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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE DISCUSSING GENDER CORRECTNESS

IN THE ENGLISH AND CZECH LANGUAGES

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Helena Lohrová, Ph.D.

Autor práce: Anna Štorcová

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Ročník: 3.

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

26.7. 2023 České Budějovice

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Anna Štorcová

Poděkování

Mé poděkování patří Mgr. Heleně Lohrové, Ph.D. za odborné vedení, trpělivost a ochotu, kterou mi v průběhu zpracování mé bakalářské práce věnovala. Touto cestou zároveň děkuji své rodině a přátelům, kteří mi po celou dobu byli neodmyslitelnou podporou.

Abstract

This thesis deals with a comprehensive examination of gender correctness in the English and Czech linguistic literature, analysing and comparing the perspectives of individual publications. By delving into the main themes and relevant issues related to this topic, the study presents not only the diverse range of perspectives present in scholarly works but also the role of gender correctness on equality in language. The paper defines the key concepts of gender correctness and its relevance to modern society.

After comparing the perspectives of different publications, it presents a critical look at the current state of the literature on gender correctness. Thus, it presents not only the current view of gender correctness but also its limitations and gaps. It also provides possible suggestions for future work on the topic. Altogether, it provides a good insight into the discourse of gender correctness.

Keywords

gender correctness, gender, political correctness, generic masculine, gender linguistics

Abstrakt

Tato práce se zabývá komplexním zkoumáním genderové korektnosti v anglické a české lingvistické literatuře, přičemž analyzuje a porovnává pohledy jednotlivých publikací. Na základě proniknutí do hlavních témat a relevantních otázek souvisejících s tímto tématem studie představuje nejen různorodou škálu perspektiv přítomných v odborných pracích, ale také roli genderové korektnosti na rovnost v jazyce. Práce vymezuje klíčové pojmy genderové korektnosti a její význam pro moderní společnost.

Po srovnání perspektiv různých publikací představuje kritický pohled na současný stav literatury o genderové korektnosti. Představuje tak nejen současný pohled na genderovou korektnost, ale také její omezení a rezervy. Přináší také možné podněty pro budoucí práci na toto téma. Celkově tak poskytuje dobrý vhled do diskurzu genderové korektnosti.

Klíčová slova

genderová korektnost, gender, politická korektnost, generické maskulinum, genderová lingvistika

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1. Introduction

Gender correctness is an often debated and important topic in modern society today. With growing acceptance and awareness of the broader scope of gender and a generally changing view of gender equality, the issue has come to the forefront of society at large and has been at the centre of the agenda of many organisations, companies as well as researchers and politicians. The wide range of organisations and therefore disciplines that deal with the issue of gender correctness confirms the interdisciplinary nature of this concept. For this reason, it is very difficult to summarise the concept in a simple way.

To address the complex and interdisciplinary nature of the concept of gender correctness, this thesis aims to provide a critical review of literature discussing gender correctness in the English and Czech languages. By undertaking an examination of existing scholarly works, this research endeavours to shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of gender correctness, its implications, and its evolving significance in contemporary society.

As a concept, gender-correctness has only gained prominence in the public arena relatively recently. Its roots, however, can be traced back several decades, stemming mainly from feminist literature (Coates and Pichler 2). The literature directly addressing gender correctness therefore remains considerably limited although a closer examination reveals discussions of the topic within books primarily focused on different subjects. This thesis will explore these aspects, including the quantity of literature, its limitations, and diverging perspectives, in the initial sections.

Furthermore, given the comparative nature of this work, which explores the concept of gender correctness in both English and Czech literature simultaneously, it is

important to establish this aspect in the introduction. Comparing how the notion of gender correctness is employed in these two languages and also how it is discussed in the underpinning scholarly literature provides an insight not only into the concept itself but it also helps to explain the changing and differing nature of societies and how both linguistic and societal diversity are established. Additionally, the comparison between English, a globally used language connecting diverse societies, and Czech, a Slavic language with a distinct grammatical system, enables a broader range of perspectives and a more diverse understanding of gender correctness. By implication, the thesis considers and perhaps challenges the linguistic diversity of different languages and how grammar affects the application of such a phenomenon as gender correctness.

The basic literature on which this thesis is based comprises both academic and scientific literature. These include publications that usually address gender correctness from the perspective of the problems it faces. Usually, the fundamental theme is the imbalance of language from a gender perspective and the effects this has on the use of language in society. A comparison of these works on these fundamental issues will then help to show how the view of gender correctness differs.

A comparative analysis of English and Czech literature provides a fascinating insight into gender correctness given their grammatical and social differences. The comparative approach allows for flexibility and interdisciplinary exploration, drawing on literature in both English and Czech and addressing violations and issues related to gender correctness.

To gain a deeper understanding of the topic, the thesis first introduces the nature of gender correctness, its importance and just how sexist language can be. Chapter three then outlines the difference between English and Czech grammar to understand the use

of gender in the language and explains the development of gender correctness in the numerous criticisms that accompany it.

The fourth chapter then introduces the basic issues and themes of gender correctness, showing how their view differs in English and Czech literature. It thus presents not only a comparison of the two perspectives but also an introductory insight into the issue.

Chapter Five then provides a critical view of the literature, an evaluation and suggestions for the future development of this literature. This thesis can serve as a comprehensive introduction to the issue of gender correctness and offers a basis for further reflection and study. It opens the door for more specialized research across a variety of disciplines, making it an essential resource for readers interested in gender correctness.

2. The importance of gender correctness

2.1. The term gender and gender correctness

The term “gender correctness” is not widely used in English; instead, it is often encompassed within the broader concept of “political correctness”. English employs terms such as “gender policy” or the more comprehensive “political correctness”. Conversely, in the Czech language, “gender correctness” is a more commonly used phrase. To precisely define “gender correctness”, we can refer to the explanation of “political correctness” as an overarching construct. According to Geoffrey Hughes, political correctness is a difficult concept to summarize in simple terms, but it represents an attempt to demonstrate respect by emphasizing the avoidance of prejudice, insulting behaviour or offensive language towards marginalized groups (8-9). Gender correctness thus falls under political correctness, specifically focusing on gender-related issues, whereas political correctness encompasses a wider range of concerns such as gender, race, religion, and more. Therefore, it is important to establish a clear definition of gender itself.

In many publications and articles, especially older ones, the terms gender and sex are sometimes conflated. Although these terms are closely intertwined and interconnected, it is necessary to distinguish between them, as they have been used differently, especially in recent years. Ann Oakley, in her book *Sex, Gender and Society*, defines gender as a cultural and psychological term, contrasting it with sex, which she describes as purely biological (158). However, the common perception in lay society often treats these terms as interchangeable. Notably, however, media play an important concept forming role. With the increasing prevalence of the media and the emergence of various communities, the broader society is provided with opportunities to learn more about gender, leading to a growing understanding that gender and gender identity encompass a wide range of multiplicities without rigid boundaries. This contemporary

perspective rejects the notion that gender is solely determined by one's assigned sex at birth. Oakley also supports this idea by stating, “to be a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, is as much a function of dress, gesture, occupation, social network and personality, as it is of possessing a particular set of genitals” (158). The World Health Organisation also defines gender similarly, describing it as “characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other” (“Gender and health: Overview”)

2.2. The importance of using gender correctness

With modern times and the ever-growing trend of social networking as a space to connect communities across the world, awareness of gender diversity, perception, and self-concept are expanding. Gender, whether in terms of diversity between men and women or the notion of gender neutrality or self-identification, comes to the fore not only as a part of everyday life but also as a subject of many debates, especially in academic conferences. Jana Valdrová describes, for example, the conference in Jena or the International Slavic Congress in Ljubljana, where she herself contributed a discussion on gender-correct Czech language in the public sphere (*Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* 63).

From another perspective, gender correctness is an important part of our lives, not least because women have been fighting for the same rights as men for centuries. In today's society, there is a considerable effort to eliminate inequalities between men and women, at least in the social sphere. Gender correctness in this respect is concerned not only with correct address and inflexion, but also with the fact that some languages are based on a purely masculine persona, or generic masculinities, and how women are quite often neglected linguistically. In the Czech literature, the proponent of this claim is Jana

Valdrová, who bases most of her recommendations on gender correctness on it. Sklar and Lakoff, for example, take the same position in the English gender literature (see Chapter 4).

But gender correctness is not just about trying to erase differences in language use and labelling between men and women, it is also concerned with preserving the rights of minorities such as LGBTQ+ minorities, which include people who identify as non-binary, i.e., not claiming any gender. They are also the ones who emphasise correct expression, which is in effect gender correct. It is precisely because of this that gender is an essential aspect of this minority. Many of the people who are part of the LGBTQ+ minority are the ones who have changed their gender, or are insistent on the gender they are perceived to be. One cannot then leave out the group that does not feel part of one particular gender i.e. the gender non-binary. For this minority in particular, proper address and linguistically sensitive treatment are essential to feel socially recognized and equal.

Valdrová points to an example from a documentary by Czech Television, where the children of the interviewees who live in non-heterosexual partnerships consider their same-sex parents to be normal, since in these households, they express themselves neutrally on the topics in question (*Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních menšin* 33). This example points to the importance of gender correctness, especially in connection with the fact of how the use of language shapes our perception and therefore the perception of these minorities.

Gender-incorrect language, but also gender-unbalanced language, then serves as a tool to oppress minorities, who thus do not get enough space in the language. An illustrative example of how much English is gendered is the result of a survey conducted by Nicole Amare. Amare examined online grammar guides in terms of how much sexist

language and genderedness are present in them. “Of the 3,220 sentences analysed in these seven online grammar guides, 3,020 instances of gendered language were measured, and 157 instances of linguistic sexism occurred in the first four categories: generic "he," and "man," as well as title labels, names, and stereotypes” (Amare 179).

Valdrová also cites the example of gender imbalance in terms of addressing women by their professional names, where speakers use incorrect masculine terms to refer to women's positions (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 107-109). *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* also emphasizes stereotypes (Valdrová 203) as a problem of gender imbalance and, ultimately, sexism (Valdrová 17-18).

A gender-correct language is therefore a tool for avoiding discrimination, harm, and suppression of the personality of certain individuals. By using gender-correct language, we avoid these possible negative effects. In the 21st century, great emphasis is placed on the rights of all and on protecting them and, in general, on protecting against discrimination and harm. This is why political correctness, and therefore gender correctness, plays a significant role in its field.

The growing need to defend the rights of minorities and to create an environment with equal opportunities for all, therefore, brings with it the need for means to help ensure that equality. The fact that gender correctness is the aforementioned tool will certainly become an indispensable tool for the use of language in the future. Gender correctness is already widely used in the public sphere as a means of politically correct expression, and its use and very claim to it is growing. Given the current developments, with all sorts of guidelines, decrees and policies being amended in recent years, whether they concern companies, schools or organisations, it is very likely that gender society will become an

integral part of the basic rules of operation of most public institutions in the future. Even if this is only a lay prediction, the demands for gender correctness in many spheres are already substantial and the importance of gender correctness is therefore not in doubt.

2.3. Linguistic discrimination and sexism

It may be asserted that language, including gender correctness, plays a central role as a tool for combating discrimination. Discrimination occurs very often in language, not only in its intentional form, but also through the unintentional use of bad phrases or the adherence to and perpetuation of obsolete linguistic habits and conventions. To understand and dismantle discriminatory language patterns, initiatives are typically taken to explore the manifestations of linguistic discrimination and sexism.

For example, Knotková and Čapková (2010) in their manual created for the Czech Ministry of Education (*Kultura Genderově vyváženého vyjadřování*) in cooperation with Valdřová, clearly determine the groups that gender correctness seeks to protect (6). “It is essential to emphasize that I am talking about social minorities, which are not necessarily numerical minorities, (e.g., women) - a social minority means that a group of people share significantly less power and decision-making” (Knotková - Čapková 6). The link between discrimination and minorities is therefore quite obvious. Discrimination itself can then take many forms, but to link discrimination and gender correctness we are primarily referring to linguistic discrimination.

Linguistic discrimination manifests itself in many ways. The question remains, of course, to what extent the various manifestations can be perceived as discrimination. At the heart of the very idea of discrimination is gender itself. Each language has its own gender. One thing is grammatical gender, but another is the mental image that gender creates. It is that mental image that is the key issue in the question of discrimination. It

raises the question, for example, in terms of any roles and how they are stereotypically assigned to either men or women. This is where the notion of generic masculine comes in, which draws attention to terms in languages directly attributed to the masculine gender, i.e. men, especially in the respects in which these terms are also used to name broader complex groups. An example is the word man, which refers to or is synonymous with the word person/human.

The gender imbalance in languages is obvious at first glance. Just by considering the previously mentioned word *man* and *woman*, wherein the word *woman* the root of the word is *man*. Eisner suggests another example in German, where the term "Mensch" refers to people in general, "Jedermann" refers to everyone, and "Mann" refers specifically to a man. This similarity to male gendered words, as well as the resemblance to the English word "men," further highlights the connection being discussed (Eisner, 439). In English, then, the meaning of *humankind* can be translated as *mankind*.

But masculine terms are not the only problem arising from language. Another problem, as seen by many linguists, is the fact that labels or words are gendered. There are a lot of terms that we either consciously or unconsciously attribute to one of the genders. For example, in English, the word hysteria is attributed to the female gender. From a historical point of view, it is already a primarily feminine trait, with women literally being treated for hysteria in the Middle Ages. Nowadays, the term hysterical woman is used not only in a slightly shameful or derisive context but especially quite often. Society, and men in particular, use this label as a kind of pigeonhole. In everyday life, a man can be just as hysterical about it as any woman, and it is therefore just a linguistic stereotype lingering from times past.

Gender is thus directly embedded in language from a grammatical point of view as well as being part of the stereotyping of language that has occurred over time. Therefore, if language is to be gender correct and for that reason not discriminatory, it should offer equal opportunities to all. It should not neglect or stereotype. How we speak and how we are spoken about has a huge, if often quite unconsidered, impact on everyone around us, including ourselves.

The above-mentioned criticisms for gender-incorrect language then all together represent the term sexism in language. According to Xiaolan Lei “sexist language is language that expresses bias in favour of one sex and thus treats the other sex in a discriminatory manner. In most cases the bias is in favour of men and against women” (1). Since language is a strongly social tool, it just as often reflects social norms, and it is through historical development that elements of sexism can be present in languages, especially social norms persisting from the past. Logically, then, today’s modern language is still permeated by the remnants of patriarchal thinking, which, as is well known, has been common to most societies throughout history and whose setting is still evident not only in language but in society as a whole, and which gender correctness is partly trying to prevent.

2.4. The interdisciplinary nature of gender correctness

Gender correctness is obviously a very interdisciplinary topic. Its function in society spans a number of disciplines. It refers to social, cultural and linguistic views that respect and affirm one’s own gender identity and experience while challenging conventional gender norms and stereotypes.

Undoubtedly, gender studies emerge as one of the primary domains where in the significance of gender correctness takes centre stage. Sociology is another leading area

of gender correctness' impact precisely because it seeks to protect minorities society is a natural setting for its use. In this regard, it is closely related to cultural studies as its use varies based on the differences in cultures. Valdová writes in the introduction to her book how closely language is linked to culture and emphasizes that it is a means of bearing witness to history and culture (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 15).

Last but not least, it is linguistics that gender correctness covers, in terms of the use of language as a basic means of communication. It is the linguistic use of gender correctness in practice that is the subject of this thesis, and it is also the language that is the setting for the violation of gender correctness.

The interdisciplinarity of gender and language research is confirmed by Nancy M. Henley, who points out that the spectrum of disciplines involved in the study of gendered language is broad. "These include linguistics, sociology, literature, anthropology, communication studies, women's studies, and gay/lesbian studies" (Henley 227).

Scholars and practitioners from various fields can work together to create inclusive environments that affirm a variety of gender identities and manifestations while also developing a deeper understanding of gender correctness. With this interdisciplinary perspective, it is recognized that gender equality and respect for all genders are societal issues rather than only personal ones that call for collective effort.

3. Gender correctness in the English and Czech languages

Before it is possible to compare gender correctness in English and Czech, it is necessary to compare the two languages from a grammatical point of view. Although the two languages are distant relatives who are part of the Indo-European family, they are very different from each other. For the question of gender correctness, it is primary to delineate their differences in terms of grammar and gender in language. Grammar is the tool that allows us to express gender, and it can sometimes be an obstacle to neutral, correct forms.

3.1. Gender in English and Czech grammar

The Czech language falls under the Indo-European languages in the Slavic group. The Slavic languages are characterized by their noticeably deep rootedness of the category of gender. In this case, Eisner states that "...we can distinguish between languages that are completely asexual, such as English, languages with a small amount of sexuality ... and finally languages that are strongly sexual, which in Europe are the Slavic languages and with them Czech" (378).

The grammatical gender of Czech is a linguistic category that is determined in Czech for nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and numerals. Czech distinguishes masculine, feminine and neuter genders. This linguistic category then influences the inflexion of the aforementioned word types and also the forms of verbs. This genus is not always related to the biological genus. In persons it corresponds directly to their biological sex, but in inanimate things we can observe both masculine, feminine and even the neuter gender. It is also important to note that the masculine gender is further divided into the animate and inanimate genders. However, this has nothing to do with the actual liveliness of the object, it is only a matter of whether it changes the forms of the noun in each case.

In contrast to the discussed Czech, which is a strongly grammatical language, English is a language that has no grammatical gender. Why this is so is explained by the *Cambridge Grammar of English*, which presents two arguments on the basis of which “the category of gender in English is irrelevant” (Huddleston and Pullum 505). First of all, in the NP structure, there is no gender agreement between the dependents and the head noun, and English does not have an inflectional gender category (Huddleston and Pullum 505). Second, rather than being only influenced by the antecedent’s grammatical characteristics, the choice of pronoun is governed by denotation or reference (Huddleston and Pullum 505). English seems to be considered by many linguists as a non-gendered language, because of these differences. This view is shared in the book *Gender across languages*, where the authors state that Old English had a slightly more rooted grammatical gender and point out the fact that “...Old English had three gender classes, feminine, masculine and neuter, the category of grammatical gender was lost by the end of the fourteenth century due to the decay of inflectional endings ... , Modern English shows no such morphological agreement. English is no longer a (grammatical) gender language” (Bußmann and Hellinger 107).

In terms of how we distinguish gender in languages, there are again many differences, although in these respects the two languages do meet in places. Gender is distinguished in the Czech language either lexically, which means that each term has its own word for each gender (boy x girl, father x mother), which is practically identical to some English terms. Otherwise, gender inflexion is used to form the feminine form (in Czech, the literal term "přechylování" is used). Gender inflexion simply creates the opposite gender of the word by using the original word plus the suffix. A simple example is the word *baron*, where the addition of the ending *-ka* gives rise to the feminine form

baronka. This example works almost identically to the English version of the word *baron* and its feminine form *baroness*.

In the publication *Gender across languages*, the genus of English is presented as a rather semantic category, and just as in Czech, English has personal nouns with the lexical category of gender, such as mother vs father, brother vs sister, etc (Bußmann and Hellinger 107). However, it is important to remember that most personal nouns do not have a specific gender and can be used for both masculine and feminine (alcoholic, prisoner, student). Further, gender can be specified, as is taught in most morphology classes, by the additional addition of the word man or woman (caveman/ cavewoman) or by using suffixes (fem. actress, waitress/ masc. actor, conqueror).

Then it is the turn of the generic genus. This term is used in Czech more in the context of the generic masculine. As the word itself implies, it is a word of a certain gender, but in its meaning it denotes a representative of all other genders. If we take the example of the generic masculine, the word *doktoři* (doctors) is a masculine plural noun in Czech, but in general use (for example, in the sentence "Doctors have high salaries") it refers not only to men but also to women working in this profession. Similar is the case in Czech for animal names. *The Dictionary of Contemporary Czech* states that, for example, the labels cat (fem. in Czech), lion (masc. in Czech) or dog (masc. in Czech) usually denote generically all individuals of that species regardless of their biological gender (Cvrček 166). This generic gender is often at the centre of debates in gender linguistics because of its lack of neutrality or equality between the sexes. In the same publication, Cvrček states that the names of professions and titles in the Czech language are in most cases masculine (166).

3.2. The development of gender linguistics in English and Czech

The field of gender linguistics, which focuses on the application of gender correctness in both languages, has not progressed uniformly. Specifically, gender linguistics in the Czech language has emerged relatively recently as a distinct area of study, stemming from the foundations laid down by feminist linguistics over the course of several decades.

As a discipline that aims to portray the position of men and women in language, to point out possible inequalities, etc, this field in Czech was somewhat later in development compared to foreign, for example, English-language studies. It can be said that the development of this field was partly dependent on the development of foreign gender linguistics. This is also confirmed by Jana Valdrová herself, who says that the development of gender linguistics began in the USA at the end of the 20th century, followed by the boom of gender linguistics in Russia around 2000, which was overtaken by the Czech Republic with its development only a few years earlier, when the term began to be used in the 1990s (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 27-28). An almost identical statement, or in other words the same view on the matter of the development of the gender issue in the Czech language, is shared by Věra Sokolová in the publication *The ABC of Feminism*.

Considering the contemporary early development of Czech gender linguistics from an originally feminist critique of androcentric conceptions of language, English gender linguistics is a slightly older field. The feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s spurred early study on language and gender (Coates and Pichler 2). During those years there was a new departure on the concept of women in language.

Those years saw the publication of many titles taking this new direction, such as Dale Spender's *Man Made Language* (1980) and Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), and it was these works that turned the tide of existing linguistics towards uncovering the connection between language use and gender asymmetries (Coates and Pichler 2). "Researchers worked within a framework that aimed to expose gender discrimination and the ways in which language was coerced into the service of patriarchy" (Coates and Pichler 2).

It was Lakoff's work that caused the uproar. The work was often regarded by many as perpetuating feminist stereotypes, yet female professionals found value in it. "Thus was launched the study of language and gender in the US" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 37). Coates and Pichler then go on to say that gender research has declined somewhat in recent years, partly because many scholars have doubted it, and it is only in the twenty-first century, when one of the main aims is to prevent discrimination in language and to ensure a balance between the categories of women and men, that this view has been reconsidered (2-3).

One of the interesting developments in terms of gender was the fact that at the beginning of the turn of feminist writings to a more direct focus on gender, it was in the 1970s that gender was perceived much more as biological sex (Coates and Pichler 3). It was only in the following years that gender began to be defined more as a social construct as we perceive it today.

3.3. Critique of gender correctness

Like many disciplines, gender correctness finds its opponents among the general public as well as among scientists and academics. Many of these negative opinions,

especially among the general public, are also due to a lack of awareness or education in the field of gender correctness or gender studies.

Certainly, there are also groups that may be extremist, who may share homophobic or other extreme views that make them opposed to gender correctness. In many instances this is also the case in terms of the stereotyping and conservatism that prevails in many parts of society. If we look, for example, at the development of gender correctness, which is much younger in the Czech Republic, it is clear that there are many people among Czech citizens, especially older individuals, for whom this idea is a sharp departure from old stereotypes, and therefore something that is difficult to accept.

Without moving away from the realm of Czech gender correctness, it is also often noted in negative responses that this is a Western invention. Similar views are also heard among critics of the European Union who see correctness as imposed, and also views that attribute correctness to the present day as exaggerated. In her book *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit*, Jana Valdřová gives many examples of negative and critical reactions to both her lectures and her publications throughout the chapter entitled *Feminist and Gender Linguistics in Czech Linguistics*. She tries to respond to most of these comments herself and to evaluate and, if necessary, answer their criticism in a constructive way. In most cases, she then points out that the commentators do not respond constructively, seem to overlook the context of some of the messages and, in particular, point out that the practices that the commentators criticise are quite common in neighbouring countries.

One illustrative example is Valdřová's response to a moment where the reviewer suggests deleting a sentence that argues that gender studies at Czech universities should be encouraged. Not only does Valdřová criticize the unconstructiveness of the criticism,

as it is not substantiated in any way, but she points precisely to the fact that gender linguistics has long existed in Austria and Germany, as well as the space for application in this field and the publications that support with their findings, for example, the identification of the language of domestic violence or sexual harassment, which Valdová sees as more than beneficial (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 79).

Patrik Nacher, a Czech member of *the Chamber of Deputies*, also criticizes the trend toward gender neutrality. In his publication *Šílenosti doby korektní* he refers to the exaggerated gender correctness several times. He ironically highlights the example of the Swedish church, which has encouraged its clergy to limit the use of the term *lord* or not to refer to the god as *him* as it is gendered as a masculine. And instead of the term father, son and holy spirit, they offered the term God and the holy trinity (35-36). Additionally, he comments on the trend of gender-correct language in advertising in connection with the example of the selection process for the position of the Office of the Government, noting that it creates confusion and will lead to society going in several opposite directions (Nacher, 39-40).

However, gender correctness does not escape criticism in English either. Here, again, the criticism of overall political correctness as a construct that binds rather than protects often comes into play. If the reader takes the trouble to look up the term political correctness in the literature, they will find countless titles that state the rather negative effects of political correctness. In his book *Political Correctness is Killing America*, Joel Christopher refers to political correctness as a “disease” (2).

In many ways, gender correctness also suffers from its closeness to feminism. Although gender correctness is, so to speak, a derivative branch of feminist literature,

feminism is not the leading idea behind its actions. However, this is not always the case in the eyes of society, and so often this correctness is seen as just another feminist endeavour. Sara Mills conducts a feminist critique in her essay *Minding your language: implementing gender-free language policies*. Already the introduction of this essay outlines a sceptical view of efforts to change language in favour of gender correctness when, in her words, it is “extremely difficult to manage well” (Mills, 2). Despite the fact that her critique is not aggressive and is well-constructed, she is one of the representatives of scepticism towards the functionality of feminist efforts to equalize language.

This chapter has explored the diverse critique surrounding gender correctness in English and Czech literature. While acknowledging that negative opinions might arise from a lack of awareness or extreme views, this study firmly believes in the importance of addressing gender correctness as a crucial step towards dismantling harmful stereotypes and fostering a more inclusive society. Moreover, it has taken into consideration well-founded concerns regarding the practical implementation of gender-correct language policies. As this thesis delves deeper into the complexities of gender correctness, it seeks to contribute constructively to the ongoing discourse, advocating for the significance of gender studies and linguistic approaches in shaping a more equitable and respectful language landscape. By embracing diverse perspectives, the thesis endeavours to shed light on the multifaceted nature of gender correctness, ultimately promoting a nuanced understanding of its impact on literature and society as a whole.

4. Review of English and Czech gender correctness research

To critically evaluate the existing literature on gender correctness, it is necessary to compare its stance on the key issues to which gender correctness relates. The existing body of literature predominantly addresses the same concerns and challenges tackled by gender correctness. However, variations arise in the authors' approaches and perspectives on specific problems. To facilitate comparison and enable critical reflection, it becomes crucial to identify several fundamental key issues or themes where convergences among individual publications become apparent. The aim of this comparative exploration is to provide a foundation for an evaluation of the existing research on gender correctness in both Czech and English contexts.

English and Czech traditions of gender correctness research

The selected literature for this chapter serves as a comprehensive portrayal of both languages and involves authors who typically belong to academic, sociological, or linguistic backgrounds. It is important to acknowledge that a majority of the literature discussing gender correctness does not explicitly focus on it. Instead, most of these works identify the issues that necessitate gender correctness as the solution.

The selection of sources includes both Czech (Table 1) and English (Table 2) literature, encompassing a variety of authors and publications. The approach taken for the critical review involves examining each source's key points, arguments, and contributions to the understanding of gender correctness. For the purpose of clarity, the sources are compared and the arguments are presented on the basis of the basic issues addressed by gender correctness. This provides insight from multiple authors on each issue, allowing a comparison of the general perspective of the English and Czech gender literature on gender correctness.

Table 1: List of Czech literature used for comparative review

Language of literature	Authors	Publications	Topic/Issue	Attitude towards the issue
Czech authors	Jana Valdřová	Kultura Genderově vyváženého vyjadřování (2010)	Generic masculine	Extensive discussion criticizing Generic masculinities. Proposing various solutions to address the issue.
		Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit (2018)	Gender based naming	Critique of Gender asymmetries in naming. Lack of gendered counterparts for certain occupational names, and use of feminine versions with different meanings.
			Generic masculine	Acknowledging gramm. correctness of gendered language. Recognizing disadvantages for women in communication. Advocating gender-balanced expression to address linguistic patterns.
			Stereotypes	Critique: Gendered language in advertisements and stereotypes. Perpetuation of traditional gender roles. Linguistic impact on job roles and responsibilities
			Women as professionals and the question of the status	Critique: Noting that women being addressed by first names in such contexts leads to feelings of inferiority, especially compared to men.
			Gender balanced education	Highlighting the gender imbalance in school textbooks based on the observation.
			Feminine surnames with inflexion	Discussion of the inflexion of feminine surnames in Czech and the problems posed by surnames without inflexion. Supports a change to the choice of inflexion.
			Gender a společnost (2006)	Generic masculine
		Stereotypes		This work highlights how humour reinforcing stereotypes about both genders' naivety and masculinity can be deemed as gender incorrect.
		Gender balanced education		Criticism of the current state of Czech education from a gender perspective.
		ABC FEMinismu (2004)	Women as professionals and the question of status	Valdřová highlights how Czech society tends to disrespect women as professionals.
			Male and female language	Highlighting societal pressures on specific topics. Both genders suffer due to it.

Language of literature	Authors	Publications	Topic/Issue	Attitude towards the issue
Czech author	Světlá Čmejrková	Jazyk Pro Druhé Pohlaví (1998)	Gender based naming	Scepticism about revising established language parts, such as pronouns, in Czech.
			Generic masculine	Feminine gender symptomatic, representing beings of feminine gender, while masculine gender non-symptomatic, denoting men specifically or serving as generic designations.
			Feminine surnames with inflexion	Inflexion is seen as a "prerogative of Czech women" accurately revealing gender. Not always advantageous.
	Irena Smetáčková	Příručka Pro Genderově Citlivé Vedení Škol (2007)	Gender balanced education	Strongly rooted gender stereotypes in Czech education. Emphasis on gender-balanced teaching.
Lenka Vaclíková- Helušová	Mnohohlasem (multiautor. by Hanušová) (2006)	Women as professionals and the question of status	Qualitative research findings: Women are perceived as weaker or less successful in the scientific sphere. Correlation with Jana Valdrová's claims of unequal treatment of women compared to men in professional positions.	

Table 1 shows the author's and his/her work's main position or idea on the issue.

It is clear from Table 1 that the Czech authors are critical of the issues faced by gender correctness and that gender correctness is a viable and practical solution for them. The most important author in Czech literature is Dr. Jana Valdřová, one of the leading Czech gender linguists. Several publications by her are mentioned here, such as *Representations of femininity from the perspective of gender identity linguistics* or *Gender and Society* and several of her contributions in journals and other publications. Valdřová has been working on the issue of women's disempowerment in language for several years. This author is essential for this thesis, as she is the most dedicated to gender correctness and has published many valuable works on this topic. Valdřová thus not only lays the necessary and missing foundations for the Czech language in terms of gender correctness, but also provides a very clear and most comprehensive set of ideas on this topic.

From the Czech literature, gender correctness has been addressed by many other mainly female authors, such as Lenka Vaclíková-Heluřová with her multi-author publication *Mohohlasem* that shows a completely different perspective on the academic side of gender correctness research or Svetlana Čmejřková with her book *Language for the other gender*. This publication is slightly older, but the author offers a sober and logical view of the developments in linguistics from a gender perspective that provided the basis for deeper explorations.

Table 2: List of English literature used for comparative review

Language of literature	Authors	Publications	Topic/Issue	Attitude towards the issue
English Authors	Robin Tolmach Lakoff	The Language War (2002)	Generic masculine	She acknowledges attempts to achieve symmetry between genders in English but as it points out that despite these attempts, some asymmetry still exists. Description of the historical development of gender naming.
		Language and Woman's Place (2004)	Women as professionals and the question of status	The author discusses the language treatment of women, including generic masculinities and professional naming. Her position is not neutral but supportive of women as an oppressed minority.
			Male and female language	Arguments about how women are taught to talk: word choice to be more formal, higher tone and emphasis, politeness, and standardness.
	Elizabeth S. Sklar	Sexist Grammar Revisited (1983)	Generic masculine	A strong critique of contemporary use of masculinities and pronouns in English grammar.
	Sara Mills and Louise Mullany	Language, Gender and Feminism: Theory, Methodology and Practice (2011)	Generic masculine	The authors are positive about the observed shift, viewing it as a step ahead in reducing the use of generic masculinities in the formal sphere.
			Stereotypes	The authors are positive about the trend of companies formulating internal policies against discriminatory language.
	Mary Talbot	Language and Gender (2010)	Stereotypes	Talbot's viewpoint aligns with Czech publications, highlighting sexism in the workplace. Sexism extends beyond stereotypical labels like "mothers" or "housewives," including physical aspects like the term "blonde" (Talbot 224).
	David Crystal	How Language Works: How Babies Babble, Words Change Meaning, and Languages Live or Die (2007)	Stereotypes	Crystal's viewpoint stands out for positive acknowledging substantial changes following contemporary critique of sexist language.
	Susan Ehrlich et.al.	The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality (2014)	Gender based naming	Seen as a more settled matter in contemporary English, linked to the development of libertarian feminism.
	Hadumond Bußmann and Marlis Hellinger	Gender across Languages: The Linguistic Representation of Women and Men (2001)	Women as professionals and the question of status	The publication highlights the use of "generic he" for high-status occupational terms. In contrast, the feminine is associated with low-status occupations.
Male and female language			The book highlights gender imbalance in language, favouring male/masculine as prestigious and subordinating female/feminine, impacting societal speech expectations.	

Language of literature	Authors	Publications	Topic/Issue	Attitude towards the issue
English Authors	Jean M. Twenge	Mrs. His Name': Women's Preferences for Married Names. (1997)	Feminine surnames with inflexion	The author conducted a survey on young women's decisions about their surnames after marriage and their children's surnames with the result that most young women preferred the traditional name choice.
	Anne Curzan	Gender Shifts in the History of English (2009)	Gender based naming	Curzan criticizes that asymmetry in gender labels in English persists despite attempts at balance and neutrality.
	Barbara J. Bank	Gender and Education: An Encyclopedia (2007)	Gender balanced education	The author critiques the phenomenon of single-gender schools, seeing it as a threat to coeducation in the United States.

Table 2 shows the author's and his/her work's main position or idea on the issue.

In English-language literature, the representation of authors is no longer purely female. Similarly, the attitude of all authors on the issue is not the same. Indeed, in some cases the authors are not only critical but find positive observations of progress. The most important publications are *Language and Gender* by Mary Talbot, *The Language War* and *Language and Woman's Place* by Robin Lakoff, and *Language, Gender and Feminism* by Sara Mills and Lousie Mullany. All these publications are written in much the same way, looking at the status and neglect of women in language. The floor also goes to David Crystal, the well-known British linguist. He is not commenting on gender correctness directly but assessing the tendency of language to be gendered.

At the same time, the literature is supplemented by several guidelines for both the Czech and English languages and publications from journals or essays. Articles and essays sometimes make concise and sober observations, often based on the thoughts of multiple authors, giving us a broader overview.

4.1. Comparative review of key research areas

4.1.1. Gender-based naming

One frequently mentioned topic is the naming of people and professions in terms of gender. Gendered naming could otherwise be explained as gender asymmetries in people's names as described by Valdřová (*Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* 97). According to her, often some, for example, occupational names either do not have a gendered counterpart or the feminine has a different meaning that is often not equally exclusive (*Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* 99-100). Valdřová is quite critical of this topic in the Czech language and it is the very first issue in one of her books. She draws

attention to the lack of counterparts or, on the contrary, feminine with a different meaning, which was allegedly explained by the later entry of women into the labour market and as an example Valdřová cites *občanka* (eng. fem. version of citizen), which is not regularly used in conjunction with citizen (masc. version) so much as in Czech is the female version *občanka* a synonym of the word ID (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 97-99). She points to the differently shaped gender counterparts as a consequence of the later recognition of the role of women in these positions, see masc. *číšník* (eng. Waiter) x fem. *servírka* (eng. Waitress) (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 99-101). Čmejrková also dealt with women counterparts in her publication years earlier, although not in such detail at that time. She herself refers to this as natural given the late entry of women into these professions (Čmejrková 226). However, what she points out, albeit somewhat sceptically, is the fact that even in Czech there is an effort to revise established parts of the language, such as pronouns. So far, she observes this phenomenon more in German or English, but she points it out in Czech from the point of view of translation in particular. In order not to be labelled sexist when translating or writing in the languages mentioned (Čmejrková 226).

This asymmetry in the gender labels of female and male is also noticeable in English. Although English is now trying to balance and neutralise these labels, this asymmetry still exists. In the chapter *Gender and asymmetrical word histories: when boys could be girls*, Curzan explains how, in terms of historical development, linguists describe this balancing of asymmetrical labels. This chapter is also part of the book *Gender shifts in the history of English*. The book is overall very rich in describing the historical development of gender naming and the use of pronouns, and already in the introduction of the book the author underpins this attempt at symmetry between genders with a

feminist critique that proves that the road to perfect gender correctness is a long one. “Many feminists argue that even these “more semantically symmetrical” pairings are often not symmetrical: for example, man is still often used as a generic (even if it is not necessarily interpreted this way), and spinster carries negative connotations that are foreign to bachelor” (Curzan 133).

In *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, part of the chapter is devoted to gendered nouns (Ehrlich, et al 26). In this case, however, they are seen more in terms of the development of libertarian feminism, and thus as a matter that is much more settled in contemporary English. They point to Robin Lakoff and her book *Language and Woman's Place* which, like the feminist linguistic milieu of the time, they criticize for the critique Lakoff makes of English as a masculine language (Ehrlich, et al 26).

The analysis revealed that certain languages, including Czech and English, still exhibit gender imbalances, favouring male-dominant forms. Efforts have been made to address this linguistic inequality, but the journey to achieve gender correctness remains ongoing. The exploration of various perspectives sheds light on the importance of recognizing and challenging such imbalances to promote a more inclusive and equitable linguistic environment.

4.1.2. Generic masculine

The term generic masculinities could certainly be described as the central theme of all discussions leading to gender correctness. “The masculine word “man” is used in two senses. It is used as “non-woman” in one sense, and as “human” in another. This linguistic phenomenon is referred to as “Generic Masculine”” (Jabbari 2). Valdřová aptly mentions it in the very beginning of her book *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy*

lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit as an address or name where women are not explicitly addressed but included and it is assumed that the use of the generic masculine will automatically be perceived as neutral when referring to a group (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 138).

One of the most famous examples, and one of the stimuli for this thesis, is the riddle used as an example by Valdřová (originally in Czech). “A father and his son are in a hurry to get home in the car and suddenly there is a serious traffic accident. The father dies on the spot and the son is taken to a nearby hospital for surgery. The surgeon on duty cries out in despair when he sees the child: “I can't operate! He's my son!” (Valdřová, Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 167). The fact is, the surgeon is the boy's mother. The answer fits perfectly into our discourse, since the surgeon, is the mother of the poor boy, but this is not entirely obvious to us at first glance precisely because of the use of the masculine term surgeon. An interesting observation is that even when translated into English, the riddle retains the same motif, since the generic masculine used specifically for the term surgeon is the same for English.

In the context of the use of the generic masculine in the quotes, Valdřová then comments on the lack of gender correct and balanced job advertisements, where advertisements often mention only purely feminine professions even though they can also be performed by men, or vice versa (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 191). Last, but not least, she pauses at the fact that the generic masculine is in some cases displacing the feminine from exclusively feminine fields, such as the sign on the door of the surgery: 'Entrance for gynaecology patients (Czech *pacienty* = *plural muscular*)' (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 181-182). The Czech language distinguishes a *pacient* as a masculine (patient) and the feminine version is a *pacientka* (female patient), which

is why the above-mentioned inscription on the door of the surgery is a really striking fact, since logically only women are the exclusive visitors of such medical facilities.

These were just a few of the rather interesting facts that Valdřová discusses in this book on the subject of generic masculinities, which she really pays a lot of attention to here. She then comments on the same topic in her next publication, *Gender a Společnost*. The gist of this subsection is largely similar to the discussion of generic masculinities in the previous work, but here Valdřová presents several solutions. These are, for example, the introduction of forms of both genders to include both women and men. Where, on the other hand, a woman is involved, the feminine form should be used. She also recommends avoiding diminutives as a form of dominance over the addressed, as well as alternating the order of gender in multi-word addresses (Gender a Společnost 99-100).

In 2010, the manual *Kultura genderově vyváženého vyjadřování* (Culture of gender balanced expression) was published in cooperation with 3 authors within the project of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth. Jana Valdřová, Blanka Knotková-Čapková and Pavla Pačlíková contributed to its creation. As in any other work on gender correctness, generic masculine comes up again. Once more, it is mentioned as a generic term, which, although grammatically correct, in practice puts women at a disadvantage in terms of communication, and this practice still persists in the Czech Republic. It is also linked to gender distribution itself, as is the case in advertising, for example: Do you want to stay slim? - Chcete zůstat *hubená*? (*hubená* – fem. form) instead of *hubený* (male form) (Valdřová, *Kultura genderově vyváženého vyjadřování* 22). It points to the division of the world into male and female, where male suffixes are used, for example, in advertisements in connection with sports, finance, politics, and female endings in connection with cosmetics, cleaning products, weight loss and so on. (Valdřová, *Kultura genderově vyváženého vyjadřování* 24).

Overall, Czech literature tends to take a critical view of gender correctness and to label Czech as a gender-unbalanced language. This is also confirmed by Světlá Čmejrková published her article *Jazyk pro druhé pohlaví* in the periodical *Český lid*. As already mentioned, this publication is much older than the others (1998). In her idea Čmejrková clearly discusses that the feminine gender is symptomatic in Czech, i.e. that feminine always represent and denote beings of the feminine gender, whereas the masculine gender is non-symptomatic and masculine thus denote specifically either men or have a generic function and are used for general designations (226).

For an explanation, see the three examples below:

- a) “Václavské náměstí zaplnili protivládní demonstranti. Vystoupil organizátor Rajchl či poslanec Foldyna” (Volfík). (Wenceslas Square was filled with anti-government demonstrators. Rajchl, the organizer, and MP Foldyna spoke.)
- b) “Zaměstnanec banky v Louisville v Kentucky zastřelil pět kolegů. Vše vysílal na instagram, policie ho zabila” (iRozhlas). (A bank employee in Louisville, Kentucky shot and killed five co-workers. He posted it all on instagram, police killed him.)
- c) “Nejlepšími Čechy byli Patrik Vebr ... a národní rekordmanka Moira Stewartová, jež doběhla sedmá za 1:12:43” (Marek). (The best Czechs were Patrik Vebr ... and national record holder Moira Stewart, who finished seventh in 1:12:43.)

Newspaper headline a) describes a square full of demonstrators, i.e. dozens of men and women. However, the word *demonstranti* (demonstrators) is masculine in Czech. Although it is clear from the article that both men and women were demonstrating, the generic masculine word may give the impression that it is only men, just as Valdřová wrote.

Headline b) comes from a recent article about a shooting in Louisville. It states that 5 colleagues were shot. However, after reading the article, one can read that a woman was among the dead. However, *kolega* (colleague) (the 1st case of *kolegů* from the original) is a masculine word in Czech, as the word *kolegyně* is used for the feminine. The headline thus clearly reduces gender equality and the reader perceives the victims as purely male.

The last bullet c) is an excerpt from the subtitle of an article about the Prague Half Marathon. When reporting on successful Czech runners, the author uses the term *nejlepší Čechy* (best Czechs) and follows up with a Czech male runner and then a Czech female runner. Although *Čech* (Czech) is a term for both a man and a member of a nation, it is still a masculine form. The Czech language has a term for women called *Češky*. Thus, after reading this sentence, it may not be immediately clear whether there are any women among successful Czechs, and one must read the rest of the article.

The English-language literature takes a virtually identical position on this issue as the Czech one. Robin Tolmach Lakoff's *The Language War* contains a chapter *Marked Words*. In this chapter we can find a passage that would strike a chord with many feminist and gender linguists and would further support their claims. "As feminists have noted, the coincidence of the two senses of man in modern English (both "male" and "human being") encourages speakers to see ... men as unmarked or normal humans, women as marked or not-fully-human" (Lakoff, *The Language War* 45).

Elizabeth S. Sklar, the author of a very interesting article entitled *Sexist grammar revisited*, first presents the historical development of the use and functioning of the generic masculine. At the end of her article, she discusses the contemporary use of masculinities and pronouns, making a very strong critique of English grammar. She

presents an explanation for the masculine usage rule. “If a personal subject is not specifically female, the masculine forms he, him and his are customarily used. This is not meant to slight women; it is simply a matter of accepted usage and style” (Sklar 357). She is very critical of this rule and calls it disappointing to say the least, given that she believes that historical development has at least brought some progress and that this rule is more or less a step towards the beginning (Sklar 357-358).

On the other hand, Sara Mills and Louise Mullany's book *Language, Gender, and Feminism* points to a step ahead. Based on surveys, they believe that generic masculinities have actually been used less in the formal sphere in recent years. (Mills and Mullany 158).

Generic masculine phenomenon perpetuates gender imbalances in language, elevating the male/masculine as the default and prestigious category while relegating the female/feminine to a secondary and subordinate position. Critical analyses from various authors highlight the implications of this approach, from job advertisements to everyday language usage. However, there are positive signs of change, as some surveys indicate a decline in the use of generic masculinities in formal settings. To foster an inclusive and equitable society, addressing gender imbalances in language remains a vital endeavour, recognizing language's role in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles. Striving for linguistic changes that promote gender equality and respect for all genders is imperative in this ongoing journey.

4.1.3. Stereotypes

One of the pervasive issues in language is the perpetuation of stereotypes, which often leads to sexism. Valdřová raises concerns about the generic feminine used in some advertisements, where stereotypically feminine jobs are exclusively advertised using feminine forms. For example, the word *cukřárka* (confectioner in the feminine form) is

used, potentially artificially reducing male interest in the position. Such gendered language choices contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and hinder neutral thinking about the concepts of men and women (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 191)

Another critical aspect is the linguistic constructs of gender, including stereotypes deeply ingrained in the collective subconscious. Valdřová points out how certain derogatory terms, like “hen” for women in Czech, perpetuate negative associations, while the gender division of labour assigns women the roles of mother, housewife, and caregiver, disregarding their diverse capabilities (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 203, 234). This unequal division of responsibilities is further reinforced by the tendency to use the term “help” when describing men's contributions, undermining the notion of shared responsibilities (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 237). Additionally, humour that perpetuates stereotypes, targeting both sexes' naivety and masculinity, can be considered as gender incorrect (308), as highlighted in Valdřová's publication *Gender a Společnost*.

In the English-language literature, Talbot shares the viewpoint, prevalent in many Czech publications, that sexism is particularly evident in the workplace. It extends beyond the stereotypical labels attached to women, such as mothers or housewives, and includes physical aspects, as Talbot notes with the example of the term “blonde” (Talbot 224). Moreover, women are often subjected to emotionally tinged language like “darling” or “sweetheart” not only in the public sphere but also in the workplace (Talbot 225).

Despite these critical observations, Crystal stands out as one of the few authors who address whether any substantial changes have occurred following the contemporary

critique of sexist language. Crystal suggests that there has been a noticeable change, especially in written speech, which has prompted the development of guidelines in formal and work settings to address gender relations (Crystal 314). Similarly, Mills and Mullany highlight that many companies or organizations are beginning to formulate internal policies against discriminatory language, although at varying stages of development (Mills and Mullany 158).

In addition to the workplace, stereotyping is well documented in the media. Here are 3 examples from the British newspaper *The Daily Mail*.

- a) “Are YOU guilty of these behaviours? Scientists reveal the key signs of aggressive drivers - after one study showed WOMEN are more likely to suffer from road rage” (Jackson).
- b) “Glam in green! Queen Camilla looks chic in emerald ensemble as she attends church with King Charles during their Balmoral getaway” (Hawken).
- c) “He did everything right and still lost his life': Furious widow of Derek Jacobs slams smart motorway scheme after coroner says fatal crash would not have happened 'had there been a hard shoulder” (Rainey).

Deduction a) is a newspaper headline discussing points on whether readers have road rage. Stereotypes are women being referred to as bad drivers in perhaps most countries. However, the author uses the headline as an argument that one study came out women as worse drivers, while still using capital letters for the word women. It undermines the already entrenched notion of women behind the wheel.

In headline (b), the media then talks about Camilla, Queen Consort. Women are stereotyped in the media mainly in terms of their appearance, their dress and their best

submissive behaviour. This headline introduces the whole treatise with the term chic in green, which only touches on the style of the woman and says nothing about her.

The last bullet (c) is a textbook example of stereotyping. The woman interviewed for this article was referred to as the Furious Widow of Derek Jacobs. Not only is one of the stereotypes the assigning of emotions to women such as hysteria, anger, and urgency, but also not calling the woman by name (and only after the name could one add that she is a widow). Instead of a name, they used in this case the woman's relationship to the man and therefore everything is again based on masculine articulation, as it was written for example in Valdová or as Lakoff herself stated.

Overall, the literature, including the authors mentioned above, predominantly focuses on the workplace when discussing stereotyping and sexism. This narrow focus in the English-language gender literature limits the exploration of broader societal contexts and fails to provide a comprehensive critique of gender-related issues. Further critical examination and expanded research in various domains are necessary to challenge and dismantle the entrenched biases present in language and society.

The perpetuation of gender stereotypes in language remains a pervasive issue, influencing perceptions and reinforcing traditional gender roles. Valdová's work highlights how gendered language choices in advertisements and derogatory terms contribute to inequality and hinder neutral thinking about gender. Crystal and Mills and Mullany point to positive changes in language, particularly in written speech and organizational policies, but there is still room for improvement. Stereotyping is not limited to the workplace but is also prevalent in the media, where women are often portrayed in superficial and submissive roles. Overall, the literature primarily focuses on

workplace sexism, warranting further research in diverse societal contexts to challenge and break down these biases and promote a more inclusive language and society.

4.1.4. Women as professionals and the question of status

The workplace is one of the most conducive places for practising political and gender correctness. This is especially so because even in this era, the pay and status gaps between women and men have not been completely erased. Therefore, much of the literature deals with the question of women as professionals and the question of status.

The question of status arises several times in the work of Valdřová, even in the context of address. First of all, Valdřová notes the use of surnames for men and first names for women in professional spheres. She argues that being addressed by name in such settings results in a feeling of inferiority, and that this happens more often for women than for men. It also happens in the media, which calls famous women by their first names (Reprezentace ťenství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderovťch a sexuálních identit 115-117).

In one of the books she contributed to, the criticism of gender correctness can be seen in her view of Czech society, which is not yet inclined to respect women as professionals and Czech women, especially those of younger age, are met with insinuations such as: Where did you get that from? You are too young to... and so on, on a larger scale than with equally experienced men (Valdřová, *The ABC of Feminism* 13).

The multi-author publication *Mnohohlasem: Vyjednávání ťenskťch prostorť po roce 1989* contains a chapter entitled *The gender science community through its own eyes*, written by Lenka Vaclíková-Heluřová, which focuses on the gender science community itself. The author presents the results of a qualitative research investigation based on interviews with academics. One of the findings is that women are sometimes perceived

as weaker or less successful in the scientific sphere (Hašková, Vaclíková-Helušová 167), which correlates with some of Jana Valdrová's claims that women are not treated as equally as men in professional positions.

In terms of English, the views are similar to Czech linguists. In the second chapter of the book *Language and Woman's Place*, entitled *Speaking of Women*, Lakoff discusses the way language treats women. It discusses both generic masculinities and the way women are professionally named, how they are seen through words created for the world of men and how they are spoken about or given meaning in language. Lakoff's position in this chapter is not neutral but clearly takes the side of women as an oppressed minority.

A concise but good overview is provided by *Gender Across Languages*. "Many high-status occupational terms, such as *lawyer*, *physician* or *scientist*, will traditionally be pronominalised by he (the so-called "generic he")" (Bußmann and Hellinger 108). This is so even in cases where the speaker is referring to a group containing women or to women as individuals. In contrast, the gendered nature of English casts a shadow over the feminine in the context of less famous occupations. In this context, the authors state "that low-status occupational titles, such as secretary, nurse or schoolteacher, will often be followed by anaphoric she" (Bußmann and Hellinger 108).

The English and Czech gender correctness research thus partly returns to the gendered naming of job titles, and it is clear that masculine terms still have a higher status today. Similarly, both sides agree that women as professionals have to work much harder to achieve recognition for their professionalism in the workplace.

The workplace remains a battleground for gender correctness, with pervasive stereotypes and biases impeding true progress. Valdrová's work highlights the demeaning practice of addressing women by their first names, perpetuating feelings of inferiority

(Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 115-117). Similarly, English-language literature exposes the use of generic masculinities in high-status occupational terms, perpetuating male dominance and relegating femininity to lower-status roles (Bußmann and Hellinger 108). The persistent preference for masculine terms in prestigious occupations reflects entrenched societal attitudes, hindering women's recognition and equality in the workplace. A critical examination of language and continued efforts are needed to dismantle these biases and create an environment that truly values and respects women's professionalism.

4.1.5. Feminine surnames with inflexion

Inflexion of women's surnames is a somewhat topical issue in the context of gender correctness. Especially in the Czech language. The English literature does not address surname hyphenation in any way due to the fact that it is not inherent in English surnames.

Valdrová opens up the topic of inflexion of feminine surnames, which is the preferred practice in Czech, and surnames that do not contain inflexion can often be problematic (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 361), for example in some official forms, the uncertainty of addressing the other person or the uncertainty of the other person's gender. However, she notes that times are changing, and so are languages (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 356), and her chapters are thus indicative of a move towards tolerance of uninflected surnames.

Čmejrková also writes about feminine surnames and their transliteration. She refers to inflexion as seemingly "the prerogative of Czech women" (Čmejrková 267). This is because, unlike in English, a woman does not have to feel hidden and her surname

thus accurately reveals her gender. If we look more closely, however, we find that this is not an advantage. This is also due to the fact that there are also foreign names in Czech for which our Czech transliteration is not quite ready. Foreigners then wonder in what form their surname is used and writers or editors are often in doubt whether to inflect the surname of a given celebrity or not (Čmejrková 227-228). She aptly points here to the comment of an American editor who reproaches the fact that if in America they write about a Czech personality, out of respect they leave the Czech surname with the inflection, why is this not the case in Czech, where we have a constant tendency to inflect foreign surnames. (Čmejrková 228).

The Czech tendency to inflect foreign names is mainly in news and tabloid portals. Take a look at 2 tabloid headlines:

- a) “Porušila práva. Píseň Katy Perryové je kopií staršího hitu” (ČTK). (She violated rights. Katy Perry's song is a cover of an older hit.)
- b) Miley Cyrusová se léčí z traumat, podstupuje terapii EMDR. (Jirásková, Hořejší) (Miley Cyrus is healing from trauma, undergoing EMDR therapy.)

Both (a) and (b) inflect the names of singers Katty Perry and Miley Cyrus. In the original these names are not inflected, but the Czech media add the Czech ending *-ová*. It is the confusion in the inflection of names in Czech that leads to the inflection of foreign names that should not be inflected.

As can be seen from Čmejrková and Valdřová’s opinions the debate about whether or not to inflect Czech female surnames is indeed extensive. Opinions vary widely and society is divided on this issue.

There really is not much literature written in English, but Jean M. Twenge of the University of Michigan has described her survey whose aim was to find out what choices

and factors influence young women's decisions about their inflected surnames after marriage and the surnames of their children. The concluding discussion stated that the majority of the young women in the sample expressed a preference for traditional name choices, such as taking their husband's surname upon marriage and giving their children their husband's surname (Twenge 426-427).

The topic of female surname inflexion in the context of gender correctness is complicated, particularly in the Czech language, where it is quite important. While there has been some movement toward the acceptability of uninflected surnames, the subject in Czech culture remains intense. While some supporters strive to defy gender norms in English-speaking environments, the argument over surname inflexion remains a major concern in languages such as Czech. This difference emphasizes the importance of cultural and linguistic variety when it comes to addressing gender equality and language practices.

4.1.6. Gender balanced education

Just as in the workplace, gender correctness is important in schools and other educational institutions. After all, the development of adolescents is one of the most important factors affecting society.

Valdrová criticizes the current state of Czech education from a gender perspective. From a young age a child is pigeonholed into the behaviours of his or her gender as assigned as correct by society (Gender and Society 15-16). A very interesting observation is then made in the chapter on education. Valdrová writes verbatim that, "the disinterest of a gender in a subject signals a gender imbalance in the content and delivery of the material" (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 27). With this observation, she points to the gender imbalance in school textbooks.

The gender imbalance in textbooks was highlighted by The Guardian in 2011 in its article *Study finds huge gender imbalance in children's literature*. It briefly described a study by sociologist Jenice McCabe, which compared 6,000 children's books and textbooks (Flood). The resulting finding was “that males are central characters in 57% of children's books published each year, with just 31% having female central characters” (Flood).

Irena Smetáčková has put together a handbook under the title *Příručka Pro Genderově Citlivé Vedení Škol*. In the chapter written by Lucie Jarkovská, we can read that gender is present in all aspects of school, not only in teaching but also in communication and space, and that the approach of the two genders differs. Smetáčková notes that gender stereotypes are strongly rooted in Czech education (44) and offers a chapter on gender-balanced teaching. Among other things, it also builds on Valdřová's view that “it is important to enable every boy and every girl to develop their personal dispositions and interests, regardless of gender ideas prevailing in a given society” (Smetáčková 45). The handbook also offers many more ideas on why to try to establish a gender-balanced school, gender in textbooks, etc.

Gender and Education: An Encyclopedia by Barbara J. Bank is a comprehensive reference book in English that explores various aspects of gender in the context of education. It covers topics such as educational policies, gender disparities, gender roles, and the influence of gender on educational outcomes. It serves as a valuable resource for those interested in understanding the intersections of gender and education. In the book, she discusses, among other things, the phenomenon of single-gender schools, which she criticizes. “For the educational mainstream in the United States, separating boys and girls poses a direct threat to the canon of coeducation” (Bank 217).

Gender correctness in educational settings is crucial for adolescent development and societal progress. Valdová critiques Czech education for perpetuating gender stereotypes from a young age, impacting school materials and delivery. Bank criticizes single-gender schools in the US for potentially undermining coeducation. These perspectives underscore the importance of fostering inclusivity and challenging stereotypes in education.

4.1.7. Male and female language

Valdová develops a discussion of masculine and feminine themes. In her opinion, women feel pressured by society to talk about parenting, relationships or education, whereas men tend to talk about work, politics or sports (Valdová, *The ABC of Feminism* 10). She thus draws the first distinction between women's and men's issues. But what is very significant then is her view of how men suffer from the gendered division of topics. They do not feel free to express their feelings, weaknesses or admit mistakes. Here Valdová notes that the high suicidality of men stems precisely from the fact that they cannot or will not name how they feel (*The ABC of Feminism* 11). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “the suicide rate among males in 2021 was approximately four times higher than the rate among females. Males make up 50% of the population but nearly 80% of suicides” (Suicide Data and Statistics). This number can be partly a very negative consequence of this gendered division of expression.

Valdová returns to the already discussed addressing of women and, among other things, she also points to the speech of women, which is given by society as quieter and more submissive and modest compared to that of men, when in situations where a woman chooses a more forceful and louder tone, which is quite natural for argumentation, she is often considered hysterical (*The ABC of Feminism* 12-13).

Research by psychologist Laurie Heatherington shows that women tend to speak more modestly. She and other experts produced research for *Sex Roles* magazine called *When Another Stumbles: Gender and Self-Presentation to Vulnerable Others* (Heatherington et.al. 889). They then asked a sample of 85 students, both boys and girls, what they predicted their GPA (grade point average) would be and compared their answers to their actual final GPA (Heatherington et.al. 894-898). When their confederate showed a hint of sensitivity and was not strict in any way, the men tended to type their results optimistically compared to the women who kept a low profile and their true GPA was actually much better than the one they estimated (Heatherington et.al. 898-899). Thus, we can observe the tendency of women to keep a low profile and be more modest in this respect as well.

Lakoff opens her publication with “I think, that women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways: in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language use treats them” (*Language and Woman’s Place* 4).

The first chapter in which Lakoff discusses discrimination against women is called *Talking Like a Lady*, and it contains arguments about the first part of Lakoff’s argument, about how women are taught to talk. She discusses the word choice to be more formal, tone to be higher and emphasis, or conversely the politeness and standard language that women gravitate towards.

Already mentioned overview *Gender Across Languages* also contains thoughts discussing roles. “Social gender has to do with stereotypical assumptions about what are appropriate social roles for women and men...” (Bußmann and Hellinger 108). And this, according to the authors, is the subject of debates in gender and feminist linguistics, which brings to the fore the fact of gender imbalance in the language of society “which considers

the male/masculine as the higher, more prestigious category and the female/feminine as secondary and subordinate” (Bußmann and Hellinger 108). In the course of the reading, it becomes clear from the text that these roles are also implied in what is expected of women and men in the context of speaking.

The literature highlights the gendered themes that influence communication patterns for women and men. Societal expectations often pressure women to focus on specific topics, such as parenting and relationships, while men are encouraged to discuss work, politics, and sports. This division limits individual expression and may lead to negative emotional states. Additionally, women’s speech can be subjected to discriminatory attitudes, with assertive tones sometimes labelled as hysterical. The literature underscores the pervasive gender imbalance in language and society, perpetuating stereotypes and restricting authentic expression.

4.2. Suggestions for applying gender correctness

The *Ten Commandments of Gender Correctness* is a subchapter of the handbook *Kultura genderově vyváženého vyjadřování* in which Knotková-Čapková comments on the ten commandments published on the website of a Czech non-profit organization. In brief, these points summarise avoiding stereotyping and ridiculing men and women, not degrading jobs to purely female or male, using both genders where necessary or noticing how the female body is sexualised by society (Knotková-Čapková 16). It then goes on to consider the connection between language and democracy, but this is not addressed until the practical part of this handbook.

Valdrová also presents some solutions in the same handbook. One of them is the promotion of women’s contribution or, as has been mentioned several times here, the recognition of women as experts. The use of the feminine Czech term for the position

when it is really a woman instead of the usual generic masculine (Valdrová, *Kultura genderově vyváženého vyjadřování* 34). She advises to avoid the generic masculine even in the designation of groups and to change the order of genders in this address, as was the case in her previous publications. Among other things, she encourages women to address themselves by the feminine version of their occupation and not to submit to a socially given masculine designation just because it appears to be on a higher level (Valdrová 37). Again, the emphasis is also on not translating foreign surnames and on institutional forms that should include both versions of gender, whether in parentheses or separated by a slash (Valdrová, *Kultura genderově vyváženého vyjadřování* 41). Valdrová puts forward similar ideas in her books, but she and Knotková-Čapková are practically the only ones from whom any suggestions and recommendations for Czech can be traced.

In the *Gender Across Languages*, the authors acknowledge the moving mass of resistance to androcentric language and the ongoing efforts to transform English into a gender-inclusive language. And they point to modern efforts to create guidelines and manuals on how to achieve gender-neutral language. “Neutralization means the avoidance of false generics, especially usages of “generic” man, as in primitive man, to man a project, or chairman” (Bußmann and Hellinger 108). Their ideas, however, do not end with pure neutralization, but also get to critique of the often mentioned stereotype in language. “Second in the hierarchy of English guidelines is avoidance of stereotyping (transport will be provided for delegates and their wives)... ” (Bußmann and Hellinger 109). In their view, then, the expression should be symmetrical and inclusive.

Some of the most well-known guidelines published online are those issued by the *American Psychological Association* (APA). The APA advises avoiding generic masculine terms when addressing, just as when the speaker does not know the gender of the person being addressed, he or she should avoid gender pronouns and use the pronoun

they, which in this case is singular (" American Psychological Association "). It is very polite to ask what pronouns a person prefers before marking them, and it is even more important to stick to them afterwards. If speaking to multiple people, it is appropriate to address them in such a way that all members of the gender feel included, i.e. use names for every single gender present. One suggestion is to avoid the term birth sex and replace it with the term assigned sex (" American Psychological Association "). This is most likely due to the possibility of the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people. Abandon slang or offensive terms for sexual minorities and use only generic, established and formal terms such as LGBTQ+, queer, etc (" American Psychological Association ").

Another organization that has published its guidelines is the UN or *United Nations*. The latter goes into a description of gender right at the beginning of its gender-inclusive manual and divides its guidelines into three parts. In the first part dealing with non-discriminatory language, the proper use of personal pronouns is again encouraged, with emphasis on the need to know the correct pronouns of the person being addressed. "There should also be consistency in the way women and men are referred to: if one of them is addressed by their name, last name, courtesy title, or profession, the other one should be as well" (United Nations). Lastly, one can read about the avoidance of the use of gender stereotypes (for example, the stereotyping of women in the previous categories).

The second part discusses how to make gender visible. " "Pairing" is the use of both feminine and masculine forms (he or she; her or his). It is a strategy that may be used when the author/speaker wants to explicitly make both women and men visible" (United Nations). Similarly, the same goal can be achieved by using both expressions for both genders (e.g. Aunts and uncles arrived at the party. The male and female students took part in the competition.) The third part deals with where not to emphasize gender when it

is not important for communication. Here it is advised to use neutral terms (Human race instead of mankind). Use the pronouns one and who. And lastly, use the passive voice there instead of personal pronouns (United Nations).

4.3. Research review summary

A comparison of a core sample of literature on the most central themes of gender correctness shows us what types of publications, in terms of views on these themes, are published in both languages.

It can be noted that both the Czech and English research strands view the most important issues more or less identically. Thus, they are in agreement on most points of view. Czech writers are much more critical compared to English authors. They state all the issues from the very beginning, just as they see Czech society standing at the very beginning for achieving gender correctness. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the number of authors writing on the topic of gender correctness or gender-balanced language is much smaller in Czech. The leading face of these publications is of course Jana Valdrová, who is followed by only a few authors.

The gender science community through its own eyes is the most important chapter by Vaclíková-Helušová in the multiauthor publication *Mnohohlasem: Vyjednávání ženských prostorů po roce 1989* that partly explains the lack of literature or other works on gender correctness is the conclusion that the lack of attention to materials, research and research on gender issues stems precisely from its controversy, the lack of time of academics, the lack of financial appreciation in this respect and, last but not least, the disagreement between male and female academics (Vaclíková-Helušová 170).

Although not very long, this research gives us a very enriching insight into the topic of gender correctness and partly answers the question about its lack of research and

publications. These aspects also contribute to the fact that gender correctness is strongly underestimated in the Czech language and much remains to be done to develop it.

Compared to Czech literature, English literature is much more extensive. There is a plethora of articles, essays and books discussing a wide range of topics related to gender correctness. However, few of them dedicate an entire publication to gender correctness and therefore it is much more difficult to make a coherent view of gender correctness. The English-language literature sometimes takes the view that progress towards unpicking the problem is already in process, which may be due to the earlier development of gender literature and general awareness of the problem of gender-related language disparities.

5. Discussion and Future Directions

5.1. Review of selected publications

The literature used to support this thesis consists of scholarly papers, books and articles produced by leading linguists in an effort to create a conducive, gender-balanced linguistic environment.

Some of these publications are more fundamental than others. As already mentioned, Jana Valdřová, whose publications are the most substantial and comprehensive in the field of Czech gender linguistics, has been promoting gender correctness in the Czech language and simultaneously in Czech society. In the publication *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* Valdřová describes in great detail, expertly and, above all, critically the topics, some of which she mentions for the first time in the Czech literature focused on gender, thus giving us a very good overview of the issues that women and the LGBTQ+ community have to deal with.

Another essential publication is *Jazyk pro druhé pohlaví* by Svetlana Čmejřková, as it is the oldest source laying the foundations for the subsequent research and discussion of gender correctness and provides very modern views for its time.

The multi-author publication *Mnohohlasem: Vyjednávání ženských prostorů po roce 1989* is the last publication to be mentioned, as it is the only one that provides an insight into gender correctness in academia and provides many answers, especially to the question of why gender correctness is partly perceived as a still controversial topic.

A substantial publication in the English-language literature is *Gender Across Languages*. It is essential for its detailed description of the function of gender in language. Although the book does not directly address gender correctness, it presents very

substantial information about how gender functions in many languages, which is important for our understanding of language and how we can apply gender correctness.

Robin Tolmach Lakoff is a name that appears many times in the field of gender linguistics and from whom there are two publications *Language and Woman's Place* and *The Language War*. Lakoff's work on women in language is similar to Waller's. She seeks to broaden the awareness of gender linguistics and names many issues, including those mentioned above.

Since in the previous chapter the literature has been grouped on the basis of core issues, a picture can already be formed of the basic topics covered. Apart from generic masculinities, gender balance in employment and education, and the behaviour and position of women in society, the literature also addresses other issues that are more minor in this perspective. These include, for example, the media, which are the subject of Valdřová's publication *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit*, which, among other things, highlights the role of women as readers. Some authors then also criticize language as patriarchal as outlined by Eisler in the introduction of his thesis.

If one can name the perspective and point of view with which both English and Czech literature views gender correctness, it is a very tentative if critical approach. As a result, it can be said that most authors see gender correctness as something certainly needed for the future. However, in order to achieve a gender-equal language, it is necessary not only to come to terms with different language systems and to find a way to put gender correctness into practice in accordance with the grammatical system. It is also important to raise society's awareness of gender-unbalanced language. All this is a very

challenging process that needs the cooperation of academia, business leaders, the political sphere and society as a whole.

5.2. Critical Reflections

The production of gender literature is increasing, reflecting its historical development and the effort to address various problems in language and offer optimal solutions. While evaluating the literature, it becomes evident that adherence to the standards of gender-balanced language is generally observed. Although it is not possible to compare all the literature comprehensively, the literature used here demonstrates that authors are guided by the principles they write about.

Many publications include quantitative surveys that examine society's opinions and language usage in relation to gender. However, both English and Czech gender literature have noticeable gaps. One significant issue is the lack of direct publications specifically addressing gender correctness and gender-balanced expression, contributing to low awareness among the general public. It is crucial to produce literature that directly discusses gender correctness as a coherent whole, including works aimed at the general public, as the existing literature is predominantly professional and academic.

Another aspect to consider is the intersectionality of gender with other identities, such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and socio-economic status. While gender identity intersects with these aspects of identity, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining their overlap. Further research is needed to understand how multiple identities interact and influence individuals' experiences in different communities.

Cultural and global perspectives are also lacking in the existing literature. Most of the literature on gender correctness and related topics primarily focuses on Western contexts. More research is necessary to explore gender diversity and inclusivity in non-

Western cultures and global contexts. Understanding the cultural differences and experiences of gender diverse individuals in different societies is essential for developing inclusive policies and practices.

One significant gap in the literature is the absence of longitudinal studies. While there are cross-sectional studies on gender identity and experience, research that follows individuals or society over time is lacking. Longitudinal studies are needed to track the outcomes, development, and well-being of women, transgender individuals, and non-binary people at different stages of life, providing valuable insights into their experiences and resilience.

While the literature primarily targets gender correctness and gender-balanced language to address the differences between men and women, there is a growing recognition of non-binary and gendered identities as society progresses. However, research specifically focused on non-binary and genderqueer individuals is still relatively limited. More studies are needed to explore their experiences, challenges, and identities. It is crucial to give equal attention and protection to the LGBTQ+ community, which currently receives limited mention in the literature. Equal representation is essential as they are also subject to the principles of gender correctness.

Despite the gaps, one of the strengths of gender literature is its attention to women, which has contributed to a growing trend in companies and organizations towards gender equality. Such literature serves as a driving force behind the emerging guidelines for gender-balanced language.

Considering the findings discussed, it is clear that there is still work to be done to bring gender literature to perfection. Expanding society's awareness of inclusive behaviour towards gender minorities and women is essential for achieving gender-correct

expression not only in language but also in broader societal contexts. While some views may seem fanatical, it is important to not dismiss the overall value of gender correctness. Adherence to gender-correct language contributes to the comfort and well-being of all individuals in institutions, educational settings, and society as a whole. Continuation of ongoing efforts is expected to increase awareness of gender correctness and lead to its gradual integration into the daily language use of the general public. This ideal aims to balance expression between genders, reduce the oppression of women and sexual minorities, and create safer and more respectful environments. Moreover, it may have potentially positive effects in other areas, such as minimizing sexual harassment by preventing sexism.

While there are gaps and limitations in the current gender literature, the findings point towards the increasing production and understanding of gender-related issues. Addressing these gaps through comprehensive research, inclusive perspectives, longitudinal studies, and greater recognition of non-binary and genderqueer identities will contribute to a more robust and inclusive understanding of gender correctness.

6. Conclusion

The thesis critically evaluates the existing research on the topic of gender correctness in English and Czech. The topic of gender correctness has been examined in the literature with an emphasis on its significance, historical development, critiques and gaps in existing research. The overarching aim of this research was to illuminate the complexity of gender representation in literary works and to promote a more inclusive understanding of gender within English and Czech literature.

Emphasis was placed on a language-oriented perspective that focuses on describing the actual influence of language on gender norms in society. This perspective refrains from prescribing what language should be, but rather observes what it actually is. Thus, the numerous examples in Chapter Four, whether it be stereotyping, generic masculinities, or the aforementioned inequality in naming, for example, in the realm of job titles, provide an ideal way to observe how language reflects and reinforces gender stereotypes. Awareness of the role of language in shaping societal perceptions of gender provides a crucial basis for taking steps towards a more inclusive and equitable language environment.

The critical review of the literature on gender correctness in English and Czech has identified several key issues and challenges that merit attention. The first theme of concern revolves around gender-based naming, where an evident asymmetry persists, perpetuating a significant imbalance in gendered language usage. This requires attention and efforts to rectify in order to promote inclusivity and equality in language. Such as trying to eliminate stereotypes in language or calling for gender-neutral job titles or gender-neutral pronouns.

The concept of the generic masculine also emerges as a crucial area of discussion. While Czech literature places greater emphasis on this linguistic phenomenon due to the language's strong gendered nature, English writers also recognise its impact on gender representation and the perpetuation of stereotypes. However, concrete actions to challenge and dismantle these biases are still limited, necessitating a more critical approach to addressing this linguistic practice.

The literature on women's professional roles and status is more broadly descriptive. In this respect, the only suggestive sources are the guidelines that many companies and firms adapt to their needs. The literature provides excellent information on the current difficulties that women face in their professional lives, but it would certainly be beneficial to look further into how language specifically shapes the professional environment, particularly in the area of gender, which would be a good resource for subsequent efforts to eliminate the difficulties mentioned for female professionals.

The prominence of the topic of female inflected surnames in the Czech gender literature suggests an inherent interest in naming practices and gender identity. Logically, there are not many publications on this topic in English gender linguistics, given that inflexion is not inherent to English. The topic of gendered language is the subject of a similar body of literature as the topic of surnames. Thus, given the fairly obvious importance of this topic, this issue would also deserve more attention from future publications. However, it is essential to name the underlying issues of this topic that the existing sources provide, such as society's pressure on women's and men's issues and, in particular, the consequences that arise as a result.

The last thing to mention is gender-balanced education. This is a very large topic for many gender linguists and it is difficult to grasp because the education of youth is a sensitive topic. However, one of the most common criticisms was the lack of gender balancing of educational material. However, gender balance at a young age is very important as it shapes thinking and future generations may be more tolerant and therefore more open to active change in favour of gender correctness.

Overall, this research contributes to the existing knowledge and understanding of gender in literary works, providing insights into the approaches and interpretations of gender correctness in different contexts. By critically engaging with the literature and identifying gaps, such as the need for a comprehensive exploration of non-binary and genderqueer identities, the intersectionality of gender with other identities, and a global perspective on gender inclusivity, this study highlights areas for further research and development. Through continued dialogue and critical engagement, we can foster a more inclusive and diverse understanding of gender representation, promoting a just and equitable society.

Original Czech quotations

1. Page 8

English translation in text: “It is essential to emphasize that I am talking about social minorities, which are not necessarily numerical minorities, (e.g. women) - a social minority means that a group of people share significantly less power and decision-making” (Knotková - Čapková 6).

Original Czech version: “Zde je důležité dodat, že tu hovořím o sociálních menšinách, které nemusí být vždy početními menšinami, (např. ženy) – sociální menšina znamená, že se daná skupina lidí podílí výrazně méně na moci a rozhodování” (Knotková - Čapková 6).

2. Page 29

English translation in text: “A father and his son are in a hurry to get home in the car and suddenly there is a serious traffic accident. The father dies on the spot and the son is taken to a nearby hospital for surgery. The surgeon on duty cries out in despair when he sees the child: “I can't operate! He's my son! ” (Valdrová, *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* 167).

Original Czech version: „Otec se synem spěchá automobile domů a náhle dojde k vážné dopravní nehodě. Otec na místě umírá, syn je převezen do nedaleké nemocnice na operační sál. Službu vykonávající chirurg při spatření dítěte zoufale vykřikne: „Nemohu operovat! Je to můj syn!” (Valdrová, *Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit* 167).

3. Page 39

English translation in text: “the prerogative of Czech women ” (Čmejrková 267).

Original Czech version: „výsada českých žen”(Čmejrková 267).

4. Page 41

English translation in text: “the disinterest of a gender in a subject signals a gender imbalance in the content and delivery of the material” (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 27).

Original Czech version: „nezájem některého pohlaví o daný předmět signalizuje genderovou nevyváženost obsahu a způsobu podání látky” (Reprezentace ženství z perspektivy lingvistiky genderových a sexuálních identit 27).

5. Page 42

English translation in text: “...it is important to enable every boy and every girl to develop their personal dispositions and interests, regardless of gender ideas prevailing in a given society” (Smetáčková 45).

Original Czech version: “Důležité je umožnit každému chlapci a každé dívce, aby rozvíjeli své osobní dispozice a zájmy bez ohledu na genderové představy panující v dané společnosti” (Smetáčková 45).

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