

**ЕПІСТЕМОЛОГІЧНЕ ЗНАЧЕННЯ РОДУ В
 АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ МОВОЗНАВСТВІ**

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**THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL MEANING OF GEANGER IN
 ENGLISH LINGUISTICS**

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Скрыцкая Н. В. Эпистемологическое значения рода в английском языкознании. Категория рода в английском языкознании является едва ли не самой сложной структурой, которая наиболее подверглась воздействиям в ее культурно-семантическом выражении. Она имеет свои особенности, исходя из референтов выражения – мужского, женского, среднего. В английском языкознании, начиная с 70-80-х годов прошлого века, проблема рода и его характеристики вышли далеко за пределы грамматики, и изучается философскими, культурологическими и политическими науками. Цель статьи заключается в исследовании особенностей семантического значения рода сквозь призму философских, политических, культурологических доктрин. Род как общественная фармация рассматривался Никольсоном, Платзером, Сюзаном Бордо, К. Девидом, Мартином Роландом и многими другими исследователями. Все авторы подчеркивают универсализм этого понятия. Постмодернистические теории создают все новые и новые аргументы этому явлению. Вместе с эпистемологией как теорией понятий категория рода рассматривается с такими понятиями как универсализм, структурализм, эссенциализм. Главной целью рода является показать ментальные и анатомические отличия между мужским, женским и средним родами.

Ключевые слова: мужской, женский, средний роды, референт, пол, лицо, общество, культура.

Introduction. Gender can be complicated the category of language and philosophy, culture, political life also. A grammatical gender system uses inflections to indicate whether a referent's gender in masculine, feminine and neuter. In 70s – 80s of 20th century after the political changes and cultural spheres, the meaning of the word “gender” began to change and extend. Critical exploration of an existing cognition and the level in which it functions as a tool for building new knowledge. The different social, historical, political and cultural conditions have the first explored the conceptual and methodological apparatus which has been developed within the Western thought interconnectedness of sex/gender distinction with the epistemological role of the category of gender. It would like to briefly outline the basic philosophical within which it has been operating.

Linda Nicholson pointed out about the differences between women and men. The author shows biological system and social with functions of gender. First of all she denotes *epistemology* of gender. So, we can speak about the former level with its philosophical (theoretical) category.

Bordo Susan analyzes the gendered character of many philosophical knowledge aspects from human history; human experience which have revealed some types of cultural norms for masculinity and femininity occurring in different spheres of human experience of the world.

So, the many scientists believe that “gender” has come to refer to any differences between women and men and at once it get mental, behavioral and anatomical structure also.

The **aim** of article is to investigate the category of gender, its epistemological and methodological role and research particularly of transforming countries where these fields of study are only now beginning to develop. And also concerning the recently emerged gender-skepticism various arguments, pro- and against the category of gender as a tool of

analysis are explored. The aim of the investigation presupposes the solution of the following **tasks**:

- to investigate the problem of gender in English linguistics;
- to study the phenomenon of gender from the historical point of view;
- to show the meaning of the word “gender” through the political changes and cultural spheres;
- to analyze the structure of gender in the philosophical field;
- to show the structural peculiarities of gender as feminine, masculine and neuter genders;
- to study the functional peculiarities of gender in linguistics.

Main part. The category of gender can be shown in philosophical knowledge also. The category “universalization” gives new level of analysis gender and it also continues to evoke new questions as the following: how is it possible to built a theory without a certain degree? Does the category of gender inevitably lead to homogenization and thus to simplification?

While trying to answer these questions it seems to be important to differentiate between the level in which this category operates as a tool of critical exploration of an existing cognition and the level in which it functions as a tool for building new knowledge. According to linguistics theories the role of gender is especially important, but its functionality must be always viewed within the context in which it is used as well as within the framework of intentions and goals of concrete research programs. It should be seen as a category depicting certain resemblances which enables us to avoid the sweeping generalizations because these resemblances are not stable.

It is important to note, in comparison with the Western, especially the English-speaking countries, where the concept of gender has played an important role since the beginning of the 70s, the term “gender” was used almost

exclusively as a grammatical category to refer to certain words, nouns and personal pronouns as masculine or feminine. After the political changes and cultural spheres, the meaning of the word "gender" began to change and extend. For the most people, the word "gender" is still mainly a grammatical category and all human beings are characterized by their "biologically given" sex.

A few explorers deduce the gender on the academic level as well as in the wider cultural context. Because the different social, historical, political and cultural conditions have the first explored the conceptual and methodological apparatus which has been developed within the Western thought interconnectedness of sex/gender distinction with the epistemological role of the category of gender. It would like to briefly outline the basic philosophical and theoretical framework within which they have been operating.

The distinction between sex and gender developed within feminist theory was originally directed against the dominant traditional understanding of the differences between women and men as "natural" phenomena connected with the biological distinction between "the sexes". As Linda Nicholson pointed out that the differences between women and men have two dimensions: 1. Biological system; 2. The social, with "sex" referring to the former and "gender" to the latter¹.

Generally speaking, the different position of women and men in the network of social and power relations is not a result of their biological, anatomical differences, it cannot be from or excused by them, are now so well-known as to require little comment. Shortly speaking, "gender" began to function as an effective theoretical tool which provided the means to describe and explore a number of socio-cultural mechanisms and instruments of production of "woman" or "man" and this tendencies transformers in male and female. So, the English natural gender system have got the words "male" and "female" to make the referent's sign clear, such as "a male Canadian" instead in "*Canadian at*". Moreover, this distinction was also seen as a conceptual tool for overcoming the so-called biological foundationalism or biological determinism as well as for shifting the attention and emphasis to the socially and culturally constructed differences².

A number of theorists mainly in English-speaking countries have considered the sex/gender distinction to be an important turn which occurred in thinking. Beginning with the initial stress on legal, economic and social discrimination of women at the end of the 70s, the Anglo-American thinking moved to the analysis of the influence of "*of the gender organization of human life on Western culture - on the literary, scientific and philosophical canon that we call 'the Western intellectual tradition'*"³. We can analyze of gendered character of many philosophical knowledge aspects of human history or collective human experience which have revealed some types of cultural norms for masculinity and femininity occurring in different spheres of human experience of the world. They can be expressed in the male normative terms of discussion about reality and experience⁴.

The many philosophers thought that gender could serve as a good basis for argumentation against one - biological, sexual - difference, which has traditionally been

regarded as essential, and the transformed in another group - social, cultural, political and power-based. So, "gender" has been functioned as a conceptual tool for grasping of the socially constructed - in modern societies also power-based and power-regulated - expectations and cultural symbols serving for reproduction of "feminine" and "masculine" characteristics, stereotypes. The category of gender has been used to express in the social, cultural and political differences. The above mentioned expectations and symbols show what it means to the relations between woman or man found on the empirical, normative and also on symbolical level. We can put the individual characteristics to one or the other category. The many scientists believe that "gender" has come to refer to any differences between women and men and at once it get mental, behavioral and anatomical structure.

In Nicholson's book we are reading about social construction of what it means to be a woman or man. What's the deference between two types of this category and how to connect these two genders? Furthermore, the category of gender has methodological number's level. It can give controversial term for many theorists⁵. This process has also unitary and essential elements across culture.

In the context of this discussion there are the problem of an epistemology of gender arise. The problem of its epistemological and methodological role in contemporary theory and research, where these fields of study are only now beginning to develop. Besides other aspects, it should be note the epistemology of gender as strongly interconnected with the question of essentialism, with the question whether the category of gender leads inevitably to "falsely universalising".

How can we build new theories using gender as an analytic category and give to it methodical conception? Many of these arguments were raised by authors influenced by postmodernism. This new philosophical conception gives to the gender essentialists' character. At this point, it would be better to note distinguish between two levels of study of gender: 1) *gender as a category*, which helps us to articulate of what means to be a woman or man in particular historical period, society and culture and of gender as a social relation, which is a specific relation of dominance and power; 2) *an epistemology of gender* we can speak about the former level, with its philosophical (theoretical) category.

These voices say that "gender" is even though possibly effective in revealing of one type of difference between men and women - covers and hides another. The *skepticism* gives to the category of gender universal and universalizing concept, for designating a universal "woman" or woman in herself. This situation has a need in experience of each society.

The criticism or even rejection of the category of gender were often framed by the debate on the threat of *essentialism*. This debate has been concentrated on the question, whether the category of gender has any common, universal, ahistorical basis, or, in other words, whether the term "gender" has a unified universal meaning.

One of more scientist Jane R. Martin shows the gender as an essentialist category and author believes that all general terms need to be given up. "Any naming or categoriz-

¹ Nicholson Linda. *Gender*. In *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, 1988, 320 p.

² *Ibidem*, P. 165.

³ Bordo Susan. *Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism*, 1995, P. 35.

⁴ Bordo Susan. *Feminist Skepticism and the "Maleness" of Philosophy*. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1988, N.11, P. 132.

⁵ Nicholson Linda. *Gender*. In *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, 1988, P. 165-167.

ing tends to call attention to similarities and to neglect differences. In other words, the use of any general term easily can give rise to the very consequence that scholars have attributed to essence talk”⁶.

Mariana Szapuova from Comenius University, Slovakia seems that this debate culminated at the break of the 80s and the 90s of 20th century. At this time it may appear that this problem has been solved, over discussed. However, she believes that the epistemological and methodological level is not only remains relevant and topical. It also continues to evoke questions for those, who start with building their theories. As most striking is consider the following: how is it possible to build a theory without a certain degree of universalization or generalization? If we reject the category of gender, we are not getting rid of a critical tool of analysis of an already existing cognition. For example, as it is well known, “gender” has functioned as a tool of critical analysis of our intellectual tradition, especially in Western philosophy.

Next question which follows how can we understand the gender based character of our own discipline without certain degree of generalization? It seems that question of productivity and adequacy of this category has in such a way concentrated mainly on the following two problems: first,- the problem depends of gender specificity of individual areas of knowledge. As an example to illustrate how the category of gender has worked as a tool of rethinking an area of knowledge choosing philosophy, whose traditional concepts is deeply rooted in our language and thinking (for example, the mind/body, nature/culture, subjectivity/objectivity dualisms, sky/ground, low/high (higher), existence/non-existence etc.).

The second question is whether “gender” can serve as an appropriate tool for articulating the problem of difference (both between genders and within one gender itself). In others words, whether gender skepticism is only alternative.

Numerous critiques of Western philosophical tradition were based on the category of gender. A spreading belief emerged in the theory that the concept of gender can serve as a productive analytical category. If we look at the concept of gender from the point of view of language, we can see it implies that the meaning of certain words such as “reason”, “knowledge”, “science”, “body” or “history”, are conditioned by gender. Most analyses of masculinity present in the history of Western philosophy have been directed against one of the fundamental assumptions of traditional philosophy, according to which philosophy is a product of objective, universal and unhistorical reason. Thanks to philosophical reflection is able to achieve “*God's eye perspective*” or to use Thomas Nagel’s phrase, “*the view from nowhere*”. According to this assumption, the question of historical and cultural positioning of reason through its “beholder” is not relevant because it does not touch the correctness and adequacy of particular philosophical theories in any way⁷.

Philosophical criticism went on to undermine exactly this assumption by arguing that the question of a social - gender, class, racial, religious - localization in the knower (philosopher) are connected with the contents of philosophical concepts and with the meaning of basic philosophical terms. In the light of this criticism, it has become clear that the assumed gender neutrality of the philosophical

terms and concepts only covers up their gendered nature and gender specific connotation.

Western philosophers, who based their analysis on gender, have revealed behavior norms, types of cognitive style and moral conduct that were evidently determined by gender. Thus, they have created a new space which provides a certain alternative to the gender neutral discourse on human experience.

These theories also have led the focus of attention to the fact that “*the hierarchical oppositions of Western thought have consistently been gender coded*”. Philosophical criticism of traditional knowledge has added a new direction to this investigation and it was the category of gender that enabled thinkers to see new oppositions of Western thought as well as the very knowledge/power relations.

Conclusions. English gender is hardly a category not only for grammar but it determines in another different forms like philosophical knowledge, political system, and culture traditions. Western philosophers, who based their analysis on gender, have revealed behavior norms, types of cognitive style and moral conduct that were evidently determined by gender. Epistemological and methodological level belongs to genders and can be used for future social, historic, philosophical investigations.

Скрицька Н. В. Епістемологічне значення роду в англійському мовознавстві. Категорія роду є, мабуть, чи не найскладнішою структурою, яка найбільше піддалася впливам та змінам в її мовно-семантичному вираженні. Вона має свої структурні особливості, виходячи з референтів вираження – чоловічого, жіночого, середнього. В англійській мові рід є лексичним поняттям та співвідноситься зі статтю референта, а система роду в англійському мовознавстві значною мірою базується на природній статі. Однак, проблема роду та його характеристики вийшла далеко за межі граматики та розглядається філософськими, політичними, культурними науками. Мета статті полягає в дослідженні специфіки категорії роду, а саме в особливостях його вираження крізь призму філософських, культурологічних, політичних доктрин. Чимало науковців розглядають поняття роду не лише як граматичну категорію, але й як суспільну формацію. Біологічні, суспільні відмінності впливають на формування та становлення особливостей роду, його функцій та значень, підкреслюючи цим самим універсальність цього поняття. Такий погляд бере свій початок із 70 – 80-х років ХХ століття в англо-американській традиції, яка виражалася у філософії, літературі, мистецтві. Рід, як вважають філософи, може впливати на формування культурологічних, суспільних, політичних доктрин. Основне значення роду – показати ментальні, анатомічні відмінності між чоловічими, жіночими та середніми особинами. Разом з епістемологією категорію роду можна розглядати з такими філософськими поняттями як універсальність, есенціалізм, структуралізм тощо. Постмодерністські теорії віднаходять все нові й нові аргументи цьому явищу. Епістемологія роду відноситься цілком до філософського (теоретичного рівня). Філософський підхід до розгляду категорії роду був розроблений Нікольсоном, Платзером, Сюзаном Бордо, К. Девідом, Мартіном Роландом, Стіклендом та багатьма іншими дослідниками. В залежності від філософського (епістемологічного) значення роду можуть творитися нові суспільні формації, інституції, призначені для вдосконалення суспільно-політичного рівня.

Ключові слова: рід, граматична категорія роду, епістемологія, особа, стать, суспільство, культура.

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⁶Martin Jane Roland. Methodological Essentialism, False Difference, and Other Dangerous Traps. In: Signs, Vol. 19, № 3, 1994, P. 636.

⁷Bordo Susan. Feminist Skepticism and the “Maleness” of Philosophy. The Journal of Philosophy, 1988, № 11, P. 134.