

NOMINATIONS OF WOMEN IN MODERN ENGLISH

Abstract: the article highlights the definition of the term «nomination», according to which nomination is considered as a meaningful linguistic unit, which is the result of the process of nomination. A detailed thematic classification of nominations of women is given.

Key words: the English language, nomination, thematic classification of nominations, nominations of women.

The phenomenon of nomination has attracted scholars' attention since ancient times. Acts of nomination are the product of speech activity and their results are accepted by the language system, functional and social rules of the language. The theory of nomination is directly connected with investigations of how the conceptual forms of mind are correlated with each other, in what way they are created, fixed in our mind and given different definitions. In this way, the study of mechanism of nominations leads to deeper understanding of the role of human factor in the language.

English nominations have a significant cognitive value, because their analysis may give a key to understanding of how women are regarded in the English community.

The concept «nomination» [from Latin *nominatio* — name] has several meanings. In this paper nomination means the result of the process of «nomination», i.e. a meaningful language unit [1, P. 366]. In the paper thematic classification of nominations of women is given, which is based on the study of Modern English dictionaries [2,3,4,5,6]

1. *Age aspect.* The analysis of the empirical base shows that there is no exact age indicator in the nominations, there are only the following semes: *baby*: **baby girl** - a female baby; *child*: **girl** - a female child; *girl*: **schoolgirl** - a girl who attends school, **tomboy** - a girl who likes playing the same games as boys; *adolescent girl/teenager*: **backfisch** - a teenage girl; *woman*: **Daughter of Eve (DOE)** - an adult female person (opposite to a man); *old woman*: **old/stupid bag** - (spoken) an insulting word for an

old woman, **artichoke** - (Am.) an old or unattractive promiscuous woman, **tabby** - a gossiping old woman.

Vague age indication testifies to the widely known fact that women try to hide their age. It is also noticeable that there is often a negative emotional evaluation in the nominations of *old women* (*gossiping, unattractive* etc.)

2. *Inner world*. In this group, it is possible to highlight such characteristics as personality, behaviour and intellectual abilities:

2.1. *Personality*. The analysis of the factual material allows identifying the following leading traits of character which are typically associated with women:

- *Hot-tempered, malevolent, ruthless* **dragon** - a woman who behaves in an angry way, **harpy** - a cruel woman, **tigress** - a woman regarded as daring or fierce.

- *Gossipy* **cat** - a woman who gossips maliciously, **old-bag** - an old woman, esp. a repulsive gossipy shrew.

- *Authoritarian* **dragon lady** - a woman who is ruthlessly powerful, domineering and manipulative, **adventuress** - a woman who is willing to take risks or act in a dishonest way in order to gain money or power.

- *Complaining* **sob sister** - a weak woman who is prone to crying.

- *Calm, laconic* **a woman of the world** - a woman who has had so many experiences and is not easily shocked, **woman of few words** - a woman who doesn't speak often or at length.

- *Heartless* **ice queen** - a sweet and beautiful girl who is rumored to be cold blooded and heartless.

- *Active* **woman of many parts** - a woman who is capable of doing many things, **filly** - a lively, high-spirited girl or a young woman. It is remarkable, that there were no nominations portraying a woman as a kind person.

2.2. *Behaviour of women*. Let us consider the following groups of nominations which are connected with their behaviour:

- *Innocent behaviour*: **ingenu** - an innocent young woman, especially in a film/movie or play, **vestal** - a woman who is a virgin.

- *Womanish behaviour* **earth mother** - a woman who has all the qualities expected of a mother and is especially interested in simple, natural ways of living, **girly girl/girlie girl** - (slang) a girl or woman who chooses to dress and behave in an especially feminine style.

- *Vulgar behaviour* **man-eater** - a woman who people think is frightening because she has many sexual partners, **Scarlet woman** - a woman who has sexual relationships with many different people, **college widow** - a young woman in a college town who dates students of successive college classes.

- *The way of behavior in which a woman uses/abuses men* **vamp** - a woman who uses her sexual attractiveness to make men do what she wants, **gold digger** - (informal) an attractive woman who uses her looks to get money from rich men, **vampire** - a woman who seduces and exploits a man.

- *The behaviour when a woman acts like a representative of the opposite sex* **romp** - a girl who behaves in a boyish manner.

- *The behaviour of careerist* **career woman** - a woman whose career is more important for her, so that she may not want to get married or have children).

Statistical analysis of the material shows that the group «Vulgar behavior» contains a vast majority of examples. It may be concluded that sexually liberated behavior is despised by the English speaking community. Numerous nominations in the group «The way of behavior in which a woman uses/abuses men» speaks for the fact, that this kind of behavior is generally disapproved by English people. The presence of the groups «the behaviour when a woman acts like a representative of the opposite sex», «the behaviour of careerist» proves the tendency that a woman is considered to have equal rights with a man.

2.3. *Intellectual abilities.* The analysis of the factual material shows that it is possible to divide the group into the following subgroups:

High level of intelligence: **blue-stocking** - a woman who is more interested in ideas and studying than in parties, **gentlewoman** - a woman who is well-educated and has excellent manners.

Middle or low level of intelligence: **girlie** - a woman who they think is less sensible and intelligent than a man, **Dumb Dora** - a naive stupid woman.

A comparatively small number of nominations in the group allow concluding that this indicator is not the leading one when characterizing a woman.

3. *Appearance.* It is possible to distinguish the following features characterizing appearance:

- *Attractive* **jam tart** - young, slender, attractive female, **popsy** - an attractive young woman, **cupcake** - an attractive woman, **tootsie roll** - an attractive woman, **enchantress** - a very attractive woman, **sylph** - (literary) an attractively thin woman, **belle** - (old-fashioned) a beautiful woman.

- *Unattractive, repulsive* **scrubber** - an ugly woman or girl, **cold biscuit** - an unattractive or dull girl, **dog** - a very unattractive woman.

A significant number of nominations in the semantic group «Appearance» prove the fact that appearance is one of the leading criteria when evaluating a woman. Moreover, there is a dramatic difference between nominations describing an attractive woman and a repulsive one.

4. *Interpersonal relations*. Interpersonal relations are usually connected with communication with the opposite sex: **inamorata** - (literary) a woman that a man loves, **(main) squeeze** - someone's girlfriend, **Sugar Mama** - a woman, often an older woman, who holds her man/woman in nice standing with money, food, an apartment etc., **sheila** - a girlfriend, **moll** - a criminal's girlfriend etc.

5. *Social status*. According to social status a woman may occupy any position in the society: **queen, princess, duchess, First Lady, empress, dame** etc.

6. *Occupation*. Alongside with usual female professions, such as **canary** - a woman singer, **starlet** - a young actress promoted and publicized as a future star, esp. in motion pictures, **agony aunt** - a person who writes the replies to reader's letters in an agony column, there appear new special nominations for women who are occupied in traditionally male professions. For example: **businesswoman, WPC** - Woman's Police Constable, **WREN** - woman of Royal Naval Service, **priestess** - a woman who presides over religious rites, especially in pagan religions, **camerawoman** - a woman who operates a television or movie camera, etc.

To sum up, a woman in English speaking society is characterized from the point of view of age, personality, behaviour, intellectual abilities, appearance, interpersonal relationships, social status and occupation.

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НОМИНАЦИИ ЖЕНЩИН В СОВРЕМЕННОМ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Аннотация: в статье предлагается определение феномена «номинации», согласно которому номинация рассматривается как значимая языковая единица, являющаяся результатом процесса номинации. Приводится подробная тематическая классификация номинаций женщины в современном английском языке.

Ключевые слова: Английский язык, номинация, тематическая классификация номинаций, номинации женщин.

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