

## **CZECH GENDER LINGUISTICS: TOPICS, ATTITUDES, PERSPECTIVES**

Vít KOLEK, Jana VALDROVÁ

Palacký University Olomouc

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The aim of the present article is to analyse the existing publications dealing with Czech gender linguistics, and attitudes of their authors. Firstly, the authors of the article present an overview of the development of the discipline, beginning with its rejection to today's acceptance. They then deal with the various ways to label people with regard to gender, and consider the formation of nouns labelling women as one of the strategies to make women visible in the language. The authors also inform readers about the psycholinguistic testing of the “generic” masculine in the Czech language and about the possibilities of Czech gender-fair language. The authors discuss the proper names of persons from the perspective of gender and personal identities, while they briefly mention translatology publications which reflect the gender perspective. Additionally, the authors present a call for further research in certain areas.

**Keywords:** Czech language, gender, generic masculine, feminization, gender-fair language, word formation, translation studies.

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

In the present article, the authors introduce the existing issues related to Czech gender linguistics and highlight the individual publications and attitudes of their authors from a metalinguistic perspective. This discipline (the name of which has stabilized to the Czech term *genderová lingvistika*, ‘gender linguistics’) is called by various names. The first publications which explicitly<sup>1</sup>

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1 Publications that are of interest for gender-linguistic research, however, were published even before this, and the authors note them in the following sections.

thematized this linguistic field (Čmejrková, 1995; Hoffmannová, 1995) used the term *feministická lingvistika*, ‘*feminist linguistics*’. S. Čmejrková used the term *lingvistika rodu*, ‘*linguistics of (grammatical) gender*’ which was supposed to compete with the term *genderová lingvistika*, already used by J. Valdřová (1997). J. Valdřová (2018a) also uses the term *lingvistika genderových a sexuálních identit* ‘*linguistics of gender and sexual identities*’ as an overarching term for feminist, gender and queer linguistics. Since this article is devoted to the topic of the relation between the language and gender identities, the authors refer to this field in the rest of this text as *gender linguistics* (hereinafter referred to as *GL*).

The first part of the present text introduces the general publications dealing with the field and the attitudes of individual authors. The second part focuses on the labelling of persons in the Czech language, mainly on the usage of the “generic” masculine, its empirical testing and on the suggestions for gender-fair language use within the Czech language, while the next part deals with personal names and then finally the issue of gender in translation is addressed as well.

In the framework of these thematic fields, it is possible to see theoretical approaches to the relation of language and gender, although these are often not concretized explicitly in the Czech GL discourse. Mainly in the period up to 1945, the structural linguistic analysis perspective dominated without any special regard to the social or situational context – this was *inter alia* caused by the strong influence of the Prague linguistic circle on the related scientific research. The socialist period was typical with its ideological (Marxist) approach, which was often necessary in order to have a text published. In this context, the promotion of female personal names was “explained” as an achievement of socialism (e.g. Dokulil below).

The year 1989 enabled a broader feminist reflection on language, although the lack of information on the development and state of feminist research into language is obvious up to the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, together with the misapprehension of the analytic category of *gender* (cf. Čmejrková, 1995; Hoffmannová, 1995). Its application to empirical research brought findings regarding the connections between verbal behaviour and the perception of reality. At present queer linguistic research underdeveloped, and the status of Czech queer linguistics is researched by V. Kolek (2019).

## 2 FROM REJECTION TO ACCEPTANCE: THE CRUCIAL CZECH PUBLICATIONS

As already mentioned above, the first texts reflecting foreign feminist linguistics (hereinafter referred to as *FL*) were published by S. Čmejrková (1995) and J. Hoffmannová (1995). Both authors considered the topic of the use of gender-fair language irrelevant for Czech— they reduce the topics of FL to the making of women visible within the language, while ironizing or questioning the whole field in general.<sup>2</sup> They also purposely create inappropriate Czech equivalents to English gender-fair formulations, disqualify FL with the use of negatively expressive labellings and do not see its relevance within the Czech language environment. It is easy to imagine the effects of these ideas, coming from respected linguists, on the possible GL-related interests of the linguistic community. An argumentative analysis of both texts is presented by Kolek and Valdřová (2017).

The two articles motivated J. Valdřová to perform gender-linguistic research. Her first texts (1996, 1997) introduced the proposed gender-fair language to the public, while the author then elaborated on the topic in further works (e.g. Valdřová, 2001, 2005a, 2010, 2013). F. Daneš (1997) reacted to J. Valdřová, considering the term *gender* a feminist construct, and the proposed gender-fair language “*násilné brusičství*” (‘forced purism’), with an appeal to common sense (Daneš, 1997, p. 258). In the same year, S. Čmejrková published another FL-related article; she, once again, explicitly and ironically distances herself from FL while rejecting the thesis that language not only reflects reality, but also constructs it. Apart from the topic of the generic masculine and the subsequent “*revize patriarchálního paradigmatu*” (‘revision of patriarchal paradigm’; Čmejrková, 1997, p. 147), the author also mentions the issue of the formation of female surnames (see Chapter 4.2.) and the analysis of female magazines and advertisements as FL topics.

In 1998, the first dissertation dealing with Czech GL was defended (Valdřová, 1998) at Masaryk University. Based on the contrastive German-Czech comparison, the author dealt with the possibilities of making women visible in the language. The validity of gender-fair language was then confirmed by Czech law

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2 It is, however, necessary to consider the lack of information in times before the spread of the Internet.

– Act no. 167/1999 Coll., which, *inter alia*, demands the offering of job opportunities without sex and gender discrimination, and this resulted in more gender-fair formulations of jobs. After numerous language analyses and publications on gender-fair language principles (see below), J. Valdrová (2015a) asked whether it is possible to speak about the existence of FL in Czech linguistics: she briefly summarizes the previous GL developments and deals with the language constructs of gender, the consequences of using the “generic” masculine in oral presentations and its alternatives, proper names from the perspective of gender (see below), and so on. She states that Czech FL (or GL) is still in its early days in 2015, but notes that interest in this field is growing, as manifested in the interest of the public in gender-fair language and in the increasing number of students’ theses dealing with the topic of *gender and language*.<sup>3</sup>

This demand was met by the *Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny* (*New Czech Encyclopaedic Dictionary*’, eds. Karlík, Nekula and Pleskalová, 2016) which contains entries such as *biologický rod X mluvnický (gramatický) rod, feministická lingvistika, gender, genderová lingvistika, genderově vyvážené vyjadřování, generické maskulinum* (*‘biological sex X grammatical gender, feminist linguistics, gender, gender linguistics, gender-fair language, generic masculine’*), authored by J. Valdrová (together with M. Nekula for the entry for *feministická lingvistika, ‘feminist linguistics’*). The entries inform readers about the historic development of FL and GL in both foreign countries and in the Czech Republic, while they focus on the description of the main topics and objects of research, including the most topical elements.

In addition to the *Nový encyklopedický slovník* (2016), Kolek and Valdrová (2017) also provide a summary of FL and GL. They analyse the various approaches to the making of women visible in the language used in the most important journals of Czech studies, *Naše řeč* (*‘Our Speech’*) and *Slovo a slovesnost* (*‘Word and Word Art’*)<sup>4</sup> before the year 1995, and reach the surprising conclusion that the linguistic community was already more inclined to making of women more visible in the language before 1989, and the fall of socialism in the Czech Republic, than it is today.

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3 E.g. in the [www.theses.cz](http://www.theses.cz) database.

4 The editorial board does not translate the name *Slovo a slovesnost*, cf. <http://sas.ujc.cas.cz/?lang=en>.

In 2018, J. Valdřová published a monograph *Reprezentace řenství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderovřch a sexuálnřch identit*, ('Representations of femininity from the perspective of linguistics of gender and sexual identities'). The monograph summarizes the state and trends of GL research in the Czech Republic, it supports the language construction of gender and gender hierarchy using examples from the public sphere and media, it reviews the possibilities of gender-fair language in Czech, and it informs readers of approaches used by the Czech general public as well as the linguistic community. Additionally, the author analyses the causes of the slow development of GL in the Czech Republic, which include: non-acceptance of the field by the linguistic community, its unwillingness to admit the interdisciplinary overlaps, and the ignorance of the results of the development and application of gender-fair language in foreign languages (Valdřová, 2018a, pp. 75–81). J. Valdřová notes that perhaps two research generations have neglected such issues, although adds that the situation has been improving, as those individuals who are still studying encounter issues regarding gender-fair language when coming into contact with foreign countries, and thus have to compare the foreign customs with Czech ones; moreover, the general public also perceives the issue of sexism within the language and discusses it. Additionally, another gender-linguistic dissertation is currently being prepared.

### 3 LABELLING OF PEOPLE REGARDING THEIR GENDER

#### 3.1 Approaches to the formation of nouns labelling women

The formation of the gender opposites of nouns (e.g. *uřitel<sub>m</sub>* -> *uřitelka<sub>f</sub>*, *vdova<sub>f</sub>* -> *vdovec<sub>m</sub>*, 'teacher<sub>m</sub>' -> *teacher<sub>f</sub>*, *widow* -> *widower*') is a natural element of the Czech language system. The formation of nouns labelling women from the nouns labelling men is more common (i.e. female gender inflection, similarly to the surnames below). The Czech language features several suffixes to form a noun to label a woman – the most productive is the suffix *-ka* (see the examples above). The formation of feminine noun forms is easy (except for rare exceptions), and is among the main ways of creating gender-fair language.

The formation of nouns labelling the professions of women was actively supported by the editorial board of *Naře řeč*,<sup>5</sup> with a significant influence on

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5 Available at <http://nase-rec.ujc.cas.cz/>

public opinion. The article *Slečna doktor* ('Miss Doctor<sub>m</sub>', 1918) criticizes the usage of masculine forms of nouns to label women as "nesmysl do nebe volající a ohavnost" ('an utter nonsense and atrocity'; p. 156). The article *Paní poslanec* ('Mrs. Deputy<sub>m</sub>', 1920) contains a short message that the labelling of women by masculine noun forms is "nesprávné a nečeské" ('incorrect and not Czech', p. 312). Moreover, in the article *Paní doktor* ('Mrs. Doctor<sub>m</sub>', 1922) the masculine noun form *doktor*, 'doctor' is seen as incorrect. With the note that "...v úředním seznamu osob působících na universitě Karlově čteme v oddílu nadepsaném »lektori« (ne »lektori a lektorky«)" ('...in the official list of people working at the Charles University we may read in the part which is labelled "lecturers<sub>m</sub>" (not "lecturers<sub>m</sub> and lecturers<sub>f</sub>"), p. 265), the editors address the issue of the lack of feminine noun forms if there are any women within the group. In the article *Z našich časopisů* ('From our magazines', 1922), the usage of the "generic" masculine is, however, called a *fashion* (nevertheless, FL is, paradoxically, called a *fashion* in subsequent articles). In the article *Paní ministryně* ('Mrs Minister<sub>m</sub>', 1924), the editors support the feminine noun form *ministryně*, 'minister<sub>f</sub>' as an analogue to *paní poslankyně*, 'Mrs Deputy<sub>f</sub>'. In the article *Magister, soudce, mistr* ('Magister, judge, foreman', 1929) the masculine noun forms which are used to label women are called "nečeským modernismem" ('non-Czech modernism', p. 166). The two articles *Slečna doktor* ('Miss Doctor<sub>m</sub>', 1930, 1931) give information about the recommendations made by the Academic Senate of Charles University and Czech Technical University in Prague to use feminine noun forms in both the professional and private spheres. The editors of *Naše řeč* welcomed that decision, adding "těší se, že nepřirozené a nečeské tituly (...) přece jednou ustoupí způsobu správnému." ('they look forward to the fact that the unnatural and non-Czech degrees will yield to the correct ones.', p. 199). The article *Člen, členka* ('Member<sub>m</sub>, member<sub>f</sub>', 1932) shows many examples of women labelled by a masculine noun form which was, again, seen as "not Czech" by the editors of the journal, while they were also surprised by the fact that "na věc tak samozřejmou je třeba stále ještě ukazovat, ačkoli nejen *Naše řeč*, ale i úřady a noviny už několikrát zavrhly toto nepřirozené zaměňování rodu." ('despite that this is self-evident, it is necessary to point this out, although not only *Naše řeč*, but also the offices and newspaper have rejected this unnatural mixing up of the gender', p. 124). F. Oberpfalcer (1932a, 1932b, 1932c, 1932d,

1933a) introduced the suffixes of nouns labelling women and presented many examples. Additionally, the article *Paní poslanec* ('Mrs. Deputy<sub>m</sub>', 1935) points out to the unnaturalness of the labelling of women with masculine noun forms, and it contains many then-topical feminine noun forms.

The text *Akademické tituly žen* ('Academic degrees of women', 1938) welcomes the decision of Charles University in the case of the formation of feminine forms of academic degrees, although the author of the text admits that female academics prefer the masculine form; that is, however, "*dokonalý komplex méněcennosti ženského pohlaví*" ('an absolute inferiority complex of the female gender', p. 221). J. Příkryl (1938) deals with "*módní zanedbávání ženského tvaru členka*" ('the fashionable negligence of the feminine noun form *členka*, member', p. 288). The then unusual sounding feminine *náměstkyně* 'deputy' is promoted by J. Příkryl (1945): it is formed "*v duchu jazyka*" ('in the spirit of the language', p. 215) and, according to the author of the article, there is no reason to avoid using the term, similar to the feminine noun form *ministryně* 'minister' in contrast to the then rival form *ministra* (Šmilauer, 1946). The frequency of articles dealing with nouns labelling women and the opinions they express in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century show the considerable support for making women more visible in the language among both the professional and general public.

In the period of socialism in Czechoslovakia (1948–1989), several articles in *Naše řeč* dealt with nouns labelling women; however, they presented their arguments in the spirit of the political system of the day. K. Hausenblas (1950) states, for example, that "*...zrovnoprávnění žen v socialistické společnosti se obráží – jak to ani jinak nemůže být – i v našem jazyce*" ('... emancipation of women in the socialist society is reflected – and it cannot be otherwise – even in our language', p. 159). The article *Učednice* ('Apprentice', 1951) reports on the successful penetration of women into the factories, workshops and companies. "*Jazyk tu byl postaven před úkol poskytnout pro tato ženská povolání náležité názvy.*" ('The language was faced with a problem to provide appropriate labels for those female occupations', p. 77). M. Dokulil (1951) paraphrases Stalin's thoughts and states that "*teprve socialistická společnost zrovnoprávnila ženu*" ('it was only the socialist society that emancipated the woman completely', p. 127) – as evidenced by the formation of nouns labelling female occupations.

The tendency to protect the language against the foreign influences manifested in the Czechization of given names and surnames (see Chapter 4.2). With regard to common names, the article by V. Kondrová (1960) reflects the uncertainty towards foreign elements in the Czech language, using the example of the hybrid form *hosteska* (the English feminine noun form *hostess* and the Czech feminine suffix *-ka*). According to the author, the form *hostesa* or Czech equivalents *informátorka*, ‘*informér<sub>f</sub>*’ or *průvodkyně*, ‘*guide<sub>f</sub>*’ would better suit the rules of Czech word formation. However, Z Hrušková (1970) does not agree with the proposed alternatives, and states that “*méně obvyklý způsob tvoření jména hosteska nemůže být na překážku jeho užívání, je-li to slovo opravdu potřebné*” (‘even the less common way of formation of the word *hosteska* does not have to be an obstacle in its usage, if the word is really necessary’, p. 190).

J. Petr (1980) mentions the change of the political system which enabled the penetration of women into many occupations. The author allows the usage of masculine word forms if “*půjde o apoziční vyjádření obecného označení funkce nebo hodnoty, které bude stát oddělené čárkou za osobním jménem*” (‘it is an apposition expressing of a general label of a function or a rank which would be separated from the personal name by a comma’, p. 267). That is, apparently, the first mentioned possible use of (generic) masculine for labelling women in *Naše řeč*.

The formation of nouns labelling women outside *Naše řeč* is dealt with by, for example, J. Schwarz (1999) or T. Dickins (2001), and the latter, a British researcher of Czech studies, criticizes *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (*The Dictionary of the Official Czech Language*) in which many nouns labelling women (mainly occupations) are missing.

S. Čmejrková (2002) presents a theoretical analysis of the formation of nouns labelling women while using the structuralist theory of markedness (supposedly, the masculine noun gender represents both men and women, the feminine noun gender represents women only). However, she admits that “*užití generických maskulin může v některých kontextech vytvářet dojem, že to jsou hlavně (spíše, pouze) muži, o kom je řeč*” (‘the usage of generic masculine noun forms may, in some contexts, make an impression that it is (rather, only) the men who is talked about’; p. 279). Nevertheless, S. Čmejrková (2003) does



not step out of the shadow of structuralism or give up warning against gender-fair language, even in her similar article published in English. She strives again to trivialize the Czech gender-fair language by using heavy-handed, artificially created example sentences.

From the brief review presented above it may be assumed that, similar to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the period of socialism can be characterized by the considerable support for using gender-inflected noun forms among of both the professional and general public. Naturally there were no feminist arguments present here, but instead appeals were made to the naturalness of the language, clarity of conveyance, and rightness, along with analogies to already existing and common words. During the period of socialism, however, fewer articles dealing with the formation of feminine forms of common nouns were published, and the authors used the lens of ideology as a means of argumentation. It was thus only the fall of the Iron Curtain which enabled the feminist reflection of the language, i.e. more than 20 years after this occurred in many other democracies.

### 3.2 “Generic” masculine noun forms and the gender-fair language

J. Valdřová (2017) defines the term “generic” masculine as “[n]ázev osoby v mužském rodě, který je míněn jako neutrální z hlediska rodu biologického, neboť mluvčí biologický rod nezná, nebo ho v daném kontextu považuje za méně důležitý než jiné sociální charakteristiky” (‘an appellation of a person in masculine noun gender which is seen as neutral from the point of biological gender since the speaker does not know the biological gender themselves or that they consider it less important than other social characteristics’). J. Valdřová (1996, 1997) was the first to point out the problematic nature and discriminative potential of the “generic” masculine in Czech linguistics: the overuse of the “generic” masculine evokes the image of men as the sole actors in public events. Czech language thus works in favour of men – the gender-specific inflection may (apart from the nouns) also be performed also on pronouns, adjectives, some numerals and some verbs forms: *Oba<sub>m</sub> naši<sub>m</sub> známí<sub>m</sub> umělci<sub>m</sub> zazpívali<sub>m</sub> hymnu* (‘Both<sub>m</sub> of our<sub>m</sub> known<sub>m</sub> artists<sub>m</sub> sang<sub>m</sub> the anthem’). Despite the fact that this sentence may also “include” a woman, she is not even mentioned, and therefore there is no need to look for her. In Valdřová (1997) as well as in many other articles after that (Valdřová, 2001, 2005a, 2010, 2013,

etc.), she formulated gender-fair alternatives to the “generic” masculine. Based on an analysis of 1,000 newspapers’ headlines (2001), she showed that the “generic” masculine may be replaced in as many as nine different ways (e.g. *výletní lodě*, ‘cruise ships’ instead of *lodě s výletníky*, ‘ships with sightseers’). In an analysis of communication at one conference (2005a), she illustrated the reproduction of the gender hierarchy – the men negotiate, women are the subjects of the negotiating.

The first psycholinguistic test of “generic” masculine perception was carried out by J. Valdová (2008). The research sample consisted of 572 respondents between 10–18 years of age. The task of the respondents was to think up funny surnames for ten people in a list according to their occupations (such as *a scientist*). The experimental group completed a test presented in the “generic” masculine form, while the control group completed a test with both feminine and masculine noun forms. The first version produced an overwhelming prevalence of masculine surnames, while in the second version the associations were significantly more balanced between masculine and feminine ones, and they reflected the reality better. This study was then criticized by J. Chromý (2008).<sup>6</sup>

In the same year, S. Čmejrková published the results of a questionnaire, in which the respondents were given a statement, “*Práce učitele<sub>m</sub> je hůř ohodnocená než práce policisty<sub>m</sub>*” (*The job of a teacher<sub>m</sub> is worse paid than the job of a police officer<sub>m</sub>*), and she asked them how they understood the sentence while giving the following options:

- 1) the author means both men and women,
- 2) the author means men only,
- 3) is it necessary to point out that both men and women are meant? (*učitele<sub>m</sub> a učitelky<sub>f</sub>*, ‘teacher<sub>m</sub> and teacher<sub>f</sub>’, *policisty<sub>m</sub> i policistky<sub>f</sub>*, ‘police officer<sub>m</sub> and police officer<sub>f</sub>’),
- 4) write down your own opinion.

More than a half of respondents selected the first option, and the second and third were each selected by more than one fifth of the respondents. However,

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6 Chromý criticizes the author for the choice of research method, although he himself suggests a method that would only emphasize the contemporary usage.

this research method may not be seen as a truly associative experiment, but rather a purposeful interpretation of the given statement without the context.

The psychologist I. Smetáčková (2016) dealt with the “generic” masculine and the double forms from the perspective of their relation to the perception of prestige. By doing so, she discovered that the feminine noun form has a lower prestige in male-dominated fields and the masculine noun form has a lower prestige in female-dominated ones, and this may be caused by gender stereotypes. Other associative experiments can only be found in students’ theses. V. Kolek and D. Scheller-Boltz (in press) provide an overview together with a critical analysis of those works, even with Kolek’s own (comparative German-Czech) associative experiment, which verifies the conclusions made by J. Valdřová (2008). Tests that are interdisciplinary, methodologically varied, well captured and carried out in laboratories (working with a text and pictures, measuring of reaction times, etc.) are desired for the Czech GL. Such tests are conducted by researchers with various professional competences from the fields of sociology, psychology, linguistics, etc.

The meaning and aim of gender-fair language is to support the equal naming of women, men and other genders in the language. In Czech, gender-fair language concerns mainly a) the way of labelling persons (including overusing the “generic” masculine), and b) language sexism. The authors of the current work provide a list of available alternatives to the “generic” masculine below. The issue of language sexism is a matter of choice of language means and style, similar to that seen in English and other languages.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic published a guide to Czech gender-fair language on their website (Valdřová et al., 2010). In this manual, the authors initially deal with discrimination and language discrimination in general; subsequently, they discuss both the “generic” masculine and methods to achieve gender-fair Czech language, and gender-fair visualisations. The last part of the manual presents an overview of the methods of gender-fair language in English and German. In response to this, R. Adam organized a protest with a petition involving nearly all departments of Czech studies in the Czech Republic, and despite the fact that he did not propose any professional arguments the manual was withdrawn from the website and the professional discussion on the topic of gender-fair language

ended before it had really started. Media responses to this affair were analysed by Z. Mađarová (2015), and she gave evidence of fallacies involving *ad hominem*, *ad populum*, *causing of fear* and *downplaying of the stated issue*.

J. Valdřová (2013 in German, 2016 in English) reacts to the often used reproaches that the diversity of Czech inflection makes gender-fair language too difficult and the resulting texts non-transparent. She supports the functionality of Czech gender-fair language based on German-Czech analogies. The argument of the typological difference of the Czech language as an obstacle to using gender-fair language seems to be false, and only the willingness of speakers to express themselves in a gender-fair way is decisive.

The latest overview of Czech gender-fair language methods supplemented by suggestions of how to label non-binary persons is presented by V. Kolek (in press; cf. Valdřová, 2018a, pp. 401–407). These methods include:

- using feminine noun forms – when a woman is labelled: učitel<sub>m</sub> -> učitelka<sub>f</sub>, ‘teacher<sub>m</sub> -> teacher<sub>f</sub>’;
- using both feminine and masculine noun forms: učitelky<sub>f</sub> a učitelé<sub>m</sub>, učitelé<sub>m</sub> a učitelky<sub>f</sub>, ‘teachers<sub>f</sub> and teachers<sub>m</sub>, teachers<sub>m</sub> and teachers<sub>f</sub>’;
- using forms with slashes: učitel<sub>m</sub>/ka<sub>f</sub>, or parentheses: učitel<sub>m</sub>(ka<sub>f</sub>);
- verbal adjectives: vyučující, ‘teaching’;
- epicenes: osoba, tým, personál, ‘person, team, staff’;
- general names, names of the titles and institutions instead of “generic” masculines: rektorát, Německo, ‘rectorate, Germany’;
- nouns with attributes: učitelský sbor místo učitelé<sub>m</sub>, ‘teaching staff instead of teachers<sub>m</sub>’;
- a simple omission of the generic masculine: dopravní inspektoráty místo zaměstnanci<sub>m</sub> dopravních inspektorátů, ‘traffic inspectorates instead of employees<sub>m</sub> of the traffic inspectorates’;
- deictic labels: Vaše adresa místo adresa žadatele<sub>m</sub>, ‘your address instead of the address of the applicant<sub>m</sub>’;

- conversion to passive verb voice: *Formulář A musí být kompletně vyplněn místo Žadatel<sub>m</sub> musí kompletně vyplnit formulář A*, ‘form A has to be filled in completely instead of the applicant<sub>m</sub> has to fill in the form A completely’;
- when labelling (or including) the non-heteronormative persons, it is also possible to use a star – asterisk: *učitel<sub>m</sub>\*ka<sub>f</sub>*, or an underscore: *učitel<sub>m\_</sub>ka<sub>f</sub>*.

Studies and tests of the “generic” masculine and research into GL concepts have been slow in coming in the Czech Republic compared to other countries with stable democratic systems. This may be caused by the general aversion of both the general and professional public with regard to feminist topics across the scientific fields, and also by the unwillingness of middle-aged and older researcher to deal with the gender analyses of language. Many opponents of GL research hold important posts at universities, editorial boards or grant committees. Nevertheless (compared to the situation in the 1990s and despite the petition from 2010), the situation has changed, the issue of the relation between gender and language is gaining ground, and the gender-fair language is gradually respected by more individuals and institutions.

#### 4 THE NAME AS A GENDERED AND GENDERING PHENOMENON

The relation between a name, sex and gender is dealt by the scientific field *gender onomastics*. It is a very young scientific discipline, however “*kaum eine andere sprachliche Einheit ist so eng mit Geschlecht assoziiert wie der Personennamen*” (‘hardly any linguistic unit is that closely bound to the gender as the personal name’; Kotthoff and Nübling 2018, p. 191). Personal names are a popular subject of specialized Czech treatises, while the bibliographic basis of the area of personal names is very extensive.<sup>7</sup> However, the gender analysis of personal names is almost unknown in the field of Czech onomastics. The first text dealing with this issue in Czech was published by J. Valdřová (2019). Let the present chapter therefore be mainly the call for further research on this topic.

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7 The lists of publications are available i.a. at <http://www.caslin.cz/caslin/homepage-caslin> (14. 6. 2020). The bibliography of entries *onomastika*, *proprium*, *přijmení* (‘onomastics, proper noun, surname’) *Nový encyklopedický slovník* include them as well; those are available at <https://bibliografie.ujc.cas.cz/search?type=global&q=propria> (14. 6. 2020), etc.

#### 4.1 Given name

Czech newborns get one or two given names.<sup>8</sup> In history, the formation of names was influenced by non-linguistic factors; apart from the parents' ideas and wishes, it also included the then value ladder of the specific community which included the feminine and masculine models. Female names often accented tenderness and beauty, while male names verbalized the image of bravery, strength, wisdom, etc. For example, the Czech names *Blanka* ("snow-white") and *Svatopluk* ("strong in the army"). In the course of time, however, semantics lost its primary function and a convention of approaches started to be applied. Female counterparts were created from the male names (*Daniel-a*, *Petr-a*, etc.). The system differences between the male and female names may also be seen (besides the meaning differences) in the phonetic form, length and accent, and these proprieties constitute the gender index of names (Nübling et al., 2015, pp. 131–137).<sup>9</sup>

In the Czech Republic, the given names have mostly been researched by M. Knappová (1978–2017,<sup>10</sup> 1989, etc.). The lists of given names are presented in encyclopaedias (*inter alia* Kopečný, 1974; Rameš, 2000). During the registration of given names and surnames, Czech register offices observe the current law on such offices and also the instructions and information given by the Ministry of the Interior, which follow from the statements of the Ústav pro jazyk český, 'Czech Language Institute' (hereinafter referred to as ÚJČ) and its long-term associate – the previously mentioned M. Knappová. Her influence on the practice of given names' and surnames' registration was called *completely essential* by R. Šrámek (2006, p. 104), and her manuals shape the work of register offices in a significant way.<sup>11</sup>

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8 The often used term *křestní jméno*, 'Christian name' should be a sign that the baptism was performed.

9 There are, however, no studies on this issue in the Czech language.

10 The manual was published in years 1978–2017 with a slightly changed title and it was gradually updated in six editions.

11 In the practice, it is often possible to encounter the resistance of the register offices to less common given names: "*Není to v Knappové, takže to nejde.*" ('It is not in Knappová, therefore it is not possible.'). Knappová (2009, p. 84) states that the (given) names of film characters are chosen for the children of those with lower education, not-very-much occupied with work, constantly watching TV, etc. I. Lutterer (1990, p. 254) classes them explicitly "*k oné svérázné etnické skupině, která je u nás nechvalně*

In the field of gender onomastics research into given names the following issues may seem to be of most interest:

- the diachronous and synchronous research into persons' labelling from the perspective of gender criticism of the language; the name as a socionym;
- the semantic principles of the construction of gender in the field of names;
- the gender index of Czech personal names and its perception by society;
- the addressing and labelling of women and men, girls and boys with personal names, the pragmatics of diminutives;
- the gender factors underlying the motivation to choose specific given names, trends;
- the quality, accessibility and function of scientific literature and information sources for the public;
- gender neutral given names, their development, trends, changes, index of options.

The last item on the list seems particularly urgent in the present day, when register offices give only limited information on gender neutral given names. The only source (Knappová, 2017, pp. 88–92) deals with them in a short chapter with an unfortunate title *Osobní jména transsexuálů*, 'Personal names of transsexuals'; the common name *transsexuál*, 'transsexual' in the title needlessly accentuates the issue of sexuality, unlike the labelling *trans lidé*, 'trans people'. Supposedly, the chapter "*není určena rodičům vybírajícím jméno pro očekávané dítě*" ('is not intended to parents choosing the name for their expected baby'; Knappová, 2017, p. 88), however, the author does not clarify why a neutral name could not be borne by any child if it is a wish of their parents. The content of the chapter aims at the tokenization of gender difference: e.g. outside the law No. 301/2000 Coll. in force, which reserves the

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*známá zvýšeným sklonem k zločinnosti.*" ('to the peculiar ethnic group which is here ingloriously known by their higher tendency to commit crime').

domestic forms of given names (*Míťa, Zbyňša*, etc.) for trans people, and the choices among the surnames are restricted as well. It is no wonder that trans people make their requests for equality in terms of names, as referred to by J. Valdrová (2018a, 2018b) and V. Kolek (2019).

#### 4.2 Surnames

In the Czech language area, the majority of people have one family or married name. Moreover, the origin of surnames was influenced by non-linguistic factors, and in the context of the current study these include gender hierarchies. The strong motivation to mark the proprietary dependence of women on their fathers, husbands or legal guardians led to the difference of female Czech surnames by a formant (suffix) *-ová* (masculine possessive suffix *-ov-* and an adjective ending *-á*, or once *-a*): *Jahoda* (masculine surname) – *Jahodova, Jahodová* (feminine surnames).<sup>12</sup> M. Knappová (1992, p. 78) states that the difference between *a* and *á* differentiates an unmarried woman from married ones; however, as previously mentioned by F. Oberpfalcer (1933b) and F. Cuřín (1936), among others, there is no evidence for this. In Old Czech, the suffix *-ka* was used to label women: J. Kouba (1983) researched the official data of women's surnames with this suffix (mainly from the 15th century), and postulated a thesis that those women were mainly unmarried ladies, including widows.<sup>13</sup>

Up to the Second World War, the formant *-ová* was used non-systematically for both Czech and foreign women's surnames – certainly due to the influence of a multilingual Czech-German-Jewish environment, the mutual respect for names' forms in various languages, and sometimes even due to a speculation about the advantages of claiming allegiance to this or that ethnicity (cf. Valdrová, 2019, p. 454). The xenophobic speeches of then Czechoslovak president E. Beneš, who demanded complete de-Germanization, including of names, sped up the expulsion of minority German Bohemians in 1945. A year later, the national committees (contemporary municipal authorities) performed an

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12 Among adjective surnames, the gender is marked among both men and women by an ending: male surname – *Novotný*, female surname – *Novotná*.

13 In the contemporary Czech interdialect, the surnames ending with *-ka* are, in an unofficial usage, marked: e.g. *Bohdalka* (derived from *Bohdal*) may, according to the context, express the popularity of a particular person as well as the critical distance.



unprecedented Czechization of German personal names: e.g. *Hans Schmied* became *Jan Šmíd*, etc.<sup>14</sup>

The feminization of women's surnames was performed in even a more thorough way by using the *-ová* suffix (see Valdrová, 2019, pp. 454–455). Since it was not possible for the country to see the feminization of surnames on the radio, TV and in newspapers, J. Kuchař (1956) made the call “*Přechylujme ženská příjmení cizího původu!*” (‘Let’s use the gender inflection on the women’s surnames of foreign origin!’) and demanded changing, for example, Hungarian women’s surnames according to Czech grammar: *Matayová* instead of the original *Matayné*. The suffix *-né*, which marks the marital status, “*stejně pro nás nemá významovou hodnotu*” (‘does not have the meaningful value for us anyway’; *ibid.*, p. 304). The instructions for the Czechization of the surnames are examined in a book by M. Knappová (1992); according to her, the desirable forms are the following ones *Indira Gándhí* -> *Gándíová* etc.

In summary, this means that blanket feminization at this time was performed for political motives. During the socialist period, it was promoted by M. Knappová (1979, p. 225), a member of ÚJČ regardless of the medium used and the nationality and origin of the women concerned. The surnames of female foreigners who lived and worked in Czechoslovakia were given a formant on official documents without their consent.<sup>15</sup>

The formant *-ová* would not be so widespread if it was not justified by quasi-linguistic arguments. In the internet advisory centre of ÚJČ that is aimed at the public, it is possible to read even now that if the speaker does not use the formant it may lead to misunderstandings. In sentences e.g. *Susan Sonntag navštívila Shirley Temple* (‘*Susan Sonntag visited Shirley Temple*’), it is supposedly not possible to find out the gender of the person without the formant, and mistaking the subject for the object may occur since Czech word order is allegedly not as fixed as in other languages. Therefore, the “correct”

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14 Matúšová (2003). Some people, however, resisted the Czechization of their names; they pointed out that even some members of the government (such as Gottwald) had a German surname.

15 The Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic is still basically following the recommendations made by ÚJČ and Knappová. JUDr. Kateřina Guluškinová, letter MV ČR č. MV-25510-2/VS-2009, 14. 4. 2009).

form of the sentence should be *Susan Sontagová navštívila Shirley Temple-ovou*.<sup>16</sup> Some linguists (R. Adam, M. Pravdová, etc.) cling to the necessity to express the feminine gender in the form of one's surname, and even confess that they cannot deal with non-feminized surnames themselves.<sup>17</sup> In this they differ remarkably from actual practice, as lay speakers do not have any issues with the usage of original forms in this context (a number of examples are given by Valdová, 2015b).

At first, the foreign women who were affected by the change of their official documents protested against the compulsory feminization of surnames. They argued for the right to inviolability of the surname, the problems they encountered in their daily lives anytime the form of their surnames in various official documents differed, even by just the semantics of the formant as a sign of the allegiance of a woman to a man. The peak of their protests was a complaint at the Czech Helsinki Committee in 2000; in 2001, an amendment brought some unclearly formulated relief to foreign women, allowing the surname to stay in its original form if it assigned by an internationally recognized convention; however, the type of convention was not specified (Valdová, 2002). In the meantime, even Czech women started to apply for a non-feminized surname.

Both the general and professional public still keep silent about the issue of the patrilineality of surnames, the fact that women abandon their maiden names and adopt their husbands' surnames. In contrast, only very rarely do husbands adopt their wives' surnames, and this asymmetry is analysed by D. Komanická (2016). As yet, however, there is no research dealing with same-sex couples in this matter. Over the last decade, the number of women accepting their husband's name in the original form (e.g. Eva *Havel*, i.e. without the formant) has risen sharply.

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16 *Přechylování příjmení ve veřejné komunikaci*. Available at <https://prirucka.ujc.cas.cz/?id=700&dotaz=přechylovánípříjmení> (14. 6. 2020). As the only concrete source, Knappová has been recommended here for more than 15 years, although others, such as Moldanová (2015) and Matúšová (2003), have also dealt with surnames.

17 M. Pravdová in a TV talk, available at [https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/ova-prijmeni-marketa-pravdova-ustav-pro-jazyk-cesky-akademie-ved-rozstrel.A190909\\_152128\\_domaci\\_rko](https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/ova-prijmeni-marketa-pravdova-ustav-pro-jazyk-cesky-akademie-ved-rozstrel.A190909_152128_domaci_rko) (K. Bulisová; 14. 6. 2020). R. Adam admitted problems with the usage of the original form of women's surnames in a radio talk, available at <https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/prezije-cestina-bez-prechylovani-8084719> (T. Samek and L. Matoška; 14. 6. 2020).

The existing distinguishing features between so-called masculine and feminine surnames is also increasingly unsustainable as it produces and legitimizes heteronormativity. Therefore, when it comes to the choice of surnames for trans people there is not much room to manoeuvre, as the manual prepared by M. Knappová (2017) for register offices does not meet today's naming needs.

The topical themes for gender onomastics research into surnames are as follows:

- the formation, development and usage of surnames as elements of one's identity both in the past and in the present; the disrespect of surnames and denying of surnames as an instrument of symbolic violence;<sup>18</sup>
- the feminization of surnames as a means of the grammaticalization of gender, as well as sexual and gender hierarchies, history, development and trends;
- the formation and official registration of surnames from the perspective of patronymy and patrilinearity;
- both critical diachronic and synchronic revision of the scientific authorities' arguments for and against the feminization of surnames, and the role of ÚJČ;
- the contemporary practice of the process of surname registration, its development and trends;
- a critical reflection of the possibilities and limits of the choice of surnames from the perspective of trans people and their needs.

As for now, the research into contemporary anthronomastics (Kopecký, 2014; Tušková and Žižková, 2016, etc.) ignores the gender aspects of the issue even, in such cases in which the choice of the form of a surname is the subject of the

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18 In the time of the refugee crisis, there were cases when people were labelled with numbers rather than names, cf. Netrvalová (2. 9. 2015), and as in the 1930s, the world criticized Czechia for this practice. Available at [https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/zahranicni/cisla-na-rukou-uprechliku-pobourila-aktivisty.A150902\\_140434\\_zahranicni\\_san](https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/zahranicni/cisla-na-rukou-uprechliku-pobourila-aktivisty.A150902_140434_zahranicni_san) (14. 6. 2020).

research.<sup>19</sup> The lens of gender onomastics is applied by publications dealing with surnames from the perspective of human rights (Valdrová, 2002), the usage and attitudes of expert authorities (Valdrová, 2015b), the taking over of surnames in the patronymic and patrilinear line (Komanická, 2016), names as elements of the identity (Valdrová, 2018a, pp. 343–368), and trans surnames (Valdrová, 2018b, 2019; Kolek, 2019).

From the perspective of gender onomastics, it is possible to see the surprisingly close bond between personal names and the political situation of the day. The pre-war multinational society was characterized by a variety of given names and surnames. From 1946, both names and surnames were Czechized. The surnames were thoroughly feminized and the related political measures were (and are, even now) quasi-justified by the language system, word order and the demand to express the gender of the person. With the gradual emancipation of women (including language emancipation), however, forms without the formant *-ová* are increasingly common.

## 5 GENDER ASPECTS IN TRANSLATOLOGY

The lack of publications thematizing the aspects of gender is, in our opinion, caused by the generally low sensibility of the Czech public towards of its importance in oral presentation, despite the fact that everyone who is able to use a foreign language had to encounter at least some recommendations for the use of non-sexist language.

The first Czech translatology text was, apparently, published by E. Věšíňová (1998). In this the author deals with general questions such as the lack of discussion about gender linguistics, including the male and female genderlect, or the overuse of the “generic” masculine in the Czech language.

An empirical comparison of the two Czech translations of the book *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* from two different periods was carried out by S. Širokovská

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19 It is possible to object to research in terms of its methodology, e.g. the issue of researchers “...zda respondentky vědí o možnosti používat v neoficiální komunikaci svá příjmení bez *-ová*” (‘whether the female respondents know that there is a possibility to use their surnames without the formant *-ová* in the informal communication’). This gives an impression that the informal usage is set by non-specified authorities (Tušková and Žižková, 2016, p. 129).

(2004), with the first translation done by a female translator (S. Jílovská, 1932) and the second by a male one (F. Vrba, 1987). In her article, the author aimed to present the translation differences caused by the gender of the translators. V. Janiš (2004) reacted critically to this while, noting the inconsistencies and paradoxes raised by S. Širokovská, and overall the connection of such an analysis with the translators' gender. V. Janiš also suggests a better way to carry out such research, and notes the insignificant extent size of the sample studied by S. Širokovská (just two translations).

E. Věšínová elaborated her idea in an article published under the name Kalivodová in 2012. In this she deals with the concept of so-called feminist translation, outlines in detail the relations between the translated and translation on the one hand, and the gender category on the other hand. She uses good and relatively bad (students') translations which are subjected to analyses, and assesses them from the gender perspective based on various theoretical approaches. She also points out the changes in the impressions the texts give if translated insensitively with regard to the gender. The author also describes her own experience of the related educational activity at the translatology institute in another publication (Kalivodová, 2017).

J. Valdřová (2005b) criticizes the lack of gender-fair language and distorting of foreign female surnames with a Czech formant (cf. above) when translating and interpreting. The lack of gender-fair language may misrepresent the reality, e.g. *hrdinný policista*, 'heroic<sub>m</sub> police officer<sub>m</sub>', in a Czech news story regarding a terrorist attack in Barcelona, when the police officer was in fact a policewoman (Valdřová, 2019, p. 163).

Apart from English, which the authors of the present paper do not consider quite appropriate to compare with the Czech language in the area of gender (due to the typological differences), the authors of the present article suggest comparing the gender dimension in Czech to that in other languages, e.g. German. In that case, it would be possible to follow the various levels of gender-fair language being enforced in German-speaking countries and consider their use in Czech, while also possible to deal with the texts from the perspective of their acceptability and adequacy.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

Gender linguistic research has seen considerable development in Czech studies. The pre-feminist articles on the topic of the formation of female profession names contributed significantly to the support for the labelling of women by a feminine marker. After 1989, Czech linguistics opened up to information from the field of foreign feminist linguistics, although some linguists protested against this. In the 1990s, J. Valdřová started discussions on gender linguistic topics among both the professional community and general public, such as on the unreliability of the generic function of a masculine form when labelling women, language gender stereotypes in the spoken language and their influence on the formation and understanding of reality and attitudes to it. After the analyses of gender-fair alternatives used in the spoken language in German, English and Russian, J. Valdřová formulated language recommendations for Czech. Today's social situation and the demands of the public have been dealt with by J. Valdřová carrying out research into the labelling needs, possibilities and limits in the area of first names and surnames, including trans names. V. Kolek follows on from her work and broadens it with additional topics, e.g. the labelling of non-binary genders within the texts.

J. Valdřová and V. Kolek deal with the language aspects of gender sensitive education. It is possible to recommend various works on the gender fairness of textbooks (Valdřová et al., 2005), methods of gender sensitive educational work (Smetáčková and Vlková, 2005; Smetáčková, 2007; Babanová and Miškolci, 2007; Babanová, 2019) and other issues. The gender critical analyses concern the communications among teachers and pupils and students in a gendered school environment, the role of gender stereotypes in the educational work, assessment and study results of pupils and students, the gender burden of text books, work with class dynamics, and so on.

Every social issue has its language side. The language either limits its speakers and misrepresents reality (when it functions as a medium for the transfer of stereotypes), or – to paraphrase J. Butler (2004) – when it sharpens the perception of the gendered world and makes us free, since it teaches us to better deal with the gendered reality and shows (mainly young people) the way to free life choices.

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## ČEŠKO JEZIKOSLOVJE DRUŽBENEGA SPOLA: TEME, STALIŠČA, PERSPEKTIVE

Namen članka je analizirati obstoječe objave, ki se ukvarjajo s češkim jezikoslovjem družbenega spola, in stališča njihovih avtorjev. Avtorja prispevka najprej pregledno prikažeta razvoj področja, začetke z zavračanjem tovrstnega pristopa in njegovo današnje sprejemanje. V nadaljevanju se ukvarjata z različnimi načini poimenovanja oseb glede na družbeni spol in se sprašujeta o možnosti tvorjenja samostalnikov za poimenovanje žensk kot eno od strategij za doseganje njihove vidnosti v jeziku. Predstavita tudi psiholinguistične teste za ugotavljanje "generičnosti" moškega spola v češčini in možnosti za spolno vključujočo češčino. Avtorja tudi razpravljata o osebnih lastnih imenih s perspective družbenega spola in posameznikove identitete, pri čemer se na kratko ustavita ob prevodnih publikacijah, v katerih se odraža specifika družbenega spola. Na koncu pozove-ta k nadaljnim raziskavam na nekaterih področjih raziskav družbenega spola.

**Keywords:** češčina, družbeni spol, generični moški spol, feminizacija, spolno vključujoči jezik, besedotvorje, prevodoslovje.