

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING AND TRANSLATING GENDER LEXICON

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Abstract: In modern society, issues of gender sensitivity are becoming increasingly relevant in education, linguistics, and intercultural communication. Particular attention should be given to approaches to teaching and translating gender-related vocabulary, considering cultural, social, and linguistic contexts. This article aims to investigate the characteristics of gender-marked vocabulary, the challenges of translating it, and to propose methodological recommendations for foreign language teachers and professional translators.

Keywords: gendered language, inclusive language, foreign language teaching, translation, linguistic gender sensitivity, gender-neutral terms, feminine forms, intercultural communication, grammatical vs. social gender, language education.

Gender as a Linguistic Category

Gendered language refers to a system of linguistic units that reflect and construct social gender within language. In the context of globalization and intercultural exchange, understanding the specific features of gendered language is especially important for both language teachers and translators.

Modern languages, such as English, include both traditional gender-specific terms (e.g., fireman, stewardess) and gender-neutral alternatives (firefighter, flight attendant). This requires flexibility and cultural awareness in both instruction and translation.

Ways Gender Appears in Language

Language Level	Examples	Description
Lexical	fireman / firefighter, waitress / server	Words that carry gendered or neutral meaning
Morphological	-ess, -man, chairman / chairperson	Suffixes or roots indicating gender
Syntactic	he/she, they (singular)	Use of pronouns and agreement
Pragmatic	manpower → workforce	Contextual, polite and inclusive replacements

Table 1: Forms of expressing gender in language

Although English has fewer grammatical gender restrictions than Russian, inclusive language practices are especially actively developing in English.

Peculiarities of Translating Gender Lexicon

One of the key challenges in translation is the difference in grammatical systems and cultural norms. For example, Russian terms such as врач (doctor) or профессор (professor) are traditionally perceived as masculine, while their English counterparts are gender-neutral. Translators must consider sentence structure, context, social expectations, and the target audience.

Main translation difficulties:

- No exact equivalents (e.g., Ms. has no direct Russian analogue)
- Cultural perception of neutrality
- Political/social sensitivity

Sample translation strategies:

- Use neutral terms (врач instead of докторша)
- Add explanations or rephrase
- Follow inclusive style guides (e.g., UN, UNESCO)

Common Problems and Translation Strategies

Problem	Example	Recommended Strategy
No direct equivalent	Ms.	Add explanation / omit if appropriate
Gender stereotype in the term	fireman → «пожарный»	Use gender-neutral form: «пожарный/ая»
Different perception of feminatives	author → автор / авторка	Consider context, style, and audience
Agreement and pronouns	they (singular)	Rephrase or choose he/she depending on context
Social sensitivity	chairman	Use neutral term: chairperson, председатель (neutral)

Table 2: Translation challenges and strategies



Methodological Recommendations for Teaching

1. Raise cross-cultural awareness:

Teachers should explain that gender in language reflects social roles as well as grammar. Work with authentic texts (media, ads, articles) helps explore real examples.

2. Use inclusive vocabulary:

Teach gender-neutral alternatives:

- policeman → police officer
- chairman → chairperson

3. Develop critical thinking:

Analyze texts for gender bias, discuss feminatives and neutrality, compare how languages express gender.

4. Translation practice:

Exercises that include gender-sensitive texts and discussion of translation choices.

5. Use modern resources and guidelines:

Incorporate materials from APA, UN Gender-Inclusive Language Guides, etc.

Summary: Teaching Goals and Strategies

Teaching Objective	Approach and Tools
Raise awareness	Text analysis, group discussion, cross-linguistic comparison
Develop translation skills	Practice on authentic texts, rewriting tasks, alternative exercises
Encourage critical thinking	Discuss feminatives, create inclusive texts
Promote inclusive models	Use APA and UN style, change mankind → humanity
Integrate tech and global sources	Glossaries, websites (e.g., https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu)

Table 3: Teaching recommendations for gender lexicon

Sample Teaching Activities

1. Word Pair Matching:

Stewardess → Flight attendant

Businessman → Entrepreneur

Fireman → Firefighter

2. Text Rewriting:

Replace all gender-biased words with neutral equivalents.

3. Discussion Topics:

- Should feminatives (e.g., авторка, редакторка) be used in academic texts?
- How does language shape our understanding of gender roles?

Conclusion

Teaching and translating gendered language requires a combination of linguistic competence, cultural sensitivity, and methodological flexibility. The shift toward inclusive communication reflects not only linguistic evolution but also a social necessity to promote fairness and mutual respect. In international education and professional translation, these skills are no longer optional—they are essential.

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