



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **The Tendencies in the Formation of Gender-marked Nouns**

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Stručná charakteristika práce

The aim of the thesis was to analyse and interpret the tendencies of gender-marked nouns denoting occupational titles in English. In her research, the author compiled a list of 571 occupational titles. These were drawn from three websites that assist job seekers in their search for employment. The sites included: www.alec.co.uk; www.occupationsguide.cz; and www.careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au. Each of the 571 occupational titles was then analysed with the help of Google N-gram Viewer, in which each of the selected professions was examined in four gender denoting variations: 'female + occupational title', 'male + occupational title', 'woman + occupational title', and 'man + occupational title'. The actual findings are discussed both throughout the text of the thesis and in the Conclusion. An overview of the findings is also presented in the Appendix.

Celkové zhodnocení

The thesis represents a fair attempt at an applied linguistic study, in which the author combines library research with her own empirical study. However, an attempt it remains. In its final draft, the thesis comes across as disorganised, lacking clear focus, and failing to maintain a sustained argument, yet often making strong claims that are either unconvincing or unsupported. In addition, the level of English in which the thesis is written does not allow the author to communicate complex ideas intelligibly and coherently; the final text would have benefited from more diligent editing.

Fundamentally, the aim of the thesis has been met only partially, primarily because the analysis seems to be wrongly founded and the findings are reported in an unsubstantiated and disorganised manner. The thesis lacks a clear statement of the actual tendencies in the formation of those gender-marked nouns to be examined. Furthermore, at the beginning of the thesis no proposition is formulated that could subsequently be pursued consistently through the analysis. Instead, the author describes, rather at length, the possibilities of gender marking in English (Chapter Two, pp.10-28), after which she adopts a more sociolinguistic perspective to introduce the tendency of the English language towards gender neutrality (Chapter Three, pp.29-31). The analysis (Chapter Four, pp. 31-41) fails, however, to develop this perspective towards any conclusive results.

The analysis (Chapter Four, pp. 31-41) claims to examine competitive forms of occupational titles. It is here that the author employs the Google N-gram Viewer. The author introduces the analysis as follows: "The following analysis of competitive forms



deals with compounds which are primarily gender-neutral, and users of English have to intuitively decide what gender marker is appropriate" (p.31). Firstly, certainly not all words on the list are compounds, e.g., secretary, teacher, scientist, roofer, servant. The author therefore neither examines contrasting varieties of gender-marked compounds, such as 'landlord' v. 'landlady', nor explores gender-marked compounds in relation to their gender-neutral varieties, such as 'fireman' v. 'firefighter'. The compounds to which the author possibly refers are the four gender-denoting variations within the limits of which the selected competitive forms of occupational titles are searched for in the Google Books corpus. To illustrate the procedure, the researcher examines the competitive forms of, for example, an occupational title 'secretary', by querying the occurrence of four compound phrases: 'female secretary', 'male secretary', 'woman secretary', and 'man secretary'. In contrast, the same would be repeated for jobs, for example, 'a roofer', 'a plasterer', or 'an optician'. By finding out that both 'female' and 'male' secretary do occur in the corpus with similar frequencies, a conclusion is drawn that the term has become more gender-neutral. While this may be true, it reports little about the tendencies in the formation of gender-marked nouns; nor that this seems a viable way of examination. When contrasted with the 'roofer', 'a plasterer', and 'an optician' examples, for which none of the four varieties was found in the corpus, a deduction that lends itself is that the corpus search undertaken was able to identify instances of usage when the need (of the speaker/writer) was felt either to clarify or to emphasise the gender of the person holding a particular occupational role. Examining such instances in the context of their original usages could also provide interesting insights; nevertheless, such insights may differ from those intended by the current study.

It is therefore insufficient planning and a lack of clear structure that has resulted in a somewhat confused presentation of the findings. It would be interesting to hear what the author has to say about her work now that she has had the time to reflect on it.

In sum, there are a number of areas where I feel the student has failed to demonstrate sufficiently detailed knowledge of the topic, nor has she presented her arguments in such a way as to make the most of her studies. However, I would like to express appreciation of the heuristic character of this thesis and the way the author ventured into a field that was, in the main, new to her. The author did take the time to explain the possibilities of gender marking in English and to introduce the tendency of the English language towards gender neutrality. She has undertaken sufficient work and raised enough points of discussion to meet the basic general requirements for BA theses.

Práci **doporučuji** k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **dobře**

06 June 2016

Datum

Podpis