EXCLUSIVE OR INCLUSIVE? WHERE THE GENDER CATEGORY IS MOVING

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This paper focuses on specifics of gender category development in English, Russian and Farsi languages. Carrying out comparative analysis based on history and current status, it reveals details on some ongoing processes in linguistics and society in general. Language changes are unpredictable and still cannot be fully uncovered by many scholars. Today the movement inside communities is getting stronger with opening new horizons of own perceptions in terms of personal gender and inclusive society. Due to the openness of information, it can also leave an impact on other languages. This article provides three main categories with gender category-specific forms.

Key words: Gender category; natural; grammatical; neutrality; animated and inanimate pronouns; inflected words.

Gender of nouns in English. How it changed, what tendencies we see today, and all in comparison to the Russian and Farsi languages.

 Linguistics have two main gender categories – grammatical and natural. Natural is based on a biological sex or, for neuter, the lack of sex of the referent of a noun. Traditionally Girl - female. Boy - male. Dog - neutral. It may appear that natural gender is not even considered a category, because nouns and pronouns reveal gender itself, it is a well-known information, and all the determiners and adjectives that are used with words just have the same form for each of them. Hence, the smart woman, the smart man, the smart dog – she, he, it is smart. Grammatical inflections are used to indicate whether a referent's gender is feminine, masculine, and neutral. In grammatical gender category inflections are affix-tags that are attached to words, moreover it leads to matching its gender with added determiners, adjectives, pronouns [1]. For example, in the Russian language you cannot say feminine word 'door' without corresponding an adjective 'wooden' to a feminine form. In old English system situation was the same, such word as 'sunu - son (masc.)' we would match it with additional words due to the right declension. In Old Persian language, it would be the same process. The system might have a glitch or how it called the 'exception'. The Old English word wifmann (the woman) naturally perceived as feminine, but grammar labels it as a masculine word, and requires answering all of its inflections [1].

First of all, the reasons why even grammatical gender was and is a thing? Some of the scholars believe it appeared because ancient people were keen on anthropomorphizing everything around them. Determine it for better under-

standing. James Frazier looked at this from a different point, and he claimed that early man and women spoke a differently inflected form of a language, but the theory was debunked by the fact that how could it be universally if not all languages had a grammatical gender system at all. Other scholars see it as an "accidental outcome of the linguistic development of some languages", and telling that from the start all grammatical genders are based on natural one [1].

All of these three languages originated from one common parental language Indo-European and they all belong to the same language family, although within it, they come from different groups [2]. In English, we should pay attention to the fact that now there is no such thing as grammatical gender as well as in Persian; although in Russian, it still exists. The Russian language characterized by grammatical gender. Because of strict inflection rules, in the Russian language for many words infinitive or neutral form is considered a masculine form. In the Persian language, the process of losing gender category took place way back in time, during the transition from Old Persian to a middle Persian language. It happened due to internal evolution of the language; it lost all forms of basic suffixes and endings and led to unification of all nouns. Modern Farsi is characterized by with nouns with no grammatical gender and pronouns are not marked for natural gender. Gender is expressed through lexis. Though from Arabic came gender inflected words, it does not play any grammatical role [4].

Despite this, English is quite different in a matter of nouns' gender. Once in their own history, the English language had the time when it used to have a grammatical gender. However, in the course of time, with new invaders and neighbours, due to psychological and other facts grammatical gender disappeared. English had its changes during Middle English period, especially after Norman Conquest. Some believe it happened because there was no way to distinguish one inflection from others. They just got weakened and the pronunciation was mashed up so nothing was left to distinguish anymore [3]. It is also being said that after the transition to natural gender, there used to be only two categories within gender norms, it was derived to animated and inanimate nouns. Animated animals no longer had biologically established sex. [5]

In general, the topic of our research can be divided to three main groups. This division is being made for the purpose of more precise demonstration. Groups are as follows:

1. Animated pronouns: English – he and she. In some cases, for showing respect and not revealing the gender, people tend to use pronoun They. Right now, the completely new system of pronouns for every gender minority is being developed on the Internet. It's interesting to know that there also appeared a new tendency to write preferred pronouns in account bio information on So-

cial Media (for example: he/him). In Russian traditionally only he/she (она/он), although because of the grammatical gender category it can also include non-animate objects like table, chair (masculine). Officially, gender-neutral pronoun does not exist. In languages with grammatical gender category, starting with German, right now can be found such phenomena as 'gender gap' – when the inflection usually written through an underscore. This is one of several gender-inclusive forms that can be used when writing in German, one in which the space above the underscore represents space for the diversity of gender identities [6]. Only one pronoun exists in Farsi that contains both he and she – [u] او , [vei] وی. There are two of them because one is used for a higher level of respect [7].

2. Inanimate pronouns: Usually it plays the main role in naming inanimate objects. However, there is another one She. In particular, this pronoun seems to have a role as giving gender, revives, gives meaning; It was concluded from previous researches that there is some typical usage of pronouns: Weather expressions ('she's raining'), some idiomatic expressions such as 'she's a toughie' (i.e. 'it's a tough problem'), name for physical objects (boats, schools) and pets [5]. In Russian it functions only as a name for words that are grammatically referred to as 'It', hence it can be animated, the word insect (neutral) for example. Farsi offers pronoun it (آن) for objects, pets as well.

3. Inflected words. There are long lists of new alternative words with neutral form and meaning these days. Nouns with –man (chairman – chairperson, policeman – police officer) in some cases were switched to nouns with suffix -person, of course this will not work in case of fireman-firefighter and others, so in this case new lexical units are invented. Such constructions with -girl occurs to be inappropriate and undesirable for usage (newsgirl, weather girl). Suffix -ess was used as a feminine inflection, when masculine and neutral were considered as a base norm (actor/actress, and poet/poetess). Last century it was considered as sexist, instead masculine version had been used as a neutral form. Ending -ette appeared in 20th century in the word suffragette, not many words have it, today it is used for humorous purposes [8]. Suffix -er can be used either for human or non-human, it names people or machines, for instance, hairdresser as a job, and hairdryer as a machine, baker as a job for a person, not an oven, also worker, reader etc. In terms of a job, naming it looks like a neutral gender designation [5]. In Russian, most nouns of jobs from the beginning are not meant to have a feminine form, for a long time masculine were used and still being used as both. Except for nouns of jobs, considered as 'for women' like female teacher (учительница). Suffixes -ка and -ца, and -ша and -иня, each of them has its own rule of usage, depending on a masculine form of ending. They all are used by those who see need for feminine in-

flections, but it is unofficial, in documents or press it can be considered as a mistake [9]. As for suffixes in the Farsi language, they do not contain any hints about gender base. For example, [gar] گر-, [mand] مند-, [chi]چی- etc. all this refers to a person that is capable of smth., that knows enough to do something or have some abilities: He/She's rich – او ثرتمند است [u servatmand ast], without context it would be unclear [10].

Based on what have been read in researches and what we see today in language communities in the Internet, specifically what younger generation do and say. We can make a few conclusions about language future tendencies. First, English had already introduced neutral suffixes and today continues to move towards gender inclusiveness and neutrality. Other languages influence each other development, Russian speaking audience is inspired to shift established grammatical gender norms. More forms of implementing gender neutral or feminine inflections to nouns, expanding the pronoun category appear in virtual space. Although the main difference between English and Russian in case of receiving new norms is that for the Russian language system it should be thoroughly rethought and approved by special commission, in the English speaking area there is no such thing. In addition to that, society seems to be more open to new changes in language. The Russian language that is based on masculine majority only now is put under society's pressure and is questioned by new younger generation. In the Farsi language natural gender is seen in all its glory, suffixes and pronouns are already neutral. Further, this phenomenon can appear as a base for some later social changes.

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