

LINGUISTIC CRITERIA AND ANALYTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE STUDY OF FEMINIST LEXIS

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu tezis zamonaviy nutqda ma'no, baholash va nomlash amaliyoti tizimi sifatida feminist leksikani o'rganishning lingvistik mezonlari va tahlil tamoyillarini o'rganadi.

Unda operativ ta'riflarga aniqlik kiritiladi, ko'p darajali model (semantik, pragmatik, so'z yasalishi va nutq darajalari) taklif etiladi hamda korpusga asoslangan va sifat tahlili usullari bayon qilinadi. Ilmiy yangilik feminist belgilarga ega birliklarni aniqlash mezonlarini umumiy gender leksikasidan farqlash tartib-qoidalari bilan uyg'unlashtirishdan iborat.

Kalit so'zlar: feministik leksika; gender nominatsiyasi; semantik mezon; pragmatik qiymat; diskurs tahlili; korpus metod; so'z yasalishi.

Аннотация. В тезисе рассматриваются лингвистические критерии и аналитические принципы изучения феминистской лексики как системы значений, оценок и практик номинации в современном дискурсе. Уточняются рабочие определения, предлагается многоуровневая модель анализа (семантический, прагматический, словообразовательный и дискурсивный уровни), описываются корпусные и качественные методы. Новизна состоит в интеграции критериев идентификации феминистски маркированных единиц и процедур их разграничения с общей гендерной лексикой.

Ключевые слова: феминистская лексика; гендерная номинация; семантический критерий; прагматическая оценочность; дискурсивный анализ; корпусный метод; словообразование.

Abstract. The thesis formulates linguistic criteria and analytical principles for examining feminist lexis as a structured set of nominations and evaluations in modern discourse. It defines the object and boundaries of analysis, proposes a multi-level framework (semantics, pragmatics, word formation, discourse), and combines corpus procedures with close reading. Novelty is achieved by operational tests that identify feminist-marked units and separate them from broader gender-related vocabulary

Keywords: feminist lexis; gender nomination; semantic criteria; pragmatic evaluation; discourse analysis; corpus methodology; word formation.

The study of feminist lexis requires a rigorous separation between three partially overlapping domains: general gender-related vocabulary, ideologically marked feminist vocabulary, and context-dependent lexical choices that become “feminist” only through pragmatic framing. This distinction is methodologically decisive because the same word can function as a neutral nomination in one text, as a polemical label in another, and as an index of group identity in a third. Therefore, the object of research should not be “words about women” as such, but lexemes and multiword units that participate in a stable set of meanings and evaluations connected with women's social roles, agency, and the critique of asymmetrical naming practices.

To make this object measurable, feminist lexis is treated here as a functional-lexical subsystem whose members can be identified by a bundle of criteria rather than by a single feature. Such an approach corresponds to contemporary lexicology and discourse-oriented semantics, where category membership is gradient and motivated by usage patterns rather than by purely dictionary definitions [1].

A first analytical principle is definitional operationalization: the researcher must formulate explicit tests that determine whether a unit is included in the feminist lexical subsystem. In practice, inclusion can be justified when at least two of the following are attested in a representative corpus: recurrent co-occurrence with metalinguistic markers of equality and critique (terms that frame asymmetry, bias, invisibility), stable evaluative prosody that targets discriminatory norms, and participation in nomination strategies that correct or contest traditional gender naming. This principle avoids circular reasoning, where an item is called feminist because it appears in a feminist text and the text is called feminist because it contains the item. The second principle is level differentiation. Feminist meanings are realized across semantics (what is named), pragmatics (what stance is taken), derivation (how naming is formed), and discourse organization (how lexical choices construct roles and alignments). Consequently, analysis must be multi-level and must document how an item's meaning shifts under context and genre constraints, especially in academic writing, media commentary, and institutional documents where normative terminology is negotiated.

At the semantic level, the core criterion is "asymmetry sensitivity": a unit qualifies as feminist-marked when its meaning presupposes or highlights unequal distribution of rights, opportunities, or symbolic recognition between genders, or when it encodes a corrective nomination that aims to reduce such inequality. This is not limited to overtly evaluative lexemes; it includes neutral-looking terms that acquire ideological load through conventionalized oppositions. In Russian and Uzbek linguistic traditions, attention to lexical meaning as a dynamic interaction of denotation and connotation has long been developed; connotative components often carry social evaluation that becomes visible in contrastive environments and in collocation profiles [2]. For feminist lexis, the semantic analysis should therefore proceed via componential decomposition combined with distributional semantics: identify semantic features (agency, competence, legitimacy, normativity) and verify them against usage evidence. For example, a nomination that systematically co-occurs with competence-doubting predicates reveals a semantic-pragmatic complex in which the word attracts a diminished-agency interpretation even if its dictionary denotation is neutral. The analytical principle here is not to attribute ideology to the lexeme alone but to document repeated meaning effects in discourse.

At the pragmatic level, the decisive criterion is stance indexing. Feminist lexis frequently functions as a stance device: it signals alignment with evaluative positions such as critique of stereotyping, advocacy of equitable representation, or rejection of derogatory labeling. Pragmatic analysis should use tools of speech act theory and politeness/impoliteness frameworks insofar as they reveal how lexical choice positions speaker and addressee, but it must remain tied to observable linguistic cues: hedging versus categorical assertion, quotation and reported speech, irony markers, and contrastive constructions that explicitly oppose "traditional" and "updated" naming. Importantly, the same unit can be used in endorsing, distancing, or mocking ways; thus, pragmatic annotation should distinguish authorial voice from cited voices and should treat quotation as a separate layer of meaning.

This corresponds to discourse-analytic insights that words are not merely selected but are “voiced,” carrying traces of social evaluation and intertextual debate [3]. A practical procedure is to code concordance lines for stance polarity (supportive, critical, neutral) and for target (norm, institution, speaker group), then verify whether a lexeme’s feminist marking persists across stances or emerges only in evaluatively loaded contexts.

Word-formation analysis provides another set of criteria because feminist lexis often expands through derivational patterns that create explicit gender marking or challenge default masculine forms. However, derivation alone does not guarantee feminist status. The relevant principle is “motivational transparency plus discursive function”: a newly formed or revitalized derivative counts as feminist-marked when it is used to problematize invisibility, to introduce symmetrical naming, or to contest established morphological norms. In languages with productive derivation, such as Russian, suffixal patterns can generate competing forms with different stylistic and evaluative profiles; the analyst must therefore document the morphological model, its productivity, and its register distribution rather than assume uniform social meaning.

In Uzbek, where analytic and lexical means often compete with derivational ones, feminist lexis may rely more on periphrasis, honorific choices, and institutional terminology than on suffixal symmetry. This makes contrastive attention important: the same communicative aim may be realized by different linguistic resources, so criteria must be formulated at the functional level (symmetry, visibility, evaluation) and only then mapped onto language-specific forms [4]. The analytical recommendation is to compile a list of candidate word-formation patterns, check their frequency and contextual functions in corpora, and interpret their stylistic status through genre stratification (news, academic, official, conversational).

Discourse-level principles are necessary because feminist lexis is not an inventory but a system embedded in argumentative and narrative structures. A key criterion is “participation in problem-solution frames”: lexical units become feminist-marked when they systematically occur in contexts that diagnose inequality, assign responsibility, and propose remedies (educational, institutional, communicative). This can be operationalized through frame-semantic annotation: identify the frame elements (agent, affected group, norm, consequence, corrective action) and measure which lexemes cluster within these frames. Another discourse criterion is metalinguistic reflexivity, where texts explicitly discuss words, naming, and correctness. Feminist lexis tends to include metalinguistic operators such as “term,” “label,” “naming,” “language,” and evaluative adjectives that assess adequacy and fairness. Such reflexive segments are methodologically valuable because they make implicit norms explicit and allow the analyst to separate lexical meaning from discourse commentary. The study should also account for interdiscursivity: feminist lexical items may migrate between academic discourse, media discourse, and institutional discourse, changing their degree of standardization. Items that stabilize in official documents may lose polemical force and become administrative terms; conversely, media circulation can increase evaluative polarization. Therefore, the analytical principle is diachronic-discursive tracking: record first occurrences, shifts in collocations, and changes in genre distribution over time, using comparable corpora where possible [5].

Methodologically, a combined corpus and qualitative approach is required to satisfy both representativeness and interpretability. Corpus procedures should include: assembling a balanced dataset (at minimum, several genres and time slices), extracting candidate units via keyword analysis against a reference corpus, and building collocation networks to identify stable semantic

associations. Yet corpus statistics alone cannot determine feminist marking because evaluation and stance are often encoded through syntax, quotation, and rhetorical structure. Therefore, close reading must follow quantitative extraction, focusing on contexts where the unit performs nomination correction, critique, or identity indexing. The analysis should apply reliability measures: double-coding of stance categories, explicit coding manuals, and transparent criteria for inclusion/exclusion. In line with academic norms of linguistic research, the thesis should also specify limitations: corpus composition biases, the risk of overgeneralizing from highly visible media texts, and the instability of emerging terminology. These limitations are not weaknesses but conditions that guide cautious generalization.

Scientific novelty in this approach lies in integrating criteria into a coherent decision procedure. Instead of treating feminist lexis as a self-evident list, the thesis proposes a layered identification protocol: first, detect candidates distributionally; second, test asymmetry sensitivity semantically; third, confirm stance indexing pragmatically; fourth, describe derivational motivation and register; fifth, validate discourse embedding through frames and metalinguistic reflexivity. Such a protocol is adaptable to different languages and can be used for lexicographic tasks, including dictionary labeling and usage notes. It also supports pedagogical applications in academic writing and translation studies: translators and editors can assess whether a lexical choice merely denotes gender or actively participates in ideological critique, and they can select equivalents that match both meaning and stance.

The conclusion synthesizes the findings as follows. Feminist lexis should be studied as a functional subsystem defined by converging semantic, pragmatic, derivational, and discourse indicators rather than by topic alone. The most reliable linguistic criteria are asymmetry sensitivity in meaning, stance indexing in usage, and systematic embedding in problem-solution and metalinguistic frames. A robust analysis requires a mixed methodology that combines corpus-based extraction with qualitative interpretation under explicit coding rules. The proposed multi-level protocol increases descriptive precision, reduces subjective classification, and makes cross-genre and cross-language comparison methodologically controlled, thereby strengthening the scientific basis for further lexicological and discourse research on feminist-marked vocabulary.

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