

**INFLUENCE OF EXTRA-LINGUISTIC FACTORS  
ON THE USE OF SYNONYMS  
(EXAMPLES OF LEXEMS ‘MANKIND’ AND ‘HUMANKIND’)**

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Language is a dynamic system that undergoes constant transformations. These transformations depend on the internal factors, involving structural areas of the language, and on the external (extra-linguistic) ones. Extra-linguistic phenomena are connected with social and cultural changes in society, development of technologies and accumulation of new knowledge [1]. Non-linguistic factors also include gender, one of the most powerful social and cultural constructions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence, the problem of politically correct language in the acts of cross-cultural communication is one of the most acute problematic issues of the last ten years.

The purpose of the study is to identify the role of extra-linguistic (gender) factors in influencing the semantic structure of language on the examples of the lexemes ‘mankind’ and ‘humankind’.

**Material and methods.** The study uses the semantic structures of the lexemes ‘mankind’ and ‘humankind’. Speaking about extra-linguistic factors, one cannot fail to mention the language as the main instrument of communication and mentality creation. In this study, the descriptive and comparative methods were used.

**Findings and their discussion.** The lexeme ‘mankind’ was fixed in English language in the 12th century. The components of the lexeme may be derived from the Proto-Germanic roots \*mann and \*kundjaz. The synonymic compound lexeme ‘humankind’ was fixed in the 15th century and it may have been borrowed from the Old French [4].

The equal use of the both lexemes can be traced in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1919) by Henry Flower (1858-1933). In this dictionary the semantic of the lexeme ‘humankind’ is completely equal to the lexeme ‘humankind’. Nevertheless, ‘mankind’ is only partly equal to the connotation of ‘humankind’ as it also denotes the male part of the world population [2]. It follows that the described lexemes were stylistically neutral in the meaning ‘people in general’ in the rise of gender equality and therefore they were interchangeable.

In the Modern English the application of the lexeme mankind is thought to be contradictory because of its gender-coloured connotation. Modern dictionaries state some extra marks for the word «mankind». As an example, Oxford Learner’s Dictionary offers the following recommendations in the section of ad-

ditional information: ‘Man and mankind have traditionally been used to mean ‘all men and women. Many people now prefer to use ‘humanity’, ‘the human race’, ‘human beings or people’ [6].

Large international organizations stimulate the use of gender-neutral denotations and publish official documents containing some recommendations. For instance, the recommendations published in the UN official website contain the paragraph ‘Do not make gender visible when it is not relevant for communication’. The first subparagraph encourages the application of the words ‘human-kind’, ‘humanity’ and ‘human race’ since it is considered gender-neutral [7]. On this basis, we conclude that the lexical item ‘humankind’ has become an ‘ideological orientation within a language form’, i.e. ideologeme linked with the modern views on the gender roles [3].

Separately worth noting the neologism ‘peoplekind’ that was used in the 1950-s for the first time. It spread only in 2018 as an alternative to the word ‘mankind’. The entry ‘peoplekind’ appeared in the dictionary in 2019 as a gender-neutral synonym to the word ‘mankind’, but with the following mark: ‘also used ironically to satirize inclusive language of this kind’ [5]. Thus, we can accordingly speak about a conservative tendency of the English-speaking culture of using the synonymous lexical issues denoting the population of the Earth. Such tendencies can both slow the displacement of the gender-coloured lexemes and prevent the appearance of new inclusive synonyms.

**Conclusion.** It has been shown that the major factor that influenced the application of the lexical issues ‘mankind’ and ‘humankind’ is the association of the root ‘man’ with the superiority of the male part of the population in human society. For that reason, such a lexical norm has become out of date in accordance with the modern social tendencies, which demand a gender-neutral substitute for denoting the whole human race. However, some social tendencies partly prevent creating gender-neutral substitutions. This allows the conclusion that extra-linguistic circumstances have a significant power on the differentiation of synonyms.

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