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## Gender identity in social space: linguistic ways of self-expression in Twitter microblogs

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**Abstract.** *The article deals with the problems of gender identity and its transformation under the influence of modern communicative culture on the Internet. In recent years, bloggers have been actively promoting gender issues in various social networks, drawing public attention to the problems of gender relations, opportunities for self-improvement and promotion of oneself as a person, regardless of social status, financial well-being, place of residence and cultural stereotypes. The authors analyzed Twitter microblogs in order to determine the features and traits of gender identity, to identify linguistic ways of self-expression of travel bloggers from different countries of the world. Reflecting in their posts the cultural identity, the identity not only of their country, but also of their places of residence, bloggers share topical issues, revealing their own potential and thereby motivating people for personal growth and self-improvement. The study points to some features of the microblogging language: minimization of gender binding, the desire to reach male and female readers, as well as simplification of the text language. Modern blog authors strive to destroy gender stereotypes by building a new gender identity that can be open to the world, society and the person himself.*

**Keywords:** *gender identity, travel bloggers, men, women, Twitter, personality, language.*

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**Introduction.** The question of gender and sex attracts the attention of researchers from different fields of sciences. For a long time, the nature of research was biological determinism. Only in the twentieth century, when the role of women in society began to undergo changes, there were discussions about gender and gender identity.

Large-scale research in the field of gender identity is confirmed by mass publications in journals with a high impact factor. Over the past decades, more than one hundred thousand publications on the topic have been published. Within the framework of studying the issue of gender, priority areas are *gender, family, culture and personality*. Much attention is paid to modern bloggers who travel to different parts of the globe

and talk not only about beautiful places, sights, but also about people. A person strives to know his essence through comparison, contrast in order to be able to find his place in society and show his best sides and qualities. This is one of the reasons that prompted us to analyze the microblogs of travel bloggers in order to identify the development and formation of a new gender identity.

From the point of view of the development of the term *gender identity*, it is necessary to note the notions *identity* and *gender*. The concept of *identity* was studied by ancient philosophers. In the context of the term, ideological foundations were initially laid, which were later replaced by correlation with absolute identity. The issue is interdisciplinary in nature, and, as a result,

does not have a single definition. Many scientists have studied this issue: P. Sorokin, F. Fukuyama, E. Hoffman, E. Erickson and others. According to S. Huntington, identity is the identification of a person with a group. In other words, each person is trying to find their own difference from the rest. The sources of identity are such factors as: natural (family, clan, sex, race, age), economic (job, income); territorial (country, region, yard, street), cultural (linguistic, regional, national environment) [1, p. 43].

**Materials and methods of research.** The materials for this article were microblogs of modern travel bloggers Casey Neistat, Jennifer Tuffen, Murad Osmani and Ilya Varlamov for 2021-2022. In total, 143 microblogs were analyzed, as well as comments on them.

The methodological basis of the research is the principles of objectivity and a systematic approach. The research also used such methods of scientific research as: comparative, problem-based and analytical.

**Results and discussion.** The main directions in the study of gender are related to the phenomenon of gender identity, its definition and role in modern society. The issues of gender identity transformation under the influence of political, legal and socio-cultural changes taking place in society are relevant in modern science. It is logical to attribute an equally important role in the transformation of gender identity to the personal development of a person, inspired by fashion trends to change the internal and external components of any successful leader. In the era of digital modernization, when earning opportunities appeared at all levels of the social ladder, gender identity has become a kind of chip of modernity, representing freedom of choice. A vivid confirmation of this is the star mothers who give their children the opportunity to evaluate themselves, to know and decide which sex to relate themselves to in the future. Previously, these actions caused a huge number of negative responses on social networks. At the moment, a storm of negativity and misunderstanding can be observed among people over 35 years old. It is not surprising, because it was representatives of this age group who once actively opposed transgender people.

An important innovation in the gender trend is the 'gender party'. An event where future parents will find out the sex of the child. More and more variations of this event appear in various social networks, which carries both a positive and a negative context. From a positive

point of view, it is impossible not to note all the creativity, solemnity and emotionality of the event. An unborn child acquires a certain identity in the face of the community, with certain expectations, requirements and dreams. It should be noted how future fathers react to the news about the boy, subconsciously satisfying the need for procreation.

The development of gender relations on the Internet has its own scenario. It is obvious that gender identity within the framework of social networks builds its own position, emphasizing and exacerbating the conflicting opinions of the public regarding the problem of sex. The identity formed in virtual reality differs from our point of view with a relative share of negativity and bias. And the language on the Internet is a new type of discourse, which is formed thanks to the creativity and innovation of user communities [2, p. 186].

Social networks play a huge role in the formation of identity. Geographical boundaries and the language barrier have retreated in the conditions of modern digitalization, which has allowed not only to expand various spheres of life, but also to create new gender relations outside the cultural component. It is implied that 'freedom of speech' acquires new meanings, giving an opportunity to express one's identity in any issue, as well as to influence topical issues of gender inequality and gender actions.

Social networks are an open platform for such relationships. In the current work, we will consider the microblogs of famous travel bloggers with millions of subscribers according to Yandex Dzen. Among the bloggers there were representatives of both the male and female half.

It should be noted in advance that our ideas about travelers' microblogs turned out to be somewhat erroneous. Within the framework of the study, we expected deeper discussions on the topic of culture, identity, but the way of presenting information and its context demonstrated completely different sides of the issue, which in no way affected the results of the study.

Casey Neistat is one of the most popular modern bloggers, who is rightfully considered a travel rebel, traveling despite any events or obstacles. A blogger who shares any details from his life every day. As a rule, the audience in social networks very quickly got used to the fact that the female part of the population puts absolutely everything online: from their food to a flower in the park. Casey Neistat also thrillingly

expresses his identity through small daily events that touch his soul. Today he writes about how he was treated to candy, and tomorrow he writes about his headphones. In other words, the author is trying to express his worldview and world perception through microblogs that are important to him at one time or another in his life. According to such blogs, you can understand the essence of a person's personality, the scope of his interests and his own attitude to himself. It is also worth noting that often the author of a blog asks everyday questions to his subscribers or shares new knowledge, because he strives to be useful to society. This kind of attempt at network socialization brings him not only subscribers, but also new topics for review that will be interesting and useful to his readers and will make them come back to his page again and again.

For example, the author writes: *"i deleted my last tweet because it was just a question and someone answered it and when i ask questions on twitter especially tech questions people make fun of me because i am like a Granny who cant figure out how to work the tv"* [3]. Note that from a linguistic point of view, the speech is spontaneous, as evidenced by absence of punctuation marks. It is also impossible not to pay attention to the use of the pronoun *I* with a small letter, which contradicts the rules of the English language. This indicates either a lack of self-love, or illiteracy or laziness, which most likely does not correspond to reality, or a subconscious desire of the individual to look at the same level in the eyes of his subscribers. And it works.

At the time of the appeal 30 people (28 men and 2 women) responded to this blog. For instance:

- *"Don't be afraid of showing yourself as a person that seeks knowledge, be afraid of becoming a person that stays in ignorance"*.

- *"You'r the best granny on youtube"*.

- *"Everyone loves their Granny Casey."*

In one of the comments, the author is likened to a grandmother, not a grandfather, which carries a kind of sarcasm and an attempt at humiliation. But in the context of comments by male representatives, the humiliation is minimized: male solidarity or an attempt to protect a person's feelings.

The author of the blog often calls on people to observe the established rules of behavior in society, norms of etiquette, and respect other people. For instance:

- *"if everytime you interact with someone in the service industry (restaraunts, stores, hotels etc) you*

*FIRST make eye contact and say hi or how are you? and then order your coffee or whatever. acknowledge we are all people. if you do this evertyhing is a little better."*

The microblog vividly reflects the desire to teach people to communicate respectfully. 239 people responded with words of gratitude, a third of whom were males over 50 years old, a third of young people from the service sector.

One of Casey Neistat's blogs, which has gained more than 10 thousand likes, is dedicated to a man who participated in a marathon without legs:

- *"this is Richard Whitehead and he doesn't believe in excuses. fucking champion."*

Casey took part in the same marathon, urging everyone to a healthy lifestyle. But surprisingly, there was no emotional reflection of feelings about the disabled person's participation in the marathon in the comments of the Americans. On the contrary, the majority spoke respectfully about the author of the blog rather than about the participant with prosthetics. This suggests that modern English-speaking society does not share personalities with problems, physical or mental disabilities. These people have become part of society without special privileges, which, in turn, gives them the opportunity to develop, identifying themselves as an equal member of society.

If we turn to the microblogs of other authors, we will also find similar notes, articles, photos and videos. Bloggers often use such information as a kind of 'hype', but at the same time, it becomes obvious that society is changing, and with it the rules of behavior, communication and existence are changing.

The complete opposite in its content and message can be considered the blog of the English travel blogger Jennifer Tuffen, full of information about different countries, life hacks, lots of photos. Despite the substantial content, however, her account has only 1300 subscribers. A distinctive feature of the microblogs of Casey Neistat and Jennifer Tuffen is reader orientation. Casey touches on everyday problems that concern the reader, while Jennifer writes only about travel, offers cheaper ways to travel. It is important to note that according to the ideas of the average subscriber, without knowing the gender identity of the authors of blogs, a person would decide that in the first case the author is a woman, and in the second – a man. In society, it is believed that men have more specifics, while women tend to get hung up on little things.

In the studies of D. Huffaker and S. Calvert, it was noted that men use emojis more often, and also write in a more free style than the fairer sex, sometimes presenting their blog in a certain gay style [4]. It is also worth noting that Jennifer Tuffen's professional orientation is also manifested in competent speech, accuracy of blogging and beautiful photos. For example:

- "So happy to be back at Raffles Hotel in #Istanbul, always offering the best views of the Bosphorus."

- "Sunrise at Elephant Rock, Al Ula #SaudiArabia."

Analyzing Jennifer Tuffen's microblogs, we note that the author tries to attract readers of both sexes, highlighting certain features of localities for representatives of both men and women. For example:

- "Wherever you are, don't forget to watch the sunset."

- "Adventurous with lots of activities such as zip-lining, kayaking and rock climbing [5]."

From the point of view of gender studies, J. Tuffen's blog corresponds to the generally accepted unspoken canons of binary opposition, when there is an implicit division into male and female, but at the same time understandable for most people. Moreover, we see that her blog is built quite competently: beautiful illustrations for the female eye that do not require additional description and in the style of *I want like Jennifer*, as well as a short advertising post for men who do not want to read more than the title, but who want to understand the main idea, to assess how interesting it is to them. The principle of clarity replaces the need for verbal explanation, but at the same time gives readers an impulse to search for more information. Interestingly, most advertising agencies and bloggers work in this way.

Modern man is so absorbed in the network that he strives to speed up all processes: whether it's cleaning, reading, moving around the city or the country. Speed is one of the trends of the 21st century. Speed is one of the features of modern gender identity. A person is in a hurry to live, reach the top and get information as quickly as possible. Jennifer Tuffen's blog is a clear proof of this.

Let's turn to the Russian blogger Murad Osmann, famous for creating the hashtag #followme. All photos and videos depict a woman walking forward and leading a man by the hand. This is a married couple who travels around the world and demonstrates beautiful places. Murad

Osmann has a somewhat atypical approach to microblogging. In addition to photos and videos with the image of a woman, the author often asks questions to the public and almost never receives comments in response. For instance:

- "Where would you go if there was no pandemic? I definitely miss Italy... #followmeto" [6].

Analyzing microblogs, it becomes obvious that Murad Osmann and his wife are quite successful; they demonstrate titanic work on creating and promoting their blogs, encouraging people to expand their worldview and horizons. The brand created by them not only appears on social networks, bringing them a good income, but also serves for the benefit of society. The couple actively participates in charity events, but does not openly talk about it in microblogs.

Famous travel blogger Ilya Varlamov (583 thousand subscribers) shares daily news not only of a cultural nature, but also news of a political nature. The events taking place in the world are reflected through the prism of his worldview. The author of the blog shares with his subscribers and third-party resources, giving people the opportunity to understand him, learn new things and form their point of view. For example:

- "Дол. Рогозин говорит, что считал войну с Украиной сумасшествием, а сам он якобы типичный маскулинный попан с комплексами 'раз ввязались в драку, то надо идти до конца'" [7].

The author actively uses slang in his blog and does not follow the competent writing of texts in his microblogs, which does not cause rejection from his subscribers. In addition, the author creates communication inside the blog, even elementary creating greeting blogs, receiving, in turn, greetings and likes:

- "Доброе утро, мои волшебные и неземные."

- "Доброе утро, мои любимые! Желаю вам роскошного дня! Всех обнимаю!"

- "Мур мур, мои зайчатки! Доброе утро! Люблю вас всех!"

Ilya Varlamov has visited more than 180 countries of the world and revealed many interesting facts about the culture of other countries, about their traditions, politics, economics, historical figures. He does not forget to mention the issues of gender culture. For example, in one of the posts he writes:

"Я придерживаюсь, если честно, настолько радикальных гендерных позиций, что считаю, что и футбол, и все вообще командные игры должны быть смешанными по гендерному

составу. Никакого отдельно мужского и отдельно женского футбола.”

The blogger received a lot of ironic comments on this post. For instance:

- “Я придерживаюсь еще более сильнее радикальных позиций и считаю что все виды спорта должны быть смешанными: допустим, футбольное поле и все соревнуются кто хочет с кем хочет, тут боксер на лыжах с ракеткой, там пловчиха в бассейне, там атлет кидает ядро в бегунов, хоккеист с копьем.”

- “Вы, Илья, видимо никогда в жизни не играли не в один командный вид спорта? Когда 80..90 килограммовый мужик, со скоростью 30 км/ч, делает подкат, там и сухожилия рвутся и сознание теряют. Вы видимо думаете, что футбол, это когда красиво мучаются на траве от легкого толчка?”

- “Кудрявый, хоть бы поделился с нами, чего куришь-то? Может тогда и в легкой атлетике смешанные сборные сделать? В хоккее? В борьбе? Боксе? Было бы здорово! Выходит такой африканец, к примеру, бегун на 3 км, а от Вьетнамской сборной девушка, 1,50 ростом.”

- “Обмен футболками если останется, то я за.”

- “Я думала ты умнее Варламов” and others. Thus, we come to the conclusion that gender identity in the social space is often perceived as gender expression. And the more pronounced it is, the more people this topic attracts attention. The network society screams about gender issues, demands attention and expresses them by all means available to them. Gender itself has become a trend that is being followed and followed. At the same time, gender identity takes on new features, transforms, and develops, finding expression in verbal ways in the materials of social networks.

**Conclusion.** The development of gender identity in life and on the web is somewhat different from each other: the desire for equality in reality, to solve personal problems in society and a vivid protest of the sexes on the web. In both cases, a person strives for self-expression, acceptance of himself and society.

The issues of gender studies have gone beyond a simple psychological and linguistic study. The phenomenon of gender identity carries the core of the person of the future and the shell of the present. Taking into account the use of global networks, all segments of the population of the planet Earth have received a way of self-expression. Identity has come to be seen as a borderline state between the

oppositions of sciences, countries, traditions and society itself.

143 microblogs of well-known travel bloggers according to Yandex Dzen were studied, which tell not only about countries, cultures and their traditions, but also about the people, their stories, their worries and achievements.

The study allowed us to identify the main trends of modern gender identity on the web, which include speed, service to society, human orientation and depersonalization of culture. A person strives to live, therefore, services that provide fast order fulfillment, courier deliveries, time management seminars and others are becoming more and more popular. Service to society is a key factor of development in many European countries. People strive to be useful, to do their job perfectly, so as not to waste time on rework, and also to teach others to follow simple rules of etiquette and safety. This is also manifested in the orientation towards a person, his needs, his qualities and capabilities. A huge number of blogs and videos are written about motivation, about improving personal qualities and the development of useful ones. Identity cannot but change under the pressure of modernity, requiring new perspectives. Modern gender identity can be considered more industrial than cultural. This is evidenced by the results of the study. In view of the fact that the Internet is a global source of subscribers, an increasing number of bloggers are striving to depersonalize culture. The desire to avoid cultural clashes, personal misunderstandings and traditional differences dictates new rules for conducting intercultural communication both in real life and online. Having studied the blogs of travelers, it was difficult for us to identify the specific nationality of bloggers and their belonging to specific communities. Ignorance of the names of blog authors would also lead to embarrassment in identifying their sex.

Linguistic ways of expressing gender identity are reduced to the use of emotionally expressive expressions, to an increase in the number of emoticons, emojis. Nonverbal vocabulary has occupied a solid niche in the verbal communication of people both in writing and in oral communication. The use of emoticons that can replace words, feelings, perception of a person and his attitude to a certain situation has led to the simplification of linguistic forms. The desire to express one's emotionality through written signs has led to the use of a large number of punctuation marks. From a gender point of

view, it is worth noting that women are more susceptible to the use of non-verbal means of communication in writing, but the tendency to use simplifications leads to the fact that men quite often began to use similar linguistic ways of self-expression.

From a grammatical point of view, there are internal processes in changing and simplifying constructions. Omitting words or not following grammatical rules entails a conscious disregard for language forms, since even knowing how a word is written, how it is inclined and used in certain situations, a person continues to write as he wants. This has led to the emergence of

new grammatical forms, the rules for which do not yet exist. For example, *want to – wanna*, etc. It is important to note that the violation of grammatical forms and constructions is more committed to male representatives. In general, the desire to convey your idea faster and easier corresponds to the modern era with its speeds, capabilities and lack of time.

From a linguistic point of view, it is necessary to continue conducting research on Twitter microblogs in order to identify hidden gender traits, as well as research on methods of representing gender identities through the prism of microblogs and comments.

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### Әлеуметтік кеңістіктегі гендерлік сәйкестік: Twitter микроблогтарында өзін-өзі көрсетудің тілдік тәсілдері

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада Интернеттегі заманауи коммуникативті мәдениеттің әсерінен гендерлік сәйкестілік және оның өзгеруі мәселелері қарастырылады. Соңғы жылдары блогерлер әртүрлі әлеуметтік желілерде гендерлік тақырыпты белсенді түрде насихаттап, жыныстар арасындағы қарым-қатынас мәселелеріне, өзін-өзі жетілдіру мүмкіндіктеріне және әлеуметтік мәртебесіне, қаржылық әл-ауқатына, тұрғылықты жеріне және мәдени стереотиптеріне қарамастан өзін тұлға ретінде насихаттауға жұртшылықтың назарын аударды. Авторлар Гендерлік сәйкестіктің ерекшеліктері мен ерекшеліктерін анықтау, әлемнің әртүрлі елдерінен келген саяхатшы-блогерлердің өзін-өзі көрсетудің тілдік тәсілдерін анықтау мақсатында Twitter микроблогтарына талдау жүргізді. Блогерлер өз жазбаларында тек өз елінің ғана емес, сонымен бірге тұратын жерлерінің де мәдени ерекшелігін, жеке басын көрсете отырып, өз әлеуетін ашып, адамдарды жеке өсу мен өзін-өзі жетілдіруге ынталандыратын өзекті мәселелермен бөліседі. Зерттеу микроблогтар тілінің кейбір ерекшеліктерін көрсетеді: гендерлік байланыстыруды азайту, ерлер мен әйелдердің оқырмандарына жетуге ұмтылу және мәтін тілін жеңілдету. Қазіргі блог авторлары әлемге, қоғамға және адамның өзіне ашық бола алатын жаңа гендерлік сәйкестікті құру арқылы гендерлік стереотиптерді жоюға тырысады.

**Түйін сөздер:** гендерлік сәйкестік, саяхат блогерлері, ерлер, әйелдер, Twitter, тұлға, тіл.

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### Гендерная идентичность в социальном пространстве: языковые способы самовыражения в микроблогах Твиттера

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются проблемы гендерной идентичности и ее трансформации под воздействием современной коммуникативной культуры на просторах Интернета. В последние годы блогеры активно продвигают гендерную тематику в различных социальных сетях, привлекая внимание общественности к проблемам взаимоотношения полов, к возможности самосовершенствования и продвижения себя как личности вне зависимости от социального статуса, финансового благополучия, места проживания и культурных стереотипов. Авторами проведен анализ микроблогов Твиттера с целью определения особенностей и черт гендерной идентичности, выявления языковых способов самовыражения трэвел-блогеров из различных стран мира. Отражая в своих постах культурную самобытность, идентичность не только своей страны, но и мест пребывания, блогеры делятся злободневными проблемами, раскрывая собственный потенциал и мотивируя тем самым людей на личностный рост и самосовершенствование. Исследование указывает на некоторые особенности языка микроблогов: минимизация гендерной привязки, стремление охватить мужскую и женскую аудиторию читателей, а также упрощение языка текста. Современные авторы блогов стремятся разрушить гендерные стереотипы, выстраивая новую гендерную идентичность, способную быть открытой для мира, общества и самого человека.

**Ключевые слова:** гендерная идентичность, трэвел-блогеры, мужчины, женщины, Твиттер, личность, язык.

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