core insight remains intact: (…) many apparently referential constructions may in fact be quantificational."

1.2.5. Denotation and connotation

The concept of *connotation* is dated back to 13th century when a medieval philosopher William of Ockham (*c* 1287-1347) used the terms *signification* to refer to what we now call a *denotation* or *referent* and *connotation* for the inherent attributes of the denotation.

Nonetheless, the meaning with which it is used today is attributed to John Stuart Mill, an English language philosopher, who in his *System of Logic*, proposed an account of language based on a contrast between the *denotation* and *connotation* of a word.

> Words denote the *objects* which they are true of; they connote specific *attributes* of those objects. The word "man", for instance, *denotes*, or is true of, all men — "Peter, Paul, John, and an indefinite number of other individuals" (*System*, VII: 31). But it *connotes* the attributes in virtue of which the word "man" applies to these individuals — "corporeity, animal life, rationality, and a certain external form, which for distinction we call the human" (*System*, VII: 31). Connotation *determines* denotation in the following sense: to know the connotation of a word is to know the necessary and sufficient conditions to determine whether a given object is denoted by that word. (Macleod 2020)

Mill points out that not all words have connotations – they can be *singular* (also called *individual names*) or *general* and while all general names are connotative, not all singular names are (Schwartz 2014). "Dog" or "mother" is a general name that may correctly apply to many individuals, in contrast, "J. S. Mill" or "the current president of the US" applies to at most one, therefore it is classified as a singular name. Mill argues that proper names are non-connotative (Schwartz 2014). Following Mill, it has been accepted in linguistic theory that any term, general or singular, may have either a denotation or a connotation or both and, most often, a general term has both.

Denotative meaning can be defined as the *central* or *core meaning* of a lexical item and is often equated with *referential* or *descriptive meaning*. Connotation, on the other hand, is the additional meaning of a lexical item or a phrase that reveals people's emotions, mental states and attitudes towards the word or the phrase. Connotative meaning is sometimes referred to as *affective*, *emotive* or *attitudinal meaning*. Leech (1981) defines connotation(s) of a word or a phrase as pragmatic effects that emerge from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation(s) together with experience, beliefs and prejudices about the contexts in which the word or a phrase is customarily used.

Connotations can be both positive and negative, for example, *lady* carries a hint of both "elegant" and "subservient". Many connotations are shared with the same culture. Not all connotations, however, surface at once – they will depend on the context of a conversation and attitudes of interlocutors, e.g., the noun *child* can have a vast set of connotations ranging from "affectionate", "amusing" or "lovable" to "noisy" and "irritating". Some words can have a very similar denotative meaning but a different connotative meaning, e.g., *economical* and *cheap* both mean “someone who saves money” when used to describe a person, but the former connotes being careful with one’s money and the latter connotes being stingy or miserly.

The influence of connotative meaning can be as significant as to change the denotative meaning. Examples of such transformation of meaning include the words: *gay*, *governess* or *mistress* (see Chapter 3.7.). In context of language and gender, there is a tendency of female words to take on more negative connotations (and denotations) than parallel words for men[1] (e.g., Schulz 1975, Curzan 2003, see Chapter 3.7.), with a widely-cited example of *bachelor* and *spinster*.

Summarising, to understand a word is not only to know its denotative meaning but also connotations that the word carries. Some connotations are shared by interlocutors but sometimes two people can associate different meanings with a term – the same term can be perceived differently, i.e. can have positive, neutral or negative connotations, by two different people or differently by the same person when uttered in two different contexts. Gendered neologisms also have connotations and, as with other newly formed words, their connotations may not always be precisely defined, in contrast to well-known words which have more stable connotations, i.e. it is more likely that language users will associate the terms with the same connotative meanings. For example, the word *girlboss* can be used as a praise by one and be seen as a mockery by another, or *mansplaining* can be used as a neutral term describing a situation or it can be meant as an insult. Difference in connotation is also a reason why gendered terms for names of professions cause so much controversy – some associate them with a progressive approach towards gender roles and some see them as frivolous linguistic creations with no serious purpose (see Section 3.8. for a discussion on gender-fair language and feminisation strategy).

1.2.6. Mental representations

Denotation is an important function of language. There is however another dimension of meaning, which is not simply about referring to existing entities, to which Saeed (2016) refers as *sense*. “[S]ense places a new level between words and the world: a level of mental representation” (Saeed 2016, p. 31) and can be identified with Frege’s notion contrasted with reference. Words gain their ability to denote because they are associated

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[1] This causes problems when it comes to, e.g., the introduction of feminine forms for names of professions. More on that in Section 3.8.

with something in people's minds. This explains how people can talk about things that do not exist in the real world. It poses, however, a new question, namely: what are mental representations? One simple idea, which has been discussed for some time now, is that mental representations are images that presumably resemble the real-world entities (see Kempson 1977). Saeed (2016) highlights the fact that this solution could conceivably work for expressions that denote things that are one of a kind, e.g., *Lisbon* or *your father*, or for imaginary entities, like *Spiderman*. The problem arises when discussing common nouns because different speakers may think of different images when evoking common nouns like *cat* or *house*. The example often cited in literature on this topic is the word *triangle* – one speaker can think of an equilateral triangle, and another may evoke an image of isosceles or scalene triangle. In other words, it is difficult to conceive of an image which would fit all triangles there are, just as it is difficult to think of an image which would correspond to all cats or houses, not mentioning the difficulties of what kind of image one might conceive of for words like *animal* or *food*, or *love*, *justice* or *democracy*. Therefore, it is possible that images are associated with some words, however it does not answer all the questions about meaning of words.

The proposed modification of the image theory is to hypothesise that the sense of words, while mental, is not an image but a more abstract element, namely a concept. A concept can contain the non-visual features of entities or have definitions for certain concepts, such as the aforementioned *triangle*. Saeed (2016) posits that while some concepts may be simple and related to perceptual stimuli, e.g., SUN or WATER, other more complex concepts, like MARRIAGE or RETIREMENT "involve whole theories or cultural complexes" (Saeed 2016, p. 31) and should be described not only from a linguistic perspective but rather from a psychological one. Some linguists, e.g., Kempson (1977) are rather sceptical of psychologists' success in describing concepts and do not consider it to be a good idea to base a theory of meaning of reference, if reference is based on concepts. Kempson writes:

> What is involved in this claim that a word has as its meaning a "convenient capsule of thought" [Edward Sapir's definition of meaning]? If this is a retraction from an image theory of meaning, as it is, then it is a retraction from a specific, false claim to one that is entirely untestable and hence vacuous. It does no more than substitute for the problem term meaning the equally opaque term *concept*. (Kempson 1977, p. 16-17)

Kempson supports the idea of modelling sense in a formal way, rather than psychological one. Linguists who are in favour of a representational approach try to shed some light onto a traditional line of research in cognitive psychology and create models of concepts to form the basis of semantics. The next chapter presents considerations on the representational approach to meaning and briefly examines basic approaches to concepts.

Concepts

If one adapts the hypothesis that the meaning is a combination of a word's denotation and a conceptual element, two questions about the conceptual element must be answered: (1) What form do concepts have? and (2) How do children acquire concepts?

Concepts can correspond to a single word or to an entire phrase. Some concepts are *lexicalized* and some not. Saeed (2016) argues that the reason for that is *utility* – if something is referred to often enough it becomes lexicalised. Saeed (2016) explains that the process of lexicalisation happens constantly. When new concepts are invented, they are given new words or new senses of old words. He illustrates this process with the example of the word *selfie* denoting a self-portrait photograph, which arose together with *smartphones* (of which both are relatively new words in English language).

When discussing the answer to the second question, it is important to take into consideration the fact that children's concepts can differ from those of adults. Children have a tendency to both *underextend* and *overextend* concepts. For example, for a child the word *dog* can refer only to their pet, not any dog, which would be an example of underextending, on the other hand the word *daddy* could be used by a child to refer to any male adult, which would be an example of overextending (Saeed 2016). Also, children can categorise the world differently than adults (Saeed 2016).

The traditional approach to describing concepts is to define them by using sets of *necessary and sufficient conditions* (Saeed 2016). In this approach, concepts contain the information necessary to decide to which entities the concept can refer, e.g., the concept of MAN can refer to an entity that has a set of characteristics or attributes. Following Saeed (2016), let us assume that *L* is a set of attributes. Then, one can say that:

(28)x is a man if and only if L.

where L includes attributes like:

x is human;

x is adult;

x is male, and so on.

Saeed (2016) explains that if an entity must have such attributes to be regarded as a man, these conditions can be called *necessary conditions*. The set that includes all attributes that are enough to define a man would be called *sufficient conditions*, which is supposed to be the right amount of information for the concept. Therefore, this theory sees concepts as lists of fragments of knowledge that constitute the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be an example of that concept. There is a problem, however, with this approach – speakers must agree of the necessary and sufficient conditions which is not the case, even when discussing nouns that identify concrete and natural kinds like *dog* or *cat* (Saeed 2016). One may say that the attributes of a dog would be:

(29)is an animal,
has four legs,
has a tail, and so on.

The problem here is that some dogs, due to various reasons, may not have four legs or a tail. Kripke (1980) discusses this problem on the example of a tiger, Putnam (1962) discusses cats, and Saeed (2016) zebras. Moreover, Putnam (1975) puts forward another argument against necessary and sufficient conditions based on his observations on ignorance. Putnam (1975) points out that speakers often use words to refer to entities even when they are not able to identify the characteristics of the referent, e.g., when using words like *gold* or names of certain species of plants. Saeed (2016) posits that "one of the advantages claimed for the causal theory of names over the description theory is that it allows for speaker ignorance: we can use a name for a person or place knowing little or nothing about the referent" (Saeed 2016, p. 34).

Prototypes

Problems with necessary and sufficient conditions motivated the search for more sophisticated theories of concepts. One influential proposal was the one made by Rosch (1973) who describes concepts using the notion of *prototypes*. In this model, there are central or typical members of a category and less typical, therefore peripheral, members. Rosch supports this theory with experimental evidence – she argues that speaker tend to agree more readily on typical members than on less typical members. For example, *sparrow* would be considered a more typical member of the category BIRD than *penguin* (Saeed 2016).

In this approach, the boundaries between concepts are less clearly defined, which appears to be the case in human perception of the world. The prototype theory allows for borderline blurriness. As Aitchison explains “It does not have to be a perfect match, merely a reasonable fit. This explains how words can be used with slightly different meanings, and how people can recognize new or damaged examples of a category” (Aitchison 1987, p. 62). An item in the world may seem to fit to two different prototypes. It also explains why speakers are able to use some words without being sure to which categories these items belong. To illustrate this, Saeed (2016) evokes the example of the word *whale*, which is used by speakers who may not know whether it is a mammal or a fish.

Another matter worth considering is what becomes a typical member of a category. One proposal could be that the central prototype is an abstraction, which can be, for example, a set of characteristic features, to which real entities are compared. Other theories assume there are *exemplars* around which people organise the categories. These exemplars are memories of actual entities. During the encounter with another entity, people compute the likelihood of it belonging to a certain category on the basis of comparison with exemplars. It is also difficult to “arrange the various features in order of importance. And it is unclear where a prototype stops, since humans have a seemingly endless amount of information about every word” (Aitchison 1987, p. 62). Aitchison (1987) argues that despite the problems that the prototype theory faces it should not be discarded. For her, the limitations stem from the limited knowledge on how words are related together in the mental lexicon.

George Lakoff (1987) proposes a different approach to typicality effects. He claims that speakers have folk theories about the world, based on their experience and rooted in their culture. Lakoff calls it *idealized cognitive models* (ITMs), which are not scientific theories or definitions but collections of cultural ideas. He discusses using the example of the word *bachelor* and the division of one’s knowledge about the word. One part is a dictionary-type definition and another part is an encyclopaedia-type entry of cultural knowledge about marriage and bachelorhood that comes from idealized cognitive model. This general knowledge restrains one to use the word *bachelor* from applying it to, e.g., celibate priests. Therefore, using a word involves combining semantic knowledge and encyclopaedic knowledge. This approach, which sources from within linguistics, is an interesting one "because of the light it sheds on the relationship between linguistic knowledge and encyclopaedic knowledge" (Saeed 2016, p. 35).

In this section, two proposals for conceptual structures are presented, namely prototypes and idealized cognitive model. There are many more theoretical proposals for conceptual structure, however, these two appear to be most prominent and widely discussed in the field of linguistics and for this reason they have been chosen to be discussed in this section. If a concept is lexicalised, it means it is prominent enough—as a concept—for people to refer to it as an entity in their conversations. Many gendered neologisms are created based on cultural knowledge about gender roles, which is transmitted to the meaning of a newly coined word. However, what constitutes a prototypical man or a woman can be blurry and can vary, depending on personal experience. Therefore, the understanding of gendered neologisms, both denotative and connotative, can be different depending on the user, e.g., whether the terms such as *mansplaining* can only describe behaviour of a man or it can be used regardless of gender.

1.2.7. Levels of meaning: words, sentences and utterances

In the previous chapters, we discussed some proposed theories of how words function and convey meaning. Words are, however, rarely used separately without company of other words. We can of course think of examples of such words that are used independently, e.g., *yes*, *no*, *hello*. Nonetheless, words are often grouped together into sentences to convey a certain message.

When discussing meaning, one can refer to different types of linguistic units such as word meaning, sentence meaning and utterance meaning (also known as speaker or hearer meaning). To understand how utterance meaning is created, it is crucial to make an important distinction between sentences and utterances. Kroeger (2019) describes the difference as follows:

> A sentence is a linguistic expression, a well-formed string of words, while an utterance is a speech event by a particular speaker in a specific context. When a speaker uses a sentence in a specific context, he produces an utterance. (Kroeger 2019, p. 5)

Sentence meaning refers to the semantic content of the sentence, in other words the meaning that comes from the words themselves, regardless of context. The term utterance meaning refers to the semantic content together with pragmatic meaning created by the specific circumstances in which the sentence is used. The definition of utterance meaning provided by Cruse states that it is "the totality of what the speaker intends to convey by making an utterance" (Cruse 2000, p. 27).

Kroeger (2005) illustrates the difference between these two units by citing a simple question in Teochew, a Southern Min dialect of Chinese, which interpretation depends largely on context.

(30)Lɯ chyaʔ pa bɔy?

- you eat full not.yet
- 'Have you already eaten?' (tones not indicated)
- (Kroeger 2005, p. 1)

The literal meaning of this question, in other words the sentence meaning, is "Have you already eaten or not?", which appears to be a form of request for information. However, speakers of Teochew most commonly use it as a greeting, like an equivalent of the English expressions "hello" or "How do you do?". Asking this question is a standard way to greet your friends and the expected reply is "I have eaten" even if it is not true. On the other hand, in different circumstances this question can be an actual request for information, for example when asked by a doctor to a patient. In this scenario, the sentence meaning, and the utterance meaning would be equal.

1.3. Conceptual semantics

Conceptual semantics is a decompositional theory of meaning developed by Ray Jackendoff (e.g., 1972, 1987, 1990). The central principle of this approach, called *Mentalist Postulate* by Jackendoff, is that describing meaning involves describing mental representations. Jackendoff (1987, p. 122) writes that "[m]eaning in natural language is an information structure that is mentally encoded by human beings." for Jackendoff, the meaning of a sentence is a conceptual structure.

Jackendoff accepts the principle of compositionality of meaning. This principle posits that the relationship between a sentence and its meaning is not arbitrary and unitary, but syntactic structure and lexical content interact (see Katz and Fodor 1963, Katz 1972). In this approach, however, a significant attention is given to lexical semantics. Jackendoff believes in that sentence meaning is constructed from word meaning. For instance, Jackendoff (1990) argues that economy is a pivotal argument for identifying a semantic component CAUSE. Semanticists aim at explaining the relationship between the sentences like:

(31)George killed the dragon.
(32)The dragon died.

(Saeed 2016, p. 279)

This relation is described as *entailment*, which recognises a speaker's intuition that if (31) is true then so is (32), i.e., when one hears (31) he or she already knows (32). Jackendoff argues that there is a semantic element CAUSE that occurs in many lexical items, e.g., *kill* and *die*, *give* and *receive*, and produces many entailment relations.

Jackendoff identifies an inventory of universal semantic concepts, of which, at the level of conceptual structure, a sentence is made. The examples of such semantic concepts, or categories, are: *Event*, *State*, *Material Thing* (or *Object*), *Path*, *Place* and *Property*. The sentence "Bill went into the house" (Jackendoff 1992, p. 13) describes motion and ca be used to show an example of an Event. The examples below are the sentence syntactic structure (33) and its conceptual structure (34).

(33)$[_{S}\ [_{NP}\ \text{Bill}]\ [_{VP}\ [_{V}\ \text{went}]\ [_{PP}\ [_{P}\ \text{into}]\ [_{NP}\ \text{the house}]]]]$
(34)$[_{Event}\ \text{GO}\ ([_{Thing}\ \text{BILL}],\ [_{Path}\ \text{TO}\ ([_{Place}\ \text{IN}\ ([_{Thing}\ \text{HOUSE}])])])]$

Jackendoff is arguing here that there are three main semantic categories – the motion (Go), which is composed of two further categories moving (Thing) and the trajectory (Path). The Path can have a destination where the motion ends. In this example, the motion is "went", the Thing is "Bill", the Path is "into the house" and the Place is "the house". The articulated nature of this semantic representation can be presented in form of a tree structure, where a mother node indicates the type of constituent, the leftmost child stands for the function and the other children are its arguments (Figure 4). It clearly shows that Jackendoff's conceptual structure has a syntax of its own. Semantic concepts are made from simpler elements by rules of combination. The elements describing movement direction and location, GO, TO and IN, combine elements of a sentence to form the major semantic categories.

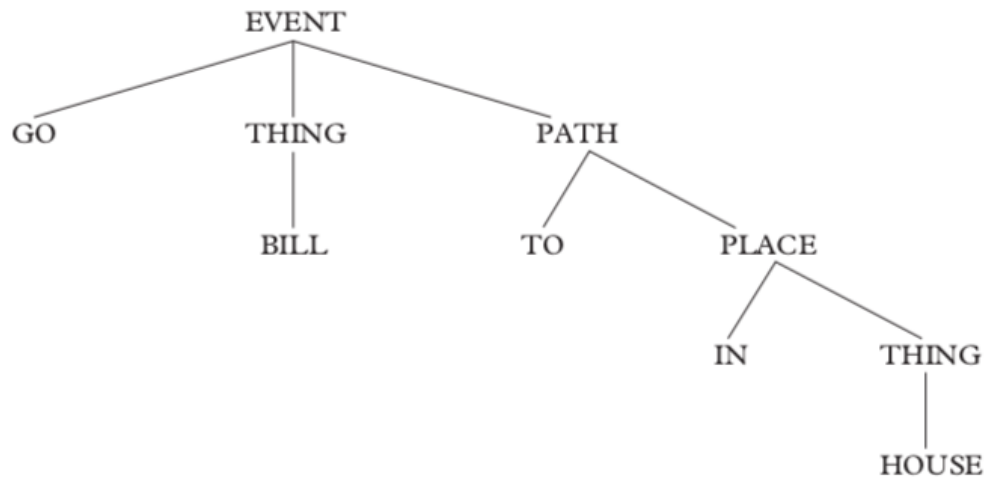

Figure 4. Conceptual structure of (33) and (34) as a tree structure
Source: Saeed 2016, p. 280

To summarise, Jackendoff develops the proposal that semantic representation involves semantic components, which are arranged as functions and arguments that can be successively embedded within one another. Furthermore, Jackendoff believes that these elements form part of human cognitive structures and identifying them correctly leads to establishing meaning. Conceptual semantics is another approach that can offer insight into how gendered neologisms gain meaning(s) when used in utterances.

1.4. Linguistic relativity and the language of thought

The underlying assumption in the theories that have been described in the previous chapter is that there is an association between words and concepts, which is that a speaker has a collection of lexicalised concepts smaller than the larger set that he or she is capable of thinking or talking of, when using language. This chapter discusses two opposing positions on the issue of the relationship between lexicalised concepts and general thinking and reasoning of a person – linguistic relativity and the language of thought hypothesis.

1.4.1. Linguistic relativity

The theory of linguistic relativity is often traced back do Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. It has become widely discussed in various areas of linguistics and anthropology. It provides an explanation for a common experience of the lack of fit between words when dealing with transmitting ideas from one language into another. For example, colour words may vary in the range they describe. Along the similar lines, the English verbs for putting on clothes are all the same regardless of the body part that the piece of clothing goes on, which is not the case for languages like Japanese (Clark 1983, as cited in Saeed 2016) or Korean (Choi and Bowerman 1922, as cited in Saeed 2016).

The idea that language mirrors cultural differences soon developed into a much stronger position that people's thoughts are determined by the categories available to them in their language. The anthropologist Franz Boas suggests that cultural practices of speakers of different languages are reflected in their language, and different languages can manifest different conceptual classifications of the world:

> As an example of the manner in which terms that we express by independent words are grouped together under one concept, the Dakota language may be selected. The terms *naxta'ka* TO KICK, *paxta'ka* TO BIND IN BUNDLES, *yaxta'ka* TO BITE, *ic'a'xtaka* TO BE NEAR TO, *boxta'ka* TO POUND, are all derived from the common element *xtaka* TO GRIP, which holds them together, while we use distinct words for expressing the various ideas.
>
> It seems fairly evident that the selection of such simple terms must to a certain extent depend upon the chief interests of a people; and where it is necessary to distinguish a certain phenomenon in many aspects, which in the life of the people play each an entirely independent role, many independent words may develop, while in other cases modifications of a single term may suffice.
>
> Thus it happens that each language, from the point of view of another language, may be arbitrary in its classifications; that what appears as a single simple idea in one language may be characterized by a series of distinct phonetic groups in another. (Boas 1966, p. 22, as cited in Saeed 2016)

Boas points out that the effect that it has is mostly unconscious because the use of language is to a large extent an automatic process about which people do not think too much.

Boas's observations started the debate on the relationship between language, culture and thought and the extent of influence of the particular language we speak on the way we think about the world. Boas's student, Edward Sapir, proposes the view that the language one's speak conditions his or her conceptualisation of the world. Sapir (1921) sees language as a *guide* to the reality in which they live. In his view, the way in which one perceives the world is unconsciously influenced by the language habits he or she acquired by living in a certain social group. Thus, according to Sapir, language habits predispose people to interpret, and therefore experience, the world in a certain way.

Another linguist, Benjamin Lee Whorf, who is well-known for his work on native American languages, proposes that there is an even stronger link between language and thought. He names this notion *linguistic relativity*. The basic premise of linguistic relativity is that the way in which people think about the world is determined by their cultural and linguistic background, i.e., people categorise their experiences according to an implicit and unstated agreement that has been made between our predecessors who created language we speak now (Whorf 1956) and this agreement's terms are obligatory for everyone.

This observation is not only made about word meaning but also grammatical systems, which Whorf considers as being even stronger determinants of though as the speaker cannot reflect consciously on grammatical systems.

If the theory of linguistic relativity holds true, it means that the language people speak predisposes them to see reality through its prism. For instance, social structures embedded in linguistic imagery may invite language users to perceive the world in a certain way. As language is something we inherit after our ancestors, it can implicitly or explicitly encode some worldviews that are no longer held in modern society. That is why when introducing social change, it is necessary to look at the language used to describe the area of reality that is undergoing this change. An example of that can be introducing gender-neutral terms for names of professions that exclude people of another gender, e.g., replacing *policeman* with *police officer*. This strategy, called neutralisation, aims at decreasing the prominence of the division into feminine and masculine in language, which in turn is believed to eliminate gender inequality from language. This topic is explored in more detail in Sections 3.7. and 3.8.

1.4.2. The language of thought hypothesis

The theory of linguistic relativity in its pure form, has been rejected by many contemporary scientists. There are two main types of arguments against linguistic relativity, of which the first is that there is evidence of thinking without language, and the second is that, as linguistic analysis has shown, language underspecifies meaning. For example, Pinker (1994) presents various kinds of evidence that thinking, and language are not equal concepts, such as examples of evidence of thought processing, e.g. remembering and reasoning in human babies, who are creatures without language. Moreover, Pinker recounts the report of people who claim that their creativity can derive from non-linguistic images. He also presents evidence from psychological experiments of visual thinking which point to the existence of mental processes that do not involve language. Finally, Pinker undermines the idea that people from different linguistic communities vary in their cognitive perspective.

Supporters of the view that mental processes do not involve a spoken language, refer to the notion of a *language of thought* (sometimes called *Mentalese*), which is a separate computational system in the mind (e.g., Fodor 1975, 2008, Stillings et al. 1995). The basic idea behind this reasoning is that memory and mental processes use a type of propositional representation that does not have the surface syntax of a spoken language.

Regarding the second type of argument against linguistic relativity, which is that language underspecifies meaning, it has become clear that there is more to meaning than is reflected in language at both ends of the communication process (Saeed 2016). Speakers' thoughts are often implicit rather than expressed explicitly, while it is the role of hearers to decipher the meaning or, in other words, provide their own interpretation of the speakers' thoughts. This way of reasoning fits into the idea that what is said is not a direct voicing of one's thought but rather thoughts converted into language. Saeed (2016) points out, however, that "[t]his does not of course provide direct evidence for this view: we could equally imagine English speakers thinking in English and still compressing their thoughts when speaking, on some grounds of economy and social cooperation" (Saeed 2016, p. 41).

The aforementioned arguments are often evoked when supporting the view that human beings think in a language of thought and the process of communication can be viewed as a translation from Mentalese to our language. This view can be extended to the assumption that every human being thinks in the same Mentalese, i.e., has the same mental processes and cognitive architecture. Therefore, the supporters of this theory claim that the *language of thought* is universal.

1.5. Austin's speech act theory

The meaning of an utterance is not based purely on its semantic properties. Each utterance is part of the social situation in which it occurs. These linguistically mediated social moves are referred to as *speech acts*. Saying something in common understanding is often treated as distinct from "doing". Speech act theory is the study of what an utterance does when uttered, beyond merely saying something. Although it is true that words alone do not do anything, they gain force when embedded in social practice. What they do precisely depends on a particular situation and the relation between interlocutors.

A speech act moves the relationship between interlocutors. The move performed can be, e.g., a compliment, complaint, insult, request, command, criticism, exclamation, command, promise, or question. It may or may not be accompanied by meaningful body language, e.g., gesture or facial expression. Such functional perspective on language use is associated with speech acts or actions.

Speech act theory was developed by a philosopher J. L. Austin (1962), who is best known for his study of "how to do things with words". Initially, Austin identifies two kinds of utterances. One is a *constative utterance* describing or denoting the situation in relation with the fact of truth or falsity. The other is a *performative utterance* that can itself, given the proper institutional setting and a speaker authorized to produce it, cause a change in the reality. The examples of performative utterances given by Austin include:

(35)"I resign" (as uttered at work or playing chess)
(36)"You're fired"
(37)"War is declared" (as uttered by a president/leader)
(38)"The court is now in session"
(39)"I promise to be there" or "I swear to do that"
(40)"I apologize"
(41)"I accept your apology"

(42)“You are under arrest”

Situations like naming boats and babies, hiring and firing, marrying people cannot be made explicit without some form of verbal performance. As it can be seen in the examples (35) or (37) the context plays a crucial role in performing a speech act. Certain speech acts can only be performed when uttered by a right person. Furthermore, to understand a speech act, it is not enough to know the wording but also to know the context in which it appears. For example an utterance “I’ll find you” in some context can be meant as a promise and in some as a threat.

Gendering people can also be thought of as performed through a series of acts, including those linguistically mediated, e.g., uttering “It’s a girl” causes treating a baby (“it”, an empty subject) instantly as a “she” (Butler 1993). Butler (1990), drawing on Austin’s theory of performative utterances, argues that performativity is not a simple matter of an individual’s desire to act through saying something. “In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat: ‘agency’, then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation of the repetition.” In other words, performances, including verbal ones, acquire their meaning and perform actions because they draw on discourse histories of similar performances, evoking elements that have worked similarly in the past. It does not exclude, however, the possibility of individuals surpassing the constraints of the inherited system. This “disobedience” if repeated by many individuals can result in a permanent change to the system.

All utterances somehow affect reality, however, not all of them do it to the same extent. Austin divided linguistic acts into three categories. There is a *locutionary act* – the act of producing a particular linguistic expression with a particular structure and (literal) meaning. In other words, it is a performance of an utterance.

The locutionary act lays the foundation for the *illocutionary act* – an act of saying something and meaning it, e.g., apologizing, threatening, commanding. In order to perform an illocutionary act one often uses *performative verbs*. The examples of performative verbs include *promise*, *apologize,* or *resign*. All verbs of course represent actions, the performative verb is itself an action, because speaking it makes the corresponding action happen in the world. The change, however, can only happen within a social or interpersonal context in which words are understood as having this kind of power, and in which the hearers generally believe that the speaker is authorised to utter the performative verb. The underlying purpose of an utterance, e.g. a reminder, a warning, a promise, a threat, is called the *illocutionary force* of a speech act. Conventionally, the performative verb can only be used in the present tense of the first person, because only when these conditions are met the utterance of the performative verb can make a given action happen.

The third type recognised by Austin is a *perlocutionary act* accomplished by saying something, e.g., persuading (someone to think something), frightening (getting someone to be afraid) or insulting (getting someone to be offended) by saying something. It is the effect, i.e. an action or state of mind, that is caused by, or as a consequence of saying something. Sometimes the intended perlocutionary effect can be different than the intended one.

The distinction between three types of speech acts distinguished by Austin can be summarised as follows:

> [A] speaker utters sentences with a particular meaning (locutionary act), and with a particular force (illocutionary act), in order to achieve a certain effect on the hearer (perlocutionary act). (Kempson 1977 p. 51)

Speech act theory has found its place in the area of feminist philosophy of language (see, e.g., Butler 1990, Langton 1993, Hornsby 1995). While Butler (1990) focuses on performativity of gender, Langton (1993) refers to Austin's distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts and argues that there are forms of silencing corresponding to each of these sorts of speech act. A person can be:

- locutionarily silenced (when prevented from speaking or intimated into not speaking)
- illocutionarily silenced (when unable to carry out the acts that she intends to carry out in speaking)
- perlocutionarily silenced (when the speech cannot have the intended effects)
-

Although some feminist scholars do not agree with Langton's (1993) use of speech acts to demonstrate that, e.g., pornography silences women (e.g., see Green 1998, Saul 2006, Finlayson[2] 2014), the feminist use of speech act theory extended to such issues like racist speech or hate speech.

1.6. Grice's conversational implicature

Acts of speech can be explicit or implicit. Listeners actively participate in the construction of meaning, instead of being merely receivers of information. It often happens through inferences – a strategy allowing to fill out the text toward an interpretation of the meaning of the speaker.

The philosopher Paul Grice introduces the term *conversational implicature* – the speaker's and hearer's cooperative use of inference (Grice 1989), where *implicature* (a word coined by Grice) refers to meaning beyond words. Grice analyses the gap between what a speaker explicitly says and what the intended meaning is understood to be. Unlike entailments and presuppositions, conversational implicatures are pragmatic inferences that are not tied to the particular words and phrases but instead arise from contextual factors and a shared understanding that conventions are observed in conversation. He suggests that the success of this type of communication can be explained by a *cooperative principle*: "Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1989, p. 26). Grice recognizes a kind of agreement between speakers and listeners that allows participants to make assumptions about each other's aims and conversational strategies.

Grice proposes that the participants of a communicative exchange are guided by a general principle, presupposed by language users, that language should be used with maximum efficiency and effect to achieve rational communication. He labelled it the *Cooperative Principle*. Grice distinguishes further four categories of more specific groups of maxims that "yield results in accordance with the Cooperative Principle" (Grice 1989, p. 26). They are as follows (Grice 1989, p. 26-28):

The Quantity Maxims

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[2] Finlayson (2014) criticizes not only the focus on pornography but also argues that Austin's work on speech acts should have never been used in by feminist philosophers.

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

The Quality Maxims

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The Relation Maxims

1. Be relevant.

The Manner Maxim

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly.

He points out that "the observance of some of these maxims is a matter of less urgency than is the observance of others" (Grice 1989 p. 27), as people, for example lie, violating the first maxim of Quality. Grice (1989) also agrees that there may be more maxims, which he has not included in his theory, but are also observed in communication, e.g., "Be polite". He explains:

> The conversational maxims, however, and the conversational implicatures connected with them, are special connected (I hope) with the particular purposes that talk (and so, talk exchange) is adapted to serve and is primarily employed to serve. I have stated my maxims as if this purpose were a maximally effective exchange of information. (Grice 1989, p. 28)

In a communicative exchange, a participant can fail to fulfil a maxim in a various way, which include:

- *violating* a maxim, e.g., when lying

- *opting out*, which differs from violating in that is done openly – the speaker indicates that he or she is not willing to cooperate in the wat the maxim requires, and therefore mitigates or eliminates the effect of the maxims, e.g., by using hedges
- *clashing* – when the speaker is unable to fulfil one maxim without violating another
- *flouting* – when the speaker, to the full knowledge of the addressee, fails to fulfil a maxim.

Grice (1989) believes that implicatures arise from the overt disregard of maxims. A flouting implicature is based on an addressee's assumption that the speaker is deliberately breaking (i.e. flouting) a conversational maxim but is still cooperative. For example, in a following conversation:

(43)A: Will you have dinner with me tonight?
B: I have work to do,

What B means is that he or she will not have dinner with A, even if he or she did not explicitly uttered that, nor the sentence that is uttered carries this meaning. Therefore, what the speaker said is distinct from what the speaker meant or implied. The speaker B would have infringed the maxim of Relation unless her contribution were relevant to the purpose of the conversation. One can infer the intended meaning by assuming that the speaker B was being cooperative and tried to answer the speaker A's question.

Grice (1989) describes features of conversational implicatures. For example, he argues that all conversational implicatures are cancellable, i.e., it is permissible to conjoin "but not p" or "I do not mean to imply that p" to the sentences that allegedly implicates that p. Furthermore, conversational implicatures are not, at least at the start, part of the meaning of the expressions. It may happen, however, that an utterance first used as conversational implicature has become conventionalized. Another feature described by Grice is the fact that in any given case, what is said may be true while what is implicated may be false, and, therefore, the implicature is not carried by what is said but by the act of saying it or by a certain way of putting it.

Thanks to Grice, meaning arising beyond words, which can be particularly important in the context of social change, receives scientific attention, and its significance is exposed. Grice was probably the first person to emphasize the systematicity underlying suggested meanings found beyond utterances.

1.7. Focus on social meaning

There is no meaning outside society, however, some researchers put social meaning in the centre of discussion. Such perspective is characteristic for the third wave approach to sociolinguistic studies, which focuses on the issue of how social information is encoded in language. In contrast to the first- and second-wave approaches, which focus on variation as a window into language change, the third-wave approach treats linguistic variation as a resource for taking stances making social moves and constructing identity (Eckert 2012).

Hall-Lew, Moore and Podesva (2021) define *social meaning* as the set of interferences that people draw based of their knowledge of how language is used in a specific interaction. They further develop that the inferences rely not only on the pragmatic function of the utterance itself but also can be drawn from, e.g., the knowledge on the sort of person who produces the utterance, the situation they are in, the nature of the relationship between the interlocutors, the speaker's attitude towards the content of the talk. The scholars point out that that:

> Unlike semantically based inferences, the inferences drawn about social meaning are inherently indeterminate (Podesva 2007; Eckert 2008; Maegaard & Pharao, this volume; Gafter, this volume). While the syntax of right dislocated tags might make them focusing and/or evaluative, they are not inherently negatively evaluative or directly indexical of a rebellious style of speech. (Hall-Lew, Moore, Podesva 2021, p. 4)

Hall-Lew et al. (2021) emphasise that it should not be expected to interpret all components of social meaning at the same time, neither from researchers nor from language users – a linguist usually focuses on how a single variant work on a specific social interaction, and individual language users, due to their different experiences, pay attention to different aspects of language. Other reason why meaning is indeterminate are the multitude of the kinds of inferences that might be drawn and the fact that different components of a construction can link to different levels of meaning (Hall-Lew et al. 2021). For example, a pejorative use of the word *posh* can indicate disassociation from a higher-class social type. What is important during the analysis is the knowledge of the context, for example, the use of the word *posh* can be triggered by the speaker's alignment in a specific discussion about taste and economic capital. Hall-Lew et al. (2021) argue that linguistic elements in our speech function as signs by de Saussure's (1982) definition, "in that they encompass a linguistic form that is associated with a meaning" (Hall-Lew et al. 2021).

The connection between a form and its social meanings is indeterminate but still structured by historical possibility (Hall-Lew et al. 2021). It is caused by *underspecification* and *multiplicity* of this connection (Eckert 2012). Underspecification states that the relationship between form and meaning is inherently vague and, rather than being predetermined, emerges in context (Eckert 2012). Multiplicity of meaning refers to all the possible meanings available and how the speaker chooses between them in a given interaction (Eckert 2012). Interestingly, the meaning in a variant's indexical field can be contradictory or have complementary meanings.

Social meaning can be conceptualized in terms of single signs in isolation as well as approach compositionally, i.e., analyse how multiple signs, each with its own set of meanings, produce meaning when put together. Although Hall-Lew et al. consider a compositional view of social meaning as useful and necessary, they argue that:

> [I]t can offer only a partial account of the way that meaning emerges from co-occurring linguistic features. Compositional approaches assume that the meanings of features pre-exist and exhibit some degree of stability. But speakers constantly exercise stylistic creativity by lifting features out of familiar contexts and packaging them in new ways, through a process known as bricolage (Lévi-Strauss 1966; Hebdige 1979). At its essence, bricolage is a process of recontextualization, a 'transformational' process whereby some aspects of meaning are retained from a feature's earlier contexts and, crucially, new meanings emerge (Bauman & Briggs 1990: 75). For example, when Chinese yuppies embed English technical terms (marketing, securities, proposal) in Cosmopolitan Mandarin speech, the terms acquire a host of new social meanings (e.g., a global orientation) that are not present in their conventional English-language contexts. The meaning(s) of any given sign can therefore not be interpreted independently from the meaning(s) of other signs. (Hall-Lew et al. 2021, p. 12)

Another approach to social meaning is constructional, i.e., looking at clusters of linguistic features, and not individual features alone. Those clusters are known to function as sign vehicles on their own, e.g., African American drag queens draw on different features of language, including white women's language, to construct a drag queen style of speech (Szymańska 2018).

One of the concepts fundamental to understanding social meaning is markedness The reason for that is the fact that more marked forms tend to carry richest social meaning than less marked forms (Hall-Lew et al. 2021), although not always (Beltrama & Casasanto 2021). This asymmetry in meaning is ideologized as marking social value. The markedness of a term can be caused by various factors, for example, which as Hall-Lew et al. (2021) point out, are all relative and depend on language users' experiences. The following section provides a more detailed account on the topic of markedness.

1.8. Markedness in semantics

When communicating, speakers must make decisions in interaction that are based on their conscious and subconscious knowledge of certain norms. Speech activities norms concern the kind of language expected, the kind of stances expected and generic structure in the discourse analysis literature known as *frames* (Fillmore 1976, Kiesling 2008). Applying such norms should facilitate making sense of meaning in a speech activity (e.g., whether somebody follows or flouts Gricean conversational maxims). Nonetheless, speakers can break the norms and use more marked linguistic forms.

The principle of markedness has its roots in the Prague School linguistic deliberations on polar oppositions in language of Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy (Battistella 1990). It is based on de Saussure's assumption that language is a synchronic system, in which items are define by their current relations to each other. Trubetzkoy presented markedness relations in the context of his research on phonological correlations, as opposition between the presence of some phonological aspects and their absence in the consciousness of speakers.

Jakobson has extended the application of the concept of markedness, beyond phonological oppositions, to other linguistic and semiotic fields, seeing that it can be applied on semantic categories in grammar and culture. Jakobson argues that "every single constituent of a linguistic system is built on an opposition of two logical contradictories: the presence of an attribute (*markedness*) in contraposition to its absence (*unmarkedness*) (Jakobson 1972, p. 76). As Battistella points out:

> Such polarities are manifest at the level of individual lexical concepts, where we find antonymous ideas, such as beauty and ugliness, trust and betrayal, truth and falsity. Polar oppositions are also evident at the levels of grammatical structure: grammatical oppositions include singular and plural, positive and negative, active and passive, present and past, masculine and feminine. And at the phonological level it has been found that the speech sounds of any language, once thought to be the minimal linguistic signs, are more accurately viewed as composed of more minimal distinctive feature oppositions – such as nasal or oral, and vocalic and consonantal –which comprise the phonological quanta that make up speech sounds. (Battistella 1990, p. 1)

The pivotal claim of markedness theory is that these binary oppositions are "not mere opposites, but rather that they show an evaluative nonequivalence that is imposed on all oppositions" (Battistella 1990, p. 1). For example, singular is not plural by chance, but it is explicitly non-plural, thus, the real opposition for grammatical number is not singular against plural but plural against non-plural.

Jakobsonian markedness is an asymmetrical relation between signalisation (in the marked item of a pair) of a certain characteristic and non-signalisation (in the unmarked item of a pair) of that property. In his theory, two levels of unmarkedness are distinguished on the level of general meaning, the unmarked item of a pair implies no statement about the relevant property of the marked item, while on the level of specific (also known as nuclear) meaning, the unmarked item indicates the opposite value of the relevant property. In the course of time, Jakobson's view on the character of the relevant semiotic property of the marked item shifted from a substantive property of the objective reality to a language-specific categorial value, and this value-oriented approach made it possible to extend the application of markedness to uses of categories and grammatical constructions. It seems noteworthy that markedness is neither an accidentally inherited nor a purely formal property of language but exists through human interaction with other humans and with the world (Comrie 1986).

1.8.1. Marked and unmarked forms

At the semantic level of language, markedness can be understood as a relation between a specific linguistic sign that bears an attribute (the marked term) and a sign that lacks this attribute (the unmarked term). Privative oppositions, however, are not the only type of oppositions to which markedness is relevant. This concept can also be applied to pairs in which the terms of an opposition are maintained by the presence of contrary features rather than a presence (or absence) of a certain feature.

Jakobson (1984) illustrates the division of semantic oppositions of marked and unmarked on the example of the opposition between masculine and feminine forms of the Russian word for donkey. In Russian, the word *ослица* refers to a she-ass and is marked for feminine sex. On the other hand, the word *осел* contains no indication of the sex of the animal in question. However, if one was to ask "is it a she-ass?" and the answer is "no, a donkey" then in this case the word donkey indicates the masculine gender because "the word is used in a restricted sense (Jakobson 1984, p. 2).

Markedness may thus be defined as "the distinction in semantic depth that is proper to inclusive relations such as hyponymy" (Andersen 2001, p. 47). Russian *donkey* or English *duck* at a higher semantic level cover both male and female, whereas, at a lower semantic level they are opposed to *she-ass* and *drake*.

A good illustration of that is the opposition between *old* and *young* or between *short* and *tall.* When one wants to ask about someone's age or height, he or she would use the sentences (44) like:

(44)How old are you?
How tall are you?,

rather than:

(45)How young are you?
How short are you?

The sentences in (44) do not imply anything specific about the age or height of a person to whom they are addressed. The sentences in (45), on the other hand, imply that a person is young or short and would normally not be used to ask about this information. The unmarked concepts *old* and *tall* can be used in two ways: to refer to specific values that are opposite to *young* and *short* respectively or to refer to the general properties *age* and *height.*

Semantic markedness is also present in grammatical structures. For example, the past tense is marked with respect to the present tense, which is unmarked, and its time reference depends on context or on other semantic properties of the verbs used. It is illustrated on the examples below, where the present tense examples in (46) indicate events happening at the moment of speech, the examples in (47) indicate general actions or states, the examples in (48) indicate future time and the examples in (49) use the present tense to indicate past time. This could not have been achieved by using the past tense, which is restricted to past events.

(46)I am walking down the street.
I agree with you.

(47)I wear a dress.
Dogs like playing fetch.

(48)The train arrives at 6.
I leave for the university next week.

(49)He shoots and misses!
So then I say to him, "Goodbye" and she leaves.

Another grammatical example worth considering is the opposition between singular and plural number. Similarly to the unmarked present tense, the unmarked singular number may refer to either singular or plural, as in the examples (551) and (8).

(50)The dog is the man's best friend.

(51)Everyone was surprised we were doing so good.

The relation between marked and unmarked can be compared to the relation between figure and ground or between abnormal and normal (Battistella 1990). The unmarked term carries less information in comparison to its marked counterpart, it is presented as the norm against which the marked terms is presented as a deviation from the norm.

Markedness relations are relative notions – what is the abnormal and what is normal is determined by context. Furthermore, they are not fixed but "depend on the language-internal evaluation of the terms of an opposition" (Battistella 1999, p. 4).

The common way of *marking* words, i.e., attaching additional meaning to the word, is to add affixes onto the root word. For example, in the English language plurals are made by adding the suffixes *-s* or *-es* onto unmarked singular nouns or by adding *'s* nouns can show possessive. We can also express polarity by adding prefixes, e.g., the unmarked word *marked* becomes a marked word *unmarked.* Also, words that show the gender of an animal are considered as marked, e.g., *lion* and *lioness*. In some cases, of course, the unmarked word has a completely different form than its marked opposite, e.g., *stallion* and *mare*.

One of the asymmetries that appears in many languages and speech communities is the one of male/masculine and female/feminine concepts and principles. Most often it is the male as the prototype that is used for human representation. In consequence, the female is reduced to the status of the "marked" one because to achieve female visibility in language one needs to apply various grammatical processes, which makes female linguistic constructions a derivative of man/male standard. Furthermore, the connotations of certain words can illustrate this inequality and double-standard approach towards male and female gender. For example, seemingly gender-neutral names of professions often evoke a specific gender. Gender markedness in language is discussed in more detail in Section 3.7. of this dissertation.

1.9. Convention and creativity

1.9.1. Linguistic creativity

According to de Saussure (see Section 1.2.1.), speakers of a language do not change the language system, even though the system may change over time. He argues that language (*langue*) is "outside of the individual who can never create nor modify it by myself" (de Saussure 1983 [1916], p. 24), and that language "is not affected by the will of the individual" (de Saussure 1983 [1916]). For de Saussure, speaking (*parole*) is uninteresting to linguistic because of its individual and momentary nature. Individual innovations "do not enter into our field of observation until the community of speakers has adopted them” (de Saussure 1983 [1916], p. 63). According to Burke, Crowley and Girvin, de Saussure’s language user is “locked in a shared system of language, unable to create meanings of their own” (Burke, Crowley & Girvin 2000, p. 16). On the other hand, Croce’s speaker is “a free spirit, unhindered by restrictive or determining grammar norms” (Burke et al. 2000, p. 16). Burke et al. ask whether people really do not have control over meaning? Is the system the creator of meaning and people are “trapped in the *prison house of language*” (Burke et al. 2000, p. 15)?

In order to discuss human abilities and restrains regarding linguistic creativity, it is necessary to make a distinction between at least two aspects of language, namely:

- language as a *product*, that is language as a social fact and cultural *object* as dictionaries and grammars describe it and the existing texts and literature of that language represent it (Vinokur 1923, p. 362)
- language as a *process* or *an activity*, both as external interpersonal acts of *communication* between human beings, that is a *communicative process*, and as one of the elements on the basis of which internal thought is possible and which reflects *cognitive processes*, i.e., what is known as the ideational function of language (see Halliday 1985).

It is important to make this distinction explicitly in order to avoid confusion. Burke et al. also make such a distinction between language as an existing objective structure and language as the agency of speakers. For mentalists, who have placed language as an object of the user’s mind, face a problem with distinguishing the properties of language and the language user’s ability. Linguistic creativity is a property of the speaker and not of the language. That is why it is crucial to differentiate language as product and language as process.

Harris (1997), who is an intergrationalist, is the supporter of the view that language, as an object, has been put in speaker’s minds. He strongly criticises what he calls the telementational model of communication and the fixed-code theory of the linguistic sign. Following the telementational model, structured and fixed meanings are transferred by speech from one individual’s mind to another individual’s mind. During this transition, they remain static and fixed, which results in activating the exact same idea in the speaker's and the hearer's mind. Harris (1997) explains that languages are not fixed codes but second-order social constructs which are intrinsically open-ended, incomplete and variable. Harris supports the view that all forms of communication demand continuously monitored creative activity. Wolf and Love comment on Harris' argumentation, pointing out that languages are "not the primary objects of linguistic enquiry, but second-hand products of communities of individuals whose actual linguistic experience is what first has to be made sense of" (Wolf & Love 1997, p. 3). Zlatev (1999) points out that creativity is the result of processes in the mind of the speaker rather than facts about the world or language.

Linguistic creativity is active and attested in all human linguistic activities. Creativity in general, and linguistic creativity in particular, is an essential trait of all humans. As Gerrig and Gibbs write "the ability to expand the range of meanings (…) is in no way restricted to gifted orators or writers" (Gerrig & Gibbs 1988, p. 3). Jakobson (1960) argues that to keep poetics and linguistics apart is to illicitly restrict linguistics: "language must be investigated in all variety of its functions" (Jakobson 1960, p. 335).

1.9.2. Linguistic creativity: motivations and functions

Linguistic creativity is manifested in individual instances by individual speakers and each one of these instances may be motivated by a variety of reasons. Gerrig and Gibbs (1988) differentiate two types of factors that motivate speakers to be linguistically creative. The first factor is the speaker's need to give expression to ideas that are "unavailable in the standardized repertory of meanings" (Gerrig & Gibbs 1988, p. 3). The second type of motivation are social factors, which include both general social factors as well as the pragmatic ones.

Starting with the conceptual inexpressibility as a motivation for linguistic creativity, Spitzer (1958) investigates the language of individual speakers who are in a specific situation (e.g., during war) and is specially interested in their "desire for renewed expression" (Spitzer 1956, p. 70). For instance, the verb *to hamster* was commonly used during the Second World War with the meaning of hoarding food or cigarettes because of the shortages of such products in war times. It is not, however, commonly used in that particular sense nowadays. According to Spitzer (1956) it is dissatisfaction with the existing forms in language and with its limited expressivity motivates language users to coin new words. He argues that while language as a system maintains its stability, it also tends to “curtail or hamstring or suppress our expressive faculties” (Spitzer 1956, p. 68). The unusuality of Spitzer’s war example notwithstanding, his main point is that circumstances and environment in which human beings find themselves are undergoing a constant change. We need to be able to adapt to new situations and this includes new ways of expression. As Birnbaum writes, linguistic creativity is “necessitated by, and directly reflects, the creativity of human thought” (Birnbaum 1990, p. 176). Human beings are continually creating new cognitive entities that serve purposes of understanding, organising, classifying and communicating new ideas (Ward, Smith & Jyotsna 1997). One example of such adjustment of language to the changing environment is creation of neologisms in scientific and technological language that follows scientific and technological development and discoveries (more on neologisms in Section 2.3.). The need for expressing ideas or concepts that are not included in the existing language, both internally in terms of ideation, as well as externally for use in communication, is therefore a motivation for continuous linguistic change. This motivation shows that humans, continuously and creatively, respond to their environment.

Another motivation for a speaker to express creatively, as mentioned, can be communicative effect and intent. As Gerrig and Gibbs (1988) explain, linguistic creativity allows language users to inform others about their beliefs in and indirect way. For example, by referring to cannabis as *weed*, *grass*, *pot* etc. the speaker can express his or her belief that it is not harmful. However, by calling it *drug* the speaker takes a different stance. Furthermore, using lexical innovations can make our speech striking and memorable, which is desirable especially in persuasive discourse, e.g., in advertising (Gerrig & Gibbs 1988). Another communicative intention that motivates language users to be creative is social pressure to be polite or to handle sensitive issues, for example soldiers during war often use different terms for death, such as *offed*, which is a metaphorical transfer from being present and alive to being *off* (away) (Gerrig and Gibbs 1988).

Many linguistic innovations arise when speakers engage in different language games, such as playful interchanges, puns or jokes. This kind of linguistic creativity can be used to reenforce intimacy between members of a group, through for example non-serious and non-informative verbal interaction. It can also serve a purpose of excluding non-group members. In some cases, this exclusion is not only intended as a social statement but also aims at excluding someone from the meaning of what is said. For example, *Polari*, a language used among homosexual men at a time when homosexual activity was illegal, helped gay community to secretly identify its members (Baker 2002). Another example could be *Grypsera* – nonstandard dialect of the Polish language used traditionally by recidivist prison inmates. Linguistic creativity is also used by minority groups, e.g., or African Americans, to show their unity in the multilingual communities by using some form of the common dominant language, in this case American English, but at the same time to separate from the mainstream by the use of innovations and slang. Speech play can also serve a purpose of enhancing the status of the speaker, for example, through clever wordplay or, in specific subcultures, through participating in ritual insults (see Labov 1997).

To summarise, linguistic creativity is usually motivated by:

- the need to express an idea or a concept that has not been included in the system (conceptual motivations)
- the need to express various types of indirect speech acts for different reasons, e.g., to avoid sensitive issues, to attract attention (pragmatic motivations)
- the need to express group solidarity or enhance one's social status (social motivations)

As it has been presented in this chapter, the reasons for linguistic creativity can vary. This is also true for gendered neologisms. Some were created to initiate social debate on certain topics, some intend to associate one gender with concepts that are usually attributed to the opposite gender, and some are simply a whimsical creations of language users.

The observable linguistic mechanisms behind linguistic creations, however, are often the same. Having discussed the theory behind linguistic creation and general motivation behind it, it is possible to move on to the ways in which this creativity is put into practice. The following chapter includes description of mechanism of word formation such as compounding, blending or loaning, and discusses in more detail particular social motivations for linguistic change.

1.10. Words and their meaning: concluding remarks

Communication through language is based upon one's knowledge of the agreed-upon meanings of strings of sounds and of how to combine them into larger units that also convey meaning. Many scholars presented their view on meaning, whether lexical or within larger syntactic units of language, such as utterances or sentences.

The theories of meaning offer interesting insight into how new meaning is created through adding the aspect of gender to already existing words on the lexical level but also when looking at how those words gain meaning when used in context. The study of two aspects of meaning, the study of the linguistic meaning of morphemes, words and sentences and the interpretation of linguistic meaning in context, is traditionally subdivided into two areas of study, semantics and pragmatics respectively. Such distinction can be found useful as it narrows the scope of work for semanticists, leaving the aspects of general or encyclopaedic knowledge to pragmaticists (Saeed 2016). However, because much of the meaning depends on the context of use, it is difficult to draw a precise line between the two fields of study. This dissertation is written in the belief that such analysis as presented in this paper will benefit from combining these two approaches.

What is also important to remember when analysing the meaning of gendered neologisms is that the meaning of a word is more than its denotation. What is also important are its connotative meaning(s). The aspect of connotation is of crucial in the study of gendered neologisms because they are created due to certain views on gender roles and are often based on stereotypes regarding each gender. Therefore, adding the aspect of gender to a word brings more than merely associating it with one gender (see Chapter 5). Furthermore, gendered neologisms often represent a binary perspective on gender, *male* is often oppose to *female*, which often makes gendered neologisms marked terms.

The following chapter presents an overview of the field of morphology and word formation, and provides the tools necessary to analyse how gendered neologisms are built and to reveal how language users are able to add a new layer of gendered meaning to words in the English language.

Chapter 2: Morphology and word formation

Human beings intentionally produce sounds which evoke a certain interpretation, and this is what we call spoken language. In other words, language can be defined as “the coming together of form and meaning” (Eble 1996). As the matter of meaning has been covered in the previous chapter, this chapter is dedicated to a discussion of form.

Form, unlike meaning, can be directly observable. Forms of words and expressions in a language usually follow certain patterns of organization, which give speakers the resources for creating new forms with linguistic meaning. For instance, through the addition of the suffix *-er* to a verb, the speaker can create a noun that means “one who does the action”, e.g., a *painter* can be defined as “one who paints” or a *player* can be defined as “one who plays”, etc.

To create new words, different types of word formation processes are employed. The first section introduces some of the terminology concerning the study of morphology and word-formation and offers a presentation of chosen word-formation processes, such as affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, abbreviation, conversion, coinage and eponymy, which are crucial for the discussion of gendered neologisms presented in further sections of the dissertation. Next sections discuss the topic of new words entering language – both newly created and loaned from other languages.

2.1. Morphology[3]

To understand how new words are coined, it is crucial to look at a word’s structure. In linguistics, the study of how words are formed and of their relationships to other words within the same language is called *morphology*. Thus morphology is the study of the internal structure of lexical items.

A word can be divided into smaller units that are called *morphemes*. The morpheme is the smallest indivisible component of a word that is meaningful, i.e., has a meaning of its own. For example, the word *true* is a single morpheme. If we combine it with a morpheme UN-, we get a word *untrue*, which contains two morphemes UN-+TRUE.

[3] This chapter is based on Bejan (2017) unless stated otherwise.

It is possible to go further and add more morphemes, for example the word *untruthfulness* contains additional three morphemes. *Untruthfulness* consists of 5 morphemes in total, namely UN-+TRUE+-TH+-FUL+-NESS.

The number of morphemes is independent of the number of syllables. There are disyllabic (e.g., *river*), trisyllabic (e.g. *harvest*) or quadrisyllabic (*gorilla*) words which are just a single morpheme. Contrastingly, there can be several morphemes in a single syllable, e.g., *walked* (WALK + 'PAST TENSE'), *laughs* (LAUGH+ 'PRESENT TENSE' + 'SINGULAR'), *men's* (MAN + 'PLURAL' + 'POSSESSIVE').

Morphemes can be divided into two types. *Free morpheme*, as a name suggests, can occur in isolation, i.e., can be a word-form on its own, e.g. *boy*, *orange*, *cat*. Words consisting of single free morphemes are called *simple words.* There are also morphemes, called *bound morphemes*, which cannot occur as independent words, e.g., UN-, -NESS, -ER, -S, -ED, -ING. These morphemes can only occur when they are attached to other morphemes. For example, in the word *blenders*, BLEND can be used on its own as a word, and therefore is categorized as a free morpheme, while -ER and -S can only be used in conjunction with at least one other morpheme. A word that consists of a central meaningful element (root/base) and bound morphemes is called a *morphologically complex word* (affixes, inflections).

Free morphemes can be further divided into two categories: *lexical morphemes* and *functional morphemes*. The former category includes the words that are the main content of the message. The latter category consists of functional words such as conjunctions, prepositions, articles and pronouns. Another significant difference between these two groups is that while new lexical morphemes are often added to the language, hardly ever does it happen with functional morphemes.

Two subcategories can also be distinguished within the group of bound morphemes. These are *derivational morphemes* and *inflectional morphemes*. Derivational morphemes when added to the stem create a new word or a word of a different grammatical category. Derivational morphemes can be suffixes, e.g., -ISH, -MENT, and prefixes, e.g., RE-, UN-, EX- (more on derivation in Section 2.2.1.). Inflectional morphemes, also called inflections, are not used to produce new words, as opposed to derivational morphemes. Instead of changing the meaning of the grammatical category of a word, they are used to assign a particular grammatical property to it, such as number, tense, possession or comparison. For example, the suffix *-ed* can mark past participle or past-tense verbs, as in, e.g., "absorbed", which could be used as an adjective ("-ed" marking derivation) or a verb ("-ed" marking inflection). The described classification of morphemes has been summarised in a form of a tree diagram and presented in Figure 5.

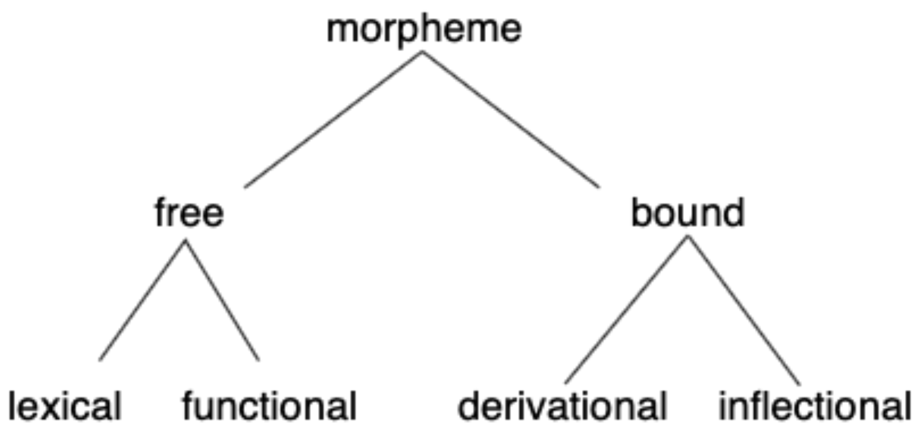

Figure 5. Types of morphemes

Nonetheless, there are also morphemes that violate this clear-cut division and do not fall under the category of free nor bound morphemes. In other words, these words cannot be assigned an independent meaning or grammatical function. In literature, they are called *unique morphemes*. An often-evoked example of a unique morpheme is a word *cranberry* – the morpheme CRAN does not carry meaning when in isolation, but it gains the ability to define the kind of berry when it is attached to the root BERRY. In fact, unique morphemes are sometimes referred to as *cranberry morphemes*. CRAN cannot be treated as a free morpheme because it does not have any meaning on its own, however, it is considered to be a root because of parallelism with other morphemes that are not unique: e.g., *blueberry*, *blackberry*, *cloudberry*, *snowberry*, *waxberry* (Bauer 2003).

A *root* is the basic morpheme of the word which cannot be divided or reduced, i.e., "[a] root is a form which is not further analysable, either in terms of derivational or inflectional morphology". For example, the word *readership* consists of three morphemes READ+-ER +-SHIP. If all the affixes, which in this case are -*er* and -*ship*, were to be removed, what would be left was the root, *read*. From a semantic perspective, a root is what carries the main component of meaning in a word.

A *stem* is the part of the word to which affixes and inflections are added. Unlike a root, it can be simple or complex, e.g., *reader* may be considered a complex stem. Stem is a part of the word which remains when all inflectional affixes have been removed. In the word-form *untouchables* the stem is *untouchable*, but in the word-form *touched* the stem is *touch.* The word-form *wheelchair* is considered to be the stem containing two roots.

In Bauer's (2003) words, a *base* is "any form to which affixes of any kind can be added" (Bauer 2003, p. 21). Therefore, all roots and stems are bases but not all bases can be treated as roots or stems but "a derivationally analyzable form to which derivational affixes are added can only be referred to as a base" (Bauer 2003, p. 21).

2.2. Word-formation processes[4]

Most new words are created productively, that is following the patterns already established in the language rather than by coinage (which is the invention of a word merely by putting sounds together). Elbe (1996, p. 25) argues that "[c]oinage accounts for almost no new words in English." She gives an example of a coinage in the English language, that is *blurb,* defined as "a brief publicity notice, as on a book jacket". The word's origins are traced back to American humourist Gelett Burgess (Elbe 1996). Elbe points out that almost all new words in the language are made of parts of already existing words or are their altered forms (Elbe 1996). She illustrates her point using the example of the word *computer.*

> *Computer* is a noun formed from the English verb *compute* (which was originally borrowed from Latin) by the addition of the suffix *-er* 'that which'. *Computerize* adds another suffix that changes the derived noun into a different verb. The shortened form *compu-* has become the first part of such words as *compucenter* and *compupaper.* The form *computer* has been shortened to merely the letter c in *PC,* for *personal computer.* All of these new words entered English in regular and predictable ways, making use of productive processes. Moreover, a new word enters as part of a grammatically related set, or paradigm. Speakers automatically add the correct inflectional suffix required by the context; thus *computerize* becomes *computerizes* 'third person singular present tense', *computerized* 'past tense and passive participle', and *computerizing* 'progressive participle'. In addition, *computerize* joins the set of verbs that become nouns by the addition of the suffix *-ation,* like *organize /organization.* (Elbe 1996, pp. 25-26)

[4] This chapter is based on Bauer (1983) and Bejan (2017) unless stated otherwise.

“Interest in word-formation has probably always gone hand-in-hand with interest in language in general” (Bauer 1983, p. 2). The word-formation study investigates and describes the processes of building new complex words. The new-built words are based on already existing linguistic resources and their creation takes place following the structures of the set words, which serve as prototypes. The following sections include a description of chosen word-formation processes.

2.2.1. Derivation

Affixes produce new lexemes, also called *derived words* or *derivatives*. They change the word class to which the word’s base belongs. A word consisting of two or more morphemes is called *polymorphic*. Affixes can appear in front of the root as well as in a final position within the word. Affixes that have an initial position are called *prefixes* and those with a final position are *suffixes*. There is a third type of affixes, namely *infixes*, that are inserted inside a word stem.

Inflections, on the other hand, encode grammatical categories, therefore, no new lexemes are created when inflections are added to the word. Additionally, *inflections* can only appear at the end of the word.

Affixes can be grouped according to their function, origin, the part of speech that they are used to form, productivity or meaning. *Governing derivational affixes* are those affixes that change the class of the word, contrastively, *restrictive derivational affixes* do not change the word class, only the meaning. Depending on the class to which the derived word belongs after adding a suffix, they are known as:

- *nominalisers*, or noun formatives – the suffixes that create nouns
- *adjectivisers*, or adjective formatives – the suffixes that create adjectives
- *verbalisers*, or verb formatives – the suffixes that create verbs
- *adverbialisers,* or adverb formatives – the suffixes that create adverbs.
-
- From the semantic point of view, these groups can be further divided into subgroups. For example, the suffix *-ess* is a gender-marking suffix indicating a female being or an occupation, e.g., *actress, heiress* and belongs to the group of

gender-marking suffixes. Another example can be diminutive suffixes, like -*ette* (e.g., *cigarette*) or -*ie* (e.g., *doggie*).

- Similarly, prefixes can be divided according to how their change the word's meaning into the following groups:
-
- *supportive and opposing* – producing supportive meaning (e.g., *pro*-) or denoting opposition (e.g., *anti*-)
- *reversative* – indicating the act of undoing and *deprivative* – indicating removing something (e.g., *de-, dis-, un-)*
- *negative* – assigning negative meaning (e.g., *a-, in/il/im/ir-, non*-)
- *prefixes of location* – assigning the meaning of location to the stem (e.g.,*fore-, over-, in*-)
- *size prefixes* – aggregating the meaning of a stime with a size concept. They can be augmentative (e.g., *hyper*-, *super*-, *macro*-) or diminuitive (e.g., *micro-, mini-, under*-).
- *temporal prefixes* – assigning the meaning of time-relatedness to the stem (e.g., *ex-, mid-, neo*-)
- *professional status prefixes* – indicating status or position in a hierarchy (e.g., *arch*, *vice*-)
- *prefixes of quantification* – aggregating the meaning of a stem with a count concept (e.g., *uni-, bi-, poly*-).

Prefixes and suffixes in English are bound morphemes as they cannot normally stand alone and are typically attached to another form.

Although infixes not that common in standard English, they do appear in more colloquial language. For example, expletive infixation is a process of inserting an expletive or profanity, most commonly an adjective, into a word, generally to achieve intensification (McCarthy 1982). The examples of expletive infixation are:

(52) abso-fuckin'-lutely

(53)fan-bloody-tastic

Even if it is technically possible to modify the placement of the infix in (52) and (53), one would not hear:

(54) *ab-fuckin'-solutely*
(55) *fanta-bloody-stic*

It is, as McCarthy (1982) notices, because expletive infixes tend to be placed preceding a stressed syllable of a word, which in the case (53) is the third syllable and in the case (52) is the second syllable.

It is noteworthy that new affixes do not arise very often. However, some words that had started as being part of a portmanteau became so widely used that are considered by some as productive affixes. The examples include -*gate*, as in, e.g., *Watergate, Celebgate*, *exit*, as in, e.g., *Megxit* and *Brexit*, or *man-* in gendered neologisms, such as *mansplaining,* or even -*splaining*, which has made its way from *mansplaining* and discussion on gender relations to other fields of debate (e.g., *whitesplaining*, *ablesplaining*). (more on -*gate* and -*exit* in Section 2.2.4.; more on *mansplaining* and *splaining* in Section 5.3.)

2.2.2. Conversion

Conversion, also known as *zero derivation*, is the derivation of a new word on the basis of the existing one, without introducing any overt changes. Examples of conversion are pairs of words that are derivationally related and are identical in the phonetic realisation, e.g.:

(56)the water (n.) – to water (v.)
(57)to guess (v.) – a guess (n.)
(58)open (adj.) – to open (v.)
(59)rich (adj.) – the rich (n.)

Different types of conversion can be differentiated, for example (56) noun to verb conversion, (57) verb to noun conversion, (58) adjective to verb conversion, (59) adjective to noun conversion. Other types of conversion, although less common, exist as well.

One of the issues regarding the analysis and description of words derived through conversion is the directionality of conversion. To determine which word is base and which is derived, one can look at the history of the language and verify which word appeared first. Another way to establish the direction of conversion is looking at semantic complexity. For example, the noun *rich* can be defined as “rich people (as a class)’ – in this case the noun is semantically more complex than the adjective *rich* and the interpretation of the noun depends on the adjective.

2.2.3. Compounding

Compounding (or *composition*) is a word-formation process of coining new words through combining two or more roots or stems. This combining process is common in the English language. Some examples of compounds are nouns *blackboard*, *textbook, wallpaper* and adjectives *low-paid* or *fast-food*.

A compound is regarded *compositional* when the meaning of the compound is determined by the meanings of its parts. Analogically, a *non-compositional compound* (also known as a *non-idiomatic compound*) is the compound in which the sum of the meanings of compositional elements does not result in the meaning of the compound. In this case, the meaning of the compound is rendered by the last element, for example *classroom* or *evening-gown* (Bejan 2017, p. 40).

It is not unusual for compounds that one of the components has changed its meaning – the aforementioned *blackboard* is neither a board nor black, *football* is a name of a game, and a *lady-killer* is not literally a killer. Moreover, the meaning of some compounds cannot be inferred from the meaning of its components, e.g., *ladybird* and *bluebottle* denote insects and not a bird or a bottle. The meaning of compounds is idiomatic; therefore, they are called *idiomatic compounds*.

Compound creation follows different patterns. They can be noun-centred, adjective-centred or verb-centred. The most frequent patterns of compound creation of nouns include: noun + noun (e.g., *ashtray*, *bedtime*), adjective + noun (e.g. *grandfather, small talk*, *software*), verb + noun (e.g. *driveway, swimsuit*).

2.2.4. Blending

Blending is another combination of two separate forms to produce a new term. It is sometimes viewed as a subtype of compounding (Beliaeva 2019). These two morphological processes differ in that in blending usually only the fragments of words are used, and not entire words, as it is in the case of compounding. Blends are also called *telescope words* or *portmanteau words*. A blended compound may consist of a whole word and a splinter (a fragment of a word), e.g., the blend *workaholic* includes the word *work* and a splinter from the word *alcoholic*, or of two splinters, e.g. the blend *brunch* consists of two splinters from the words *breakfast* and *lunch*.

It is safe to assume that if the speaker uses a new word, he or she does it with the intention for it to be understood by the hearer. Studies show that some blends are easier to recognise than others – in the order from most easy to identify to the hardest: word + splinter, splinter + word, two splinters, complete overlap, embedded splinter (Lehrer 1996).

In the blends like *brunch* (*breakfast* + *lunch*), *Spanglish* (*Spanish* + *English*) or *smog* (*smoke* + *fog*) the meaning denotes an entity that shares the properties of the referents of both elements – *brunch* is at the same time breakfast and lunch and *smog* is at the same time *smoke* and *fog*. Additionally, it is possible for a frequently used splinter to become a combining form. Combining forms can be at a final position, like *-holic*, which refers to abnormal desire or dependency, at an initial position, like *-gate*, which is often used to refer to a political scandal, or *-thon*, which denotes a long-lasting event.

Plag (2003, p. 123) describes in most general terms the mechanism of blending as follows:

AB+CD = AD

What it means is that blending involves combining parts of two source words so that the beginning of the first one is conjoined with the ending of the second one. However, the types of combinations can be different. For example, the beginning of one source word can be chained with the ending of another (e.g., *tigon* = *tiger* + *lion*), but the source words can also overlap in the place where they are merged together (e.g. *motel* = *motor* + *hotel*). Sometimes the source words overlap in a way that one of the words in entirely preserved (e.g., *jumbrella* = *jumbo* + *umbrella*) or even both of them are fully preserved (*alcoholiday* = *alcohol* + *holiday*). There are also cases where one word replaces a fragment of another word in its middle – these are called *infixed blends* (Bauer 1983). In point of fact, the phonetical and graphical similarity of words is sometimes a factor for choosing words for blending.

Certain blends are created through analogy. The suffix -*gate* derives from the *Watergate scandal* – a major political scandal in the United States involving the administration of the President Nixon. -*Gate* has become a productive suffix through rebracketing and backformation and is now blended with a noun to suggest the existence of a far-reaching scandal, e.g., *Bridgegate* (the Fort Lee lane closure scandal) or *Celebgate* (a scandal in 2014 involving leaking of private pictures of American celebrities, many of which contained nudity). Another example of blending through analogy is the portmanteau *Megxit* (*Meghan* + *exit*) coined by the British media, a phrase used to describe the decision made by Prince Harry and his wife Meghan to quit their royal duties. Although *Megxit* is widely considered to be a misogynistic term that strengthens the stereotype of a deceptive woman who temps a man away from his rightful duty, it is an interesting material for linguistic discussion. *Megxit* is a play on one of the most popular portmanteau in Great Britain as for the second decade of the 21th century, namely *Brexit* (*Britain* + *exit*), which in turn was inspired by the word *Grexit* – the term used for Greece's possible exit from the eurozone.

Interestingly, the aforementioned examples could be seen from another perspective, not as blends but as created through affixation. Thus, -*gate* and -*exit* are functioning as two productive suffixes in English. Some lexical morphemes can turn, through grammaticalization, into derivational morphemes, e.g. the morpheme -*able*.

> The well-known example of the new suffix -gate in English is a case in point. This suffix originated from the phrase Watergate affair (or scandal or the like), referring to the events in the aftermath of a burglary at the Watergate apartment complex that brought down the Nixon administration in the early 1970s, through a truncation of the phrase to Watergate (e.g. Nixon resigned because of Watergate) and a reanalysis in which the -gate part was treated as a suffix and not the compound member it originally was in the place-name Watergate. It then spread, giving coinages such as Irangate (for a scandal in the 1980s involving selling arms to Iran), Goobergate (for a scandal alleged in 1979 to have involved then-President Carter's peanut warehouse), and numerous others. (Joseph 2017)

From this perspective, one could also consider *man-* in gendered neologisms such as *mansplaining*, *manterrupting*, or *manspreading* as a productive prefix.

2.2.5. Clipping and hypocorisms

Clipping, also known as *contraction* or *shortening*, is a word-building process in which the word form is reduced in size. It involves deleting a part of an existing word, which is known as a *prototype* or *original*, with the aim of obtaining a phonologically shorter sequence, called a *clipped form* (or the *residue*). (The process of shortening linguistic forms can also be seen in blending, discussed in the previous Section 2.2.4.).

Clippings are divided into three types: *aphaeresis*, *syncope* and *apocope*. Aphaeresis, also known as *fore-clipping*, is the loss of initial syllable, e.g., *airplane* becomes *plane.* Syncope, or *medial clipping*, is the loss of syllable in the middle. This process, however, is considered to be unproductive today. Lastly, apocope, or *back-clipping*, is the loss of the last syllable. In contrast to syncope, apocope seems to be a very productive word-building process today, e.g., *advertisement* becomes *ad, bicycle* becomes *bike*, *condominium* becomes *condo.* Clippings can also be *embellished* by for example adding inflections or suffixes to clipped words.

A special form of clipping is *ellipsis*, which is the omission of the head in an existing compound, e.g., *final examinations* become *finals*. Ellipsis of the head can also go together with back-clipping of the modifier, e.g., *graduate student* becomes *grad*. When coining new words, word-building processes can be combined. For example, the word *grandmother* can become *granny* by applying ellipsis, back-clipping and suffixation.

Another type of reduced words are *hypocorisms*, which are formed from longer words reduced to a single syllable through backclipping then suffixing *–(e)y* or *-ie*. Hypocorisms are often created as terms of endearment and are equated with *pet names*. Therefore, Michael can be called *Mikey*. Not all hypocorisms, however, have a function of expressing affection. The well-known examples of hypocorisms include *telly* from *television*, *Aussie* from *Australian*, *barbie* from *barbecue*. The wide use of clippings and diminutives is considered one of the distinctive features of the Australian variety of English (Simspon 2014). One kind of hypocorisms, characteristic for Australia, is adding an *-o* suffix to a backclipped noun, e.g., *arvo* ("afternoon") or *nasho* ("national service"). Hypocorisms have strong social function, for example they can be used to mark status in a superior-to-subordinate interactive context, both to express affection, warmth and playfulness or to express disrespect, unusual familiarity with the referent or an unusual friendliness on the part of the speaker. It is important to remember that although hypocorisms are synonymous with the standard words from which they derive, they are generally excluded from formal discourse.

A type of reduction worth mentioning when discussing clippings is *backformation*. This process includes words that have been coined through reduction of a word of one type in order to form a word of another type. It happens when one word, commonly it is a noun, enters a language and then a need arises to create other parts of speech, like a verb. For example, the verb *televise* is a backformed verb from the noun *television*, the verb *enthuse* from the noun *enthusiasm* or the verb *surveil* from the noun *surveillance*. Backformation often follows the patterns that are observable in English and applies them to yet non-existing roots. In legal circles, a well-known example is the word *choate* that had been backformed from *inchoate*.[5]

2.2.6. Acronyms and related abbreviations

Abbreviations are similar to blends in nature in that they both are fusions of parts of different words – both processes involve loss of material (in contrast to affixation during which material is added). The difference though is that it is orthography and not prosodic categories that plays a prominent role.

Most commonly, abbreviations are formed by combining initial letters of multiword sequence to create a new word, for example:

(60)MA – for Master of Arts
(61)EU – European Union
(62)FAQ – frequently asked questions

Abbreviations can also be a combination of initial and non-initial letters, e.g.:

(63)MSc – Master of Science

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[5] The history of this word is described by, e.g., Zimmer (2009).

(64)Inc. – Incorporated

(65)kHz - kilohertz

The spelling and pronunciation of abbreviations reveals an interesting view on the formal properties of the words. For example, the well-known abbreviation of "as soon as possible" can appear in many forms – it can be spelled as ASAP, a.s.a.p. or asap. The abbreviation ASAP can be read as individual letters or as a regular word; a.s.a.p. is usually read as individual letters or the abbreviated words are pronounced; asap is usually read as individual word.

Abbreviations can be divided into two groups according to their orthographic and phonological properties. The spelling of acronyms may differ between capital (e.g., *USA*) and lower case letters (e.g., *e.g.*). Using capital letters is the norm as it facilitates making a connection between the acronym and its base word. Nonetheless, some words that historically originated as acronyms are not spelled with capital letters. In these cases, many speakers do not associate these forms to the words they originally abbreviated, as it is with *radar*. Additionally, they can be pronounced either by naming each individual letter (as in *USA*) or by applying regular reading rules (as in *NATO*). The former are known as *initialisms* and the latter are classified as *acronyms.* The classification with examples is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Spelling and pronunciation of different abbreviations

Abbreviation	Spelling	Pronunciation
USA	capitals	as initialism
NATO	capitals	as acronym
e.g.	lower case letters	as initialism
radar	lower case letters	as acronym

As acronyms are pronounced like regular words, they conform to the phonological patterns of English. In consequence, not all abbreviations are likely to become acronyms. On the other hand, some abbreviations are intentionally created in a way that they are pronounceable, i.e., can become acronyms. At times these formed acronyms are homophonous to existing words. This procedure is often used for marketing or publicity reasons, with special layer of meaning added when the homonymous word carries a meaning that is intended to be associated with the referent of the acronym. The example of this can be the acronym START standing for "Strategic Arms Reduction Talks", which as Plag explains

> was coined not only as a word to refer to an envisioned disarmament treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, but it was presumably also coined to evoke the idea that the American side had the intention to make a new, serious effort in disarmament talks with the Soviet Union at a time when many people doubted the willingness of the U.S. government to seriously want disarmament. Incidentally, the START program replaced an earlier, unsuccessful disarmament effort named SALT (*Strategic Arms Limitation Talks*). (Plag 2003, p. 164)

The assumption that underlies such strategic creation of abbreviations is that the name used for a phenomenon influences the language users' view on that phenomenon (Plag 2003), which does not only concern abbreviations but all names that are given to certain phenomena.

2.2.7. Coinage

There are also cases, although not very commonly in English, of a completely new term being coined, without using other word formation processes. In literature, this process is most often referred to as *coinage*. Bejan (2017) also refers to it as *word manufacture*. Most typically, these words stem from trade names for commercial products that, when their popularity grows, become general terms for any version of that product – in this case usually not capitalised (Yule 2014). Some examples are *aspirin*, *zipper*, *vaseline*, *granola*, *teflon*, *kleenex* or *xerox*. An example of a coinage that entered the English language due to the influence of information technology is the word *google* (more on the influence of information technology on language in Section 4.2.1.).

It is worth-mentioning that the term *coinage* is often used in common parlance to refer to a newly created word regardless of the word-formation processes involved.

2.2.8. Eponymy

Another group of words that do not involve "standard" processes of word creation are *eponyms* – new words that stem from the name of a person, an imaginary or mythological creatures or a place (Bejan 2017). Bejan lists several examples of eponyms, which are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Examples of eponyms with their origins (based on Bejan 2017, p. 71-72)

Eponym	**Origin**
Eponyms based on names of real people	
cardigan	19th century Earl of Cardigan, a style of waistcoat that he favoured
diesel	Rudolf Diesel, German mechanical engineer, inventor of the the internal combustion engine that uses crude oil in the 1890s
leotard	Jules Leotard, French acrobat, who in the late 1800s, often performed in a skin-tight one-piece body suit
mesmerize	Franz Anton Mesmer, a German physician of the late 1700s, famous for his theory of animal magnetism
nicotine	Jacques Nicot introduced tobacco in France in 1560
sandwich	18th century the Earl of Sandwich, British nobleman, who brought bread and meat together to the gambling table
Eponyms based on names of mythological characters	
atlas	Atlas, a Greek god
morphine	Morpheus, the Greek god of sleep and of dreams
Eponyms based on geographical names	
jeans	from the Italian city of Genoa, where the cloth was first made
cheddar	a village in Somerset where cheese was produced

Eponyms are widely spread in scientific language since new inventions or discoveries are often named after their inventors or discoverers, e.g., names for newly discovered elements in the field of chemistry, units in physics or names of diseases and connected with them procedures, symptoms or techniques in medicine. Also many types of produce are named after the places where it was produced, e.g., wines: *burgundy*, *champagne*, *sherry*, *port* or cheese: *cheddar*, *gouda*. The political scandal of the break-in at the

Watergate Office Building was further known as *Watergate* (which has led to *-gate* becoming a suffix to names for political scandals since). The most productive word-formation processes that are applied in the creation of eponyms are conversion, suffixation and composition (Bejan 2017).

Language is an open system to which new elements can be added. One of language's features is its productivity – language users can create and understand novel utterances but also new lexical items (see Hockett 1958). As it has been discussed in this section, new words most often are created following certain patterns, or word formation processes. The next section focuses on new linguistic creations, in linguistics known as *neologisms*.

2.3. Neologisms

New words are constantly entering language. It is estimated that almost 800 neologisms are added to the working vocabulary of the English language every year (Bejan 2017). The term used for newly coined words is *neologism*. Following Guilbert (1975), in this dissertation *neologism* is understood as the term referring to the production of words, either with the appearance of a new signifier or a new meaning for an existing lexical item, or to the linguistic component that studies the creation of these items. Guilbert (1975) distinguishes between internal neologisms, created using the linguistic resources within the language and external neologisms (or loans) borrowed from other languages (loans are discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.).

There exists another term used by linguists to refer to newly created words, namely *nonce formation*. The definition that is followed in this dissertation is that a *nonce formation* or a *nonce word* is a word which is created by a speaker for a particular situation and used for the first time (Bauer 1983). It can be said that all neologisms started as nonce words. Neologisms are created through various word-forming processes, such as suffixation, compounding, blending, clipping, or combinations of these (see Section 2.2.).

There are various reasons for introducing new words. One of the reasons for coining new words is a need for naming new things, concepts and processes, for example due to a technological development (see Section 4.2.) or a change in social attitudes (see Section 3.3.). As Bejan points out "in printing and media very often a new concept arrives on the scene and it is necessary to create a new word or phrase with which to express it"

(Bejan 2017, p. 93). The example of such words can be *webcam*, *spamming*, *FAQ*. Another area where a need for new names often arises finance (Bielenia-Grajewska 2009).

Some new words, however, have not been coined out of a need for a name for a new concept but as a playful comment on a phenomenon, e.g., *nannycam*, which refers to a hidden camera with which you can spy on your nanny while she stays with your child. Other words seem to be created merely for entertainment, like *evangineer* or *chatterati*.

Another important reason can be a tendency to seek shorter, more efficient, forms, for that reason some words are clipped, or their acronyms are used. However, it seems that most new blends and other popular neologisms do not increase efficiency – sometimes an individual needs to put more effort into interpreting and processing many new words, even if they are shorter than their whole-compound source words (Lehrer 2003). Finally, some words are created not to name new things, concepts or processes but to draw attention to already existing ones, e.g., *sexual harassment* (Spender 1980) – naming the problem helped in identifying and fighting it, both in a legal way and through educating people about it. Before that, people who experienced sexual harassment had lacked linguistic or conceptual resources and had not been able to identify or report the issue (see Section 3.3. for a more detailed account).

When using a new (unknown to the hearer) word purposefully, the speaker must have some perlocutionary intent (Lehrer 2003). Lehrer (2003) posits that the perlocutionary intentions of the speaker include using a new word for attracting the hearer's attention. It can prove especially useful in advertisements or press articles, where the authors compete for the reader's attention. Additionally, neologisms are memorable. The idea behind using a new word is that the hearer must be capable of deciphering the meaning behind a linguistic blend or an acronym. Lehrer argues that the successful interpretation of the meaning leads to the hearer's positive attitude towards the neologism's creator and facilitates creating a social bond between the interlocutors (Lehrer 2003). Therefore, when creating a new word, the speaker must bear in mind that it should be understood quickly and easily, "like jokes, if the point must be explained, the new word is unsuccessful" (Lehrer 2003, p. 372).

2.4. Loanwords

Loanwords, also known as *borrowings*, are words that enter one language, called *borrowing language*, from a foreign language, referred to as *source language* or *donor language*. Words that are borrowed most often are nouns (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 1987). A word can be borrowed directly from one language to another, such as it was with the English word *omlette* that comes from the French word *omlette*. Words can also be borrowed indirectly, when it is passed from one language to another, like Turkish *kahveh* that entered Arabic as *kahva*, from where it entered Dutch as *koffie* and finally English as *coffee* (Bejan 2017, p. 84). As the examples show, a word borrowed indirectly has higher chances of being different from its source word. The word can change its phonemic shape, spelling, paradigm or even meaning that is adjusted to the linguistic standard of the borrowing language and the reality in which the language is used (see e.g., Niepytalska-Osiecka 2014).

Table 3. Examples of loanwords in the English language (based on Yule 2014, p. 52)

Loanword	Origin language
dope	Dutch
jewel	French
glitzy	Yiddish
lilac	Persian
piano	Italian
pretzel	German
ski	Norwegian
sofa	Arabic
tattoo	Tahitian
tycoon	Japanese
yogurt	Turkish
zebra	Bantu

Borrowings happen because of cultural contact between two language communities. When such contact happens, the linguistic exchange can go in both directions between the two languages. However, it is rarely symmetrical, which means that usually more words go from one language to the other. This is connected to the difference in power, prestige and/or wealth between the source language community and the borrowing language community, with the former having some advantage in this aspect over the latter. Bejan (2017) gives an example of the Germanic tribes that adopted numerous loanwords from Latin in the first few centuries A.D., which was due to trading products with the Romans. On the other side, few Germanic words entered Latin at that point.

The process of borrowing a word starts generally when some speakers of the borrowing language use the word from the source language in everyday situations. With time, more and more speakers are becoming familiar with the word and in consequence it is *conventionalized.* Conventionalization is a gradual process in which the newly borrowed word is gradually accommodated to the sound and the inflections of the borrowing language, when speakers who do not know the source language adopt the loanword to their native language. When the process in complete, speakers of the borrowing language do not perceive the word as foreign at all (Durkin 2009). Some examples of English words that were once borrowings from other languages are *city* (Latin borrowing), *anger*, *cake*, *husband* (Scandinavian borrowings), *art*, *dance*, *army* (French borrowings) or more recent ones as *banana* (from African languages via Portuguese), *shampoo* (from Hindi) or *pizza* (from Italian) (see Bejan 2017, p. 85-90 for more examples).

Loaning words is not a recent phenomenon, however, nowadays, with English being the language of the many influential areas such as Internet, business and Hollywood, it seems that the English language has been playing a pivotal role in influencing other languages. English has become the source language for many other languages even if there is no direct contact between the representatives of two languages – everything thanks to globalisation, global export of goods and the Internet. The recent studies on relatively new (from the end of 20th century until today) English borrowings shows that it is a prolific field for linguistic discussion (see e.g., Dunaj & Mycawka 2017, Mańczak-Wohlfeld 1993, 1995, 2006, Niepytalska-Osiecka 2014 for English borrowings in Polish). Their popularity among language users notwithstanding, loanwords face criticism from linguistic purists (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2006).

Loan-translation, also known as *calque*, is a particular type of borrowing in which the elements of an expression are directly translated in the borrowing language (Yule 2014). One of the examples of calque is *sky-scraper*, which has been borrowed by many languages, e.g. the Polish term *drapacz chmur* and the Dutch term *wolkenkrabber* literally translate to *cloud scratcher*, or the French term *grate-ciel* (scrape-sky). Sometimes though English words enter one language as a borrowing (Spanish *perros calientes* ('dogs hot'), Chinese *nan pengyu* ('male friend') and other as calques (Polish *hot dog*, Japanese *boyifurendo* ('boyfriend')) (Yule 2014).

One of the key criteria for the assessment of loanwords is whether a word gave a name to a phenomenon or an object that had not yet been named in the borrowing language (Dunaj & Mycawka 2017). Dunaj and Mycawka (2017) claim that many borrowings from such spheres as economy, business, music, cuisine or a dynamic sphere of technology are main domains in which the introduction of loanwords is explicable and needed. On the other hand, the linguists point to many instances in which speakers use English words even when the counterparts for these words already exist in their native language. These loans are deemed as unneeded and yet often used. It happens because of their shorter form, which is another criterium for the spread of loanwords – the economy of exchanges (Dunaj & Mycawka 2017).

2.5. Morphology and word formation: concluding remarks

A human language is an evolving system in which its users create new words. The creation of most new words happens productively rather than by coinage – language speakers follow the already existing patterns in the language instead of inventing words merely by putting sounds together. There are various patterns, or word-formation processes, to create new words, e.g., affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, abbreviation or conversion.

Newly created words are called neologisms. New words are created for various reasons, for example to name a new thing or concept or to increase efficiency of communication. Not all reasons, however, are purely practical – some new words are created just for entertainment or as a joke and can create a social bond between interlocutors. Finally, some words are created with a purpose of emphasis. For example, by giving a concept a name, we mark its presence in social consciousness. Neologisms are also attractive in prepared speeches or advertisement because an unknown word attracts the hearer's or reader's attention

New words do not have to necessarily be created; they can also be borrowed from another language. Borrowings usually are adapted to the sound and inflections of the borrowing language. In fact, gendered neologisms often enter other languages as borrowings. When the speakers of the borrowing language become familiar with the word, it becomes conventionalized, and the speakers do not perceive it as foreign anymore.

Although the classification of word-formation processes appears to be clear-cut, in many cases the creation of a word is a result of a combination of some processes, as it sometimes is in the case of the neologisms that are the focus of this dissertation.

Chapter 3: Feminism, language and linguistic change

Feminist approach to language has carved its place in linguistic studies. The research within the area of gender and language includes both differences in language use between men and women and the problems of gender representation in language, which is intrinsically connected with society treats representatives of each gender. "On the simple assumption that people's attitudes will be affected by something they see repeatedly, feminists exposed, and tried to eliminate, negative and stereotypical portrayals of women" (Cameron 1985, p. 4).

This chapter is dedicated to feminist research on language with a special focus on the role of language in the striving for achieving gender equality. It presents an overview of the reasons why feminist scholars became interested in linguistic studies, considering both the difference and the dominance approach. It highlights the problem of sexist language and how it is used to spread and maintain gender stereotypes. It also discusses the topic of gender stereotypes in jokes and regarding linguistic behaviours.

Next, the focus is shifted towards language change in the context of feminist theory. The subchapters discuss the history of the introduction of neologisms describing women's reality, gender markedness of language and how some words change their meaning due to gender stereotypes, gender-fair language strategies that aim at eliminating sexism from language and studies regarding the attitude of both sexes towards lexical innovation.

3.1. Gender and language: an introduction

The work of Robin Lakoff's "Language and woman's place"[6] caused quite a stir when published in 1972. In the article, Lakoff argued that women speak differently from men and that the difference stems from their subordinate position in society. Women's speech, powerless, trivial, tentative, places them as unqualified for positions of power and authority. Therefore, in Lakoff's view, language is a tool of oppression imposed by societal norms and by consequence, as the title of the article suggests, keeps women in "their place". The debate on Lakoff's work led to the development of two paradigms in feminist studies:

- the difference approach that claims that there are fundamental differences in men's and women's relation to the language and, therefore, men's and women's way of communication are different (e.g., Tannen 1990)
- the dominance approach that has in its centre the claim that women and men speak differently because of male dominance over women (e.g., Spender 1980, Cameron 1985, 2007)

Feminist scholars acknowledge the role that language plays in achieving social change. For a couple of decades now there has been a widespread protest against what is considered to be a constant and harmful misinterpretation of the world by sexist language, in which "women are portrayed as second-class citizens, neither seen nor heard, eternal sex objects and personifications of evil" (Cameron 1985, p. 128). This view is supported by the radical feminist theorists who believe that the entire linguistic system is controlled by men and no neutrality in this system could be achieved (Cameron 1985). Radical feminist linguistic theories hold that language determines the way in which people think and perceive the reality. In the light of these theories, language, as any other resource in the patriarchal system, is controlled by men and this fact places women at disadvantage as the users of the *male* language that falsifies women's experience and perceptions (Cameron 1985). The scholars most often associated with relativist, or even determinist ideas are Sapir and Whorf (see Sapir 1921, Whorf 1956). In fact, so strong is the association that the idea of language determining our worldview has been often referred to in linguistics as the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis*.

Differences between languages require from their users that they pay attention to different aspects of the world if they want to communicate successfully following the norms of the language they use (Sapir 1921). What Sapir means by this is that, for example, an English speaker who utters a sentence (60)

(60) Mary went out with a friend.

is not required to give information on and thus pay attention to the sex of the friend with whom Mary went out, whereas if the sentence was uttered in, for example French or Polish, this information would have to be included in the utterance and therefore present in the speaker's awareness.

The differences in what is required from speakers of different languages inspired researchers to ask a question whether language changes the way its users think about the world. Even if the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language limits the cognitive abilities of an individual has been rejected by most of contemporary scientists, it has incited other reflexions on whether language shapes thought, and if so, in what way? Even if there are studies which reject the claim, there are many which support it (Boroditsky, Schmidt & Philips 2003). As Boroditsky, Schmidt and Philips (2003) notice, the difficulty in answering the question whether language shapes thought lies in the imprecision of the question. They refer to the work of Slobin (1996), who rephrased the problem by replacing *language* and *thought* with *speaking*, *thinking* and *thinking for speaking*, which offered a distinction between linguistic and nonlinguistic thought (Boroditsky, Schmidt & Philips 2003). What Slobin (1996) refers to as *thinking for speaking* are cognitive processes of e.g., the selection of words, accessing them, and applying the words in grammatically correct and planned speech. Thus, the aforementioned different aspects of the world that need to be taken into consideration when speaking are in this view classified as thinking for speaking.

The acceptance of the concept of thinking for speaking leads to another question: do the habits acquired in thinking for speaking influence the way people think when they do not speak and how they perceive the world? And if yes, in what way then (Boroditsky, Schmidt & Philips 2003)? These are the questions that researchers have been trying to answer. Some researchers (e.g., Heider 1972, Lucy & Shweder 1979) do this on the example of colours. Their research has proven that colour memory is similar among users of different languages with varied colour terminology. Yet, the research of Boroditsky (1999, 2001) concerning conceptualisation of more abstract domain, namely time, has shown significant differences in thought between English and Mandarin speakers.

The question asked by Borodistky, Schmidt and Philips (2003) is "why would there be such strong evidence for universality in colour perception, but quite the opposite for thinking about time?" (Borodistky, Schmidt and Philips 2003, p. 63). The answer given is that language possibly influences more strongly abstract domains than the ones connected with sensory experience (Borodistky, Schmidt and Philips 2003).

The same researchers have also investigated the influence of grammatical gender on the way people perceive inanimate objects, which they see as “an extreme point along this concrete-abstract continuum” (Borodistky, Schmidt and Philips 2003, p. 63). The research has led them to conclusion that speaking a language with grammatical gender that requires to talk about inanimate objects as if they had a gender influences speaker’s mental representation of objects.

Although one may disagree with the statement that language determines thought, it does seem right to notice that problems with specific terms can render it more difficult for women to communicate about essential elements of their lives, and probably also more difficult to reflect upon these elements (Hornsby 1995).

3.2. Gender and linguistic behaviours

The structure of a word, which is created through the word-formation process of blending of the words *man* and *explain*, together with its origins, may suggest gender-dependence. The tendency of ascribing certain behaviours, both non-linguistic and linguistic, to one of the two genders is not a new concept. The starting point to the study of gender in the linguistic context was indeed the exploration of differences between men and women.

3.2.1. Biologically motivated differences

Some differences between gender are biologically motivated. One of them is voice pitch. Women tend to have higher pitched voices than men due to hormonal differences – men’s voices are in average deeper because of the longer and thicker vocal cords due to the surge of testosterone released during puberty (Abitbol, Abitbol, Abitbol 1999). Studies show that the difference in pitch between female and male voices is generally greater than could be explained by physiology alone, which leads to a conclusion that there are other reasons why people modify their voices (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams. 2002).

People can, to some extent, raise and lower their voice pitch. They can decide to do this for a number of reasons. Some studies indicate that because men find higher-pitched women’s voices more appealing, women speak with higher pitch when they talk to certain men to attract preferred mates (Fraccaro et al. 2011). Nonetheless, the fact that higher pitch seems to be associated with femininity is used not only in situations of attracting potential partners. For example, the modification of the pitch were one of the ways of achieving a more assertive image (therefore more masculine, as these two qualities are culturally seen as closely associated) for Margaret Thatcher, “who in 1979 became Britain’s first woman prime minister, was obliged shortly thereafter to submit to a linguistic ‘makeover’, lowering her voice-pitch by almost half the normal range, flattening out her prosodic contours and slowing her delivery to sound more authoritative” (Cameron 2005, p. 496). In fact, female leaders with lower-pitched voices are more likely to be elected by both men and women than female leaders with higher-pitched voices (Anderson and Klofstad 2012)[7].

Another linguistic difference between male and female gender that scientist have been supporting is the girls’ superior aptitude for language learning. This has been attributed to biology, to be more precise, to differences in brain activity of males and females – girls are said to show significantly greater activation in language areas of the brain than boys (Burman, Bitan, Booth 2008). These sex-related differences are often explained by different roles each of the sexes have had in social groups during evolution. Adani and Cepanec explain reasons for these differences:

> Generally, female primates were typically engaged in child raising, food gathering, and domestic tool construction, whereas men tended to hunt and kill. It is believed that “women’s work” contributed to the functional evolution of speech areas, while “men’s work” contributed to male visual-spatial superiority. (Adani and Cepanec 2019, p. 141)

The researchers also agree that it is sex hormones that cause differences, for example, 4-week-olds girls and boys with lower testosterone levels showed phonological discrimination effect while boys with high testosterone levels did not (Friederici et al. as cited in Adani and Cepanec 2019).

One of the matters on which researchers do not agree is whether women really are more talkative than men and whether it is caused by biological factors. For example, Brizendine (2006) argues that women talk more than men – with an average of 20,000 words per day for women and nearly three times lover count, 7,000 words per day, for

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[7] Interestingly, while voice pitch matters to both men and women when selecting female leaders, the results of the same study also suggest that while men prefer male candidates with lower pitched voices, women did not discriminate between the pitch of male voices.

men, and explains these discrepancies by citing hormonal differences. Researchers obtain strikingly different results on that. Mehl et al. (2007), on the other hand, obtained strikingly different results – they have counted that both men and women utter around 16,000 words per day.

There are more differences between men and women that have been cited in literature on gender and language. Those differences spur an ongoing debate on whether they really are facts and not stereotypes/myths and if so, whether they are motivated by nature or by nurture. The following section dives deeper into the topic of communicative behaviours of women compared to that of men and the link of those patterns of behaviour to expectations and roles assigned to each gender by society.

3.2.2. Communication-related patterns of linguistic conduct

In 1972, Lakoff coined the notion of *women's language*, when she compared language use between men and women and presented her conclusion that women's language possesses a set of characteristics, such as:

- hypercorrect grammar
- extended vocabulary (e.g., using various adjectives, such as *charming*, *adorable*, *fantastic*, *gorgeous*)
- the knowledge concerning *typical woman's work* (e.g., references to sewing, use of precise colour terms)
- avoidance of swear words and other taboo forms
- tendency to personalise through the use of first person pronouns, inclusive *we*, possessives (e.g., *We need to hurry* instead of *You need to be quick*)
- over-hesitancy, including pausing, stuttering and uncompleted sentences
- using a higher number of *expressives* (i.e., phrases related to emotion and inner feelings)
- using a higher number of backchannel utterances (e.g., *oh*, *wow*) that is motivated by superpoliteness
- using a higher number of tag questions
- non-interruption in conversation

- using rising intonation pattern when answering questions

These can be classified as patterns of linguistic performance of femininity. Such linguistic behaviours can be linked to characteristics typically associated with femininity, e.g., the vast range of adjectives is supposed to show that women are more sensitive to the environment and more likely to express their emotions, and avoiding expletives is a way to achieve the impression of being gentle and docile.

Lakoff (1972) suggests that many elements of *feminine* language are in fact symbolic expressions of deference or powerlessness and non-assertiveness. For example, rising intonation, the use of hedges or inclusive *we* instead of the second person pronoun show lack of confidence and avoidance of confrontation. Lakoff believes that women find themselves in a double-bind when they have to face a choice — to appear unfeminine or not to express themselves decisively and authoritatively.

Tannen also argues the point that women speak differently than men (see Tannen 1990, 2006). For example, she claims that women are more inclined to share their problems and seek empathy in conversation, whereas men tend to offer solution when faced with someone's problem (Tannen 2006). For Tannen (1990) men and women behave so differently that male-female conversations can be considered as cross-cultural communication, arguing that as children we often grow up in sex-separate groups within which different styles of speaking are used — just as being brought up in two different cultures. Some researchers (e.g., Baron-Cohen 2003) go even further claiming that the differences in communication between men and women stem from biological differences between male and female brain.

These views are challenged by Cameron (2007) who posits that the idea of men and women differing fundamentally in the way they use language to communicate is a myth. She argues that when analysing the speech of men and women, one needs to take into consideration more than just their sex, for example social position of interlocutors, setting, subject of a conversation and its purpose. "The Myth of Mars and Venus", as she calls the proposition that men and women speak differently has its roots in stereotypes rather than actual facts and there is no reason to believe that in the real world, people conform to these. Along similar lines, Robson and Stockwell argue that

> [t]hough (…) recorded differences seem to correspond directly with the dimension of social power rather than gender, the fact that women often find themselves in socio-economically less powerful situations can explain their tendency to use such patterns (and, of course, vice versa). Nevertheless, repeated use of these features has led to an identification that there are such things as *genderlects* (Robson and Stockwell 2005, p. 2).

The subject of stereotypes, power relation and language is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Nonetheless, some researchers find differences in the language use between the two genders. Studies indicate that, for example, women are more prone to using new words and spellings (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003, Cañete-González 2017) and more flexible in their lexical choices adapting to the changing requirements of readers and assumed goals (Łyda & Warchał 2010).

Most feminist scholars advocate the point that social gender should be disconnected from biological sex (e.g. Butler 1990, 1993, Ochs 1992), following the famous claim of Simone de Beauvoir (2011 [1949], p. 330) that "[o]ne is not born, but becomes, woman", in other words, that femininity does not arise from differences in biology, psychology or intellect but is a construction of civilization, a reflection not of differences between men and women, but of differences in their circumstances, like, for example, their upbringing. According to Ochs (1992), there is a small number, if any, of linguistic characteristics that directly and exclusively index gender. She points out that the notion of gender is based on the distinction between biological sexes projected onto sociocultural context. In other words, men and women are perceived in a different way in society and they are attributed different roles (Ochs 1992). As language is one of the major streams to channel identity, ideologically it is also expected to be influenced by one's gender. Ochs distinguishes three types of the language-gender relation. The first is a *non-exclusive relation* stating that in most cases it is impossible to link a linguistic feature to the sex of a user of language, whether it is a speaker, addressee or a referent. The second is a *constitutive relation*, according to which linguistic features that are supposedly index one's gender, in fact index social meanings, such as stances, social acts, or social activities. The expression of gender through language is rather pragmatic work during which a speaker takes into consideration social norms, preferences, and expectations towards his or her role in a given context. The last relation is described as *temporally transcendent*, which refers to the possibility of language to "constitute past and future contexts" (Ochs, 1992, p. 345) and, according to Ochs, "the roles and status of men and women are partly realised through the distribution of recontextualizing and precontextualizing acts, activities, stances and topics" (1992, p. 346).

Also, gendered neologisms should not be interpreted as a proof of the existence of differences between women and men but rather as a confirmation of the prevalence of stereotypes concerning what is considered to be male or female. However, in reality, a woman can adopt a behaviour stereotypically associated with men (and *vice versa*) and should not be discredited for that.

In Modern English gender is a highly culturally and socially salient element, with a binary male-female/masculine-feminine model. It does not mean, however, that it is the only framework that should be applied. Curzan writes:

> questions such as whether a generic and gender-specific meaning can coexist privilege gender in a way that other factors are not always privileged. For example, for many words singular and plural meanings coexist (e.g., *you*, *sheep*), and given the lower cultural salience of number, the contradictory meanings encompassed by these words strike as less baffling and much less problematic. (Curzan 2003, p. 178)

Curzan points out that examining the use of gendered words, both in text and in the metadiscourse of dictionaries, can reveal what attitudes about men and women were held by speakers in the past and what these attitudes are now (Curzan 2003). Although Curzan focuses on the change in meaning of words describing men and women, her statement also holds true for newly created words that enter English language.

Cameron (1985) calls into question the existence of a binary opposition of gender in language asking whether there is one to discover or it has been constructed as a part of linguistic analysis, and if this division is a reflection of a way of thinking, if it is innate or learned? Further, Cameron wonders whether the binaries that exist/are constructed for language are equally applicable at every level of language (Cameron 1985). Along similar lines, Bing and Bergvall make an interesting point:

> Because language is discrete and biased towards dichotomy and clear boundaries, the scalar values and unclear boundaries of reality are sometimes difficult to recognise and to accept; we must continually remind ourselves that the reality and language can conflict. The many real-world continua hidden by language suggest a question: is our automatic division of humans into female

> and male as justified as we think? Are the boundaries between them as clear as the words female and male suggest? (Bing and Bergvall 1998, p. 495)

The questions asked by these scholars can be applicable both in the context of discourse analysis (when dividing speakers into the categories of male/masculine and female/feminine) and to the lexicon itself.

3.3. Sexist language

Some feminist scholars (e.g., Penelope 1990, Spender 1980) posit that English, as many other languages, is in a general sense male. What they mean by it is that English encodes a male worldview by helping to subordinate women and to render them invisible, or by taking males as the norm. Spender (1980) gives examples of such bias:

- there are more words for males than for females in English, and more of these words are positive;
- a "word for women assume[s] negative connotations even where it designated the same state or condition as it did for men" (Spender 1980, p. 17), as it is with spinster and bachelor;
- that words for women are more sexualised than word for men, which holds true even for neutral words, when applied to women (Spender 1980).

Spender explains that the widespread encoding of male bias in language is something one should expect, as males (though not all of them) have had far more power in society, which included the power to enforce their view of the world through language (Spender 1980). At this point, it is important to note that so-called *male perspective* does not signify the perspective shared by all men but rather refers to the fact that the only perspective from which certain understandings make sense is a male one.

One of the major problems pointed out by feminist scholars with the way in which we, as society, use language *is false gender-neutrality*. In other words, feminist academics argue that the terms like *he* and *man*, which are said to have both gender-specific and gender-neutral meaning, are not really gender-neutral (Martyna 1978). This concern is not triggered only by the confusion that these terms may cause but also by the fact that using such terms as *he* and *man* with supposedly gender-neutral meaning contributes to making women invisible in discourse as if their existence was not relevant. The presence of women in certain areas of life or professions is already smaller and using the terms *he* and *man* contributes to this discrepancy. As research shows, in many cases people think more readily about men than female when they encounter such terms (Gastil 1990, Moulton 1981, Moulton, Robinson & Elias 1978, Wilson & Ng 1988).

Nonetheless, the invisibility of women in language is not the only issue to which feminist theorists object. In an effort to mark female presence in certain occupations, some gender-specific terms have been proposed, such as *manageress* or *lady doctor*. There are feminists, however, who oppose to the introduction of these words, explaining that the use of such gender-specific terms only aggravates the problem of maleness being a norm in language, and therefore reflects the persistence of the objectionable notion that men are the norm for humanity. Moulton (1981) compares the terms *he* and *man* to the words like *Hoover* or *Scotch tape*, which have become generic names for a product type. For Moulton (1981) the former pair of words are gender-specific terms for men, and, similarly to what happened to the latter pair, their use has been expanded to cover both men and women. This claim has been argued by Horn and Kleinedler (2000), who note that the term *man* started as a gender-neutral term and later acquired a gender-specific meaning. This change in the timeline notwithstanding, Horn and Kleinedler (2000) agree that the terms *he* and *man* are only gender-neutral in theory and that their use as gender-neutral supports the view of men as the norm for humanity. The same objections can be evoked when discussing other gendered neologisms, such as *womanager*, *SheEO* or *womantrepreneur.*

The discussed male dominance in language is not only visible in names and labels but also in terms discussing social practices and behaviour. Cameron (1985) discusses such lexical items as *penetration*, *fuck*, *screw* or *lay*, which all describe heterosexual intercourse as something men do to women. Along the similar lines, Gloria Steinem (1983) discusses terms such as *sexual harassment* and *sexism*, which as she comments poignantly "[a] few years ago, (…) were just called life" (Steinem 1983, p. 149).

Apart from the idea that the meanings of certain terms seem to describe the world in a way that is more natural for men than for women, languages may also lack terms for things that are important to women, as shown on the example of *sexual harassment*. Naming problems facilitates fighting against them, both legally and by educating people about it (Farley 1978, Spender 1980). Such instances of gaps in lexicon, as it was in the case of *sexual harassment*, are called *hermeneutical injustice* (Fricker 2007), which Fricker defines as “the injustice of having some significant area of one’s social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to persistent and wide-ranging hermeneutical marginalisation” (Fricker 2007, p. 99). Existence of such gaps in communal linguistic or conceptual resources is damaging to those from a socially disadvantaged group.

Nonetheless, the claim that language is male has faced some criticism. First of all, language is a difficult thing to control. The main power men have had has concerned dictionaries, usage guides, and laws, but it is a great leap from these to controlling people’s minds. This argument notwithstanding, problems with specific terms can render it more difficult for women to communicate about essential elements of their lives and to reflect upon these elements (Hornsby 1995).

The change in language would not be enough to eliminate sexism from society, but it is an important part of a general change of worldview and values (Cameron 1985).

Language plays a pivotal role in expressing and reproducing ideologies. In his book on ideology analysis, van Dijk (1998) describes language as the mental representation of ideology, and therefore, recognises the importance of discourse in construction and reproduction of ideologies. Nonetheless, he also notes that discourse, language use and communication are not a sole means of creating and spreading ideology – other social and semiotic processes are also involved (van Dijk 1998). In his own words, “although discourse is often crucial in the expression and reproduction of ideologies, it neither is a necessary nor a sufficient ‘medium’ of reproduction” (van Dijk 1998, p. 192). Nonetheless, it is the only social practice that allows *expressing* and *formulating* abstract ideological beliefs (van Dijk 1998).

In a just society, language should be a neutral vehicle in the representation of reality. However, as Ng, Chan, Weatherall and Moody (1993) argue, semantic changes “encode not so much the attitudinal biases of the population at large but those of the more powerful groups in particular” (Ng et al. 1993, p. 78). Given that language is not the representation of reality of every individual and additionally that language is burdened with social values, “the relative success of attempts at gender-based language reform is dependent on the social context in which the language reform occurs” (Ehrlich & King 1992, p. 152). In other words, language reform must be introduced together with other initiatives to erase sexist practices and unequal position of men and women in society.

3.4. Why (linguistic) stereotypes matter

Stereotypes are static and oversimplified ideas about a group or a social category that largely influence our expectations and behaviours (Thompson & Hickey 1999). Stereotypes and prejudice contribute to the intergroup attitudes that underlie an important part of our social cognition (Fiske 1998). Some researchers argue that there are some advantages of stereotyping claiming that is a natural approach to human interaction and communication in the process of getting to know other people (McFarlane 2014). Their supposed usefulness as social function notwithstanding, stereotypes are often harmful for individuals about whom inaccurate assumptions are made.

One may ask whether it really matters what stereotypes are attributed to men and which to women, especially those concerning linguistic behaviours? Bing and Bergvall (1998) argue that binary, two-sex (and, therefore, often two-gender, as sex and gender often get conflated) models in linguistics tend to suppress differences within categories while highlighting differences across them, with categories outside this binary model ignored or erased. It means that the questions we ask can affect the answers that we receive based on the assumptions of gender difference.

The results of the research conducted by Cameron (2008) indicate that stereotypes concerning linguistic behaviours of men and women distort our view of representatives of each sex and have further effects on how we assess their performance in a professional environment. Cameron (2008) analyses varied British texts concerning women and men as participants of communication act. She has concluded that language use is discussed as a set of skills, which people should have or not according to their gender. She argues that the verbal behaviour of men is presented as being "in some way problematic" (Cameron 2008, p. 457) and contrasted with how women behave in similar communicative situations. Even if explicitly the texts claimed the superiority of women over men, Cameron's (2008) subsequent analysis shows that implicitly they maintained the stereotypical vision of women, as, for example, being more emotional.

Furthermore, on account of such traditional stereotypical vision of genders, men, who are not expected to be good communicators, get extra credit when they possess good communication skills, and consequently women's achievements in this area are not appreciated as much – being a good communicator is considered a quality a woman should possess (Cameron 2008).

Lakoff (1972) argues that women find themselves in a double bind when choosing between being perceived as feminine or sounding assertive. With the social changes concerning gender equality that has been introduced since the 70s, in which the statement was made, it may appear that this dilemma no longer exists. However, studies within the roam of politics have shown that it is still the case. Politics is the area where public perception is a key to gaining power and gender stereotypes prove to be a true burden for female politicians.

Eckert (2000) points out that women, as minority members on the political scene, are perceived and often perceive themselves as *interlopers* and as such, they adjust their behaviour to the norms of the group. In government institutions, communication style is often biased towards what is considered to be the masculine style of communication, regardless of gender of interlocutors (Yu 2014). Jamieson (1995) posits that female leaders, in politics or holding other leadership positions, must confront the problem of proving themselves as both feminine and competent as if the two were mutually exclusive, which is caused by prevailing stereotypes, which become conceptual structures that define normal expectations (Haste 1993). It is often commented on in the media — if a woman does not appear "tough (like a man)", she is deemed as being not competent enough, and if she appears "tough (like a man)", she is considered as being a "bitch" by violating the expectations that women should be warm, sympathetic and friendly (Jones 2016). Jones (2016) points out that Margaret Thatcher, Angela Merkel and other female leaders who do not conform to idealised feminine stereotypes, are given the label of an "iron lady", which implies that strength, determination and authority are the traits that are valued in leaders but, at the same time, are uncommon or anomalous in women (Jones 2016). The research performed by Jones (2016) on Hilary Clinton's linguistic self-presentation indicate that her speaking style conformed to a masculine one and that it has become increasingly masculine as she has gained more power in politics in contrast with her feminine communication style when appearing in a role of the first lady. The only instance of her veering from this pattern was noticed when she tried to "soften" her image and become more likable, which she tried to do by referring back to the communications style that suits her gender. As Jones points out "Clinton's career testifies to the labyrinth that women – and members of any marginalised group, long kept out of power – confront when striving toward politically powerful positions" (Jones 2016, p. 637).

Although the presented studies in the area have concerned the (albeit crucial) area of electoral politics, the findings can be extended to women's representation in other areas of civil society, especially to how feminine behaviours is associated with lack of competency in leadership. On the other hand, by acting against stereotypes and expectations towards female gender, women also risk being perceived negatively. Thus, even if a woman of today does not mind being perceived unfeminine, she may have difficulties being accepted by behaving in a more masculine way. Cameron (2007) writes that "the relationship between the sexes is not only about difference, but also about power. The long-standing expectation that women will serve and care for others is not unrelated to their position as the 'second sex'." To find a possible solution to the problem of unachievable gender equality, it could be worthwhile to turn to Spender (1980) who posits that there will be no gender equality if we polarise *male* and *female.* In patriarchal order that takes *male* as a standard, *female* understood as male and anti-male, thus male is always be presented as superior.

The relation between gender stereotypes and language does not only concern how men and women speak – what we say is equally important with how we say it and in what circumstances. For example, some well-meaning statements can unintentionally spread stereotypes. The speaker may want to encourage someone by saying

(61)Girls are as good as boys at math.

Whereas the intention is to convey that both sexes are equal in their abilities, the subject-complement structure, in which one gender is framed as the standard for the other, can perpetuate biases. "Boys" is the complement or a standard and "girls" is the subject which is examined against the complement. To avoid this, the speaker should formulate the sentence using subject-subject structure (61), in which boys and girls are in the same position and the comparison is eliminated.

(62)Boys and girls are equally good at math.

In both (61) and (62) the explicit meaning is supposed to be the same, what differs these two sentences is their implicit meaning.

One may ask: does the implicit meaning really matter? In their research, Chestnut and Markman (2018) investigate how the sentence formulation influenced people's belief about abilities of each gender. The abilities chosen were math, a domain in which boys are stereotyped as naturally more talented, and verbal ability, in which girls are stereotyped as naturally more talented. Chestnut and Markman (2018) argue that using boys as the reference point for girls' verbal ability (e.g., "Girls' verbal ability is as good as boys'") and girls' for boys' math ability (e.g., "Boys' math ability is as good as girls'") makes people be less supportive of the prevalent stereotypes, although bias is not completely eliminated. Moreover, the participants of the study did not consider the subject-complement statements as biased towards one of the genders.

In some ways, implicit messages can shape beliefs more powerfully than explicit messages because of their subtlety — implicit messages are harder to detect and, because often presupposed in conversation, cannot be easily challenged or rejected. Using passive voice in a sentence like "The woman was abused by the man" instead of stating "The man abused the woman" causes people to be more accepting of violence against women because in this way perpetrators are distanced from their crimes, which consequently makes the crimes seem less severe (Henley, Miller & Beazley 1995). Along similar lines, the way in which questions are asked can presuppose the answer. For example, in a case of a car accident, asking a witness "How fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?" elicits higher speed estimates than asking "How fast were the cars going when they hit each other?", as the word "smash" presupposes that the collision was high-impact (Loftus and Palmer 1974).

3.5. Gender stereotypes and humour

Certain comments on gender stereotypes are made in a humorous way. The same applies to the use of gendered neologisms, which is shown in Chapter 6 of this paper. Some may argue that jokes that are based on stereotypes do not have any harmful effect on the perception of men and women in society.

Humour is a quality appreciated among people. Research shows that a good sense of humour is a quality more desired in romantic partners than honesty, kindness or physical attractiveness (Lippa 2007). Nonetheless, humour is a powerful form of communication, which often balances between acceptable and unacceptable and can foster prejudicial expressions, keeping some groups in position of disadvantage and some in position of advantage (Hodson and MacInnis 2016). Nonetheless, as Hodson and

MacInnis (2016) point out, jokes and humour have been significantly overlooked by prejudice researchers. Hodson and MacInnis explain the effectiveness of humour:

> Not only can it be offensive and oppressive, but humor can also be employed as a defensive strategy to lighten the severity of any purported offense by the communicator. Humor and joke-telling are frequently dismissed as just jokes, with the implication being that those not appreciating the joke are unintelligent (i.e., failure to "get" the joke or appreciate the context), killjoys (i.e., insistence on prudish seriousness), or severely at odds with societal norms and strategies for bonding (i.e., being less human). (Hodson and MacInnis 2016, p. 63)

The damaging effects of derisive humour have been proven by research. For example, Weston and Thomsen (1993) had showed participants sexist and neutral comedy skits and found that watching sexist comedy skits increased the tendency for participants to make stereotype-based evaluations of subsequently encountered men and women (Weston and Thomsen 1993, as cited in Ford 2000). Ford has come to similar conclusions with racially disparaging comedy skits (Ford 1997). Another research performed by Ford (2000), in which male and female participants have been exposed to sexist or nonsexist jokes, has led to the conclusion that exposure to sexist jokes caused more tolerance of the discriminatory behaviour and that the critical element of the increase of tolerance of sex discrimination is, in fact, a noncritical mindset towards jokes, which is considered to be a natural by-product of humour (Ford 2000). From a different perspective, Olson, Maio and Hobden (1999) argue that, when it comes to the beliefs of an individual, exposure to disparaging humour does not uniquely affect the individual's stereotypes and attitudes toward the disparaged groups. Nonetheless, exposure to disparaging humour creates a favourable social context for discrimination against members of the disparaged group and increases the tolerance of instances of sexist events (Ford 2000).

3.6. New words in the context of feminist theory

The popularity of the word indicates that it has filled in a hap in language to describe a globally shared reality, to which many can relate. Since the beginning, as the world has been changing, so has been language. Schmid argues that:

> new words are continually being added to the lexicon generally because new objects are being invented and new ideas are rising, all requiring a designation. In addition, words which are not strictly speaking ‘required’ for naming purposes are created to *encapsulate new trends and social practices*. (Schmid 2016, p. 69)

Although it is true that the creation of new words is often caused by a change in the world or by facing a “new reality” to be shared with others, new words are not only created to name what is *new*. The neologisms like *mansplain* are an example of a change in language that aims at influencing reality and highlighting certain aspects of it. We have given language a role of “making things real” by giving names to these things and the importance of linguistic change and striving for gender equality is not a new concept. Still it cannot be denied that such gendered neologisms as *mansplain* are also used to entertain our listeners/readers or make a speech or a text more memorable.

Many of the neologisms discussed in this dissertation denote an undesirable male behaviour and their definitions often refer to the feminist movement. In the 1960s and 1970s feminists urged a linguistic change. One of it was coining and using words that described the world from a woman’s perspective (as opposed to from a man’s perspective). One of these words was sexism, which according to Shapiro was most likely used for the first time on November 18, 1965 by Pauline M. Leet during a “Student-Faculty Forum” at Franklin and Marshall College (Shapiro 1985). Leet defines *sexism* by drawing a comparison to racism:

> When you argue…that since fewer women write good poetry this justifies their total exclusion, you are taking a position analogous to that of the racist — I might call you in this case a “sexist”… Both the racist and the sexist are acting as if all that has happened had never happened, and both of them are making decisions and coming to conclusions about someone’s value by referring to factors which are in both cases irrelevant. (Leet 1965 in Shapiro 1985, p. 6)

The first appearance of the word *sexism* in print is dated to November 15, 1968 when Caroline Bird’s ”On Being Born Female” was published. Bird (1968) expanded the meaning of *sexism* — apart *from* being an act of judging someone based on their sex, sexism has also helped to keep hierarchical imbalance. She also emphasises the role of stereotypes in sexist behaviours.

> Sexism is judging people by their sex when sex doesn't matter. Sexism is intended to rhyme with racism. Both have used to keep the powers that be in power. Women are sexists as often as men. Women who get good jobs do it by outsexing the sexism. They persuade the boss that a woman's intuition is needed. Or that women pay more attention to detail. They know isn't so, but they use the sexist arguments to get around prejudice. It is sexist to ask: Could we ever have a woman president? In India they don't ask because they have a woman chief executive. The question is like "Would you want your daughter to marry a Negro?" Now that your daughter might do it, you don't ask. (Bird 1968, p. 90)

The third person that contributed to popularising the term *sexism* (and as Shapiro writes has often been wrongly named the originator of the word) has been Sheldon Vanauken, who in his pamphlet "Freedom for Movement Girls — Now" writes about "the sexist myth" of male superiority and female inferiority (Shapiro 1985).

Neither sexism, sexual harassment or condescending behaviour of privileged groups over less privileged ones, were something that appeared and therefore needed a name — these phenomena have been given names in order to identify and condemn them. In her book "Man Made Language", Dale Spender (1980) points out that it is necessary for women to regain their semantic space and give names to concepts they experience, especially these unjust, giving two words, *sexism* and *sexual harassment*, as examples. She writes:

> Where women have renamed part of the world it is clear that values have shifted and, with them, the balance of power. Before the naming of *sexism*, for example, it was the behaviour of women that was problematic if they were presumptuous enough to protest about the actions of some men. Without a name, the concept they were trying to present was of dubious reality, with the results that it was women's behaviour which had to be explained — and which could be explained as anything from neurotic to ridiculous. But with the name sexism, with the categorization that accompanies these female-centred names, the reality is accepted and it is male behaviour which demands justification and not female objections. If there were more symbols which posited a female centred reality, there would be more occasions in which male behaviour could be measured against something other than their own standards. Sexism is one foundation-stone for a woman-generated reality: more are needed. (Spender 1980, p. 184)

The wave of neologisms that has been triggered by *mansplaining* seem to be in agreement with Spender's statement. In more recent research, Manne (2017) describes a case of what she calls *himpathy* that labels the inappropriate and disproportionate sympathy from which powerful men often profit in cases of misogynistic behaviours, e.g., sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or even homicide. Manne argues that in these situations men are often shielded by arguments referring to "how good person he is" or that "a life of a good man is going to be destroyed" and a story of a victim, usually a woman, is disregarded as if there was not any. As she writes in her article in "The New York Times" "once you learn to spot himpathy, it becomes difficult not to see it everywhere" (Manne 2018). Giving a name to an entity makes it less dismissible and helps rising awareness of its existence and. It both applies to naming undesirable behaviour and to marking the presence of one gender in the area that is stereotypically associated with the other.

After the appearance of mansplaining in general discourse, more such neologisms have appeared. Spender comments on such linguistic changes as follows:

> I would not want to argue that males are not going to 'lose' as women conceptualize their new reality since there is no room in it for male supremacy, but I would argue that they are only losing what was not rightfully theirs, but that which they appropriated in the first place. (Spender 1980, p. 184)

Linguistic research triggered by the second wave of feminism has indicated investigated the reflection of gender inequality in language. One of the pervasive notions in feminist theory is that there are more derogatory terms for women than for men (see Schulz 1975, Stanley 1977, Sutton 1995). It has, however, been disputed by some feminist scholars — Persson (1996) and James (1998) argue that there are more derogatory terms referring to male gender than to female one. They do not contradict the findings stating that women are often victims of the negative sexualization. James (1998) argues that the majority of derogatory terms for men focus on evaluating them on the basis of their accomplishments, particularly their competency in physical and mental abilities, whereas negative terms for women often involve sexuality, focusing on their attractiveness to men, faithfulness, availability and portraying them as sex objects (see James 1998, Liske 1994). On the other hand, Sankis, Corbitt, and Widiger (1999) conclude from their study that there are more "socially desirable trait terms" to describe women than there are to describe men in English language. James (1998) also argues that derogatory language towards women reflects a male-centred view of the world because the insults concerning women's sexuality shall only be insults when interpreted from a heterosexual male perspective.

The studies have shown that it is men who talk more, for about 80 per cent of the duration of a conversation, and in situations when male active participation is estimated to less than 70 percent both men and women deem the conversation to be dominated by a woman (Spender 1980). Zimmerman and West (1975) argue that men maintain their conversational dominance through violative interruption. Apart from the uneven distribution of the time of speaking, also topics of conversations seem to be more often chosen by men in mixed-group conversations because women's attempts are often ignored by men as well as other women in the group (Leet-Pellegrini 1980). Other research McConnell-Ginet (1989) has come to a conclusion based on the findings about gender difference in discourse and male-centred semantic sphere — should the assumption that men have a chance to talk more often and they more often are attended to be correct, than it would mean that they are more likely to have a chance to express their perspective and their terms have a better chance of becoming accepted and known (McConnell-Ginet 1989). James and Clarke (1993) have reexamined these findings, however what they have called into question are methodology and interpretation of findings and not the existence of the phenomenon itself.

The problem of dismissing or downgrading women's voices in the public and private spheres has also been discussed more recently. The focus of research on the topic has also shifted to the online sphere (Lane 2015). Women are talked over and ignored in the workplace and on social media (Bates 2016a). The well-known cases of such experiences include scientists like Jessica Meir, a NASA astronaut, Katherine Mack, an astrophysicist, Annemiek van Vleuten, an Olympian — these women expressed their opinions on social media on topics of their expertise and received comments from men with unwarranted corrections or simplistic explanations (Bates 2016b). The prevalence of instances of such behaviours of discounting a woman's intelligence or her knowledge of the topic has provoked the emergence of the creative wordplay *mansplain* that has now entered dictionaries.

The neologisms denouncing undesirable behaviour of men towards women during a conversation reflect the results of linguistic research. For example, *manologue* (*man* + *monologue*) refers to an idea that men tend to monopolise a conversation, which has been investigated and proved by Spender (1980); *manshush* refers to an act of a man silencing a woman while she is making an important point, which could be linked to the study of Zimmerman and West (1995). Nonetheless, there is a prevalent stereotype, which goes against the aforementioned studies, that it is women who talk more during conversation.

As Cameron explains, people believe in such statements because there is a tendency to rely on stereotypes when processing information about people and to pay more attention to, and therefore remember better, the instances of behaviours that match their expectations (Cameron 2007).

Many behaviours described by gendered neologisms that aim at criticising undesirable behaviour, such as *mansplain*, have been observed in the society for a long time but only recently with the invention of the Internet and social media, people affected by such objectionable practices could connect. As Lutzky and Lawson point out:

> While individual instances of being affected by these types of behavior may often go unnoticed or may not be given immediate attention in every- day life, at the workplace, or in political debates, it is on social media platforms such as Twitter that they are discussed by those affected, those witnessing the respective behaviors, and those who want to join the discussion of these sociocultural phenomena and express their individual stance toward them. (Lutzky & Lawson 2019, pp. 9-10)

The fact that these neologisms have gained such popularity can be caused by the fact that many people identify with the experiences these words describe. Additionally, giving a name to the objectionable behaviours can make them somehow more solid – something a person can oppose, as it was, for example, in the case of *sexism* and *sexual harassment* (see Section 3.3.).

3.7. Gender markedness in language

Markedness can manifest itself in many ways in language (see Section 1.7.). Markedness in gender is of special relevance to the topic of study in this dissertation and for this reason it seems important to discuss it in more detail.

Masculine-feminine contrasts have been a staple of the literature on semantic markedness. Bobaljik and Zocca's (2010) examination of six languages[8], including English, in terms of gender markedness has pointed them to the following conclusions:

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[8] The six languages in questions are: English, Brazilian Portuguese, Russian, German, Spanish and Italian.

- the morphology does consist (for these languages) of a simple two-way opposition, with marked feminine opposed to unmarked masculine,
- in the case of derivational affixation, the morphologically unmarked forms are indeed semantically unmarked, but
- certain noun stems may nevertheless carry male/masculine as a part of their lexical semantics

(Bobaljik & Zocca 2010, p. 144)

It is important to remember that there exists an apparent asymmetry between marked and unmarked words. Marked and unmarked terms are very useful when analysing the representation of gender in texts as words which are considered to be marked are also those which are ascribed less prestige in comparison to the standard unmarked form (see Battistella 1990, Section 1.8.). The characteristic that many languages and speech communities have in common is asymmetry of male/masculine and female/feminine concepts and principles. There is a tendency to consider the male as the prototype for human representation. For example, in many languages, including English, generic reference is identical with the representation of maleness. This, in consequence, reduces the female to the status of the "marked" one because to achieve female visibility in language one needs to apply various grammatical processes, which makes female linguistic constructions a derivative of man/male standard.

Robson and Stockwell note that "the bipolar nature of sex has strongly influenced the perception of gender as being similarly binary" (Robson & Stockwell 2005, p. 32) and present the list of various binaries onto which male and female have been overlaid.

masculine	feminine
active	passive
rational	irrational
logical	hysterical
possessing	possessed
dominant	submissive
culture	nature
authority	subjectivity
norm	other

unmarked	marked
writing	speech
speaking	listening
thinking	emotion
worker	carer
work	play
serious	trivial
adult	childlike
systematic	chaotic
public	domestic

(adapted from Robson & Stockwell 2005, p. 32)

Such relative binaries, which have been assigned masculine and feminine social factors, are part of the standard ideology of the relation between masculine and feminine.

Also, the connotations of certain words can illustrate this inequality and double-standard approach towards male and female gender. An example of this can be the morphological change of a suffix that leads to changing the gender of a word from male to female, e.g., *mister* would be changed into *mistress, lad* would be changed into *ladette*, or *governor* into *governess*. The morphological change of the added bound morpheme suffixes does not only change the gender of the word – the male terms with the same denotation as that of their equivalent female terms, have strikingly different connotations. Whilst all the male terms have positive connotations, *mistress* is associated with promiscuity or an affair, and *ladette* has the connotations of boisterous and undesirably masculine. Curzan (2003) argues that a pejoration of the marked words was caused by sexism (and stigmas attached to *woman* that came with it) in the past, which resulted in the acquisition of negative, lower status meanings. *Governess* used to be a gendered term for a politician before it started to be used to denote a woman who taught children in a private household. Similarly, *mistress* used to be applied to refer to a head of the household. Schulz (1975) calls to attention this practice of semantic derogation which constantly reinforces the portrayal of "generic man" and "sexual woman". She points out that "a perfectly innocent term designating a girl or a woman may begin with neutral or positive connotations, but gradually it acquires negative implications, at first only slightly disparaging but after time becoming abusive and ending as a sexual slur" (Schulz 1975,

p. 64). Curzan (2003) points out that the histories of such word pairing like *spinster* and *bachelor* not only confirm "the often noted tendency of words for women to take on more negative connotations or denotations than parallel words for men" (Curzan 2003, p. 171), but also "highlight the complex nature of meaning and usage, the ways in which highly gendered words in Modern English have crossed gender lines historically, up to the present day, and the ways in which masculine–feminine pairings are not stable and necessarily symmetrical over time" (Curzan 2003, p. 171).

Feminists who stand against female invisibility in language, at the same time advocate avoiding gender markedness because of the fact that it always results in placing one gender as a norm and the other as abnormal (marked). Names of professions such as *lady doctor*, *woman surgeon*, or *woman professor* are considered to be sexist because they imply that the norm is male.

There are some terms which are gender-neutral by denotation, but because of their connotations they are used as if they only referred to women. It is manifested in the fact that these supposedly gender-neutral terms when used to refer to man, are preceded by a male mark, like *male*- or *man*-. For example, a nanny who is a man is often called *male nanny* or *manny*, as if the standard was for nannies to be female and a man in this profession was an abnormality. The same applies to *male nurse*.

In his book, Baron-Cohen proposes a division of labour that he seems more suitable for *female* and *male brains.* He puts forward the following claim:

> People with the female brain make the most wonderful counsellors, primary school teachers, nurses, carers, therapists, social workers, mediators, group facilitators or personnel staff ... People with the male brain make the most wonderful scientists, engineers, mechanics, technicians, musicians, architects, electricians, plumbers, taxonomists, catalogists, bankers, toolmakers, programmers or even lawyers. (Baron-Cohen 2003, p. 185)

And even if he claims that there are men with female brains and women with male brains, in his opinion the tendency is for women to have female brains and for men to have male brains (therefore the names), which leads back to the stereotypical description of women as being servants and caregivers and men being creators and leaders. The roles that are stereotypically attached to women, i.e., to which women are said to be better predisposed, are not the ones that can occupy positions of responsibility, because for example, they are considered to be more emotional or, to give an example of a stereotype concerning women's linguistic predispositions, unable to express themselves authoritatively or decisively (Cameron, 2007). These roles assigned to women are not the roles that are given much power. It is noteworthy that professions that are viewed as typically more male are often of higher social status than these associated with women (see Cameron 2007).

Other examples of such linguistic creations are *male-slut* or *man-whore*, which illustrate the social opinions on women who are promiscuous as negative, while it is irregular for a man to be viewed negatively for the same reason and for this reason it requires a specific free morpheme to prove them to be male.[9]

Regarding markedness, in order to avoid the sexist use of language, one recommendation is to opt for gender neutrality. That is why instead of using a form *policewoman* the term *police officer* is preferred, so as *flight attendant* is a better alternative for *stewardess*. More strategies proposed to eliminate gender inequality from language are described in the following section.

3.8. Gender-fair language

There are different strategies of gender-fair language, which are applied with the aim of reducing male bias – the implicit belief that a word describing an undefined person describes a man. This male bias can be caused, for example, by the words themselves in terms of generic masculine or masculine forms, or by the conflation with humanity, which "evoke[s] a male bias in mental representations and make readers or listeners think more of male than female exemplars of a person category (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016, p. 2). The influence of linguistic forms on mental representations in terms of gender have been measured in several experiments using different methodologies and led to conclusions that masculine bias is present in English and many other languages (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016). Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams point out that:

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[9] Uberman and Uberman put forward an idea that although "in many patriarchal societies the image of women is that of deceit or low life" there is a group of women who are excluded from such associations, namely mothers and grandmothers (Uberman and Uberman 2021, p. 243). However, as the authors point out, other female family members, sisters and daughters, are not held in the same high esteem.

> Thus, at least until recently, most people hearing *My cousin is a professor* (or *a doctor*, or *the Chancellor of the University*, or *the President of the country*, or a *steel worker*) would assume that the cousin is a man. This assumption nothing to do with the English language but a great deal to do with the fact that, historically, women have not been prominent in these professions. (…) On the other hand, if you heard someone say *My cousin is a nurse* (or *elementary school teacher*, or *clerk typist*, or *house worker*), you would probably conclude that the speaker's cousin is a woman. (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 2002, p. 483)

As a response to structural asymmetry in language, proposals have been made to introduce *gender-fair language* as part of a broader attempt to reduce stereotyping and discrimination (see Fairclough 2003). Gender-fair language can also appear in literature under different names, such as *gender-neutral language* (Sarrasin et al. 2012), *gender-inclusive language* (Stout & Dasgupta 2011), *non-sexist language* (Douglas & Sutton 2014).

Gender asymmetries exist in most (if not all) languages. However, as languages differ between one another in terms of structure, these asymmetries can be more explicit in one language than in another (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016). Languages can be divided into three groups in terms of gender representation that are: grammatical gender languages, natural gender languages and genderless languages. For example, languages like French or Polish, are *grammatical gender languages* where every noun has a grammatical gender, and the gender of personal nouns tends to express the gender of the referent. In *genderless languages,* like Turkish or Finnish, gender is not signalled by personal nouns nor pronouns. In these languages gender is only expressed in lexical gender words, e.g., *woman* or *father* or through attributes such as *male*/*female* (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016). English, however, belongs to the third group of languages, *natural gender languages* (or as McConnell-Ginet prefers to call them *notional gender languages*, see McConnell-Ginet 2013 for discussion), where personal nouns tend to be gender-neutral (e.g., *friend*) and referential gender is expressed in pronouns (e.g. *he*/*she*).

There is a direct correlation between this typology and the strategies that are applied with the aim of fostering linguistic gender fairness. The most common strategy for languages in which nouns verbs and adjectives are conjugated with feminine/masculine gender is *feminisation* (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016). This strategy is based on the explicit inclusion of women into discourse, for example, by using paired forms, grammatically feminine with grammatically masculine, e.g., Polish *naukowczynie i naukowcy* (female scientists and male scientists) or by using abbreviated forms with slashes, e.g., Polish *student/ka* (*studentka* is a 'female student'), or brackets, e.g. Polish *student[ka]* or after an underscore, e.g. Polish *student_ka*. Feminisation has been recommended for grammatical gender languages, such as Polish, French or German, combined with neutralizing strategy so that overly complex sentence structures can be avoided.

This strategy is sometimes also applied in languages that do not have grammatical gender distinction in nouns but have feminine/masculine pronouns, like, e.g., English or Swedish. However, research shows that this strategy of increasing women's visibility does not eliminate a male bias (Lindqvist, Renström & Gustafsson Sendén 2019). Another concern regarding this strategy is that some people may feel that feminine alternatives for, e.g., names of professions, carry less prestige than their original (masculine) forms (e.g. Marcato & Thüne 2002) or can be associated with rural speech or with the meaning of 'wife of…' rather than 'female job holder' (Koniuszaniec & Blaszkowa 2003). There are also asymmetries in meaning for certain feminine and masculine forms, as with for example Polish *sekretarka* ('female secretary') which refer to a personal assistant and the masculine form *sekretarz* that designates a high governmental function (Koniuszaniec & Blaszkowa 2003). "In Polish, the feminine suffix -ka not only derives feminine occupational terms (such as *nauczyciel-ka* 'female teacher' from masculine *nauczyciel* 'teacher') but also words for inanimate objects such as *marynar-ka* 'jacket' from masculine *marynarz* 'sailor'" (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016). Furthermore, Polish feminine suffixes are also homonymous with diminutive. Problems of this kind can limit the possibilities of feminization in some languages. It is more difficult to implement feminisation strategy in language that face such structural problems and for this reason, in these languages, feminisation is usually less widespread and may bring negative effects.

For example, a study of feminine occupational titles in in Italian by Mucchi-Faina (2005) indicates that a woman referred to by a traditional feminine title (e.g., *professoressa*) is seen as less persuasive than a woman referred to by the generic masculine professional role.[10] Similar conclusions have been made with regard to the use of feminine forms in Polish language. Formanowicz et al. (2013) posit that women

[10] The same study also shows that inclusive terms for occupational titles tend to be used more often when referring to women, while traditional terms are still preserved when referring to men.

described with a feminine title receive less favourable evaluations when applying for a job than women described with a masculine job title. Formanowicz et al. (2013), who have studied the side effects of feminine job titles in Polish, argue that although feminisation of language increases visibility of women, feminine job titles still carry negative connotations and, therefore, their use decreases the perceived suitability of women for high-status positions. The authors point out that the possible reason for devaluing individuals with a feminine title might be the novelty [11]of the respective forms and further deliberate on whether men who enter typically feminine professions, for which a masculine title is not available, would face similar problems (Formanowicz et al. 2013). Formanowicz, Cisłak, Horvath & Sczesny (2015) study the effects of gender-fair language in Poland and Austria two countries in which grammatical gender language is spoken. The countries differ, however, in the use of gender-fair language being well-established in Austria and relatively novel in Poland. The study has supported the claim that feminine carry negative connotations in countries in which gender-fair language is not common. Contrastingly, in Austria German the use of feminine (gender-fair) forms results in higher support. It is due to the fact that the use of gender-fair language in German has lost its novelty and, currently, is associated with higher education or competence (Formanowicz et al. 2015). Previous research notwithstanding, more recent account on Polish feminine forms (to which the author refers as *feminativa*) by Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak (2019) indicates that although the process of gender specification in Polish is difficult formally and socially, feminine forms are becoming more widely spread.

Because of the shortcomings of the strategy of feminisation of language, instead of increasing women's visibility, another approach has been proposed, namely *neutralisation*. Neutralisation is a strategy used to decrease the prominence of the division into feminine and masculine in language. This strategy calls for replacing gender-marked terms by gender-indefinite nouns (e.g. English *policeman* replaced by *police officer*). Neutralisation has especially been recommended for natural gender languages and genderless languages. For example, in "grammatical gender languages, gender-differentiated forms are replaced, for instance, by epicenes (i.e., forms with invariant

[11] The debate on feminine forms in Polish (also referred to in literature as *feminativa*, *feminitives*, *feminatives*) has been ongoing since the second half of the 19th century (see Szpyra-Kozłowska 2019, Małocha-Krupa 2021).

grammatical gender which refer to female as well as male persons; e.g., German *Staatsoberhaupt*, neut. 'head of state' or *Fachkraft*, fem. 'expert' in German)" (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016, p. 3) or instead of using generic *he* or the combination of *he/she* or *s/he*, "singular *the* is the dominant epicene pronoun in modern written British English. However, despite its use, singular *they* has never been endorsed by institutions of the English language, such as major dictionaries and style guides (although many style guides now reject generic *he*…)" (Paterson 2014, p. 2).

Lindqvist et al. (2019) advocate for another gender-fair language strategy – creating new words, with special attention to gender-neutral third-person singular pronouns, which are in the opposition to the binary gender system. They argue that the strategy of actively creating gender-neutral pronoun is of highest value because it is more inclusive than other strategies.

> Regarding pronouns, such initiatives are found in languages with binary gendered third-person singular pronouns representing she and'he, often in LGBTQ+ communities. For example, in English a wide range of possible gender-neutral third-person singular pronouns has been suggested, such as *ze*, *ve* and *xe* (Grant et al. 2011; Harris et al. 2017; Stotko and Troyer 2007). The probably most well-known pronoun of these is *ze* (see Fae 2016). Whereas singular *they* has been used both as a generic pronoun and/or when gender is unknown, as well as a referring to individuals with non-binary gender identities, *ze* is more specifically referring to individuals with non-binary gender identities. (Lindqvist et al. 2019, p. 111)

They admit that even the most wide-spread English alternative words are not known to the broader public, but when they are used in context, readers may infer their meaning from the context and understand it. A reform of this kind has been conducted more successfully in the Swedish language where, according to research, over 95% of people are familiar with the gender-neutral third-person singular pronoun *hen*, which is used when gender is unknown, irrelevant, or the target is anonymous (Lindqvist et al. 2019).

The need for gender-fair language seems to be proven by research, which indicate that linguistic asymmetries facilitate forms of social discrimination, possibly unintended (Mucchi-Faina 2005, Stahlberg, Braun, Irmen, & Sczesny 2007). The consequences of linguistic asymmetries are, for example, that adult women are reluctant to apply to gender-biased job advertisement and more interested in the same advertisement when written in unbased form (Bem & Bem 1973). Furthermore, there has been a documented dependency of the likelihood of naming women as possible candidates for the office of chancellor in Germany on the grammatical gender of the word *chancellor* in the question (Stahlberg & Sczesny 2001, as cited in Sczesny, Formanowicz, & Moser 2016). Other examples include the influence of linguistic forms on evaluations of successfulness of women in typically male occupations – when the jobs were described with masculine forms, girls assumed women to be less successful in these professions, additionally they were less interested in working in these areas of profession (see Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016).

The extent to which gender-fair language strategies are implemented differs across languages. Guidelines for using gender-fair language in particular professional domains were already introduced in the 1970s (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser 2016) and later many countries adapted their own guidelines. There are countries, like Poland, where no official guidelines have been issued yet. It does not mean, however, that no attempts of use of gender-fair language have been made – on the contrary, in various texts written in Polish (e.g. in books or journalistic texts) one can find examples of feminisation (see Formanowicz et al. 2013).

Furthermore, the use of gender-fair forms can differ from one individual to another. Some people reject gender-fair language on the basis of its novelty, which is in conflict with speakers' linguistic habits (Blaubergs 1980). Therefore, in the initial phases of language reforms, people may perceive gender-fair forms negatively (Mucchi-Faina 2005, Formanowicz et al. 2013). Another reason for rejecting gender-fair language can be its association with activist movement, which can be a discouraging factor for people with conservative political attitudes and strong support for traditional gender arrangements, Sczesny, Formanowicz and Moser (2016) point out that "[e]stablishing GFL (gender-fair language) habits via teaching and practicing current linguistic standards is a promising approach which should follow the initial phase of GFL implementation and may reduce political controversies" (Sczesny, Formanowicz, & Moser 2016, p. 4). These scholars also recognise the role of the media in promoting the use of gender-fair language by individual speakers. Successful implementation of this linguistic reform depends on attitudes and intentions of speakers as well as habitual processes, involving repetition of past behaviour.

3.9. Men, women and lexical innovation

When discussing linguistic change, women are often considered to be more conservative and therefore less innovative than men in terms of language use (e.g. Labov 1994, Chambers 2009). It is suggested that the tendency of women to follow *standard speech*, which is speech associated with higher social class and formal context (Cheshire 2004), is explained by the lack of a prominent place of a woman in society (Moreno 2009, as cited in Cañete-González 2017) or attributed to the desire of women to reach the status they are denied (Romaine 2003). By using specific behaviour, like more formal speech, women want to mark their social status (Moreno 2009, as cited in Cañete-González 2017).

These conclusions seem to also be in contrast with the fact that many of the popular gendered neologisms are created by women to talk about their experiences (see Chapter 5). In fact, studies show that it is young women who most often "disrupt" language. The analysis of 6000 letters written from 1417 to 1681 performed by linguistis Terttu Nevalainen and Helena Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) has led to the conclusion that female letter-writers (especially younger ones) changed the way they wrote faster than male letter-writers, consequently spreading the use of new words and spellings. The results of a recent study performed by Cañete-González (2017) indicate that it is women who use more newly coined terms than men on the Internet. The research also shows that the "freedom underlying writing has a significant influence over the neological behaviour of women" (Cañete-González 2017, p. 230), as they use twice as many neologisms in their blog posts compared to women writing for printed newspapers.

Looking at the linguistic freedom that has been flourishing on Twitter and other social media, it can be concluded that it is not only blogs which create a conducive environment for creation of new lexical items, but rather new means of expression that came with the omnipresence of the Internet. The *standard speech* of the Internet is, in fact, rather informal and invite this kind of non-standard communication. The Internet was also a cradle for gendered neologisms – before they entered everyday discourse, they had been popularised on social media platforms. The following section explores in more detail the role of digitally-mediated communication in the process of creation and spread of neologisms.

3.10. Feminism, language and linguistic change: concluding remarks

Feminist scholars emphasize the role that language plays in achieving equality of genders. Even if language does not fully determine human thought, communication of thoughts can be problematic if language as a system lacks certain terms that would describe them and it is women who are often represented as disempowered as speakers – they cannot say what they mean and when they do, they are not heard (Hornsby 1995). Linguistic change does not happen overnight, and it can face many hurdles especially at the beginning when not many people are familiar with a new form. Introduction of new terms is a crucial part of elimination of sexism from language.

The role of gendered neologisms described in this paper can be considered as a part of the influence of feminism on language. For example, the words *mansplaining* or *manspreading* are used to highlight, and by extension help in fighting against negative male behaviours. On the other hand, such blends as *femtrepreneur* or *womanager* aim at increasing the visibility of women in professional environment. However, whether such words introduce a real change is a matter for debate, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, which explores the use of gendered neologisms.

Chapter 4: Internet and linguistic change

The Internet has become the most popular means of communication and is an immense source of linguistic innovation. For this reason, it is important to discuss this specific form of human communication which is Internet language. The Internet is especially interesting in the context of the discussion on gender roles in society because the online sphere has become a special place of public debate where people who had not been given voice before could present their views to a wider public, as well as connect with others with similar experiences.

This chapter explores the definition of Internet language and its characteristics. Next, digitally-mediated communication is presented in the context of linguistic research – different approaches to it and challenges it poses. The subsequent sections are devoted to the impact of the Internet on linguistic innovation, which is one of the subjects of special importance in this dissertation, followed by a few remarks on the Internet as a forum for expressing people's views. The closing subsection presents a brief summary on digitally-mediated communication.

4.1. Internet language

4.1.1. Internet language: a definition

To understand how gendered neologisms are applied, it is crucial to take a closer look at the environment in which they are used and spread. Gendered neologisms are considered to arise on the Internet, by means of which are further popularised. Text-messaging become a method of written communication practised routinely by all ages and social profiles and, therefore, its influence on language cannot be overlooked. Social media platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, are an environment in which many neologisms (if not most of them) are created, and later reused and modified, until they reach their commonly accepted form. Finally, in this final form, a word enters a language. Some words are often likely to be used in a digital environment only and, just like loanwords coming from one language to another, after some time, they start to be used outside of the digital sphere (see Niepytalska-Osiecka 2014). This shows how specific of an environment the Internet is.

The term *Internet language* can be interpreted in different ways, as the word *language* can have different senses:

(a) special coding system for constructing communication carried via the Internet
(b) special terminology used in discussions about the Internet (e.g. networking, browsers, HTTP)
(c) coding systems or translation interfaces used for gathering information from the Web
(d) natural language usage carried via the Internet (e.g. on social media, in e-mails)

In this paper, the term *Internet language* is used with the last (d) meaning from the above list. To avoid confusion, some scholars prefer to substitute it with terms like *digitally-mediated communication*, *computer-mediated discourse* (Ferrara, Brunner and Whittemore 1991) or *digital networked writing* (Androutsopoulos 2011). In this paper the terms *Internet language*, *digitally-mediated communication* and *digitally-mediated communication* are used interchangeably.

Over the past two decades, online forums and social media sites have become a prolific source of examples of naturally occurring texts for linguistic research (Page 2017). The Internet has influenced tremendously human communication, diminishing the relevance of constraints of distance and time.

The appearance of new tools for communication resulted in new ways in which people express themselves. Digitally-mediated communication cannot be categorised as conventional speech or writing system (Crystal 2011).

Speech, often considered the most efficient communication form since human language evolved, is characterized by face-to-face interactions, which include some extralinguistic cues such as facial expressions and prosodic features. These cues aid conveyance and receiving the meaning. Another characteristic is that speech usually happens in real time with constant feedback and with no tangible trails of what has been said.

Contrastingly, written communication appears in a more concrete form. Messages conveyed in writing can be reread and reanalysed. Nevertheless, you do not receive immediate feedback nor extralinguistic cues.

Winnie Cheng (2012) proposes her own distinction between spoken and written language, presented in Table 4. She also points out that a text can be written with the intention to be read (e.g., newspaper reports or emails) or written with the intention to be spoken (e.g., political speeches). As for a spoken text, it can be produced spontaneously (e.g., in conversation) or non-spontaneously (e.g., video advertisement).

Table 4. Characteristics of spoken and written language (adapted from Cheng 2012, p. 14)

Spoken language characteristics	Written language characteristics
- Utterances instead of clauses and sentences - Usually planned - More interactive - Turn-taking organization - Structure based on tone groups - Phonological contractions and assimilations - Frequent occurrence of discourse markers (e.g., *okay*, *so*, *now*, *right*, etc.) at beginning or end of tone groups - Spontaneity phenomena (e.g., repetitions, pauses, verbal fillers [filled pauses], false starts, hesitations, interruptions, overlap, incomplete clauses) - Participants are able to take advantage of non-verbal communication - Grammatical intricacy - Low lexical density (lexically sparse) - More frequent use of active voice - Less frequent use of nominalizations - Frequent occurrence of interrogatives and imperatives - High incidence of first-person and second-person pronouns - References to the writer's mental process and statements that monitor the flow of information (e.g., *I guess, I think, you know, well*) - Use of deixis which is context-dependent (person reference, e.g.,	- • Clauses and sentences instead of utterances - Planned - Monologic organization - 'Final draft' (polished) being indications of earlier drafts removed - Longer average word length - Grammatical simplicity - High lexical density - Wide range and more specific vocabulary - More frequent use of nominalisations - More frequent use of passive voice - Complex relations of coordination and subordination - High incidence of attributive adjectives - More detached - Longer information units - Use of punctuation, layout/format - Formal diction

you; place reference, e.g., *there*; time reference, e.g., *later*) - Informal diction (e.g., slang, jargon, colloquial phrases, uncommon abbreviations, humour, sarcasm)	

Digitally-mediated language encompass selective characteristics from both language systems. Internet language emerged within a unique environment for communication (Crystal 2011). Androutsopoulos argues that prototypical digital-mediated communication is shaped by four main conditions, it is vernacular, interpersonal and relationship-focused rather than subject-oriented, unplanned and spontaneous and finally interaction-oriented, carrying expectations of continuous exchange (Androutsopoulos 2007, as cited in Androutsopoulos 2011).

Unlike the traditional speech, Internet language users cannot rely on visual feedback between communicators. For this purpose, they use new strategies to support their communication, like emoticons and emojis[12] (e.g. Evans 2017, Pavalanathan & Eisenstein 2016), memes (e.g. Blommaert & Varis 2017; more on memes in Section 4.2.2. of this disseration), orthographic variation (Ilbury 2019) or Graphic Interchange Formats (Tolins & Samermit 2016). These communicative practices add layers of interactional meaning and intent that exceed the basic denotational content of their messages, generating new ways of communicating sociolinguistic aspects of interaction such as meaning, stance or affect (Blommaert 2015).

Another difference is that the Internet allows its users to conduct multiple separate conversations with different interlocutors simultaneously. In contrast to traditional written communication, feedback comes much faster, which influences the construction of messages. Furthermore, writing in the digital environment should not be perceived as fixed due to constant inputs or changes, e.g. when pages expire or are replaced, and messages are deleted (Crystal 2011).

Most Internet users employ writing to communicate. Nonetheless, standard characteristics of a written language cannot be applied when describing digitally-mediated communication. Instead, Crystal (2011) compares the language use on the

[12] The term *emoticon* is used in literature as (1) an umbrella term for different types of facial expressions or (2) a horizontally-oriented Western face symbols. The term *emoji* refers to colorful pictograms that include not only facial expressions but also pictures of places, animals, plants, objects etc. (see Siever (2020) for a more detailed discussion)

Internet to oral communication that appears in a written form. What he means by it is that individuals often express their thoughts as if they were speaking but put these thoughts in a writing form required by the digital medium. Gee and Hayes (2011) point out that people often communicate through messages "without much forethought" (Gee & Hayes 2011, p. 21). Probably the most influential reason why these two systems of communication vary in content and formality is that digitally-mediated communication, in contrast to written communication, tends to emphasise less on content or facts and is rather performed for the purpose of socialisation (Gee and Hayes 2011).

Language of the Internet tends to be informal in its form. Texts are often written as if they were a direct form of how one speaks, which is referred to in literature as *conceptual orality* (see Koch & Oesterreicher 1985, as cited in Ortmann & Dipper 2019). Another interesting characteristic of digitally-mediated communication is a *semiotic compensation* – the use of symbols to create expressions or the replication of sounds, for example representing the sound of laughter through typing *ha ha*.

Additionally, Internet users often avoid elaborated forms and opt for short messages, especially when communication takes place in real-time and immediate response is expected. This leads to enhanced use of single letters, numerals, typographic symbols and logograms in text messages, e.g.:

Table 5. Examples of short forms in text messages with their meanings (adapted from Crystal 2008, p. 37-38)

	Short form	**Meaning**
1	*xxx*	"kisses"
2	*b*	be
3	*b4*	before
4	*2*	to
5	*2day*	today
6	*zzz*	"sleeping"

They represent parts of words, or, as in the case of *xxx* and *zzz*, noises associated with actions. They can be use separately (*b*, *2*) or in groups (*xxx*, *b4*, *2day*, *zzz*). Other examples of strategies applied for the sake of economy of text messages are initialisms (e.g. *JK* – just kidding, *DK* – don't know, *NP* – no problem, *FYI* – for your information) and omitting certain letters (e.g. *msg* – message, *bt* – but, *tmrw* – tomorrow) (Crystal 2008). Some items draw on iconicity as in the case of “for” in "b4" above, where the shape seems crucial.

Looking at these characteristics, it is possible to conclude that in digitally-mediated communication people often try to recreate the environment of spoken communication, through such means as opting for short forms, semiotic compensation, and lower level of formality.

4.1.2. Internet language and linguistic research

For the purpose of scientific research, various classifications of Internet language have been proposed. Crystal (2001) distinguishes different domains of the Internet communication. These could be e-mails, chat groups, or virtual worlds. With the change of how people used the Internet for communication, later the list has later been expanded by such domains as blogging, instant messaging, tweeting or social networking (Crystal 2011). Crystal argues that when analysing digitally-mediated communication, different language features are commonly observed within different domains (Crystal 2001).

Another classification of Internet language has been proposed by Herring (2008), who identifies Internet language through its *facets*. The two main aspects mentioned by Herring are *technological facets* – the dimensions of language influenced by the technology platform, and the *social facets* – the social features that influence language use in digitally-mediated communication. For online text, Herring’s (2008) technological facets discuss:

- synchronicity – whether communication takes place in the real time or not
- granularity – the nature of the units of communication, e.g. messages, lines, characters
- length allowed by the system
- persistence of the message after being received
- channels that are involved, e.g. animated graphics, video, audio
- speaker identification – whether the speaker’s identity is known

- audience – whether a conversation is public or private, which is said to affect the stylistic use
- structure of communication – how messages appear and where they are situated

The examples of social facets, on the other hand, are concerned with such aspects of communication are:

- participation structure – the number of participants, how much they say, how often they interact, whether they interact privately or publicly, etc.
- topic – what kind of content is considered to be relevant or appropriate by participant
- social functions of communications where communication occurs (e.g. commenting, playing a game)
- tone – e.g. aggressive, persuasive, humorous
- activities – the means used to communicate (e.g. text, photographs, adding sounds)
- norms of language – existence of rules regulating linguistic behaviour (e.g. jokes, use of abbreviations)

Crystal (2011) agrees that these factors contribute to how language is being constructed within an online environment and that Herring's (2008) list can be used to classify and describe Internet texts.

One very fruitful subject connected to digitally-mediated communication is the use of emojis. In 2015, the "face with tears of joy" emoji[13] was selected as the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year (despite the fact that it is not even a word but a pictogram), which indicates how relevant emojis have become in human communication. Davison argues that:

> Emoticons reference a previously existing source of meaning (human facial expressions) and therefore can be easily interpreted upon first encounter. More than just re-creating

> face-to-face meaning in textual communication, emoticons also add the possibility of a new level of meaning—a level impossible without them.
>
> If all these factors were not true, perhaps emoticons would see less use. If keyboards full of punctuation were not already spread across the landscape, or if human facial expressions were not a cultural constant, maybe emoticons would disappear or be relegated to obscurity. (Davison 2012, p. 123)

Not all emojis, however, are universally understood. If one was to apply Peirce's taxonomy of signs (icon, index, symbol), it is probably possible to find examples of emojis for each sign type. Most emojis have an iconic resemblance with entities existing in the world and, therefore, can be classified as icons. The aforementioned "face with tears of joy" can regarded as iconic representation of actual human expression. Another example of iconic sign would be replacing a whole word with an emoji, e.g. an emoji of a plant instead of writing the word "plant". Emojis can also be seen as symbols, which receive a conventional dimension, with an infamous example of the eggplant emoji which is more often used as a phallic symbol than a sign for the vegetable. Siever points out that "pictorial characters that initially appear purely iconic (such as the 'eggplant' emoji) can, at any given time, be employed as a symbol by particular groups" (Siever 2020, p. 134). The symbolic use of an emoji can be culture-dependent, but it can also be developed as a symbol of which meaning is understood by a group of friends or only two individuals.

> Not all emoji are used and understood in the same way, internationally or even nationally. It can- not be guaranteed that the intended meaning will be grasped. Therefore, emoji cannot be called a 'universal' or 'global' language as is occasionally stated in the media. The Unicode Consortium, for example, states that "[t]he images represented by emoji can have or develop very different overtones and usage depending on a user's language and culture". (Siever 2020, p.134)

By extension, not knowing the convention can lead to, sometimes critical, misunderstandings. Tendencies in use of emojis, motivated culturally or socially, can be another interesting subject of research.

Another non-standard way of communication that has emerged on the Internet is a *meme*. An Internet meme is a piece of content that spreads online from one user to another and is changed along the way, hence the name that was inspired by the work of an evolutionary biologist, Richard Dawkins, who used the term meme to denote all non-genetic behaviour and cultural ideas passed from one person to another. Memes are most often captioned images, but they can also have a form of an image without any description or a GIFs. The text in memes is often written in vernacular language and may contain puns, slang and neologisms (including gendered neologisms, see Chapter 6). The first person who offered an academic description of the phenomenon was Patrick Davison (2012) in his work *The Language of Internet Memes*, where he defined the term “Internet meme” and develops a framework for analysing Internet memes. This framework involves the deconstruction of memes into three elements: the ideal, the behaviour and the manifestation. Davison (2012) points out that also emoticons can be classified as a meme and can serve several functions in the transmission of information, e.g. to frame content as positive/negative, serious/joking. All of these features make memes a complex but useful and creative communicational tool and of course, a fruitful source for linguistic research.

Crystal (2011) points out that the analysis of Internet language has proven itself to be challenging for linguists for several reasons, one of which is the enormous amount of data it contains. Crystal describes the Internet as “the largest language corpus there is” (Crystal 2011, p. 10). Another reason for digitally-mediated communication to be a challenging topic of research is the stylistic diversity of the language on the Web. Crystal also highlights the speed of change both of this medium, i.e. technological, and of how it is used by people to communicate. This aspect, which he names the Internet’s “temporal identity” (Crystal 2011, p.12), makes it difficult to make any general statements about the linguistic style on the Internet even within a particular domain. The final aspect is inaccessibility of certain information. While researchers have an open access to certain domains, such as comments or blogs, other domains, like e-mails or text messages, are not willingly shared for empirical studies (Crystal 2011). Moreover, the linguistic data to which the researchers do have access is often anonymous – the participants either hide their identity or we cannot be sure whether the self-disclosed information are accurate.

All these difficulties notwithstanding, Internet language fascinates scholars and is a prolific source for linguistic analysis due to the tremendous impact technology has made on human communication.

The dynamicity of linguistic changed spurred by the Internet cannot be tracked by using traditional dictionaries. In fact, before a word (or a new meaning) can enter such dictionary, it needs to have enough evidence of use. That is why users of the Internet create their own *crowd-sourced online dictionaries* (see Section 5.1.1.). Such dictionaries reflect changes in a language much quicker than traditional ones because of a lower threshold for including new material (Rundell 2016) and for this reason they should be used with a dose of scepticism. Everyone can add their definition to a crowd-sourced dictionary, therefore many of them include personal opinions, jokes or even offensive comments. What is more, crowd-sourced dictionaries not only reflect linguistic change but also contribute to it (Creese 2013).

4.2. Internet and linguistic change

The effects of digital media on language have been questioned by researchers (see Tagliamonte & Denis 2008, Thurlow 2006, 2007). Baron even argues that "when it comes to speech, the potential effects of the Internet (at least as of now) are negligible at best" (Baron 2008, p. 180).

Nowadays, with technology becoming more and more present in our lives and with a new generation of young adults who did not experience the world without it, this view has become obsolete. There are abbreviations, such as *LOL* or *YOLO*, which used to be reserved only in digitally-mediated communication, that have been used in spoken language, not only in English but in other languages as well. Moreover, some relatively recently coined words are strictly connected with human activity that was enabled thanks to technology, e.g.:

- *to google something* – refers to searching for information using the Google search engine;
- *YouTuber* – a person who makes videos and post them on the platform videos and post them on YouTube platform;
- *facebook stalking* – the practice of following someone's activities on the social media platform Facebook;
- *to unfriend* – deleting someone from the list of friends on the aforementioned social media platform.

In Twittonary, one of the online dictionaries that collects vocabulary items invented in connection with Twitter, listed around 600 neologisms in 2010, only 4 years after the launch of the platform (Crystal 2011). Crystal further explains:

> However, when we examine them closely, we find that the vast majority are the result of people exploiting the wordplay possibilities of the name, especially those suggested by the unusual (in English) phonetic properties of the initial consonant cluster [tw-]. Two-thirds of the entries are plays on that cluster, usually by replacing an initial consonant (*twictionary*, *tweologism*, *tweckling*) or [tr-] (*twendy*, *twaffic*), or by adding an extra initial cluster (*twiden- tity theft*, *twaddiction*, *twissues*). Blends are also very common (*twittersphere*, *twitterhea*, *twitterati*, *twitterholic*, *celebritweet*). (Crystal 2011, p. 59)

Some words gain new meanings, e.g. *befriend*. New lexical items like these appear because people have a need to lexicalise their social practices through digital technology.

It may appear that the evidence for the effects of digitally-mediated communication on spoken language mainly concern lexis (Androutsopoulos 2011). Those lexical items are referred to as *net neologisms* (Crystal 2011, p. 58). Accounting for the actuation and propagation processes of net neologisms seems to be a daunting challenge for research if not a virtually impossible one (Androutsopoulos 2011). Still, researchers keep trying to find methods for tracking the spread of neologisms on the Internet. For example, Grieve, Nini and Guo propose a method for mapping lexical innovation using Twitter, which allows to track the geographic origins and spread of new words, using the platform as a multi-billion-word corpus (Grieve, Nini & Guo 2018). Würschinger, Elahi, Zhekova and Schmid (2016) point out that social media platforms like Twitter can often incite or react more quickly to the appearance of new words and maybe the more reliable and balanced source to track the new words' use and conventionalization is "the heterogeneous and pervasive World Wide Web" (Würschinger et al. 2016 p. 43).

Social media platforms play a crucial part in the creation of new words. Studies show that the individuals who respect linguistic norms in their professional relations still manifest creativity when it comes to language on social media (Napieralski 2014). This can be caused by the fact that communication on the Internet is often informal as well as anonymous. The rising importance of the Internet communication at the beginning of the century went in pair with increasing worry that Internet language will negatively influence linguistic skills of adolescents and, as result, will eventually lead to an inevitable decline of the language. As Crystal (2008, p. 151) writes "[a] remarkable number of doom-laden prophecies arose during the opening years of the new millennium, all relating to the linguistic evils which would be unleashed by texting". Nonetheless, these, as Crystal calls them, prophecies did not fulfil and nowadays, people, even those who do not remember the times before the Internet, are fully aware of differences between standard language and the language used in text messages and successfully adapt their register to the situation at hand.

Although the use of the Internet spurs the linguistic creativity, it is important to remember that not all of the linguistic creations will survive. As Crystal points out when discussing the terms connected with Twitter:

> Most of these are likely to have a short linguistic life. Just a few will be long-term additions to the language – or, at least, for as long as Twitter exists. Which words live or die, and which factors promote their life or death, must be important questions for historical lexicology" (Crystal 2011, p. 59).

This is the reason why many neologisms, which may be extremely popular at the moment, are not added to dictionaries right away – editors of dictionaries want to see whether a word survives the test of time before they allow it to sit in the midst of "real words". For example, it took more than a decade since its first recorded use for the word *selfie* to appear in traditional dictionaries (Nguyen, McGillivray & Yasser 2018). This inflexibility of traditional dictionaries motivated Internet users to create their own crowd-sourced dictionaries, which have been mentioned in Section 4.1.2. but are discussed in more detail in Section 5.1.1.).

4.3. Hashtags and online activism

4.3.1. Hashtag: a definition

The two previous chapters discuss how the Internet has influenced human communication. A communicative practice that has a significant influence on establishing new words on social media and for that deserves a closer look is *hashtag* (Würschinger et al. 2016). *Hashtags* are also of special importance when discussing gendered neologisms, which often appear with a special hash mark attached.

Hashtags are a means of labelling social media posts. They were first introduced on Twitter to categorise Twitter messages, or *tweets*, according to the topic, which in turn would facilitate users finding and sharing content that interested them (Caleffi 2015). Hashtags can be considered a key semiotic resource for providing searchability, which is an important dimension of social media discourse (Zappavigna 2011, 2015).

The practice that enables individuals to search social media discourse in order to find other people who talk about a certain topic is referred to as *conversational tagging* (Huang, Hornton & Efthimiadis 2010). Zappavigna points out that the reasons for using hashtags have changed from people's need to search for content to searching for other communities with shared values (Zappavigna 2015). Marking posts using hashtags is viewed as a linguistic innovation (Cunha et al. 2011) and nowadays serves as "an information-organizing tool to a social resource for building relationships and communities" (Zappavigna 2015, p. 274).

Although initially hashtags functioned only as topic markers, nowadays they have gained other functions, such as expressing states and emotions, supporting movements, praising and criticising ideas, promoting brands or events, spreading information on breaking news just to name a few. New hashtags continuously appear on social media – some of them are successfully spread and some disappear shortly after being created (Caleffi 2015). Interestingly, some popular hashtags cross the barrier between different languages, in other words some users can write a post in one language and include hashtags in another (Jurgens, Dimitrov & Ruths 2014).

Simultaneously to acting as a topic marker, hashtags can construct more interpersonal and structural meanings. The study of linguistic functions of hashtags in microblogging performed by Zappavigna (2015) has shown that hashtags can perform the communicative functions of construing experience, enact relationships, serve as commands to the audience (e.g. *#follow, #share*) or invoke the notion that there are people who feel the same way as a person using the hashtag (e.g. *#Ihatemornings*) (Zappavigna 2015).

Furthermore, tagging facilitates connection between the users of social media and creates the possibility of new forms of social bonding (Zappavigna 2015). The research performed by Dickinson (2013) also shows that hashtags foster connection with the values and communities and make it possible for Twitter users "to interact with others on terms that other modes of communication cannot provide" (Dickinson 2013, p. 25). Wikström (2014) mentions other communicative functions of hashtags, such as marking jokes or making a popular culture reference. He also points out that the act of turning a word or a phrase into a hashtag can be itself a form of making a joke (Wikström 2014).

Hashtags have spread from the online environment to TV commercials, newspaper headlines, political slogans or demonstration banners (Caleffi 2015). The popularity of hashtags on television can be explained by their positive impact on popularity of TV shows that use them. For example, Hill and Benton (2012) argue that displaying TV-program dedicated hashtags during its broadcasting increases the viewers activity on social media and their engagement during commercial breaks (Hill & Benton 2012). Hashtags are also used in discussions of sexist behaviour and marginalising social practices (see Fox, Cruz & Lee 2015, Smith 2018).

Not everyone regards the spread of hashtags positively (see Biddle 2011), but regardless of one's attitude towards them, it cannot be denied that hashtags are a part of linguistic change. Hashtags can be considered linguistic items that are created through "a potentially new word-formation mechanism, namely *hashtagging*, which would add to already existing morphological processes such as blending, clipping, compounding, etc." (Caleffi 2015, p. 47).

4.3.2. Hashtag activism

Recent studies highlight the role of hashtags in making a stance in social debates (De Cock & Pizarro Pedraza, Evans 2016, Xiong, Cho & Boatwright 2019). This practice has been so widespread that gained its name – *hashtag activism.* This term "refers to the use of social media to advance, support, debate about, or reflect on social causes" (Hahn 2018).

The term *hashtag activism* was most commonly used when referring to Twitter, however nowadays the instances of hashtag activism are witnessed on other social media platforms, e.g. Facebook or Instagram. The uniqueness of hashtag activism is based in a fact that it gives a possibility to connect supporters of the cause, often from different communities. Thanks to social media and successful hashtag activism, any movement can gain international support in a short span of time (Tombleson & Wolf 2017) or even get the support of celebrities that otherwise the participants of the movement would not be able to reach. It is important to emphasise that not every instance of using a hashtag is the act of activism itself, only when a hashtag is used to support certain causes.

One of the defining moments when activists shifted from using traditional media to new media to organise and advertise their activities was 2011 during Occupy Wall Street demonstrations (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun 2012). This change enabled the creation of new contexts in which activism could appear, together with new expectations towards people on how they can (and should) participate in social causes and public debate (DeLuca, Lawson & Sun 2012). Other examples of hashtag activism were the hashtag #25jan used to gather protesters and draw attention to the revolution during the 2010 Arab Spring (Wilson & Dunn 2011), the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls that was a part of the campaign for returning the kidnapped schoolgirls in Nigeria (Chiluwa & Ifukor 2015, Carter Olson 2016). Hashtags are also used in movements to fight with discrimination, for example #BlackLivesMatter that fights against police brutality (Yang 2016) or in social movements to fight for women's rights, e.g. #YesAllWomen or #MeToo (Xiong, Cho & Boatwright 2019). Interestingly, the last one mentioned was chosen Australian Macquarie Dictionary's Word of the Year of 2018 and, according to the dictionary, can be used in a form of an adjective or a verb (Badham 2019).

As it has been mentioned, many gendered neologisms are used in form of a hashtag – to help connect likeminded people, stimulate spreading of ideas on the internet and express support for a movement, like it was, for example, in the case of *manspreading*. Sometimes, however, hashtags are used just as a humorous element or an embellishment of a post.

4.4. Internet as a public forum

The research on the connection between gender and conversational tendencies indicate that it is men that dominate conversation (e.g. Spender 1980, Zimmerman & West 1975, see Section 3.6.). McConnell-Ginet (1989) argues that men have a higher chance to express their perspective and, by extension, their views have a higher chance of becoming accepted and known.

A public online forum seems to potentially give an opportunity of getting the attention of a much larger audience than any face-to-face interaction and, in theory, everyone has the same access to it. Flores (1990) argues that "the computer conference

(…) model [is] a more egalitarian mode of dialogue. (…) Each [participant] can hold the floor for as long as he or she chooses and cannot be interrupted" (p. 112). This makes forums an appealing medium, especially to members of groups who have traditionally lacked a public voice, such as women (Balka 1993) or young people (Stern 2007). This view is challenged by Herring (2010):

> (…) not everyone has the ability or the right to post to every forum; some forums are in languages that the potential poster does not know, some may impose restrictions on access, and a moderator's decisions can determine which submitted messages are posted. Moreover, not every message posted to an online discussion forum has the floor for all recipients; many postings are deleted unread, or are only read part-way through. Finally, not all messages have the floor to the same degree. Some messages have a more central status than others; they garner more responses, and may even provide the theme for an extended 'thread' which involves dozens of participants in discussion over a period of weeks or months. In contrast, some messages receive no response at all. (Herring 2010, p. 2)

Herring (2010) raises the question whether the same kinds of gender differences that have been discovered in face-to-face communication, exist in computer-mediated discussions. The analysis of four public computer-mediated discourse samples has led her to several conclusions. Herring has found that in the samples where there were more male than female participants, the discussions lasted for more days and contained longer messages on a single topic. Additionally, the discussion was more argumentative in style. In contrast, the analysis of the samples of female-dominant discussions has shown that female participants opted for shorter posts, discussed multiple topics and expressed agreement more often than disagreement. However, even in female-predominant discussions, male contributors receive responses more often.

Herring (2010) maintains that these findings should be explained in terms of social rather than technological factors. She concludes that both genders are socialized to manage conversational interaction differently, which is reflected in face-to-face communication as well as digitally-mediated one. However, she points out that there were women who dominated conversation – these powerful female participants had a high professional status or appeared in an environment where women had a majority in a conversation, and that "each gender's behaviour varies as regards topic initiation and messages posted to/responses received by dominant participants, depending on whether they are in a male-predominant or a female-predominant context" (Herring 2010, p. 17).

4.5. Internet language: concluding remarks

To conclude, digitally-mediated communication created a need to make written language suitable for social interaction. The characteristics of Internet language, vernacularity, semiotic compensation and economy have emerged in response to that need. Internet platforms created a favourable environment for expressing people's opinions and have given voice to everyone who wants to express his or her views and communicate with others who think in the same way. The Internet also gives an opportunity for new words to spread fast across the entire globe. The digital campaigns, such as #BringBackOurGirls or #BlackLivesMatter, show the potential of the users of social media to mobilise publics and implement change in society.

PART 2: ANALYSIS

Chapter 5: Gendered neologisms

This chapter focuses on the phenomenon of gendered neologisms. It is believed that the analysis of such words can help in understanding the relations between genders in contemporary society, as “[s]ocial labelling practices offer a window on the construction of gendered identities and relations in social practice” (McConnel-Ginet 2003, p. 69). The standard language we speak is the language invented by our ancestors and naming practices reflect their point of view on the matters. The analysis of neologisms, even if they have not yet been accepted as “the standard”, i.e. included in dictionaries, can offer a window into social change that is happening right in front of us.

The chapter elaborates on the topic of gendered neologisms. It discusses how such words are created in terms of their structure and what new layers of meaning words gain by the addition of the nuance of gender, which is more than simple association with one sex. Finally, it takes a closer look at possible motivations behind creating gendered words.

McConnel-Ginet argues that “words do not just label preexisting determinate concepts; they often play a role in shaping concepts in channelling thoughts and actions” (McConnel-Ginet 2006, pp. 218-219). She illustrates this claim with the example of the word *marriage*, which nominal definition excludes unions between people of the same sex and therefore has had real influence on aspects far beyond just concerning linguistic considerations.

Gendered neologisms are newly created words that recently have been increasing in popularity and spreading through social media. The idea behind these linguistic creations is to add an aspect of gender to the meaning of already existing words that originally are gender-neutral (or appear to be). Gendered neologisms use lexemes such as *man*, *female*, *she*, *he*, *bro*, or *girl* to coin new words from previously gender-neutral ones, e.g. *mansplain* (*man* + *explain*) or *SheEO* (*she* + *CEO*).

The need for new words stems from the social dimension of language – a closer look at these new gendered creations shows that they do not merely aim at describing a new “reality” to be shared with others, but they also address the social issues, in this case, connected to gender and its depiction in language.

The most recommendable strategy of eliminating sexism from language is neutralisation (see Section 3.8. for more on neutralisation and other gender-fair language strategies). Interestingly, the neologisms discussed in this dissertation, even if oftentimes used in the context of gender equality, seem to be in contradiction with this widely promoted linguistic reform.

5.1. Methodology

As with other gender issue related vocabulary items, gendered neologisms require an interdisciplinary perspective that combines the linguistic with the social. To obtain a well-rounded analysis, it is also required to look at gendered neologisms from a semantic and pragmatic perspective. As it is discussed in Section 1.1. the fields of semantics and pragmatics are related and complementary fields of study between which it is difficult to draw the line. That is why in this dissertation, gendered neologisms are analysed from a perspective of their designated meaning (or their "dictionary meaning" but not many of those words can be found in traditional dictionaries) and the meaning(s) that those words gain when introduced into the "real world" (i.e., in an actual utterance).

Although the analysis is performed on seemingly written texts, those texts are gathered from the Internet, where language functions in its own rights: "Internet language is identical to neither speech nor writing, but selectively and adaptively displays properties of both" (Crystal 2011, p. 21). (see Chapter 4, which is devoted to how language functions on the Internet). Although the NOW corpus that is used in the analysis presented in Chapter 6 is described as a collection of online articles, its scope does not only include the articles themselves but also comment sections that go with them, and where the analysed gendered neologisms often appear. Such discussions in comment sections often share more characteristics with speech than with written text.

The analysed words are described as new, although some of them have been around for more than a decade, e.g., *mansplain* was first use in 2008 (see Section 5.3.1.). Nonetheless, in "word years" they still can be considered as new – it was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in January 2018, only a few years before writing this dissertation. It would be impossible for traditional dictionaries do not react to language change instantaneously (see Sections 4.1.2. and 5.1.1.) that is why not many of the vocabulary items discussed in this dissertation have gained official dictionary definitions.

Those words mostly appear in spoken language, which also makes them difficult to track by using corpora. Unfortunately, corpora, similarly to traditional dictionaries, often do not react fast enough to linguistic change (Davies 2017). It is difficult to track such new linguistic items, and their frequency in a corpus will often be much lower than well-established words, if they have been recorded there at all. Corpus linguistics is a research approach that supports empirical investigations of language variation and use. As Biber points out, corpus-based approach is more suitable for discovering the systematic patterns of use rather than discovering new linguistic features. However, even if corpus-based approach cannot be applied in this case, the use of a corpus that is updated regularly can be used to provide examples of use of a certain word (see 5.1.1.).

However, before looking at the analysed words in a corpus to see how they are used in context – how it influences their meaning and what function they perform in utterances – we must first look at how gendered words are created from a morphological perspective (see Chapter 2 for an overview of the theory on morphology and word formation, what default meaning they have (see Chapter 1 for an overview of the theory on lexical meaning) and how their meaning evolved, which will be crucial in a later discussion on how the meaning is shaped by the context of use. This insight gain by the analysis will also allow to place the role of gendered neologisms in the context of a discussion on gender equality (see Chapter 3 from an overview on a role of language change and gender equality).

First, the words were manually collected from the Internet using crowd-sourced dictionaries. The starting point was the word *mansplain*, which led to discovering of other blends and compound with *man*, and in consequence other productive elements for creating gendered neologisms, such as *bro* and *his* for male, and *woman*, *fem*, *girl*, *she*, *her*, *queen*, *gal* for female. It seems, although is still to be proved by quantitative research, that the creation of female gendered neologisms is more varied. The structure of gendered neologisms is described in Section 5.2. Crowd-sourced dictionaries had been previously used for a study on *man*-based gendered neologisms performed by Foubert and Lemmens (2018). The researchers refer to gendered neologisms as *gender-biased neologisms*. The word *biased*, however, often carries the meaning of being unfairly prejudiced, and therefore the author of this dissertation proposes the term *gendered neologism* for this phenomenon.

Mansplain is one of the most widely spread, and therefore most well documented word. Possibly it had inspired the creation of other gendered words with the lexeme *man* as their internal morpheme. *Mansplain*'s history and meaning has been traced via an Internet search (the results are presented in Section 5.3. The word is documented in both traditional and crowd-sourced dictionaries, which allowed for a comparison of its senses (which vary across different sources).

Having looked at the issue of gendered neologisms and their intended function, the next step of the research was to see how such words work in context by using a corpus. The corpus-assisted research presented in Chapter 6 focuses on two groups of neologisms that seem especially interesting in the context of gender equality issues, male dominant behaviour (*mansplaining*, *manspreading*, *manterrupting*) and counteracting female visibility in positions of power (*girlboss*, *SheEO*, *womentrepreneur*). The corpus has been searched to retrieve the six neologisms in order to determine how they function within sentences and utterances.

As corpora are not suitable for tracking frequency of new words, another tool has been applied, namely the Google Ngram Viewer. This tool has allowed to chart frequencies of the analysed gendered neologisms and track their first recorded use and see trends in the use of the words. The following section presents the tools used for the research, crowd-sourced dictionaries, the NOW corpus and the Google Ngram Viewer, in more detail.

5.1.1. Tools

Crowd-sourced dictionaries

The invention of the Internet and the development of digitally-mediated communication has influenced the dynamic nature of language, making linguistic change even faster. Crowd-source online dictionaries, such as *The Open Dictionary* or *Urban Dictionary,* can be used as a source for the neologisms that are created and spread through the use of internet platforms of communication.

Crowd-sourced online dictionaries are dictionaries created by users of the Internet. This type of platform seems to be very suitable for dictionaries, which in its traditional form often do not keep up with constant changes in language. A new word or a new meaning for a word needs to have enough evidence before it can enter a traditional dictionary. An example of a neologism that has entered a traditional dictionary in the second decade of 2010s would be the word *selfie* (which is also an example of how technological influence on our lives is reflected in language). *Selfie* was the Oxford

Dictionaries word of the year in 2013 and its frequency in the English language is said to have increased significantly that year (Nguyen, McGillivray & Yasser 2018. Even if the word's origins are dated back to 2002, it took 11 years to be recognised by traditional dictionaries (Nguyen, McGillivray & Yasser 2018).

The *Urban Dictionary* offers the user such functionalities as sorting the entries alphabetically and showing the newest entries or sorting the entries according to categories, such as: *college*, *name*, *drugs*, *religion*, *food*, *sex*, *internet*, *sports*, *music,* and *work*. Additionally, it shows "the word of the day" for every day and also a list of trending neologisms for every day. The *Urban Dictionary* has also been published in a form of a book (see Peckham 2009).

The crowd-sourced dictionaries react much quicker to changes, however for this exact reason they can be less reliable and need to be used with a dose of scepticism as they have a lower threshold for including new material in comparison to traditional dictionaries (Rundell 2016). Another disadvantage of such quick response is that some new word meanings cannot last in the language for long. As Crystal points out:

> Changes in language typically take decades, or even life-times, before they are established. But history is no guide, when it comes to electronic technology. In olden times (i.e. before the Internet), it would take several years before a new word would achieve a sufficiently high community profile to appear in print, be picked up by lexicographers, and come to be recorded in dictionaries. Today, a new word can achieve a global profile within hours. (Crystal 2011, p. 57)

The dictionary entries in the best-case scenario are meaningful definitions of the words that have not yet appeared in traditional dictionaries but in reality, such definitions are in company of personal opinions and jokes. Moreover, some of the content of such dictionaries can be offensive (Nguyen, McGillivray & Yasser 2018). There is a system that has been implemented in order to increase reliability of such dictionaries – users vote for most accurate definitions and these most popular appear at the top of the page — the definitions can get up votes or down votes and their accuracy is calculated from the difference between the former and the latter. Nevertheless, it has also been suggested that such dictionaries may contribute to linguistic change and not merely reflect it (Creese 2013).

Being aware of all these shortcomings of the crowd-sourced dictionaries, one can still use them in their linguistic research such as presented in this dissertation. Such dictionaries may not be a reliable tool to track the spread and the use of new words in a language, but they can serve as a source for such neologisms for further investigation. The following analysis does not aim at describing the linguistic change but to discover the relations between gendered that are portrayed through coining such neologisms, whether they are going to stay in the language or not. Additionally, these internet sources seem to be suitable due to the nature of analysed words, which are recently coined neologisms that are mostly used in computer-mediated communication.

The NOW corpus[14]

The corpus used in the present project for the analysis of gendered neologisms is the News on the Web corpus (NOW), which, according to the information provided on the website, contains 12.1 billion words of data with 2.59 billion words of data from the past year and 196 million words from the last month as for March 2, 2021. The articles in this corpus come from two sources: Bing News and the search on over 1 000 websites to find new articles that may have appeared every day. It has been tracking the frequency of words since 2010.

In addition to searching for individual words and phrases, the system allows its users to search for families of new words and compare the frequencies of occurrence of members of word families. The frequency for each word can be displayed in six-month segments as well as by the week. This can be useful for investigating the time frame when a certain topic was discussed more frequently.

The NOW corpus was created by Mark Davies in 2016 as a response to the problem of corpora not reacting to linguistic change fast enough (Davies 2017). As the corpus is updated every day, it is considered a tool allowing for analysing recent linguistic creations, such as gendered neologisms.

Although the search in the corpus has not brought enough entries to perform a reliable quantitative analysis, it has provided material which allows to analyse the retrieved lexical items in their contexts of use and see their situated meanings.

[14] The NOW corpus can be found here: https://www.english-corpora.org/now/

The Google Ngram Viewer[15]

The Google Ngram Viewer (also called Google Books Ngram Viewer) is a search engine that uses Google's text corpora to chart the frequencies of use of any string of symbols, or a set of strings, found in printed sources dated between 1500 and 2019. The dataset that this tool offers consists of 5.2 million books in 8 languages, English, Chinese, French, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, German and Russian. which amounts to around 500 billion words. It is also possible to choose more specialized corpora, e.g., American English, British English or British Fiction.

The tool counts the appearances of the string (i.e. ngram) in books, and not by counting books that host a given string. The tool does not, however, lead directly to the dataset, therefore, it fails to provide the context in which the word appears. Fortunately, it can be used to investigate trends in the use of a word. The Ngram Viewer allows to graph and compare phrases from datasets over time, showing how their usage has increased or decreased over the years. Those changes can suggest the ebb and flow of ideas, changes in style and usage, and historical change. The y-axis of the diagram indicates the percentage that the word consists among all words contained in the sample. The user is allowed to select the time period of interest and presents results with a yearly precision.

The Google Ngram Viewer has several features that allow more advanced search, e.g. an inflection search or categorizing the use of a word depending on what part of speech it is.

5.2. Gendered neologisms: structure and meaning

When looking at the examples of gendered neologisms, one can see that, in terms of their structure, most often they are created through word-formation processes of compounding and blending. Moreover, some are created through addition of a prefix, of which examples will be presented in this section.

Gendered neologisms are built through addition or combination of various words. The choice of a word or a splinter may depend on phonetic and/or graphical similarity to

[15] The chapter has been based on Michel et al. (2010). The Google Ngram Viewer can be found here: https://books.google.com/ngrams

the original word that is being modified, i.e. to which the gender value is being added. For this reason, these neologisms often involve overlap.

5.2.1. Signalling male gender

When it comes to referring to male gender, the most commonly used word for blending and compounding is the word *man*. The examples of compounds with the word *man* are:

(63)man bun
(64)man flu
(65)man cave
(66)man bag
(67)manspreading

In the examples (63) and (66), adding the item *man* indicates reappropriation of domains – the *bun* form (63) denotes a type of hairstyle that can be created on long hair and therefore, it is associated more with women than men (as the former tend to have longer hair and the latter tend to have shorter hair). Along similar lines, the neologism in (66) indicates that a bag is an item typically associated with female gender – if it has been created/is worn by a man it needs specification of gender added to it (whereas no specification is needed for a bag worn by a woman).

On the other hand, the lexeme *man* in the examples (64) and (65) refers to something associated with men, with *man cave* designating a place in a home where men could perform typical male actions (whatever they may be) without being disturbed by female family members. Similarly, *man flu* refers to supposed tendency of male gender to forego the influence more severely than women as if a different kind of illness is inflicted on men. Another interesting example is *manscaping* (a blend of *man* + *landscaping*), which sees similarities between male body hair trimming or shaving with modifying a landscape by altering plants. In this word, two mental spaces are blended – a man's body becomes a landscape, and body hair the plants.

Finally, among these compounds there is the example (67), which could be classified similarly to (64) and (65) as something that is typical to men. However, this kind of neologisms, as it will be shown later in this section, should be discussed separately because of their special functions in discourse. These gendered blends and compounds are often used in public debate on the position of men and women in society and relations between them. In this case, the word *man* not only denotes something typical to men but also adds the element of disapproval to the meaning of the word. The discussed example, *manspreading*, refers to the practice of men sitting in public transport or other public places with legs wide apart and, as it is later demonstrated in Chapter 6, is not used as a plain statement of the fact but carries additional layers of meaning and is promptly used in social discussions. It is one of several examples of neologisms with a pejorative meaning.

Man is also used in such linguistic blends as:

(68)mansplaining
(69)manterrupting
(70)manologue
(71)manny

The examples (68), (69) and (70) are both portmanteaux which, similarly to *manspreading*, carry negative connotation and are a form of criticising certain male behaviours. *Mansplaining* is a portmanteau of the words *man* and *explain* and refers to way of explaining things in a condescending way, which supposedly is a pervasive tendency of men, together with *manterrupting* (*man* + *interrupting*) and *manologues* (*man* + *monologue*). All three words draw attention to the seemingly wide-spread tendency among men to dominate conversation.

At this point it seems to be of importance to highlight the fact that *man* in such neologisms does not refer to men in general but to socially accepted image of maleness and the position of a man in society as opposed to the position of a woman. As Deborah Cameron points out, the relations between the sexes are not only based on difference but also on power (Cameron 2007). The word *mansplain*, which is one of the most well-known examples of gendered neologisms, is most often used to describe male behaviour but not exclusively – it has gained a meaning of explaining things in a condescending way regardless of sex. The word *mansplain* portrays a man as a person who thinks that he knows best and is patronizing towards others. Just like the expression “you throw like a girl” does not refer to any special way in which girls perform the action of throwing, as there is no unique way in which everyone who can be labelled as a *girl* would throw a ball. This phrase, sexist as it is, refers to a widespread stereotype rather than actual truth. We can look at gendered neologisms from a similar angle.

The example (71), *manny*, is different in nature from its companions from this list of blends with the word *man*. This telescope word of *man* and *nanny* denotes a male nanny. Thus, it can be considered as one from the group of reappropriation of domains, similarly to *manbag* and *man bun*. The word *manny* is a marked term – with a male nanny as a deviation from the norm, it indicates that the occupation of nanny is considered as a profession for women. This pattern repeats with another caregiving occupation – nursing. A man who is a nurse is sometimes referred to as *male nurse* or even *murse* whereas a woman is called *nurse* or with *male maid*. Another example of this tendency could be *mangagement ring* – a ring that a man wears to indicate that he is engaged. Again, the seemingly neutral term *engagement ring* is traditionally associated with something that a female prospective spouse receives from her partner when he proposes marriage and may be considered a sign of "belonging" to the spouse. The gender of the term is not indicated linguistically, but is revealed when users of language make an attempt to talk about an 'unusual' situation (i.e. that opposes the traditional gender roles) and create a blend of words *man* + *engagement ring*.

Another commonly added element used for indication of male aspect in gendered neologisms is the splinter *bro-*. The examples of such blends are:

(72)bromance
(73)brocery shopping
(74)bropropriation

The one apparent reason why in this case the splinter *bro* has been chosen for the word formation process over the word *man* is the similarity of words that allows the overlap – with the overlapping -*ro*- part in *bromance* = *bro* + *romance* and *brocery* = *bro* + *grocery*. Here, the examples (72) and (73) refer to something reserved for men and their male friends. Adding the splinter *bro* to the word *romance* also excludes the romantic part of the relation replacing it with a friendly one. The example (74) (*bro* + *appropriation*) is another word that, similarly to *manterrupting* or *manologue*, names an unwanted male tendency to interrupt at the same time conveying an element of judgement of this behaviour. The clipping *bro* from the word *brother* functions on its own within informal communication as a form of address to male friends.

5.2.2. Signalling female gender

There are various methods that are used to index female gender in gendered neologisms. One word that is used for blending and compounding is the lexical item *woman*. By adding this to some existing words, one obtains such neologisms as:

(75)womanager

(76)womansplaining

The examples (75) and (76) are linguistic blends. In the example (75) both constituents, *manager* and *woman* are fully preserved because the words overlap. In (75) adding the word *woman* makes it a marked term. It draws attention to the fact that a person on the position of a manager is a woman. Such linguistic creations were coined with the initial intention of increasing visibility of women as leaders, contrary to stereotypical depiction of a woman as a natural caregiver. However, as a marked term it also indicates abnormality of this state of affairs, i.e. suggests that this position is typically reserved for men. This discussion is developed in Chapter 6 in which the use of neologisms reappropriating male domains are analysed in context. The example (76) is a blend of the words *woman* and *explain* and its creation was probably triggered by the existence of the word *mansplain*. It has not gained as great recognition as its male counterpart.

Another strategy allowing to add the nuance of female gender to gender-neutral words is blending them with the word *female*.

(77)femacho

(78)fempowerment

The example (77) is created from the words *female* + *macho*. It has its derivative – a noun *femachismo*, which would stand for indicate exaggerated female pride. This word, in contrast to most discussed in this dissertation, has not been coined recently. In fact, it is mentioned in The New York Times article from 1979 that discusses the need for a new adjective for the female equivalent of *macho*. We can read in the article about other suggestions that played on the combination of adding feminine gender to the word, such as *femacha*, *facho*, *wacho* and a Spanish feminine form *macha* (Safire 1979).

Nonetheless, *femacho* has recently been rediscovered flowing with the current trend of genderization of words.

The example (78) is a blend of *female* + *empowerment*. It has several meanings. It is used to denote women's empowerment. It has also become a shorter name for empowerment feminism. Moreover, sometimes *fempowerment* is also associated with cherishing feminine qualities. One can also come across its derivatives – an adjective *fempowered* and a verb *to fempower*.

(79)femnazi

The example (79) if a pejorative term for a feminist.[16] The word is in fact a blend of *feminist* + *nazi*. Even if this word does not refer directly to female gender but to feminist movement, it is an interesting example worth mentioning.

Other gendered neologisms that resulted from blending *female* with previously gender-neutral terms are:

(80)femtrepreneur
(81)femocracy
(82)femspiration
(83)femvertising
(84)femocrat

Female inspiration has become *femspiration* – a powerful and inspiring woman, *femvertising*, a linguistic blend of *female* + *advertising*, denoting advertising strategies specifically aiming at women as a consumer group, *femocracy* refers to *feminist democracy* and *femocrat* is a blend of *female* + *bureaucrat*.

In the example (80) *female entrepreneur* has become *femtrepreneur*, which similarly to *womanager,* was coined to increase female visibility in business and challenge stereotypes regarding women in workplace. Nonetheless, it is a marked term that can do the opposite – deepen gender division at work.

[16] Along similar lines, although not in the topic of gender, there is a neologism *eco-nazi*, which is meant to be an insult towards environmentalists.

The example (81) is another word that can have two meanings. One, which has been known for centuries now, would be a feminine approach to political issues – responsible and socially inclusive. As Edwards explains:

> (…) femocracy is not about women taking positions of political power, especially not when conforming to masculine characteristics. Neither the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher (…), nor Hilary Clinton (…), really qualify as significant figures in the development of femocracy. (…)
>
> A woman or man might be pro-life and feminist, but a feminine approach to being pro-life would feature support for widespread birth control, social and economic support networks for single mothers, and increased workplace support and protections for women rather than a masculine approach calling for the banning of abortions and punishment of women. (Edwards 2021, p. 135)

However, this word can be used with a pejorative connotation, putting femocracy in opposition to feminism. In this view femocracy is seen as a situation where women abuse their power, e.g., in an antidemocratic female power structure focusing on the gain of its members rather than women in general.

The example (83), in contrast to many other neologisms mentioned in this chapter, does not aim at empowering women. It denotes a new communication strategy inspired by the growing popularity of the third-wave feminism. The marketing messages are supposed to be appealing to women by presenting them as separate from stereotyped social roles. It spurs a debate on whether brands by using feminist messages support the movement or exploit it for their own gain.

Femocrat is another example of a blend which has not been coined recently but seems important and worth discussing in the context of gendered neologisms. As one can read in *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*:

> The term 'femocrat' was invented in Australia as a derogatory term to describe feminists entering women's policy positions in government. Subsequently it has been used more neutrally to describe feminists in government, whether in women's policy agencies or elsewhere, and whether at national, subnational, or transnational levels of governance. There is now a significant comparative literature on 'state feminism' and continuing scholarly debate over whether the institutionalising of feminism weakens autonomous

women's movements or whether femocrats should be conceptualized as women's movement actors in their own right. (Sawer 2016)

It is interesting how the meaning of a word changed influenced by the change in the social perception of feminism.

Adding *she* to certain words is also used to signal female gender in words, as in the following examples:

(85)SheEO
(86)shero

In the example (85) (*she* + *CEO*) the word *she* has been chosen for the linguistic creation because of its phonetic similarity to the original sound of CEO. As for the example (86), the *she* element could have been chosen either for the sake of similarity of the word or, perhaps more probably, in order to substitute *he* part, associated with male sex, with a female singular pronoun *she*. This strategy has also been applied in other items, such as:

(87)queendom
(88)herstory

In which the *king* part from the word *kingdom* has been replaced with its female counterpart *queen* (87) and *his* from *history* has been replaced with *her* (88). Even if the male masculine possessive pronoun *his* is not a part of the etymology of the word *history*, this coincidental relation is put into use to create a word play on this lexical item.

Other wide-spread female-focused neologisms are

(89)Galentines,

which is a compound of *girl* + *Valentines*, which is a blend of *gal*, an informal form of the word *girl*, and *Valentines* – which is a name for a holiday that celebrates female friendship instead of romantic love, and

(90)girlboss,

which is a compound of *girl* + *boss*, which is another gendered neologism for women successful in the area of business. The word was coined with the idea that women should be celebrated as entrepreneurs because it is harder for them to achieve success in business than for men. Its early usage was defined by perceived empowerment. However, in the recent years, the concept has been used ironically, with the girlboss ideal receiving more criticism than praise. More on the use of *girlboss* is discussed in Chapter 6 of this paper.

5.2.3. Signalling male and female gender: concluding remarks

Gendered neologisms are words that add concept of gender to the meaning of originally gender-neutral words. The word formation processes engaged in the creation of these gendered neologisms are blending and compounding.

The most common words used for addition of male gender are *man, male* and *bro*, and for female gender *woman* and *female*. Adding a gender nuance to a word can create a word with a new meaning, for example *manscaping* (a blend of *man* + *landscaping*) has a meaning of trimming or shaving a man's body hair, combining the idea of modifying a landscape by altering plants with a male physic, where a man's body becomes a landscape, and body hair the plants. Gendered blends, however, do not only encode gender information but also additional connotations connected with attitudes and stereotypes regarding gender. The examples presented in this chapter show that although the gender aspect is not linguistically encoded in some elements, culturally (or socially), they are associated with male or female gender, which is revealed by the need of language users to coin new words that distinctly mark the opposition to the accepted norm, e.g., the users of the English language refer to a bag worn by a man as *man bag* (or an engagement ring as an *mangagement* ring) whereas women wear *bags* and *engagement rings*,. Those terms seem gender-neutral, but, as the current use of language reveals, they are not (as shown by the increasing trend of using their marked counterparts). Such linguistic change can also be an indicator of the changes in society – if there is a need for a term *manny*, it means there are more and more men who enter a traditionally female profession. Still though, such gendered neologisms indicate that, e.g. a man working as a nanny (as for *manny*), or a man wearing a bag (as for *man bag*) are not the norm but a deviation from it (this is also a counterargument against feminisation of the names of certain professions, see Section 3.8.), and that this is an ongoing process, and the change has not been completed and fully accepted.

Language not only reflects a change but can also be used to introduce it. Many of neologisms were coined in the spirit of gender equality, e.g. to fight against sexist behaviours or to increase female visibility in the domains dominated by men. Giving names to certain concepts carves a space for them in social awareness and allows people to talk about them. For example, sexist behaviours, before named, had not been treated as a serious problem. On the other hand, emphasising that a position in power is held by a woman is supposed to normalise such situations. However, not all gendered neologisms play their intended role as many of them are marked words, which may be seen as leading to deepening of gender stereotypes and gender division instead of erasing them. The analysis of a real function of gendered neologisms in discourse is presented in Chapter 6.

5.3. *Mansplain* explained

The vertiginous speed with which the neologisms are created and spread on the Internet has made it difficult to track the origins of every word. Nevertheless, the effort has been made to describe the linguistic journey of one of the most well-known gendered neologisms – *mansplain*. This section offers insight into the beginnings of the word *mansplain* and how it gained its popularity. Its success in consequence has possibly triggered the creation of numerous gendered neologisms.

5.3.1. The origins of *mansplain*

As Anne Curzan claims that "[e]ach word, in many ways, has its own story to tell, (…) the story of one word may be revealing about more than just that word's meaning and history" (Curzan 2003). Thus, in order to fully grasp the concept conveyed by the word and conduct an in-depth investigation of the word's meaning and usage, it is crucial to refer to its beginnings, even if the history of the word, as in this case, is not a long one.

The origins of the word *mansplain* are often linked to Rebecca Solnit's article "Men Who Explain Things" of April 13, 2008, in which the author describes an encounter with a man at a party, during which the man, upon learning that Solnit had recently published a book, proceeded to tell her about a very relevant book on the same topic. The man explained the journalist what the book was about without realizing that she was its author, even if she and her friend tried to tell him about that fact several times (see Solnit 2012). Helen Lewis writes that Solnit's essay has gained popularity because "so many women recognised an experience they have never been able to vocalise before: having their expertise instantly dismissed because of the lady-shaped package it came in" (Lewis 2014).

Although the author's personal experience of being patronized by a male friend perfectly fits the definition of *mansplain,* Solnit did not use the word explicitly in the article. The earliest recorded mention of the word is dated to May 21, 2008, when it was first used in a comment section of an article entitled "Women Who Hate Dean Hating Women Hating… wait" by a LiveJournal[17] user (Merriam-Webster 2018). The comment read

(91) Oh, gosh, thank you so much for mansplaining this to us!

and triggered a release of a collection of forum profile icons featuring references to *mansplaining.* On the following day, the term was used in a LiveJournal blog post titled "You're Such a Special Little Snowflake, It's a Wonder You Don't Melt in the Laundry Room…" in which the post's author describes an argument she had with another woman in the laundry room (92):

(92)'Maybe I'm not explaining myself well,' I swear this woman sounds like she's trying to 'mansplain' something to me, 'people who are doing more than 2 or 3 batches of clothes should leave one washer and dryer free so other people can use the machines'

The word *mansplain* continued to spread among Internet users and in April 2009 it appeared in a crowdsourced online dictionary for slang words and phrases the *Urban Dictionary* defined as follows:

(93)To explain in a patronizing manner, assuming total ignorance on the part of those listening. The mansplainer is often shocked and hurt when their mansplanation is

[17] LiveJournal is a social networking service that allows users to keep a blog, online diary or a journal.

> not taken as absolute fact, criticized or even rejected altogether. Named for a behavior commonly exhibited by male newbies on internet forums frequented primarily by women. Often leads to a flounce. Either sex can be guilty of mansplaining. (Urban Dictionary 2009)

On February 4, 2011, the same website highlighted it as the Urban Word of the Day. In 2014, Oxford English Dictionary also placed it on the runner-up position for their word of the year (Steinmetz 2014). The word had been gaining more and more popularity up to the point where official dictionaries added it to their collection.

Judith Bridges writes:

> *Mansplain* comes from the realities of women consistently feeling they are interrupted by and talked down to by men. Clearly, a shared frustration of women who feel their abilities, voices, and ideas are eclipsed, disregarded – or even stolen and accredited to a man, as described by another gendered portmanteau, *bropropriation* (*bro* + *appropriation*) – has amassed enough cyber voices to collaboratively craft and circulate new vocabulary to describe these experiences and how it shapes women's lives and careers. *Mansplain* and other similar wordplay such as *manterrupt*, *manspread*, and *manologue* expediently and cleverly compress the meaning of two words into one, providing a label for which these gendered social phenomena can be called. (Bridges 2017, p. 95)

It functions both as a verb *to mansplain* and as a noun *mansplaining,* and also has its derivatives, such as *mansplainer* denoting the doer of the action. The word *mansplain* has been popularised through the mainstream media and has been used in the context of online discussions about feminism and gender politics until the present day.

It is noteworthy that the word *man* in neologisms such as *mansplaining* carries more than just information about gender — a person who *mansplains* something pertains to a socially privileged group, which motivates his (or her, as it is the case in the example sentence (92)) condescending behaviour. The meaning of *mansplain* is discussed in more depth in the following section.

5.3.2. The meaning of *mansplain*

The analysis of gendered words and their use in texts and in the metadiscourse about what these words mean in dictionaries can give rise to the considerations on what these words reveal about speakers' attitudes about genders (Curzan 2003).

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word *mansplain* as:

(94) to explain something to a woman in a condescending way that assumes she has no knowledge about the topic (Merriam-Webster 2020)

In the Cambridge English Dictionary one can find the following definition:

(95) to explain something to someone in a way that suggests that they are stupid; used especially when a man explains something to a woman that she already understands (Cambridge English Dictionary 2020)

Macmillan explains that it shows disapproval and is used:

(96) when a man mansplains something, he explains it to someone, usually a woman, in a way that shows he believes he knows more about it than she does just because he is a man (Macmillan Dictionary 2020)

Other dictionary definitions that can be found are the following:

(97)(of a man) to explain (something) to a woman in a patronizing or condescending way (Collins English Dictionary 2020)

and

(98)(of a man) explain (something) to someone, typically a woman, in a manner regarded as condescending or patronizing (Oxford University Press 2020)

The definitions cited above refer to the gender of interlocutors and this was indeed included in the preliminary meaning of the word – that *mansplaining* is an action performed typically by men. Nowadays, however, after the word has been in use for some time, the distinction that this behaviour is typical for men only towards women is not that clear. In other words, the behaviour behind this word is not constrained by sex and therefore is not only used to refer to how men behave.

The dictionaries, however, agree on its informal nature and that this word does not suit formal context, as it has not yet detached from its origins and is still considered as a word of the internet slang.

As for February 2021, the word has 43 definitions on the *Urban Dictionary*, of which the most popular one, i.e. the one that has received the biggest number of votes from the website users, is:

(99) Essentially when a man assumes a woman (sometimes a man) lacks knowledge in an area where she (or he) is known to be an expert (Urban Dictionary 2021)

The newest definition (99) takes into consideration the fact that *mansplaining* is not only restricted to gender. It is more about power relations between people, condescending behaviour and lack of acknowledgement of someone's expertise.

Furthermore, the root word of this neologism, namely -*splaining*, also made its way into online debates concerning racial relations and identity politics at large through its derivative terms, e.g. *whitesplaining*, *ablesplaining, femsplaining/womansplaining*. *Splaining* can be defined as a form of condescension in which a member of a privileged group explains something to a member of a marginalised group, as if the former knew more about it than the latter. Thus, in the context of racial relations, *whitesplaining* would hold a meaning of the act of a Caucasian person explaining to audiences of colour things in a patronizing way, most likely connected to sociopolitical events or the nature of racism.

The words *femsplaining* and *womansplaining* have probably been a direct answer to the concept of *mansplaining* and refer to a reversed situation in which it is a woman who mistakenly believes that she knows more about a certain topic and explains to a man things that he already knows. These words, however, have not been as widely spread as *mansplaining* because the prevailing stereotype is that it is men who are more assertive. Moreover, the meanings of *femsplaining* and *womansplaining* are in contrast with the newly gained dimension of *mansplain* as a word which goes beyond describing stereotypical practices of men.

5.3.3. The use of *mansplain*

The lexical item *mansplain* (the portmanteau of *man* and *explain*) is a word that has gained recognition on social media. It is typically used by women to talk about their experience with men speaking to women in a patronising manner. However, the analysis of how it is used in social media discourse has revealed a wider range of uses and meanings for this word (Bridges 2017). It is not uncommon that in the Internet communication neologisms are often disassembled. For example, the word *troll*, which originally had a meaning of provoking someone on the Internet for amusement, nowadays is used to denote disagreeable online writing (Hart 2014, as cited in Bridges 2017). Similarly, "*mansplaining* has morphed from a useful descriptor of a real problem in contemporary gender dynamics to an increasing catchall expression that seems to be inflaming the Internet gender wats more than clarifying them" (Hart 2014, as cited in Bridges 2017, p. 95).

In her research, Bridges (2017) analyses how men and women use the word *mansplain*. In the examples extracted from Twitter and Facebook she discovers that 70,6% of posts with *mansplain* have been written by women talking to or about men who, in their opinion, performed mansplaining, and the remaining 29,4% have been written by men who refer to their own language or discuss their opposition against the word's existence.

Bridges continues by stating that when using the word *mansplain* women perform many different actions "such as pointing out an instance of mansplaining they experienced first-hand or witnessed as a third party, predicting a mansplanation in response to their post, or sarcastically requesting men to mansplain to them" (Bridges 2017, p. 97). With regard to metapragmatics, the authors of analysed language samples describe the use of language as dependable on gender and styles of men's talk, which are described in certain contexts as undesirable or unacceptable.

Mansplain is both used retrospectively as a comment on an event (usually a message) that happened earlier in time or a comment on prospective events — meaning the authors preemptively set forth regulations on anticipated responses from men (Bridges 2017). Bridges also argues that by labelling an action as *mansplaining* women declare that they feel certain about their knowledge on the discussed topic and any further comment would be done in a false need to explain things to them. Bridges identifies other metapragmatic functions of *mansplain* – women often use it sarcastically when they portray themselves as a senseless female, requesting an explanation. Satire, i.e.

exaggerated elements of reality, is an element used to draw attention to a social reality and is increasingly prevalent in media (Stewart 2016). In this context, using the word *mansplain* mocks the stereotype that men know more than women, especially about the things that are considered to be strictly connected to being a woman, e.g. pregnancy. The word is also used to label the act of mansplaining as absurd (Bridges 2017).

When it comes to men using the word *mansplain*, as it is a metalinguistic word, if a man wants to comment on the use of it, he may risk exposing himself to being accused of trying to mansplain the word *mansplain* (Bridges 2017). Bridges argues that "as the experience of being mansplained is categorized with other experiences primarily lived by women, the topic of mansplaining is also thereby deemed a forbidden topic for men to discuss, at least with any hint of confidence" (Bridges 2017, p. 59). *Mansplain* takes on two roles — it can be used to describe a linguistic act in which men repress women but also it can be used by women to silence men in a discussion. Thus, it can be a disclaimer or preemptive preservation of face.

Furthermore, men also use the word as a sarcastic commentary on their comment. Through choosing the word *mansplain* instead of *explain,* a man show that he recognizes the issue that the word is meant to describe. Also, the sarcasm indicates that mansplaining is not what they mean to do, *viz. mansplain* is used to perform stake inoculations, which is a strategy to "minimize the risk of being held accountable for one's actions" (Hall et al. 2013, p. 231). Nevertheless, the word *mansplain* can be used in the opposite way, namely, to highlight the relation of interlocutor's identities based on gender — women in fact know less than men and an explanation is needed. Bridges (2017) argues that the use of *mansplain* can be treated as a rhetorical strategy.

The researcher concludes that men evaluate the word as unnecessary and hostile, but some of them use it to show that they are aware of the problem and want to manage their behaviour. On the other hand, women use the word to challenge the stereotype of women knowing less than men. By employing a playful or sarcastic tone women make their critiques of society through humorous linguistic inventiveness. Bridges (2017) points out, however, that even if the word is used with the intention of condemning the stereotype, it also contributes to a bigger narrative of women feeling ignored. She also attributes another social role the word – of prompting reflexive discussions on the topic of the pragmatics of their own and others' language, together with stipulating the discussion on the topic of existence of sexism and normative gender roles.

Another study concerning the use of *mansplain* analyses it in the form of a hashtag (see Lutzky & Lawson 2019). It is not uncommon for gendered neologisms to appear in this form (see Section 4.3.). Lutzky and Lawson (2019) have performed a corpus linguistic analysis of three lexical blends in the form of hashtags, namely *#mansplaining*, *#manspreading* (*man* + *spreading*) and *#manterruption* (*man* + *interruption*). All three words are relatively new linguistic formations which “have been co-opted as a shorthand method of highlighting men’s (socially problematic) behavior” (Lutzky & Lawson 2019, p. 1). The terms *manterruption* and *mansplaining are* related to interactional features and the word *manspreading* focuses on physical behaviour of men. The hashtag *#mansplaining*, out of all three, is the most frequently used.

Lutzky and Lawson (2019) analyse English tweets collected from November 2016 to April 2017 which include at least one of the three hashtags in order to see how these hashtags fit into the landscape of the overt social policing of gender norms in online spaces. Lutzky and Lawson (2019) posit that these hashtags are primarily intended to draw attention to male behaviour that is considered socially problematic act, i.e. they are used as a means of policing gendered behaviour. Lutzky and Lawson’s research supports Bridge’s (2017) claim that the term *mansplaining* is often used sarcastically. The researchers add that it mostly appears in the three-word cluster *thanks for #mansplaining*. Additionally, their analysis has also discovered a notable disagreement about whether these objectionable behaviours happen in real life or whether marking these behaviours as typically “male” is correct. The objections regarding the use of these terms have mostly been voiced by men (Lutzky & Lawson 2019).

Mansplain has started as one of the neologisms that describe unwanted (initially considered as typically male) behaviour, a word which has given women the opportunity to describe their experience of patronizing and belittling someone’s intelligence due to their gender. From this point of view, it can be compared to the word *sexism*. Moreover, together with other *-splain* neologisms, it includes an element of judgement, condemning the type of behaviour it describes. The question that remains is: is *mansplain* about gender? If we look at women as a group which is generally given less power in patriarchal world than men than the answer is: yes. However, it does not mean that in specific cases it will be a woman who patronizes another woman (or a man). Therefore, the meaning of the word *mansplain* in specific cases can be used regardless of gender. The reference to men in this neologism is rather a reference to stereotypical relations between genders and more privileged position of men in society. Those who oppose such generalisation are offered a gender-neutral linguistic blend *condesplain* (*condescending* + *explaining*), which in more literal way portrays the intended meaning.

The progress and tendencies in the use of the word *mansplain* are discussed in Section 6.2.2.

5.4. Gendered neologisms and gender relations

This section discusses the connection between social representation of each gender and gendered neologisms. The analysis of gendered neologisms offers an insight into current gender-based norms and social values within the framework of society as a whole, as well as of individual approaches and experiences. The study of these new lexical units may allow for a better understanding of how world, and together with it, society's perspective, changes and how speakers, both men and women, adopt to these changes.

5.4.1. Categorization of man-based neologisms

Foubert and Lemmens (2018) analyse the semantic structure of lexical blends with the word *man*. They collect and categorise the words starting with the lexeme *man*, which refers to either a generic or man-specific meaning. The results of their analysis of the man-specific neologisms indicate that the words are gender specific rather than having a generic meaning, as they mainly refer to domains typically associated with women. Foubert and Lemmens argue that the neologisms can be labelled according to four motivations for their creation:

- (re)appropriation of domains which are typically associated with women (e.g. *man purse* a purse for men)
- reinforcement of differences (e.g. *man cave* a room for men only)
- confirmation of stereotypes (e.g. *man science* a branch of knowledge available to men only)

- naming undesirable male behaviours (e.g. *mansplain* man explaining things to women in a condescending way)

The researchers posit that the last group of words have been created and used “mainly in attempt to change” (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 1) the undesirable behaviours stereotypically attributed to men. Foubert and Lemmens’ research also shows that the neologisms most likely to be coined are those reinforcing differences and confirming stereotypes. However, these words are less likely to be diffused in comparison with those naming undesirable male behaviours.

The addition of *man* to a word when coining a new word presents a particular representation of each gender and of relations between them. Foubert and Lemmens (2018, p. 6-7) identify nine relations through which *man* in gendered neologisms specifies the male aspect. These relations are divided into three groups: *male-oriented*, *female-oriented* and *neutral*. Starting with male-oriented relations, these are:

- *exclusion of women* — these are neologisms naming phenomena, behaviours, items etc. that specifically exclude the link with women. The given example is *man-flu* which, from definition, cannot affect women.
- *reinforcement of the male aspect* — in other words, emphasising male aspect, as in *man beard*, which is supposed to display manliness.
- *majority of men* — neologisms denoting entities that apply more to men than to women, e.g. *manconomics*, defined as “economics classroom (…) that is mostly dominated by men (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 8).
- *male explanation* — neologisms naming a behaviour caused by the fact the doer of an action is a man. The example of this is the most well-known gendered neologism *mansplaining*.
- *neutral reference to men* — used as in *of a man*.
- *male equivalence* — neologisms designating the male version of an entity, e.g. *manorexia* (*man* + *anorexia*)

Looking at the last male-oriented domain on this list, it is noteworthy that some of these male equivalents show indirect link of certain phenomena, behaviours, items etc. with female gender, as in the provided example — there is no biological reason nor semantic one to link anorexia only with women and yet a "male version" of a disease is named.

Next to male-oriented neologisms, there are two female-oriented identified by Foubert and Lemmens, namely:

- *neutral reference to women* — it is how Foubert and Lemmens call a situation in which neologisms do not refer to the typical male aspect.
- *female equivalence* — referring to neologisms designating stereotypically male aspects of a female entity, e.g. *manceps* (*man* + *biceps*)

Again, female equivalents, the same as male equivalents, point to what is perceived as male, as in the example of *manceps*, which shows that muscled arms are attributed to men rather than women.

The last described relation is the neutral. In this group Foubert and Lemmens place:

- *man*-neologisms that can be used about both men and women while being man-specific, e.g. "*man stoopid* (sic) designating an act of stupidity that typically only men do, but which can be performed by both men and women" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 7)

The *man*-based neologisms have been categorised according to their structure and meaning. As for the structure, the common creation patterns of *man*-neologisms are compounds of two constituents, e.g. *man brain*, *man cave* or *man-flu* and blends, e.g. *manologue* (*man* + *monologue*), *manstache* (*man* + *moustache*) or *manteraction* (*man* + *interaction*), with the former being slightly more common than the latter (794 compounds and 561 blends).

Nevertheless, the research is more focused on semantic features rather than the words' morphology. Therefore, the first step of the analysis has been to divide the words according to their being generic or gender-specific. The researchers have discovered that a significant majority of words have a specific meaning rather than a generic one — 1 374 out of 1 403 neologisms from the sample have been categorised as man-specific and only 29 as man-generic. Foubert and Lemmens conclude that the generic meaning is used for two purposes: to refer to hybrids of a man with objects or creatures, e.g. *mantar* (*man* +

guitar; half human, half guitar), *mansheep* (half human, half sheep), *manster* (*man* + *monster*; half human, half monster), or to invented entities from a human origin such as *manstone* (a man-made stone).

Next, the neologisms have been analysed for their relations with socially prevalent stereotypes concerning gender. The assumption that the researchers have made is that *man*-neologisms are man-specific because refer to entities stereotypically associated with female gender. That is why they have decided to refer Schmid's (2003) corpus-based work on male and female topics in discourse, to which Schmid refers as *domains.* Thus, female domains are the topics that are predominant in female discourse and regarded as stereotypically associated with women, and male domains are those topics that are predominant in male discourse and regarded as stereotypically associated with men. Other domains, which Schmid has not included in his article, are labelled as neutral. Foubert and Lemmens classify the concepts into three categories, namely female domains, male domains and neutral domains, excluding neologisms designating women as the main referent (e.g. *man book* - a woman's romantic novel) and retaining only these neologisms where female domains refer to men, which is presented in Table 6.

The researchers argue that the fact that 55,2% of the investigated *man*-neologisms referred to female domains and to 44,8% to non-female domains proves their initial hypothesis that these neologisms designate concepts which are typically associated with women. However, it is noteworthy that the difference is not significant and their hypothesis still seems questionable, especially in the situation in which the sample has been a quarter of all words found (the researchers have estimated the number of *man*-neologisms to be around 5 700 and investigated 1 403 of them). Furthermore, later in their comment to a quantitative analysis, Foubert and Lemmens state that "[e]ach domain and relation bring their own nuances and distinctions, to the extent that the only thing that appears to be common to all these *man*-neologisms is their form" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 15), which proves that this quantitative approach and domain framework has not proved to be very insightful for this analysis. Furthermore, the material in *Urban Dictionary* has also been deemed unsuitable for conventional quantitative analysis (Swerdfeger 2012).

Table 6. Distribution of domains (with male-oriented and neutral relations) (adapted from Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 8-9)

Domains		**N**	**%**
FEMALE	BODY AND HEALTH	434	34,1%
	CLOTHING	51	4,0%
	FEELING	23	1,8%
	FOOD AND DRINK	32	2,5%
	HOME	17	1,3%
	RELATIONSHIP	145	11,4%
	Subtotal FEMALE domains	**702**	**55,2%**
MALE	ABSTRACT NOTIONS	6	0,5%
	ENTERTAINMENT	64	5,0%
	WORK	14	1,1%
	Subtotal MALE domains	**84**	**6,6%**
NEUTRAL	BEHAVIOUR	375	29,5%
	INVENTION	15	1,2%
	SEX	95	7,5%
	Subtotal NEUTRAL domains	**485**	**38,2%**
TOTAL		**1 271**	**100%**

Finally, a quantitative analysis does not provide answers to the questions why such neologisms are coined and why, as the number of such words existing indicates, English speakers are so eager to create and use them. That is why Foubert and Lemmens turn to qualitative techniques. The analysis has led to identifying the four main motivations mentioned at the beginning of this section. These motivations will be discussed in more detail in the following part.

5.4.2. Motivations behind man-based neologisms

The first motivation for coining man-neologisms suggested by Foubert and Lemmens is the reappropriation of female domains into the male ones. Neologisms classified to this group "project an exact correspondence between what is usually associated with women and which now is to be associated with men" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 10). These neologisms have been coined to fulfil a role of denoting a "male version" of an entity which is stereotypically associated with women and importantly, without altering it to be "more masculine". The examples of the neologisms given by the researchers are *mankini* (a bikini for men), *manpurse* (a purse for men), *manden name* (*man* + *maiden name*) or *manstress* (*man* + *mistress*).

Although the reappropriation may appear as aiming at erasing gender differences it is far from being such. The authors challenge this view as well by giving several reasons. First, the *man*-neologisms refer to female domains emphasising the differences rather than erasing them. A good example of this is previously discussed *manorexia* — the act of inventing this word and/or using it highlights the view that *anorexia* is a women's disease because it is more typical for women to worry obsessively about their weight.

Another problem with the proposed interpretation of the reappropriation serving as a means of removing the differences between male and female is the fact that some of the analysed gendered neologisms focus on emphasising the male aspect within a female domain, e.g. *man-sturizer* (*man* + *moisturizer*) would be a name for a face product that is not "too feminine" for a man to use it, because caring about your physical appearance is not considered manly. Within this group, there are also neologisms that focus on distinguishing physical features associated with women (for example *manboob*).

Foubert and Lemmens (2018) agree that some *man*-neologisms can be coined for the purpose of an actual change in what is male and what is female. However, many of these neologisms denote only a partial correspondence (as in *manorexia*), foreground the male aspect (as in *male-sturizer*) or focus on physical features. These examples, hiding behind the façade of reappropriation, seem rather to reinforce the differences.

This remark leads to the second motivation proposed by Foubert and Lemmens (2018) which is the reinforcement of differences, in most cases stemming from stereotypes about men and women, that are prevalent in society. Within this category, the researchers identify different strategies to achieve the reinforcement.

The first strategy is the reinforcement through focusing on what distinguishes men from women, such as male sexual organs (e.g. *man stick*, *man region*) or other biological qualities, with hairiness as the second most frequently mentioned characteristic (e.g. *mansweater*, *manscarf*).

Another area of interest within this category is hierarchy or superiority (with men depicted both as a superior or as an inferior gender), as well as the exclusion of women. e.g. *man right*, which is defined as a believe that a man's point of view is always correct when arguing with a woman. Many of the neologisms discussed by Foubert and Lemmens oppose men to women, providing a definition of manhood. A recurrent notion present in the definitions of *man*-neologisms is superiority and/or excess, which seems to be a prototypical part when defining manhood (opposed to womanhood).

Interestingly, in the FOOD AND DRINK domain, which has been assigned as a female one, there appear neologisms that highlight the male aspect, through the emphasis on quantity and strength (of alcoholic drinks), for example *man bread* would be defined as a very big bread, *man-sip* as a very big sip, and *martini* (*man* + *martini*) a strong alcoholic drink. In other words, the emphasised stereotype is that eating and drinking a lot is what "real men" do. In addition, men are supposed to be not very skilled at cooking, which is indicated by the neologisms *man-slop*, referring to easily made food, together with other house chores, which stereotypically should be performed by women (e.g. *manchore*).

As these examples show, *man*-neologisms aim at portraying men (or rather stereotypical masculinity) but at the same time give a contrastive image of a woman. Some of them only make sense in reference to women, e.g. *man chair* designating a place where a man sits when their partner is devoting herself to a stereotypically female activity— shopping. Another "unmanly" domain to which *man*-neologisms refer is the domain of FEELINGS. The neologisms show that, stereotypically, men do not express emotions, e.g. *manblink* designates what men would do in situations in which women would cry.

Foubert and Lemmens argue that "while women are not the main referent of *man*-neologisms, they are still typically evoked and depicted in typical 'female' actions, such as cooking or shopping" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 14).

The discussed neologisms give an image of a stereotypical "manly behaviour". However, they do not give an example of feminine one. These neologisms are a reflection of stereotypes and through them women are portrayed in opposition to men – there is not, however, much of stereotypical femininity, which can be associated with gentleness, empathy, beauty, grace (see Kite 2001, Thomas 2001, Vetterling-Braggin 1982), but rather as the ones who are skilled at house chores (because men are not) or the ones that are weak (because men are supposed to be physically strong) etc. One may look for the reason for this in the fact that the domains associated with both genders are different and when we talk about men, we comment on their achievements a when we talk about women, we mention their beauty (see Holmes 1996, James 1998), which is less valued in today's world and is not a determinant of a successful life.

In contrast to the two preceding motivations identified by Foubert and Lemmens, the neologisms classified to the next group are man-specific and refer to male domains, namely ABSTRACT NOTIONS, WORK and ENTERTAINMENT. These neologisms are coined with the intention of confirming the existing stereotypes. Foubert and Lemmens find that these strategies are parallel to those discussed in the cases of reappropriation and reinforcement — they can highlight masculine aspect or exclude women from certain domains, and sometimes appeal to hierarchy or superiority, e.g. *man science* — denoting the "fact" that there are certain actions, for example connected to electronics, that can only be performed by men because of their ability to solve problems, *mancation* (*man* + *vacation*) — type of vacation "only men can have" with "typical male activities" such as sports, camping, gambling etc., or *man brain*, as opposed to *woman brain*, which supposedly is superior to the latter and has abilities that the latter does not, such as mathematical skills, logical skills, spatial orientation, etc., i.e. stereotypically connected with men.[18] *Mancation* is evidently formed using the "by analogy" strategy to mirror the structure of earlier formed words, such as *staycation* (vacation spent at home). The authors point out that some of the neologisms as discussed above again contain a reference to women, "sometimes quite directly" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 15) as they put it. These "women-targeting neologisms" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 15) involve the domain of BODY AND HEALTH (e.g. *manceps* referring to muscular arms that can be considered unfeminine) and a neutral domain of BEHAVIOUR, e.g. *mantality* (*man* + *mentality*) which refers to "a masculine perspective adopted by women usually associated with dominance or entitlement" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 15);

[18] Baron-Cohen (2003) would be one of the examples of authors writing about male and female brains and connected stereotypes. Although he stresses that there are men with female brains, women with male brains and individuals of both sexes with "balanced" brains, his assumption is that there are more women with female brains and more men with male brains and his theory seems to be based on nothing more than gender stereotypes.

manbitious (*man* + *ambitious*), an adjective referring to a woman that tries and does "things that only a man can do" (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 15).

The question that comes to mind is whether the words were coined because of a true belief in concepts they designate or whether they rather are humorous in nature. Regardless of the answer to this question, they are created based on prevalent stereotypes and the existence of these neologisms proves the presence of such stereotypes in society, even if most (if not all) of these stereotypes appear ridiculous.

Foubert and Lemmens comment on their findings:

> Taken together, the three motivations presented above (…) reveal that across and within domains *man*-neologisms are characterised by a considerable semantic heterogeneity and seeming contradictions: women acting like men versus men acting like women or men being attracted to women versus repulsed by women. Each domain and relation bring their own nuances and distinctions, to the extent that the only thing that appears to be common to all these *man*-neologisms is their form. Nevertheless, minimally, they do reveal a general and common need to define or reassert gender. Even though some neologisms aim at achieving an equality of domains, overall, the specific nature of *man*-neologisms does not lead towards fewer differences. In addition, the strategies used to (re)assert these differences are fairly similar, across different domains. Despite the predominant gender-specific meaning, not all *man*-neologisms reinforce and/or introduce new distinctions. (Foubert and Lemmens 2018, p. 15)

Together with the reinforcement and confirmation of stereotypes (see Section 3.4. for a discussion on stereotypes), *man*-based neologisms are created and employed in discourse to bring to the fore, and often denounce, typical male behaviours. The example of this is the word *mansplain* (*man* + *explain*), discussed in detail in Section 5.3. It is probably the most widely known *man*-neologism, the first to enter official English dictionaries and much likely the one which triggered the creation of a myriad of gendered neologisms (not only *man*-based). However, Foubert and Lemmens do not give it any special attention in their analysis, placing it together with other *man*-neologisms that denounce how men behave towards women, e.g. *manshush*, which refers to a tendency of men to silence a woman when she is making her point and *manologue* (*man* + *monologue*), which refers to another conversational tendency of men to monopolise a conversation with a woman.[19]

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[19] The tendency of men to dominate a conversation have been investigated and proved by linguists, e.g., Spender (1980), Leet-Pellegrini (1980). See Section 3.6.

5.4.3. Man-based neologisms: concluding remarks

To sum up, the *man*-neologisms project an image of a stereotypical manly behaviour at the same time not giving an example of feminine one. Through these neologisms, femininity is portrayed as something opposed to masculinity. However, they do not say much about stereotypical traits of femininity explicitly. Spender (1980) warns against such polarization of male and female as within a patriarchal order female will be equal to anti-male, which means it will always be inferior.

A different approach to the one that has been proposed by Foubert and Lemmens (2018) would be to look at the perlocutive function of such neologisms. As Cameron (2007) points out, domains that are stereotypically assigned to men appear to be more attractive in today's world, therefore a question appears whether there is a desire to reappropriate typical feminine domains, e.g., lack of physical strength or indecisiveness. The word *mansplain* has become popular mostly because of its connection to the gender equality movement.

On the other hand, many of these *man*-based neologisms are offensive to women and aggravate the problem of unequal treatment of genders, even if, when looking at the definitions, it can be said that they are meant to be used in a humorous way. As it has been discussed in Section 3.5., humour can be used to disguise prejudicial expressions under a façade of a joke.

The reappropriation of domains is one of the nine relations proposed by Foubert and Lemmens (2018). In their paper, the scientists mention only (re)appropriation of female territories by men, as they discuss *man*-based neologisms. One of the examples of such (re)appropriation, however not discussed in the study, would be the neologism *manny*, which is a linguistic blend of the words *man* and *nanny*. Male nannies are an increasing trend and there seem to be more and more agencies with men as babysitters (Hosie 2016). In the article about male nannies, one can find the following statement: "They hope to prove men are just as good at childcare as women" (Hosie 2016).

It does not mean, however, that women do not wish to (re)appropriate domains typically associated with men. This phenomenon has also its representation in gendered neologisms. The stereotypical division of occupations, discussed in detail in Section 3.8., links women mostly with caregiving jobs, such as primary school teachers, nurses, carers or personnel staff, whereas men are supposed to be natural creators and leaders, and are seen to be more suitable for working as engineers, architects, bankers or lawyers. The careers categorised as typically female are of less social status (and also lower paid). These roles assigned to women are not the roles that are given much power.

It is reflected in gendered neologisms such us *SheEO* (*she* + *CEO*), *girlboss*, *womanager* (*woman* + *manager*) *femtrepreneur* (*fem* + *entrepreneur*) or *womentrepreneur* (woman + entrepreneur). Such neologisms are meant to put femininity and women in place of power. On the one hand, the neologisms can be seen as a way to "mark the territory", to highlight the presence of female gender among CEOs and entrepreneurs. On the other, it is not clear whether these creations do in fact work against stereotypes that women are not competent leaders. One may ask, why does a woman have to be called a womentrepreneur and not just an entrepreneur? Does it mean it is not a woman's place to be a CEO? This seems to depend on an interpretation by an individual, whether she wants to use this label and considers it empowering or the opposite of that, as they perpetuate the idea of men being the standard (more on the feminist point of view on maleness as norm in Section 3.3. and Section 3.7.). It seems that there are more and more voices that condemn the use of gendered neologisms marking the female presence on positions of power because of their markedness that can lead to an unintended presentation of a female leader as deviation from the (in this case, male) norm.

To answer those and other questions regarding the use of gendered neologisms it is required to look at them in context. The following chapter presents corpus-assisted research on gendered neologisms aiming at discovering in what context they are used in the English language.

Chapter 6: The use of gendered neologisms

This chapter presents results of a corpus-assisted analysis of two types of gendered neologisms that seem especially interesting in the context of gender equality and women's rights, (re)appropriation of domains and naming undesirable behaviours. However, unlike in case of *man*-based neologisms, the neologisms chosen for the analysis are motivated by female appropriation of domains typically associated with men. The analysis intends to answer the questions: (1) are these words used outside of communication on social media?; (2) how are they used (with what meaning and what purpose)?; (3) do the motivations for their creation are equal with the motivations with which the words are used in context?

6.1. The study of gendered neologisms in context: an introduction

The research presented in this chapter uses the tools of corpus linguistics to analyse how such words work in context. The corpus entries that have been verified include one of the following neologisms:

- SheEO
- girlboss
- womentrepreneur,

which can be classified as neologisms of (re)appropriation of domains typically associated with men, and:

-

- mansplaining
- manspreading
- manterrupting,

which are words naming undesirable male behaviour.

These two motivations are of special importance in the context of gender equality and women's rights as their underlying aim is to introduce an actual change in gender relations by denouncing certain tendencies and praising other.

SheEO, *girlboss*, *womentrepreneur* are three recently created gendered words that initially were coined to increase visibility of women in executive positions. Even if the initial purpose may be erasing gender differences, this interpretation of their role is often challenged (see Section 5.4.3.)

On the other hand, *mansplaining*, *manspreading* and *manterrupting*, were added to the English language with the aim of highlighting, and often denouncing, certain male behaviours.

The main question asked is with what functions these words are used in modern English. For this purpose, the NOW corpus has been used as the source of data. Each entry from the corpus from January 2018 to June 2021 has been analysed individually. The corpus used for the analysis is based on news articles published on the Internet that come from two sources: Bing News and the search on over 1 000 websites to find new articles that have appeared every day. The corpus tracks the frequency of words since 2010. As it is updated every day, the corpus is considered a suitable tool for analysing recent linguistic creations, as which gendered neologisms can be considered. The neologisms have been analysed in context to establish how and with what meaning they are used.

6.2. Gendered neologisms (re)appropriating male domains

6.2.1. SheEO

The search in the NOW corpus for *SheEO* has shown that most often, in 151 entries of the total of 156, this lexical item is used as the name of a company that is a non-profit founder for women-led businesses. These entries have not been qualified for this analysis.

Nonetheless, the word also has been used in other contexts. For example, it plays a role of a label:

(100) Co-hosted by Much/E! host Tyrone Edwards and ETALK reporter and E! host, Chloe Wilde, award-winning singer-songwriter, speaker, **SheRO** & **SheEO**, Jully Black, and Canadian TV host of La Voix Jr Maripier!

(101) You're curious, we're curious, so we asked her for a sit-down to find out more about the kind of **SheEO** she is and looks to become. Su-Mae also shares some great business tips that will help those looking to launch their own product.

(102) Even Broad City did its part for the girlboss cause, with Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson's slacker alter egos squealing their way through a guest appearance from candidate Clinton. Then Hillary lost and #MeToo came for Harvey Weinstein, a major donor to Clinton and other Dems, clearing up any confusion over who still ran the world (predatory boys). Meanwhile, a number of highly visible "**SheEO**" types fell from grace.

In the example (100) *SheEO* is used as a label together with a different gendered neologisms *SheRO*, which is a wordplay that aims at adding female gender to the word *hero*.

In the example (101) it is clear from the context that the person to which the label refers is a woman, therefore, the argument of simply announcing female gender of the person is not valid. In this context *SheEO* is mostly used for its connotation, in this case a positive one, of an accomplished woman who can meander in the world of men. In contrast, the example (102) presents the word as something ridicule more than empowering.

The use of this marked label emphasizes shifts the focus to the fact the receiver of the label is a woman. It also puts into question gender neutrality of the word *CEO*, but also presents a woman in power as something uncommon. Depending on the interpretation of the word, it can be used as a positive or negative label.

One instance of using *SheEO* in context of corporate gender equality has been registered:

(103) Jenny Shipley has been particularly active over the last year as the chair of Global Women NZ, which promotes businesswomen. Likewise, “feminist

capitalist" Theresa Gattung is leading the **SheEO** movement to promote more women CEOs.

The word has also appeared in a metalinguistic context, in a discussion on the recent popularity of gendered neologisms, where reasons for the popularity of these gendered terms are discussed:

(104) She is a #**Girlboss**. She is a mumtrepreneur. She is a **SheEO**. He is a manterrupter. A mansplainer. (…) What is it with the growing popularity of overtly gendered neologisms? From chick flicks to dick pics, from boss babes to guyliner, there has been a proliferation of his or hers portmanteaux.

The analysis has shown that the word *SheEO* can be used both in a positive or negative context. Taking into consideration the low frequency of use, the conclusion is that the word has not entered semi-formal English of online articles. It mostly serves as a label and is more popular on social media in form of a hashtag than in articles. The meaning it carries vary – it can show either praise for a woman who was able to achieve much in the world dominated by men or as a mockery, to show that we do not take someone seriously.

6.2.3. Girlboss

Another gendered neologism that has been created in the spirit of female empowerment and with an initial function of increasing visibility of women in executive positions is *girlboss*. The word seems to be more popular than *SheEO* – the search in the corpus for the period January 2018 – June 2021 has brought 491 valid examples.

The first conclusion is that the meaning of the word has undergone a change in the last couple of years. In the corpus entries from 2018 and early 2019, the word *girlboss* is used with different connotations. It mostly referred to an aspirational figure of the 21st century:

(105) The modern woman knows and identifies herself as a **girlboss**. She makes no apologies when making decisions. Her independence doesn't mean that

she is afraid to ask for assistance and guidance. She knows the importance of a different opinion.

(106) Especially if you are a **girlboss** with creative pursuits, this is the best time to get the hairdo of your dreams. However, the decision of new hair makeover should be taken based on your face shape, hair texture and maintenance time. Here is the top hairstyle for the girlboss below age 30 to rock the meetings and a boring business day!

The word has also been used as a label for a female business owner, often with connotations of being independent, successful, decisive – qualities stereotypically associated with men:

(107) Mala Bryan, the **girlboss** behind Kwéyòl, puts so much passion into her meals, and prepares everything with the highest amount of love.

(108) Bidemi may be pint-sized but the petite **girlboss** certainly packs a punch. She has single-handedly built one of the most prestigious PR firms in Lagos, LSF PR, a results-driven PR agency that provides the perfect balance between local knowledge and global expertise, which boasts clients including Remy Martin, Nissan and Huge Boss.

In the example (109) the word *girlboss* is a label used by the speaker about herself, again with positive connotations:

(109) In secret I built a YouTube career, and never received a penny from it for the first 4 years! But I poured my heart into it and now consider myself to be my own kind of '**girlboss'**. As a self employed business woman on this journey I wanted to understand how to 'MAKE IT' but found that no one wanted to really share 'HOW' especially when it came to running and growing a social media/digital based business.

The idea of independent working woman is evoked with the importance of “making it”, i.e. achieving success in business, emphasized.

Furthermore, as it can be seen in the example below (110), the neologism can be used to refer to certain attitude rather than only a woman in executive positions or a symbol of a positive change in capitalism:

(110) What's wrong with the **girlboss**, real or fictional, as an aspirational ideal without seeming to scold women for embodying traits we traditionally associate with men.

However, from the late 2019, continuously until June 2021 this gendered neologism started appearing in a negative context where its pejorative connotations are explained:

(111) Coined by the founder of a fast fashion company that sold cheap feminist slogan tees while mistreating the women who made them and then filed for bankruptcy, “**girlboss**” could have been a positive message but rapidly devolved into a cynical term for women who acquire a large amount of money, status and power by using the language of gender equality to further their own career.

(112) **Girlboss**: an unabashedly dominant, unapologetically feminine woman defined by boundless ambition, for whom glorious ends often justified ugly means.

(113) The archetype was aspirational; even if she harmed other women in the course of her quest for self-actualization, the **girlboss'** triumphs were understood to be a credit to all of womankind. But much has changed in years bracketed by presidential elections and capped with a pandemic. A young generation that's more critical of capitalism and empowerment feminism has turned **girlboss** into a joke, a meme, something hopelessly cheugy – to use Gen Z's term for pass?

Figure 6. A popular meme from 2021 including the word girlboss.
Source: https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/gaslight-gatekeep-girlboss

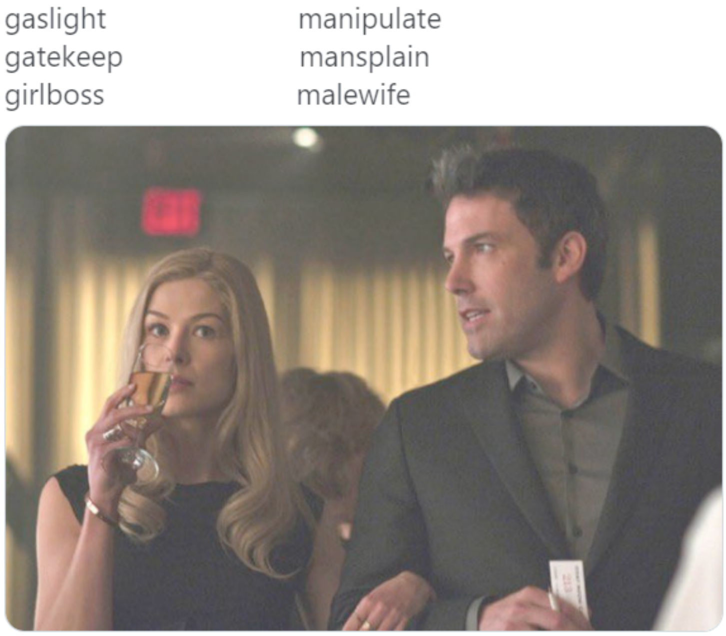

Figure 7. "Manipulate, mansplain, malewife" – a male-themed counterpart of "gatekeeping, gaslighting, girlboss" presented in a form of a meme.
Source: https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/gaslight-gatekeep-girlboss

The word *girlboss* has also been used in a parody of a phrase "live, laugh, love" and started appearing in social media posts, in memes (more on memes in Section 4.1.2.) and in a form of a hashtag (more on hashtags in Section 4.3.2.). The terms *gatekeeping* and *gaslighting* are used to describe a female manipulative behaviour. Including the word *girlboss* in this alliterated trio seems like a definite sign that this stereotypical behaviour is perceived negatively.

Interestingly, this parody has also motivated the creation of its counterpart that could be applied to men that also includes gendered neologisms, namely “manipulate, mansplain, malewife”.

Furthermore, this compound word is widely used as a noun modifier:

(114) with so many characters falling on the spectrum from full-fledged girlboss to, like the Broad City leads, **girlboss wannabe** – made for some boring years in pop-culture feminism. So it's been gratifying, recently (with notable exceptions) to see scripts that chip away at the **girlboss facade**.

(115) Physical is part of this shift, with characters ranging from the monstrous Sheila to the mutually supportive all-girl skate crew in HBO's Betty replacing the two-dimensional **girlboss ideal** to create a fuller picture of female power.

(116) They're embracing **girlboss feminism**, of course, yet von Horn's Sweat isn't interested in delving into the economics or psychic toll of being your own boss in public.

(117) People will say things such as 'this is millennial,' or ‘**girlboss energy**.’ All of these terms are pointing to the same thing.

The word *girlboss* has also been further modified through an addition of suffix to create a noun *girlbossery*, with the first appearances in the corpus in August 2020. As with *girlboss*, it carries negative connotations, e.g.:

(118) While it is good to see young women from ordinary backgrounds in important roles in a traditionally posh industry, the show's commentary around these women, and around Missguided in general, often tips into "brand feminism," where vague concepts of "empowerment", inclusivity and **girlbossery** are thrown around to the end of shifting product.

(119) In effect, **girlbossery** is founded on the ultimate neoliberal sleight of hand: obscuring collectivization with consumptive self-actualization. Brought into existence by processes of self-surveillance, online performance, and observation, girlbosses model behaviour to one another and police one another's compliance to shifting norms.

(120) “Maybe girlboss is a new word for feminism,” entrepreneur Sophia Amoruso, who popularized the term with her 2014 memoir #Girlboss, mused in an Elle interview about the book. In fact, the roots of para-feminist **girlbossery** run much deeper.

The relatively high frequency and the fact that the word inspires further linguistic innovation may indicate that is has found its place in the English language. Nowadays the word rather evokes negative connotations, ridiculing the ideal of a “hustling woman” who puts her morals aside to achieve success in business.

6.2.3. Womentrepreneur

The last analysed word, the neologism *womentrepreneur*, appears in only two articles: It is used once in a metalinguistic context – the article on social media language:

(121) Faryl Robin, was also moved to make her own post, listing the social media lingo of “Boss Babe,” “**Womentrepreneur**,” “Girl Boss” and "Mompreneur.” “Let's please stop adding these cute names to women who are ambitious and are going after their dreams with persistence,” she wrote.

The other instance of use is in a description of a workshop, in order to inform the reader that is designed for female participants.

(122) Access Bank trains 600 women under **womentrepreneur** business workshop series.

The workshop’s name, interestingly, does contain another version of blending the words *woman* and *entrepreneur – womenpreneur*:

(123) In sustenance of its objective to empowering Women in Business, Access Bank Plc through its W Academy recently organised the **Womenpreneur** Business Workshop -- a capacity building workshop for female business owners.

Nonetheless, the search in the corpus for the word *womenpreneur* has only shown that this alternative version had only been used in the context of the aforementioned workshop.

6.2.4. Womanager

The corpus search had also been conducted for the neologisms *womanager*. However, no entries have been found. Contrastingly, entries for the word *womanager* have been found in the Google Ngram Viewer (Figure 8). No results have been found for the words *SheEO* or *womentrepreneur*/*womantrepreneur*. There may be two reasons for those differences in results. First, the NOW corpus and the Google Ngram Viewer use different source texts and, as one could expect, such linguistic novelties will sooner be used in online news articles than in books. Second, that the NOW corpus' oldest data come from 2010. In this case it is important because, as it can be seen in the graph, the word *womanager* was more often used in the years 2006-2008 rather than now. On the other hand, as for 2022, the Google Ngram Viewer does not allow its users to see the tendencies for the word *girlboss* after 2019. We only see that it experienced a rise from 2016 to 2018 and a slight fall in 2019. The previous analysis has shown that 2019 was a turning point for this word in terms of the connotations associated with it.

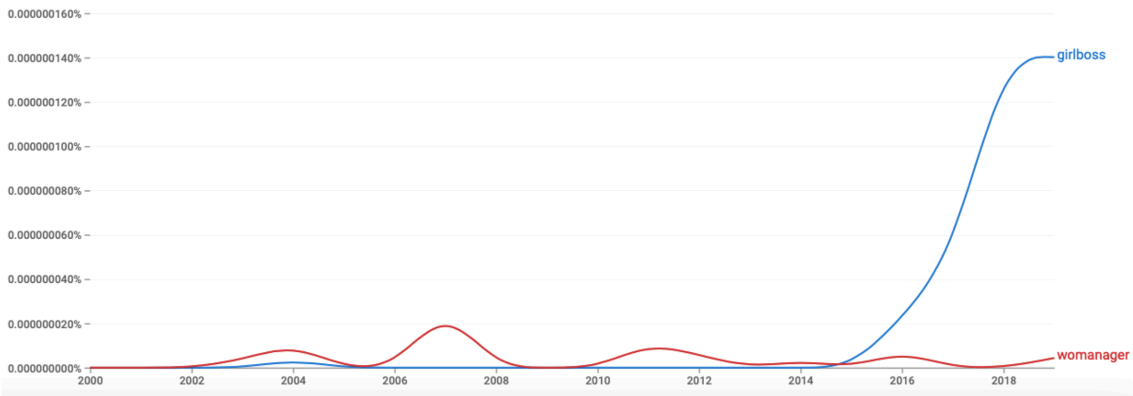

Figure 8. Gendered neologisms of domain reappropriation – frequency comparison.

6.2.5. Gendered neologisms reappropriating male domains

The words *SheEO*, *girlboss* and *womentrepreneur* had been coined with the idea of increasing female visibility as CEOs and entrepreneurs, however, as the study of their use has shown, they do not play this role in current the English language. The most widely spread of the three is *girlboss*, which has overshadowed the other two in terms of the frequency of use. The other two, namely *SheEO* and *womentrepreneur*, although popular on social media, do not appear significantly often in online news.

It is especially visible on the example of the compound *girlboss* that such gendered neologisms have gained negative connotations. Even if in the early 2019 these words were still seen as carrying positive connotations, as for 2021, they are used in context of criticising both the use of the words (as they are judged as ineffective in supporting female empowerment), and the former ideal of a working woman that these words evoke.

In the light of the markedness theory, the female terms become marked versions of their unmarked counterparts. It remains to be seen whether the female lexemes are going to turn neutral in the future and stay as items of unmarked language. It is important to remember that there is an apparent asymmetry between marked and unmarked words. Terms that are marked are also those which are ascribed less prestige in comparison to the standard unmarked form (see Battistella 1990). That is why in English the recommended strategy for elimination of gender bias from language is neutralisation. The gendered neologisms violate this recommendation. Therefore, even if it goes against the intention of the people who create and propagate the gendered words, the existence and further use can emphasise the differences instead of alleviating them.

Another aspect that increases the negative connotations associated with these three words is the fact younger generations seem to be more critical of capitalism now than they were before. In 2019, the margin between 18-34 year-olds who view capitalism positively and those who view it negatively was 20% higher than now (58% with positive view vs. 38% with negative view in 2019, 49% with positive view vs. 46% with negative view in 2021) (Wronski 2021). The survey data also shows that 54% of people in the age of 18-24 hold negative views of capitalism, in comparison to 42% who see capitalism favourably (Wronski 2021).

6.3. Gendered neologisms naming undesirable male behaviours

6.3.1. Mansplaining

For the analysis, the corpus has been searched for the word *mansplaining* and its derivatives. In the period from January 2018 to June 2021, *mansplain* was used 185 times, *mansplaining* 837 times, *mansplained* 147 times and *mansplains* 65 times. After the analysis of the corpus entries, similar conclusions can be drawn regarding the use of all forms of the neologism, unless explicitly stated.

One context in which *mansplain* often appears is a discussion on language and new words, e.g.:

(124) Speaker Bob Wanner cautioned members about using the term. But Wednesday, noting that different circumstances can warrant different rulings, Wanner gave Notley an effective pass. "I would, however, caution all members about characterizing language and their responses such as saying '**mansplain**,'" Wanner said. "I also caution members on the tone of their questions."

(125) Most years, a lot of the fun of Oxford's shortlist comes from portmanteaus, or blend words, like "**mansplain**" or "broflake." But this year, even the neologisms were a bit downbeat. For every "covidiot" and "Blursday," there was a "twindemic" (the concurrence of two epidemics) and an "infodemic" (an anxiety-arousing explosion of pandemic-related information).

The way in which *mansplain* is used in these two examples can be interpreted as an indication of the word's well-established position in the English language. In the example (124) the word is used in a quotation of what had been said about the word and its use and in the example (125) in the context of new words entering English. Another aspect that supports this claim is that in neither of these examples the meaning of the word is explained. Furthermore, in the example (125) the word *mansplain* is used as an example of a well-known linguistic blend to add context to the discussion on other, more current, linguistic novelties that appeared during the COVID pandemic.

Nonetheless, the word appears more frequently outside of the metalinguistic context. Using the word is often a form of expressing criticism towards discussed behaviours, sometimes adding an ironic nuance, e.g.:

(126) Paul Ryan seems genuinely upset that AOC wouldn't let him **mansplain** being in Congress to her. Probably had to rush straight to his gym to explain to a female bodybuilder how she was lifting incorrectly.

(127) Because you just tried to **mansplain** female friendships to the females.

(128) So he **mansplains** it to her – domestic life is boring, active parenting is the distracting privilege of the middle class. He reenforces a pressure to limit the lifestyles a woman can feel comfortable displaying in their careers.

The act of explaining can refer to matters connected to "female domain" (examples (127) and (128)), but also to matters that are obvious to the person to which things are explained (126).

It does not mean, however, that the word *mansplain* is strictly gendered, i.e. the act of mansplaining is not only understood as behaviour directed explicitly towards women.

(129) Does the vice president want to **mansplain** why despite India's growing economy, the country's female labour force participation remains the lowest in the world? While numerous studies have suggested that concerns for personal safety and oppressive social norms are among other causes of decreasing participation, a take on " others " protecting these women should be interesting.

(130) Bauer: "Good to see South Africa has medical experts to **mansplain** [sic] to the whining political class and WhatsApp group experts."

As the examples show, the word can be used regardless of gender of the interlocutors. The meaning carried is of explaining something, often in a condescending way, to someone who is well-familiar with the topic.

The word *mansplain* has also been used, although only once within the analysed period, as a noun modifier (131).

(131) On Fox News, pundit Jesse Watters went into full **mansplain** mode, issuing a condescending lecture about how “the women are not helping their case for equal pay by their behavior” and predicting that people “aren't going to watch” the team if they continue to “disparage the president and... act in unpatriotic ways and then complain about not getting paid equally.”

As shown in the examples (132), (133), (134) and (135) the word is used to describe an omnipresent defect of patriarchal society and is placed within the same category as bullying or sexual harassment (135).

(132) To be held this year on October 7 at the Lalit Ashok Hotel in Bangalore, We The Women, in its own words, is “a participatory, open-to-all, forum for women” that aims to “build an annual space that - in a world of continued **mansplaining** - will give women a space for unfettered expression, great conversation, forging bonds, mentoring and networking and ultimately a wide community of friends.”

(133) And of course, there is a lot of **mansplaining** as well. Because at the end of the day it is unfortunately a patriarchal society and politics is mostly full of men.

(134) It is saddening, however, that sexism remains deeply entrenched in what used to be a male-dominated profession. Even if I am equally capable as my male counterparts, I sometimes feel that I need to work doubly hard to get halfway through. I tend to be described by older male colleagues more often as a “pretty lady lawyer” than as a “good lawyer”. I have experienced being “**mansplained**” and not taken seriously.

(135) Rachel Thompson, insights director at GfK South Africa comments on the recent Gillette “We Believe” campaign that urges men to be their best and leave behind toxic behaviours like **mansplaining**, bullying and sexual harassment...

Nonetheless, *mansplaining* is also used regardless of the gender of interlocutors, or the connection of the topic discussed to the matters of female gender, as in the example (136).

(136) "I'm a Marine Corps grunt. Everything from my military experience is viewed through that lens," Bell says. "I shouldn't be the one **mansplaining** different aspects of military service to other people."

On the other side of the spectrum, *mansplaining* also appears in texts written by men who do not wish to hear this word being used and find it offensive highly biased against male gender. In the example (137), the speaker feels offended by the use of the word towards his behaviour, but interestingly, because what he had said was not his opinion but the opinion of his female partner (not because he objects to the term itself).

(137) In an incredibly abusive and slanderous response to my initial mail it was suggested that I was "**mansplaining**" (despite conveying how my GIRLfriend felt about the matter). If it helps I can call upon more female takes on what happened.

Such examples as (37) attest the existence of the word in English even though the person does not like the word.

Another context in which the word *mansplaining* appears is the critique of the incorrect use of the word, e.g.:

(138) None of these interactions seem to have much in common, other than they involve conversations between women and men – and that they've been labeled "**mansplaining**," despite not actually fitting the original definition of the term, coined out of an essay by feminist writer Rebecca Solnit over a decade ago.

(139) When Schumer accused Ernst of being "afraid of the NRA," which opposes closing the loophole, she had "**mansplaining**" at the ready.

(140) By accusing him of **mansplaining** to her, a rape survivor, she had a quick way to emphasize her solidarity with other survivors in the most superficial and duplicitous of terms.

The use of the word is presented by some as a disingenuous strategy to gain advantage in a discussion as a part of loaded language.

Looking at collocations in which the word appears frequently can also shed the light on its use. There have been 17 instances in which the word appeared together with *accused of*, as in the example (140). Other verbs that appear with *mansplaining* are, e.g. *suffer* (141) or *endure* (142).

(141) This is especially true for women, who have suffered from **mansplaining**, have been subjected to the male gaze, and misrepresentation. Women's bodies and faces, and their general attractiveness, it so seems, has always existed to cater to men.

(142) And in order to further prove just how prevalent this practice is, "Another Round" co-host Tracy Clayton recently took to Twitter to ask her followers to share the worst examples of mansplaining they've ever endured.

The analysis of corpus entries containing the word *mansplain* and its forms has unveiled certain patterns of use of this neologism. The contexts in which the blend *mansplaining* is used are principally discussions on sexism in society and labelling specific instances of unwanted behaviour. The neologism appears often in the articles on the world of politics but sometimes also on finance, music industry or law – these domains are ones that are considered male dominated. Initially the word was gendered and referred to female-male power imbalance in discussion, however, there has been a shift in the meaning and the word is starting to be used regardless of gender. Some see the word as a *loaded term* and that it has been "weaponized" by people to gain advantage in conversation.

In this section, the Google Ngram Viewer (see Section 5.1.1) has been used to analyse the progress and tendencies in the use of the word *mansplain*. The search for *mansplain* and its inflections shows that the most popular form by far is *mansplaining*, with *mansplain* being on the second position, and *mansplained* and *mansplains* being on the third and fourth position consecutively (Figure 9).

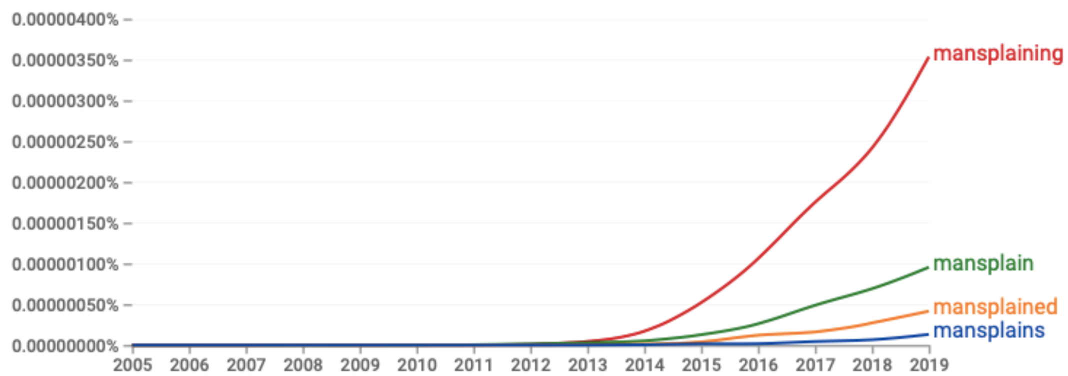

Figure 9. The frequency of appearance of the word *mansplain* with its inflected forms

Figure 10. The first appearance of the word *mansplaining* in the Google corpora

The first appearance of the word *mansplaining* was registered in 2008 (Figure 10), which coincides with the earliest record of the word being used that is given by other sources mentioned in this dissertation. The graph also shows that *mansplain* appeared in the corpus later, in 2011. The first use of *mansplained* was recorded two years later, in 2013, and the first use of *mansplains* two years after that, in 2015.

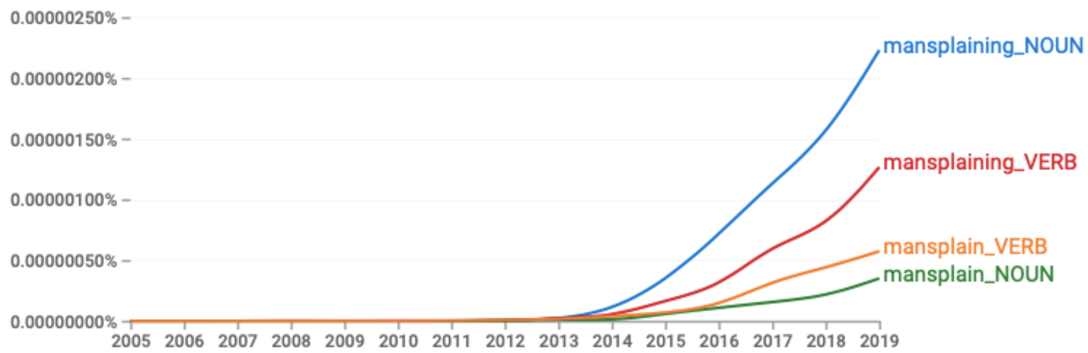

Figure 11. The use of *mansplain* and *mansplaining* – part of speech comparison.

There are no records of it being used as a different part of speech than a noun or a verb. The graph presented in Figure 11 shows that mansplaining is more frequently used as a noun than a verb, which is exactly the opposite for mansplain. From this graph one can also conclude that mansplaining was first used in 2008 as a verb (Figure 12).

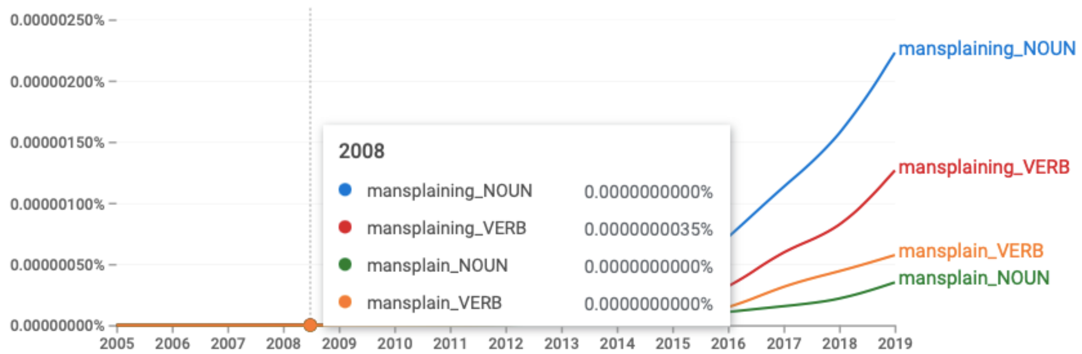

Figure 12. The first use of *mansplaining* - part of speech

Figure 13. *Mansplain* in the Google American English Corpus

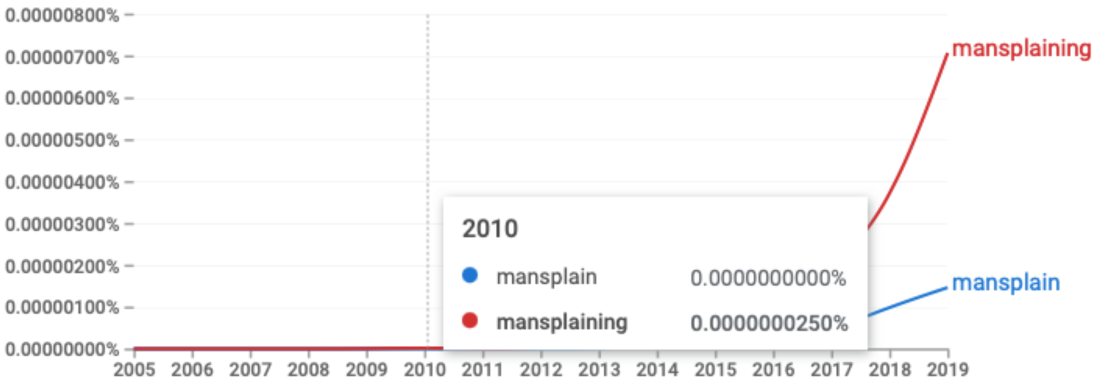

Figure 14. *Mansplain* in the Google British English Corpus

The comparison of the search in the corpus of American English (Figure 13) and British English (Figure 14) shows that although the word firstly appeared in the British corpus two years later than in the American corpus, that is in 2010, it was used more frequently that year than when it first appeared in the American corpus. What is more, at present it is used more frequently.

6.3.2. Manspreading

The search in the corpus for *manspreading* has brought 159 examples of use that could be used for the analysis in the period from January 2018 to June 2021. Additionally, the frequency of use for *manspread* has been verified and brought 25 examples of use within the same period and for *manspreads* there have been 15 examples.

In 2018, at the beginning of the time span chosen for the analysis, the word *mansplain* was used in the context of pervasive male behaviour (143), (144), (145), often in a criticizing tone, sometimes together with other unwanted male behaviours, as in (143):

(143) There were layers of sexism, and I was aware of them. Every time I would want to type out a sharp response, I would remember some unsolicited advice: Learn to take a joke. And so, I learnt to replace “horrid dating culture” with “just a bad date” and learnt how to ignore casual sexism, mansplaining, manspreading and whatnot.

(144) Everyone can immediately understand which body part controls the behavior of these men," she said. She says her “video is ‘dedicated’ to all ‘men’ for whom manspreading is the norm of conduct” and insists that she was acting “on behalf of everyone who has to endure the manifestations of you declaring your macho qualities on public transportation.”

(145) People were mad to write about it. And sure why wouldn't they be? Manspreading remains a hot topic – Madrid banned the practice on public transport last year.

Naming the practice of sitting in public transport with legs spread apart was going hand in hand with social actions against such behaviour. The fact that it has obtained a name, helped to recognize such behaviour and acknowledge that it is problematic[20]. The introduction of the word *manspreading* has brought real changes – the act of manspreading on public transport is banned in places like Los Angeles, New York and Madrid, where you can be fined for it.

[20] See Section 2.5.1 for a detailed discussion on the relation between language and shift of values, referencing e.g. Spender (1980) on *sexism* and *sexual harassment* and Manne (2017) on *himpathy*.

Figure 15 Berlin activist fighting against manspreading in public transportations.
Source: https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/berlin-activists-seek-to-stop-manspreading-habit-on-train

Within the analysed period, there was only one example (146) present with the word *manspreading* used in a metalinguistic context. It does not exclude the possibility that the word had been used in this context more frequently earlier. Nonetheless, it seems that this neologism has already been incorporated into the English language and everyday discourse and is not discussed as an example of linguistic novelty.

(146) "Fatberg" reached the Oxford English Dictionary in 2015 – at the same moment as "**manspreading**" and "Brexit" and "bantz" – and in the same year in which a record-breaking 10-tonne example broke a sewer in Chelsea costing Thames Water £400,000 to fix. But it wasn't really until last year that "fatberg" went viral.

Another indicator of this portmanteau being incorporated into the English language is the fact that it is sometimes used humorously, as in the example (147),

(147) After the Alpha variant was first detected in the United Kingdom, it soon became apparent that this variant was already more contagious than the original version of the SARS-CoV2 that started the pandemic. But while alpha males may be into **manspreading**, the Alpha variant of the Covid-19 coronavirus can't seem to spread faster than the Delta variant.

and metaphorically – as in the examples (148) and (149), where the word is no longer restricted to its literal meaning of sitting with one's legs wide apart:

(148) The time has come to call out this swaggering, unselfconscious expanse. Interminable TV episodes are the **manspreading** of television storytelling. In precisely the same way that a man sits down on a public row of seats and happily relaxes into a pose that takes up as much real estate as physically possible, the trend of protracted TV episodes is a battle for viewer eyeballs that equates significance with bulk.

(149) He's constantly guilty of verbal **manspreading**, cutting across her with an excruciating, relentless trickle of needless "corrections", overfamiliar interjections and clumsy flirting.

Manspreading preserves its original criticizing tone when used metaphorically. In the example (148) it is used to comment on new tendencies in creating TV series, in the example (149) to describe one man's style of conversing. The example (148), from 2018, the author explains the use of the metaphor, but in the example (149), from 2021, its author does not feel the need to explain to the readers what *manspreading* stands for in the context.

Furthermore, another word that has emerged together with *manspreading* is *manspreader*, e.g.:

(150) As a frequent manspreading victim, all I am asking for is precisely my half of the seat to remain uninhibited by anyone other than myself. That's why the seats are evenly separated and not, for instance, a couch. **Manspreaders** will pay a hefty tax calculated by the journey duration and severity of the impact on fellow passengers.

It is also noteworthy that in the example (150), the person who experiences manspreading refers to herself as *victim* of this behaviour, which adds to the critical tone of the text.

Interestingly, there have also been one instance recorded of the form *manspreaded*:

(151) "Breitbart writer Matt Boyle, who once joked that he would be Trump's White House press secretary – alas, the job went to Sean Spicer – **manspreaded** on a couch near Groser's lectern," the magazine said.

In summary, contrary to the use of *mansplaining*, the word *manspreading* in its main sense is clearly gendered – the behaviour to which it refers applies to the male gender. The word carries a nuance of criticism. The introduction of *manspreading* has led to real social changes – sitting with your legs wide apart in public transport is legally banned some places. Furthermore, *manspreading* is sometimes used in a humorous context, as well as metaphorically.

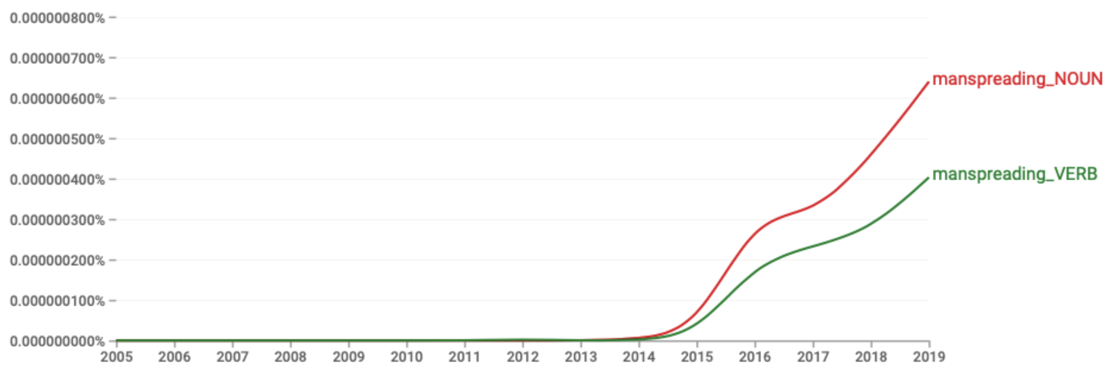

Figure 16. The use of *manspreading* - part of speech

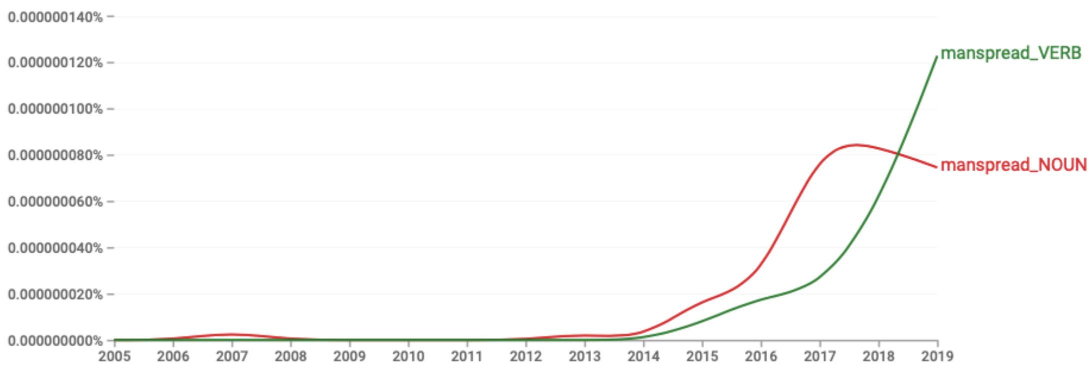

Figure 17. The use of *manspread* - part of speech

Because of the word considerably smaller frequency and, therefore, does not provide enough data, the Google Ngram Viewer does not allow to perform such detailed analysis as in the case of *mansplaining*. However, certain tendencies can be noticed. First, the form *manspreading* is more frequently used than the form *manspread* (Figure 16 and Figure 17). Moreover, *manspreading* is more frequently used as a noun (Figure 16) than as a verb. There are no records of it being used as a different part of speech than a noun or a verb. Interestingly, *manspread* was first used as a noun, in 2007, since 2017 the use of it as a verb has been increasing to finally become more frequent (Figure 17).

6.3.3. Manterrupting

The last analysed gendered neologism describing (and, at the same time, criticising) undesirable male behaviour, namely *manterrupting*, seems to be less popular than the two previous ones as it appeared 18 times in the analysed period.

Another indicator of the word's lower recognizability is the fact that in most of the cases in which the word is used, with 10 entries in total, it appears in the metalinguistic context, e.g.:

(152) **Hepeating** is yet another phrase women have come up with to describe the infuriating nature of some workplaces. We already have "**mansplaining**," which is when a man condescendingly explains something back to you, and "**manterrupting**," where he literally talks over you.

(153) In the past, several studies have pointed to women being talked over or ignored during in-person meetings, with some researchers coining the phrases

"**manterrupting**," "**mansplaining**" and "**bropropriating**" to describe the act of men interrupting, explaining or taking credit for a woman's idea.

(154) My friends have come up with terminology for it: **Manterrupting**. **Manstanding**. (Or talk-blocking, if you want the gender-neutral version.)

In the examples (152), (153) and (154) the discussed portmanteau appears next to other gendered neologisms: *mansplaining* (152), (153), *hepeating* (154), *bropropriating* (155), *manstanding* (154).

Nonetheless, sometimes it is used in articles without explanation of its meaning, therefore it seems that the authors assume it is not a new phenomenon and the reader will know what the word mean, e.g.:

(155) Dismal statistics show there are fewer female CEOs in healthcare because of **manterrupting** and male bonding events like football, golf and cigar bars.

The second most common context in which the word is used is criticizing the practice of men to dominate conversation, e.g.:

(156) You would think that ascending to the Supreme Court would protect women from **manterrupting**. Nope; Trump's nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, had better get ready. Male justices, research shows, interrupt their female colleagues three times as often as they interrupt one another during oral arguments, regardless of the women's seniority. Studies show that these "highly gendered" arguments can affect the outcomes of cases – making **manterrupting** a practice that can distort the fundamental laws of the land.

The first appearance recorded by the Google Ngram Viewer is in 2016 and since then, the frequency has been rising (Figure 18). As for 2021, the use of *manterrupting* has not been tagged, therefore, it is impossible to verify whether it is more commonly used as a noun or as a verb. Also the search for *manterrupt* yields no results.

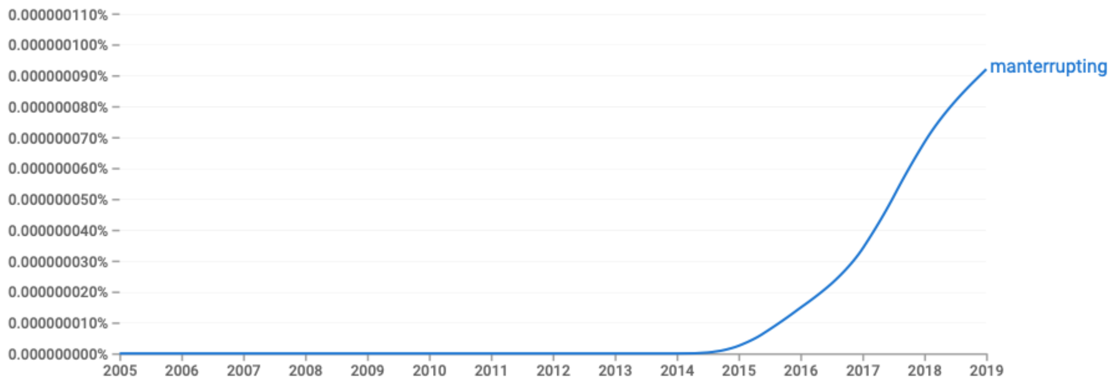

Figure 18. The use of manterrupting

To conclude, *manterrupting* seems to be less popular than other words analysed in this chapter – with lower frequency and higher ratio of appearance in the metalinguistic context to the actual use with its intended meaning. It can be said, however, that the word marked its presence in the English language and is not treated as a complete novelty. Similarly to *manspreading*, its use is restricted to describing male behaviour and, as the other two words, it carries the nuance of criticism.

6.3.4. Gendered neologisms naming undesirable male behaviour: preliminary conclusions

The results of the corpus analysis indicate that the words *mansplaining*, *manspreading* and *manterrupting* have entered the English language and are no longer discussed as linguistic novelties, although *manterrupting* appears to be less-widely used than the other two neologisms. As a group, they also seem to be more frequently used in online articles than the neologisms of (re)appropriation of domains.

All the words started as gendered words and two of them, namely *manterrupting* and *manspreading* have preserved the quality of being reserved for male behaviour. However, the word *mansplaining* in this regard is more freely used and can refer to the act of explaining something in a patronizing manner both by men and women. All of these words carry critical tone, which is sometimes emphasised by the collocations in which these words appear, people who have experienced this sort of behaviour describe themselves as *victims* or they *suffer from* or *endure* it. In contrast to the discussed neologisms of the (re)appropriation of domains, these words are used with intended function of calling out, and also shaming, unwanted behaviour.

The words are used in several contexts, of which the most prevalent are discussions on gender discrimination. The words are used primarily to emphasise the existence of certain unwanted behaviours. On the other hand, they also appear in discussion on whether they are in fact needed, or if they are a part of *loaded language* and are used to gain advantage by creating social awareness of problems that do not exist in real life. For *manterrupting*, the least popular of the three, the most dominant context was the metalinguistic one.

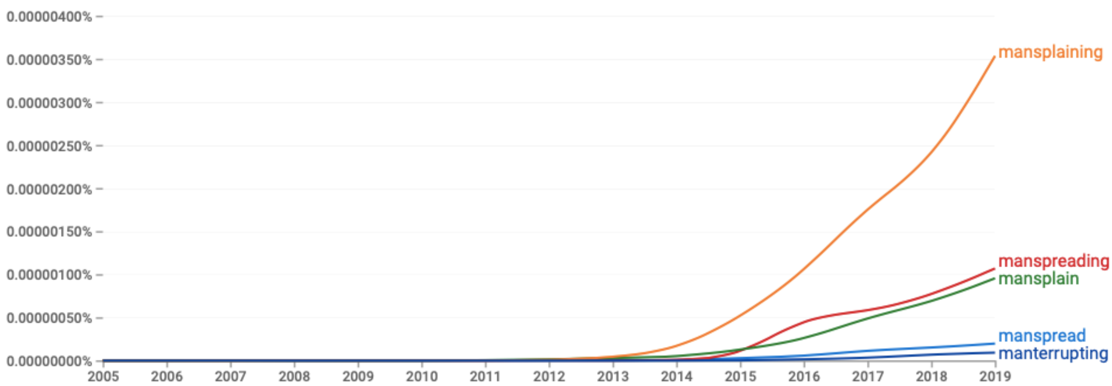

Figure 19. Neologisms naming undesirable male behaviours – frequency

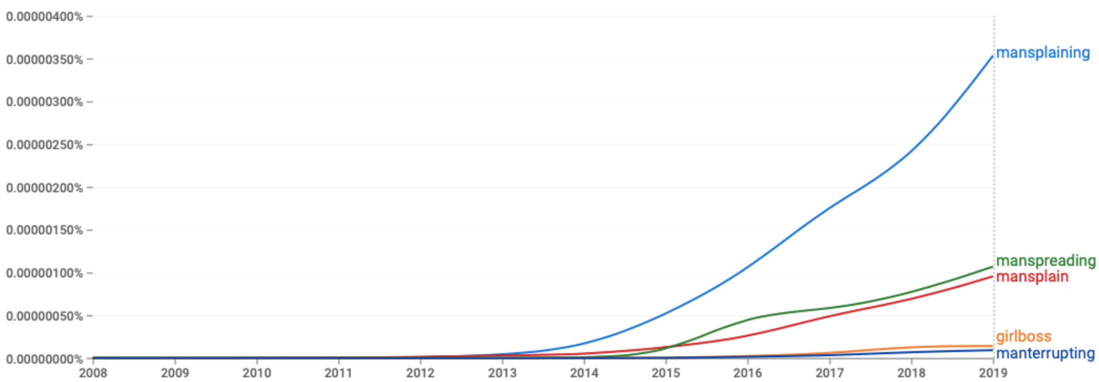

Figure 20. *Girlboss* and neologisms naming undesirable male behaviours - frequency

As for the frequency charted by the Google Ngram Viewer, *mansplaining* and *manspreading* are the most frequently appearing in the corpus (Figure 19). *Manterrupting* is the least popular among the three and the entry *manspread* does not appear in the corpus.

If we compare the frequency of the most frequent neologism from the group of the (re)appropriation of domains, namely *girlboss*, its frequency is comparable to the frequency of the least popular word from the analysed neologisms naming undesirable male behaviours (Figure 20) and around 25 times less frequent than *mansplaining*. What is particularly noticeable is that all the words seem to have been gaining in popularity around 2017, which is also the year when a movement known as *MeToo* against sexual harassment and abuse started.

These words perform other actions than simply describing reality. For example, *mansplain* serves not only as a word describing a linguistic act in which men repress women but also is used by women to silence men in discussions and the use of *manspreading* facilitated bringing a real change, namely introducing laws to stop men from spreading their legs out and encroaching on adjacent seats.

6.4. The use of gendered neologisms: concluding remarks

Although the frequency for gendered neologisms analysed in this dissertation is not high, it is vital to remember that linguistic innovations will always be in stark minority compared to standard words when searched in corpora. However, it is also evident that gendered neologisms do exist and are used, mostly in spoken language and on social media, such as Twitter. It is significant as these are important means of communication and some of the gendered neologisms have spread outside of the online environment and are used both in spoken and in written English.

Some of gendered neologisms have been created as a result of linguistic creativity, for example, to make people laugh or attract their attention, without any underlying agenda. Many of them, however, are deeply rooted in the context of feminism and social change and their use is directed at achieving gender equality. However some of the analysed gendered neologisms that were coined in the spirit of gender equality are not used with their initially intended role.

Conclusions

People invent new words for various reasons, for example, to name new objects or concepts, to make a playful comment on a certain situation or a phenomenon, or to reach higher efficiency in language use. Some words, however, are created to draw attention to already existing entities and situations that have not yet been named.

A closer look at gendered neologisms has revealed much on gender roles in contemporary society and on the relation between communication and social change. The users of the English language most often use *man*, *male*, and *bro* to add an aspect of the male gender to a word, and *woman* and *female* for the female gender. Adding a gender nuance to a word can create a word with a new meaning, e.g., creating a metaphoric blend. For example *manscaping* (a blend of *man* + *landscaping*) has a meaning of trimming or shaving a man's body hair, combining the idea of modifying a landscape by altering plants with a male physic, where a man's body becomes a landscape, and body hair the plants. However, such words, created through blending and compounding, not only do encode gender information but also additional connotations due to attitudes and stereotypes regarding each gender. The examples discussed in this dissertation show that although in some lexical items gender aspect is not linguistically encoded, socially they are associated with male or female gender. This is indicated by the fact that the users of English create their 'other gender' counterparts, in which they distinctly mark the opposition to the accepted norm, e.g., by referring to a bag worn by a man as *man bag* (or an engagement ring as an *mangagement ring*) whereas women wear *bags* and *engagement rings*. The terms *bag* and *engagement ring* seem gender-neutral, but, as the current use of language reveals, they are not (as shown by the increasing trend of using their marked counterparts). Such linguistic change can also be an indicator of the changes in society – if there is a need for a term *manny*, it means there are more and more men who enter a profession traditionally regarded as reserved for women. Nonetheless, such gendered neologisms indicate that, e.g. a man working as a nanny (as for *manny*), or a man wearing a bag (as for *man bag*) are not the norm but a deviation from it, and that men as nannies or men wearing bags are not yet fully accepted as a norm.

Language not only reflects a change but can also be used to invite or introduce it. Although the linguistic relativity hypothesis has been rejected by most of contemporary scientists in its full form, it has incited a debate on the influence of language on human perception of reality. Naming concepts goes beyond simply attaching labels – if something does not have a name, it is difficult to discuss it, and, therefore, it stays obscured from collective understanding. For example, as Hornsby (1995) points out, even if one does not see language as determining thought, the lack of specific terms can make it more problematic for women to communicate about and reflect upon elements of their reality. Therefore, to avoid such situations, new words are created.

As for gendered neologisms, which are at the heart of the discussion presented in this dissertation, some of them are made as a spur of linguistic creativity, in order to make people laugh or attract their attention, without a more developed agenda. Many of them, however, are deeply rooted in the context of feminism and social change and are directed at achieving gender equality. The frequency analysis has shown that the time when the analysed gendered neologisms started gaining in popularity was around 2017, which coincides with the beginning of the *MeToo* movement, a social movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment[21]. It can be speculated whether the discussed words, similarly to *MeToo*, were a part of the fourth wave of feminism. That is why it seems natural to pose the question whether they play an active role in such changes.

The combination of theoretical considerations on the topic of gendered neologisms with the analysis of their use in context has been done in attempt to provide an answer to the research question, whether the gendered neologisms function as catalysts for real social change**.** The main conclusion is that mere invention of the words is insufficient to introduce substantial change, but the lexemes can be a contributing factor. Their power depends, however, on a particular case.

Although many of the analysed gendered neologisms were coined in the spirit of gender equality, the research has revealed that not all of them play their intended role at present. The words *SheEO*, *girlboss* and *womentrepreneur* had been coined with the idea of increasing the visibility of women holding executive positions but, as the study of their use has shown, they do not play this role in current English. Not only have they not gained enough recognition to stop being perceived as linguistic novelty items, but also have acquired negative connotations. At the beginning of 2019 the words *SheEO*, *girlboss* and *womentrepreneur* were still seen as carrying positive connotations, but in 2021 is appeared most often in the context of criticising both the use of the words (as they are

[21] Some sources cite 2006 as the year when the movement started, however, 2017 was the year when it gained a widespread attention and worldwide recognition.

judged as ineffective in supporting female empowerment) and the former ideal of a working woman that those words evoke.

Two possible explanations can be offered to account for this shift in the words' evaluative meaning. First, in the light of the markedness theory, the female terms become marked versions of their unmarked counterparts, with an apparent asymmetry to the disadvantage of the marked words. For example, terms that are marked are also those which are ascribed less prestige in comparison to the standard unmarked form (see Battistella 1990). That is why the recommended strategy for elimination of gender bias from the English language is neutralisation. Gendered neologisms seem to violate this strategy. Therefore, even if it goes against the intention of the people who create and propagate the gendered words, the existence and further use can emphasise the differences instead of alleviating them. Second is the fact that younger generations seem to be more critical of capitalism now than they were before (Wronski 2021). These neologisms evoke an image of a woman who achieves success in business (whatever the cost) in the male dominated world, and, therefore, refer to images that are no longer aspirational for the generation whose members hold negative views of capitalism.

Meanwhile, contrasting results have been obtained for the gendered neologisms naming undesirable male behaviour. The results of the analysis of the corpus entries indicate that the words *mansplaining*, *manspreading* and *manterrupting* have entered the English language and are no longer discussed as linguistic novelties, although *manterrupting* appears to be less-widely used than the other two neologisms. As a group, they also seem to be more frequently used in online articles than the neologisms of (re)appropriation of domains. All the words from the second group started their lives in language as gendered words reserved for describing male behaviour, but only two of them, namely *manterrupting* and *manspreading,* have preserved this quality. The word *mansplaining* is used more freely in terms of gender and can refer to the act of explaining something in a patronizing manner by both a man and a woman. The analysis shows that all the gendered neologisms describing undesirable male behaviour convey criticism, which is sometimes strengthened by the collocations in which they appear – people who discuss their experience using these words describe themselves as *victims* or write that they *suffer from* it or *endure* it. In contrast to the discussed neologisms of the (re)appropriation of domains, these words are used with intended function of calling out, and also shaming, unwanted behaviour.

The analysed *man-* neologisms appear most often, but not exclusively, in the context of discussions on gender discrimination. They are used primarily to emphasise the existence of certain unwanted behaviours. On the other hand, they also appear in discussion on whether they are a necessary element of the language, or whether they are a part of *loaded language* and are used to gain advantage by creating space in social consciousness for problems that do not exist in real life. It is visible that these words do more than simply describing reality, for example, the word *mansplain* serves not only as a word describing a linguistic act in which men repress women but also is used by women to silence men in discussions. Moreover, the use of *manspreading* facilitated bringing a real change, namely introducing laws to stop men from spreading their legs out and encroaching on adjacent seats.

Although all analysed neologisms can be categorized as words that add concept of gender to the meaning of originally gender-neutral words, the analysis of their use has revealed the striking differences in the approach towards those two groups of gendered neologisms. The difference stems possibly from a different social context in which the words' meanings operate. The gendered neologisms created with a purpose of increasing female visibility in male-dominated areas present reality where *female* is put in opposition to *male*, where *male* is the norm, therefore, *female* can be interpreted as inferior. The markedness of gendered neologisms is what makes their use intentional and what adds an additional layer of meaning – the words are used to show attitudes of the speaker. It seems that the gendered neologisms belonging to the second discussed group, namely those naming unwanted behaviour, stroke a chord with many people who could relate to the reality they describe. In contrast, it can be a more complex process to decide that we want to use a certain word to label ourselves, as it is in the case of *girlboss* or *SheEO*. The questions that may appear before using the word to refer to oneself are what qualities it carries and whether we identify with all of them. The answer to those questions heavily depends on the society's perception of concepts that the words represent – not so long ago, some women did not want to call themselves feminists because of negative connotations attached to the word, but with a change of perception of the word, many people are now proud label themselves as feminists. Moreover, it is nothing new that people oppose to gendered terms in professional context, as it has been discussed on the topic of feminisation of names of professions. On the other hand, words that refer to shared reality seem to be accepted more easily (although the gendered neologisms from this group also face criticism). Nonetheless, it can be argued that if these words did not describe concepts that speakers had experienced, they would not have been so widely accepted.

The gendered neologisms have functioned in the language for a relatively short period of time – they experienced a sudden growth in popularity in 2017 but the Google Ngram Viewer only allows us to track the frequency until 2019 (which also seems to be a turning point for some of them). It would be beneficial to follow the topic again in several years. Only time will tell which of the words were a temporary fad and which will stay in the English lexicon as frequently and effectively used items. Language is a reflection of the social world and, at the same time, it can be used as a tool which not only reflects the existing reality, but also imposes certain perspectives and creates new reality. As long as there are individuals who share the worldview reflected by the gendered neologisms, these words will stay in language and be actively used.

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Summary

The study explores the form and the functioning of gendered neologisms, which are relatively new terms that have been created through the addition of the nuance of gender to the meaning of already existing words, e.g., *mansplain* (*man* + *explain*), *femspiration* (*female* + *inspiration*) or *SheEO* (*she* + *CEO*). To reach this goal, gendered neologisms are identified and classified. Next, samples of their used are analysed. All is done with the objective of revealing what morphological forms gendered neologisms acquire and how they may function in the social world.

Chapter 1 of the dissertation is dedicated to the exploration of the study of lexical meaning in communication and refers to two main approaches to meaning, *semantics,* i.e., the study of dictionary meaning of words, and *pragmatics,* i.e. the study of the meaning(s) that a word gains when used in an utterance. The topic of lexical meaning is crucial in the following discussions on the meaning of gendered neologisms, their evolution and how the meaning is shaped by the context of use. The chapter, thus, contains basic information about selected theoretical approaches to lexical meaning.

Chapter 2 reviews the terminology concerning the study of morphology and word formation. It presents chosen word-formation processes, such as affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, abbreviation, conversion, coinage and eponymy. It also discusses the topic of new lexical items entering a language, whether they are newly created words or borrowed from other languages. The exploration of the field of morphology and word formation provides the tools necessary to analyse how gendered neologisms are built in order to reveal certain patterns of their creation, i.e., how users are able to add a new layer of gendered meaning.

Chapter 3 focuses on the relation between gender and language. This area of research includes both differences in language use between men and women and the problems of gender representation in language, which is intrinsically connected to how society perceives representatives of either gender. The chapter reviews two main approaches in feminist linguistics – the difference approach and the dominance approach. It includes a description of the problems with language to which the feminist literature refers and potential solutions to gender inequality in language. Moreover, it places linguistic innovation and the need for new words, including gendered neologisms, in the context of feminist theory. This approach is necessary to understand the motivations behind creating and using gendered neologisms.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the use of language on the Internet – the environment in which gendered neologisms are created and the source from which they enter everyday language. In this chapter, the definition of Internet language and its characteristics are provided. The chapter also discusses how technology has influenced language and how it currently spurs linguistic innovation. It is believed that the online environment has become a place where people who had not been given a voice before could start sharing their experiences and connect with others who faced the same problems and, therefore, it is especially important to refer to the issue in the context of the research.

Chapter 5 concentrates on gendered neologisms as a phenomenon – it discusses such aspects as, e.g., how gendered neologisms are construed and what new layers of meaning a word gains by the addition of the nuance of gender, which is more than a simple association with one sex. The chapter also provides a discussion on how gendered neologisms portray different genders, their roles in society and relations between men and women. The examination of such aspects is made in an attempt to discover the motivations behind creating gendered words.

Chapter 6 presents the analysis of chosen gendered neologisms in context. The main problems that the corpus-assisted analysis presented in this chapter intends to solve are: whether the words are used outside of social media, and if so, how they are used and, finally, whether the motivations with which they are used coincide with the motivations for their creation, such as the ones discussed in Chapter 5. For this purpose, two types of gendered neologisms have been chosen – those naming undesirable behaviours associated with maleness and those associated with female appropriation of stereotypically male domains.

The dissertation is closed with a concluding section that summarises the results of the research. The study shows that those words are actively used, although, because of the dynamic nature of language, it is difficult to perform a quantitative analysis at this relatively early stage of their existence. A closer look at gendered neologisms has revealed much on gender roles in contemporary society and on the relation between communication and social change. As for their role in introducing social change, the conclusion is that mere invention of the words is insufficient to introduce substantial change, but the lexemes can be a contributing factor. Their power depends, however, on a particular case.

Key words: sociopragmatics; linguistic change; gender; gendered neologisms; internet language;

Streszczenie

Celem badawczym rozprawy jest analiza formy oraz funkcji neologizmów nacechowanych pod względem płci społecznej (*gendered neologisms*), które pojawiły się w języku angielskim, lub też uległy popularyzacji, w ciągu ostatnich lat. Przykładem nowo powstałych słów nacechowanych pod względem płci w leksyce języka angielskiego jest „mansplaining” – zbitka wyrazowa słów „man” (pol. *mężczyzna*, *człowiek*) i „explain” (pol. *wyjaśniać*). Oprócz zbitek słownych zawierających element „man”, zbiór analizowanych wyrazów zawierać ma także zbitki z elementem „woman”, „she”, „female” oraz inne słowa, których budowa morfologiczna zawiera wskazanie płci społecznej czy to przez odniesienie eksplicytne, czy przez konotację.

Rozdział pierwszy skupia się na znaczeniu leksykalnym. Omówione są w nim różne podejścia teoretyczne do znaczenia leksykalnego. Słowa wybrane do analizy można traktować jako neologizmy, gdyż są to wyrażenia, które pojawiły się w ostatniej dekadzie. W rozdziale pierwszym prezentowane są ogólne rozważania na temat znaczenia słów, które prezentują się jako kluczowe do przeprowadzenia analizy. Podkreślona jest rola języka jako instrumentu działania w przestrzeni społecznej. Wśród perspektyw teoretycznych omawianych w rozdziale znajdujemy na przykład klasyczną teorię G. Fregego z rozróżnieniem sensu iodniesienia (ang. *sense* i *reference*), rolę reprezentacji mentalnych w ujęciu klasycznym (Kempson 1977), kognitywne rozumienie znaczenia prototypowego, konceptualnego (np. Jackendoff 1990, 2012) oraz ekstensji metaforycznych oraz teorię aktów mowy Austina.

Rozdział drugi jest przeglądem teorii dotyczącej procesów słowotwórczych. Ujawnienie wzorców tworzenia tych słów jest krokiem kluczowym w zrozumieniu, z jakich środków językowych korzystają użytkownicy języka angielskiego w celu nadania istniejącym słowom dodatkowej warstwy znaczeniowej związanej z płcią.

Rozdział trzeci poświęcony jest omówieniu relacji między płcią a językiem. Związek płci społecznej i języka obejmuje zarówno problemy różnic związanych z odmiennym użyciem form językowych przez płeć żeńską i męską, jak zagadnienia związane z kodowaniem informacji o płci w języku angielskim oraz polityką językową. W rozdziale przedstawiony jest przegląd dotychczasowych badań dotyczących językowych odzwierciedleń płci oraz ich stereotypowo przydzielonych ról w społeczeństwie i wynikających z nich zachowań i obszarów zainteresowań.

W rozdziale czwartym omawiane jest użycie języka w Internecie jako szczególnym środowisku komunikacji. Wiele z analizowanych neologizmów swoje istnienie i rozpowszechnienie zawdzięcza właśnie temu medium komunikacji. Fragment rozdziału poświęcony jest również rozważaniom dotyczącym wpływu technologii na język oraz na wzorce komunikacji oraz kreatywność językową jego użytkowników.

Rozdział piąty dedykowany jest neologizmom nacechowanym płciowo jako zjawisku. W tym rozdziale przedstawiona jest również analiza znaczenia poszczególnych neologizmów oraz ich kategoryzacja. W rozdziale pojawia się również dyskusja dotycząca obrazu kobiecości i męskości oraz relacji społecznych i ewolucji takich relacji w odniesieniu do ról obydwu płci, który wyłania się z tych elementów leksykalnych.

W rozdziale szóstym wybrane neologizmy analizowane są w użyciu. Głównym założeniem jest przeprowadzenie analizy jakościowej materiałów w celu sprawdzenia, jak wybrane słowa zachowują się w kontekście. W tym celu wybrane zostały dwie grupy neologizmów: neologizmy krytykujące męskie zachowania oraz neologizmy mające na celu zaznaczenie obecności kobiet w środowiskach zdominowanych przez mężczyzn.

Ostatni rozdział to część podsumowująca, w której znajdują się wnioski płynące z przeprowadzonego badania. Analiza pokazała, że neologizmy nacechowane płciowo używane są nie tylko by odzwierciedlać, ale również budować obraz płci społecznej. Słowa te są aktywnie używane w języku angielskim, choć z powodu dynamiki języka ciężko jest na tak wczesnym etapie ich istnienia przeprowadzić analizę ilościową. Jednakże niektóre z nich, jak na przykład *mansplaining*, wykazują predyspozycje do stania się pełnoprawnymi elementami leksykonu.

Słowa kluczowe: socjopragmatyka; zmiany językowe; gender; neologizmy nacechowane płciowo; język internetu;

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