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Expressing Gender in English, Slovak, and Latin - Comparison

Petra Jesenska

Matej Bel University, Slovakia 40 Tajovskeho Str., 974 01 Banska Bystrica Ph.D. (general linguistics), Assistant Professor E-mail: petra.jesenska@umb.sk

Abstract. The paper explains the term *gender* in linguistics and its reflection in English, Slovak, and Latin languages. The Slovak language expresses gender in substantives, adjectives, some pronouns, some numerals, and in the simple past tense of verbs in the 3rd person singular. The Latin language expresses gender in substantives, adjectives, pronouns, and some numerals, while the English language expresses gender 'only' in substantives and some pronouns.

Keywords: linguistics; gender; European languages.

Introduction

The term *gender* is not only a grammatical term, but also a social phenomenon having strong impact on its perception within grammatical structures. English gender has its peculiarities the same way as the Slovak and/or Latin languages do have theirs. In this paper, we compare and contrast the phenomenon of gender in all three languages (English, Slovak, and Latin) due to their peculiarities and common features. The reason is logical — Latin strongly influenced the grammar of English and Slovak languages, and gender is part of grammar of both languages. Ancient Latin understanding of gender is reflected in modern languages as English and Slovak are. Though, from the viewpoint of language typology, English is an analytical language and Slovak is a syntactic language preferring declinations of names (nouns, adjectives, pronouns, etc.) and conjugations of verbs.

The term *gender* comes from Latin *genus*, *-eris* (the genitive form from which all other forms are derived), n. (neuter) and originally it was bearing various meanings. Latin itself borrowed the term from ancient Greek *génos* (kind) [1]. We have found eleven original meanings of the term as known in the Latin language:

- 1) origin, e.g. *genus ducere* (derive one 's origin) or *generis socia* (sister),
- 2) noble origin, aristocracy, e.g. amplus genere (a noble stock),
- 3) family, kin, e.g. antiquitas generis (ancient kin/family) or auctores generies (forefathers),
- 4) offspring, child,
- 5) nation, humankind, e.g genus humanum (humankind),
- 6) sex (and also gender in modern understanding of the term), e.g. *genus virile* (male sex), *genus muliebre* (female sex),
 - 7) sort of, kind of (people),
 - 8) kinds of animals, breed, e.g. varia genera bestiarum (various kinds of animals)
- 9) characteristics, feature, nature, way, e.g. *genus dicendi* (oratorical style), *genus vivendi* (the way of life),
 - 10) thing, object, material
 - 11) aspect, direction, e.g. in omni genere (in all aspects) [2].

Understanding of *gender* important for our analysis and comparison is in the point six above. Then gender may be described as 'a grammatical distinction, in which such parts of speech as nouns, adjectives, and determiners are marked as masculine and feminine (as in French or Spanish), or masculine, feminine, and neuter (as in Slovak, Czech, German, Latin, and Greek). In such languages, these parts of speech when used together, must agree in gender [1].

Methods

In terms of methodology, the standards of descriptive grammar are followed using description, comparative and contrastive analyses as well as qualitative analysis. We analyze the gender of parts of speech in all three languages and further compare them in order to find common features and differences.

Discussion 1 English gender.

The term *gender* comes to the English in the 14th Century from the Old French *gendre* (in Modern French *genre*) [1].

The English language distinguishes natural and grammatical genders (though some grammar textbooks completely deny the existence of English grammatical gender). English natural gender (see table 1) recognizes masculine (boy, man, father) and feminine (e.g. girl, woman, mother) of persons. Derivational morphemes creating (usually feminine) gender, such as -ess or, -ette help to distinguish between male and female, e.g. actor – actress or waiter – waitress (čašník – čašníčka). Female English nouns are created this way – they are derived from the male nous (see table 1). Exceptionally, it is the way round – creation of masculine from feminine by adding suffix -er, e.g. widow - widower or by compounding by means of -groom in the one and only case, i.e. bride bridegroom, or bride - groom respectively. The other way to distinguish male from female is the usage -man and -woman in expressions, such as policeman - policewoman, postman postwoman, chairman - chairwoman, etc. In Modern English the process of compounding by means of *-person* is preferred due to gender equality and gender neutrality, e.g. chairperson (or chair respectively), postperson, police officer, etc. The expressions steward - stewardess are substituted by neutral flight attendant. Neutral expressions in English become problematic when translating them into the Slovak language which is based on gender. Especially, when translating into Slovak (or Czech for example) without any further context expressions as chair, flight attendant, postperson or post officer. Then so-called generic masculine must be applied or sometimes by means of pairs (masculine – feminine).

Table 1: Natural gender of English nouns

The way how gender is	Examples			
expressed	hov girl fo	boy – girl, father – mother, brother – sister, uncle – aunt, gentleman –		
Pairs of words	lady, sir – m	adam, male – female, nephew – niece, husband – wife,		
		, prince – princess, monk – nun, gander – goose, cock –		
	hen, drake –			
		actor – actress, waiter – waitress, count – countess, duke		
	-ess	– duchess, heir – heiress, emperor – empress, god –		
Derivatives		goddess, host – hostess, tiger – tigress, lion – lioness		
from male	-ette	usher – usherette		
nouns	-ine	hero – heroine		
	-ina	czar – czarina (borrowings from the Russian language)		
Derivatives	-er widow – widower			
from female				
nouns	-groom	bride – bridegroom		
	-(wo)man	chair(wo)man, police(wo)man, post(wo)man,		
		horse(wo)man, sports(wo)man		
	(fe)male	male teacher – female teacher, male reader – female		
Compounds	reader			
_	boy/girl boyfriend – girlfriend, boy students – girl students			
	man-	man-servant – maid-servant		
	/maid-			

	s/he-		<i>– she-goat∕nanny-goat</i> (koza),
		wolf – she-wolf	
	other forms	tom-cat – pussy-cat	
	Masculine: Love, Sun, Summer,		Feminine: <i>Babylon, France, the</i>
Personificatio	Autumn, Winter, Anger, Sleep, Time		Earth, Spring,
n			Nightingale,Night, Fortune,
			Justice, Liberty, Wisdom

So-called non-personal nouns are marked neuter regardless whether there are animate (creatures) or inanimate objects (*dog, window, book*). Dual gender (see table 3) is rather common in English nouns naming living creatures, referring to their occupation or activities, e.g. *student, teacher, friend, writer*, etc. Such nouns are usually translated into Slovak by means of generic masculine as *študent* m., *učitel'* m., *priatel'/kamarát* m., *pisatel'/spisovatel'* m. Duality is also expressed in the 3rd person plural *they* (in Slovak *oni* refers to masculine and *ony* to feminine) and its further forms *their(s), themselves*. Also relative pronouns *who* (in Slovak *ktorý* m., *ktorá* f., *ktoré* n.) and *which* (in Slovak *ktorý* m., *ktorá* f., *ktoré* n.) both refer to masculine and feminine at the same time. In terms of relative pronouns, English prefers expressing animate creatures (*who*) and inanimate objects and animals (*which*) to gender.

Nouns (referring to persons) and (personal, reflexive, and possessive) pronouns express gender in English as shown in table 2. Generic masculine used to be preferred in the past (usually in the 19th and 20th Centuries) by means of *he, his, himself*, e.g. *Everyone wants to realize his ambition*. However, in Modern English neutral (dual) dominates — *they, them, their(s)*, e.g. *Everyone has their faults*. This is a sort of step ´back´ to the 17th Century when *their* was preferred to *his*. The animals are referred to by means of (im/non-)personal pronoun *it*, especially in specific technical texts or sayings, e.g. *Every dog has its day*.

SINC	ULAR	PLURAL	
son	he / his / himself	sons	they / their(s) / themselves
	who		who
daughter	she / her(s) / herself	daughters	they / their(s) / themselves
	who		who
beetle	it / its / itself	beetles	they / their(s) / themselves
			which
book	which	books	they / their(s) / themselves
			which

Table 2: Expressing English gender in all parts of speech [3]

Legend: Relative pronouns *who* and *which*, and personal pronouns in plural are crossed over due to the further comparison to the gender expressed in the Slovak language.

The exception that proves the rule is personification expressing affection to pets by means of pronouns s/he, e.g. We love our cat. Her name 's Later. Animals in fables and/or fairy tales are characteristic of human qualities, and that is why they are referred to as persons/people. For example, as in the case of a nightingale featuring in a famous fairy tale by Oscar Wild, where the creature is referred to by means of she, her, hers, herself (nightingale f.). Compared to Slovak, slávik m. (nightingale) is masculine and it is referred to by means of he, his, himself. Words like cat, parrot, or fish are also feminine in English. Masculine are canary, dog, or horse.

Personification is common in English in case of inanimate entities, such as cities (or towns), countries, ships, cars, and various machines, e.g. biblical *Babylon* is feminine as shown in the syntactic construction *Babylon the great and her destruction*. In journalistic style names of cities and countries are referred to by means of pronoun *she* and/or *her*, e.g. *Though she had not suffered wartime destruction, the United States shared with Europe an acute housing shortage*.

Personification is common when referring to ships, cars or machines: *There she is! The most luxurious car ever made!* The examples about the United States and luxurious car have been both taken from Dušková et al. (1988) [3].

In English belles-lettres, personification is perceived as stylistically marked, especially in style of poems [3]. Very often this is due to the strong Latin influence e.g. Latin masculine *sol* m. (sun) is respected in the case of English *sun* m. Similarly, English *moon* f. takes feminine from Latin *luna* f., or English *earth* f. from Latin *terra* f. Rarely, either gender is applied in English personification, e.g. in cases of such words as *sea* or *world* when it may be referred to by means of *s/he*. Grammatical gender is applied in the aforementioned examples.

Parts of speech	Examples	
Nouns naming fe/male persons	artist, assistant, author, baby, citizen, child, cook, cousin, doctor, doer, dog, editor, foreigner, friend, frog, goer, host, inhabitant, member, minister, mouse, musician, neighbour, nurse, parent, person, president, professor, pupil, reader, runner, servant, singer, speaker, stranger, student, teacher, worker, writer,	
Personal pronouns	you, they, them, one, etc.	
Possessive pronouns	theirs, yours, mine, etc.	
Possessive adjectives	their, your, my, etc.	
Reflexive pronouns	themselves, yourselves	
Relative pronoun	who	

Table 3: Dual gender in English

Table 3 depicts English animate nouns referring to fe/male persons, however, some nouns (usually cubs) are referred to by means of all three genders [3]. Dual gender may be considered part of the natural gender taking its gender neutrality into account. In tables 3 and 6 we can see that English dual gender outnumbers stylistically marked natural gender and grammatical gender. In general, the category of English gender can be viewed on morphological and lexical levels.

2 Slovak gender.

Slovak prefers grammatical gender, but it also knows natural gender, e.g. in pairs of words as $mu\check{z} - \check{z}ena$ (male – female), otec - matka (father – mother), $u\check{c}itel' - u\check{c}itel'ka$ (male teacher – female teacher) etc. (see tables 4 and 6). Grammatical gender in Slovak is expressed in nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, the 3rd person singular of verbs in the simple past tense, and in the present and past participles, that is in all parts of speech subjected to declinations [4].

Slovak male nouns are subjected to the five basic paradigms *chlap, hrdina, dub, stroj,* and *kuli.* Paradigms *chlap* and *hrdina* are applied in declination of animate nouns and names of animals in singular. Slovak female nouns do not distinguish between animate and inanimate entities. They are subjected to paradigms *žena, ulica, dlaň, kosť, gazdiná,* and *idea.* There are four paradigms *mesto, srdce, vysvedčenie,* and *dievča* recognized in Slovak neuter.

Slovak masculine adjectives and participles are subjected to two paradigms *pekný* and *cudzí*. Analogically, Slovak feminine adjectives and participles are subjected to two paradigms *pekná* a *cudzia*, and neuter adjectives are subjected to two paradigms *pekné* and *cudzie*. Plural masculine adjectives distinguish between animate and inanimate declinations. Plural feminine and neuter adjectives are subjected to the same rules as inanimate masculine adjectives.

The gender of Slovak pronouns (see table 4 below) is expressed in the 3rd person singular and plural. Slovak personal, possessive, demonstrative, indefinite, relative, and interrogative

pronouns are marked in terms of gender because they are always members of masculine, feminine or neuter. Their gender neutrality is not possible in the Slovak language.

Slovak numerals (one, two, three, and four) jeden m. (one) -jedna f. (one) -jedna n. (one), animate dvaja (two) / inanimate dva (two), dve f. (two), etc. (for more examples see table 4) are also gender markers. Other cardinal numbers are in terms of gender neutral, e.g. $p\ddot{a}t'$ $mu\check{z}ov/\check{z}ien/deti$ (five men/women/children). However, ordinal numbers express gender, e.g. piaty $mu\check{z}$ (the fifth man) -piata $\check{z}ena$ (the fifth woman) -piate dieta (the fifth child).

Slovak verbs in the 3rd person singular of the simple past tense express gender by means of morpheme -*l* for masculine, -*la* for feminine, and -*lo* for neuter, e.g. *robil, robila, robilo* (see table 4). The syntactic construction between verb and noun must agree. In Slovak one cannot say the following utterance *Jana povedal* or *Jana povedalo*, because noun gender and verb gender do not agree. The correct utterance would be *Jana povedala*. (Jana said.) – the feminine gender of a proper noun *Jane* and verb *povedala* agree together. Unlike in English, in Slovak it is not only lexical or only morphological phenomenon. We can conclude that Slovak gender is a morphological-syntactic category.

Table 4: Slovak gender of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, and verbs

Type of gender			Examples		
Grammatical		bicykel (bicycle), krk (neck), lakeť (elbow), les (forest), národ (nation), stôl (table), prístroj (machine), nos (nose), nábytok m. (furniture), vlas m. (hair)			
gender of nouns		hora (mountain), stolička (chair), kniha (book), lingvistika (linguistics), sirota (orphan), pera (lip), líška (fox), myš (mouse), oblička (kidney), žaba (frog)			
		srdce (uto (car), hrdlo (throat), koleno (knee), oko (eye), pero (pen), rdce (heart), ucho (ear), dévedéčko (DVD), mesto (town), kolenie (training)		
			otec (father) – matka (mother)		
Natural gender			syn (son) – dcéra (daughter)		
of nominal			brat (brother) – sestra (sister)		
pairs of words	h.	natnan	chlapec (boy) – dievča (girl)		
	bratranec (male cousin) – sesternica (female cousin)				
	<i>učiteľ</i> (male teacher) <i>– učiteľka</i> (female teacher) <i>občan</i> (male citizen) <i>– občianka</i> (female citizen)				
	cudzí m. (foreign) – cudzia f. (foreign) – cudzie n. (foreign)				
Adjectives	malý m. (new) – malá f. (new) – malé n. (new)				
J	$nov\acute{y}$ m. (new) $-nov\acute{a}$ f. (new) $-nov\acute{a}$ n. (new)				
	slávny m. (famous) <i>– slávna</i> f. (famous) <i>– slávne</i> n. (famous)				
	Personal pronouns $on \text{ m. (he)} - ona \text{ f. (she)} - ono \text{ n. (it)}$				
	oni m. (they) – ony f. (they)				
			$m\hat{o}j$ m. (mine) – $moja$ f. (mine) – $moje$ n. (mine)		
	Possessive	-	tvoj m. (yours) – tvoja f. (yours) – tvoje n. (yours)		
Pronouns	pronouns	6	<i>jeho</i> m. (his) <i>– jej</i> f. (hers) <i>– jeho</i> n. (its) <i>náš</i> m. (ours) <i>– naša</i> f. (ours) <i>– naše</i> n. (ours)		
Fronouns			svoj m. (his) – nasa i. (durs) – nasa ii. (durs) svoj m. (his) – svoja f. (hers) – svoje n. (its)		
	Relative pronouns		ktorý m. (who/which) – ktorá f. (who/which) – ktoré n.		
	recidence profit	Julis	(who/which)		
	pronouns		nejaký m. (some) – nejaká f. (some) – nejaké n. (some)		
	Interrogati	ve	$ak\acute{y}$ m. (what/which) $-ak\acute{a}$ f. (what/which) $-ak\acute{e}$ n.		
	pronoun		(what/which)		
			ktorý m. (who/which) – ktorá f. (who/which) – ktoré n.		
			(who/which)		

		tento m. (this) – táto f. (this) – toto n. (this)		
	Demonstrative	tito m. (these) – $tieto$ f. (these) – $tieto$ n. (these)		
	pronouns	ten m. (that) $-ta$ f. (that) $-to$ n. (that)		
	1	tamtí m. (those) – tamtie f. (those) – tamtie n. (those)		
Numerals	jeden	m. (one) – jedna f. (one) – jedno n. (one)		
(cardinal		dvaja m. $(two) - dve$ f., n. (two)		
and ordinal		<i>traja</i> m. (three) – <i>tri</i> f., n. (three)		
numbers)		<i>štyria</i> m. (four) – <i>štyri</i> f., n. (four)		
	desiaty m. (the tenth) – desiata f. (the tenth) – desiate n. (the tenth)			
Verbs	\check{c} ítal m. (he read) – \check{c} ítala f. (she read) – \check{c} ítalo n. (it read)			
in the 3 rd	napísal m. (he wrote) – napísala f. (she wrote) – napísalo n. (it wrote)			
person	plakal m. (he wept/cried) – plakala f. (she wept/cried) – plakalo n. (it			
singular	wept/cried)			
of the past	robil m. (he did) $-robila$ f. (she did) $-robilo$ n. (it did)			
tense	uvidel m. (he saw) – uvidela f. (she saw) – uvidelo n. (it saw)			
	Present participle <i>píšuci</i> m. (writing) – <i>píšuca</i> f. (writing) – <i>píšuce</i> n.			
Participles	(writing)			
	Past participle	<i>písaný</i> m. (written) <i>– písaná</i> f. (written) <i>– písané</i> n.		
		(written)		

Legend: m. – masculine, f. – feminine, n. – neuter

3. Latin gender.

Like Slovak, Latin recognizes masculine, feminine, and neuter. Similarly to Slovak, Latin prefers grammatical gender (*genus*), but it also knows natural gender (table 5). Dual gender appears in animate nouns, which used to be only masculine in the past, but later when women gained similar rights as men the nouns became feminine as well. This is the case of *civis* (citizen), which can refer to masculine and feminine [2]. The marker of female gender appears in brackets in a dictionary *civis* m., (f.) [2] only as if 'by the way' but that is understandable when taking into consideration very strong patriarchal society of ancient Rome.

However, grammatical gender plays a key role in the Latin language in nouns (see table 5), adjectives (table 5), numerals (table 5), and pronouns (table 5). Similarly to English and Slovak, natural gender is expressed in pairs of nouns naming persons (table 5). Latin adjectives, numerals, and pronouns are similar to Slovak in terms of gender markers (table 5). For detailed information study sources [5] and [6] below the article.

Latin verb is independent of noun gender. Latin verb must agree 'only' in the category of number, but not in gender.

Type of gender	Examples		
Grammatical	Masculine	fructus (fruit, berry), liber (book), mus (mouse), panis (bread), venter (stomach, belly)	
gender of nouns	Feminine	alvus (belly), avis (bird), domus (house), manus (hand), res (thing)	
	Neuter	balneum (bath), epulum (feast), mare (sea), os (bone), verbum (word)	
Natural gender of nominal pairs of words	pater (father) — mater (mother) filius (son) — filia (daughter) frater (brother) — soror (sister) puer (boy) — puella (girl) frater patruelis (male cousin) — soror patruelis (female cousin) magister (male teacher) — magistra (female teacher) civís (male citizen) — civís (female citizen)		

Table 5: Latin gender of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and numerals

Adjectives	clarus m. (famous) <i>– clara</i> f. (famous) <i>– clarum</i> n. (famous) pulcher m. (pekný) <i>– pulchra</i> f. (pekná) <i>– pulchrum</i> n. (pekné)		
	Personal pronouns	is m. (he) $-ea$ f. (she) $-id$ n. (it)	
	Possessive	<i>meus</i> m. (mine) – <i>mea</i> f. (mine) – <i>meum</i> n. (mine)	
Pronouns	pronouns	tuus m. (yours) – tua f. (yours) – tuum n. (yours)	
	Demonstrative pronouns	is m. (that one) $-ea$ f. (that one) $-id$ n. (that one) hic m. (this one) $-haec$ f. (this one) $-hoc$ n. (this one) $ipse$ m. (himself, alone) $-ipsa$ f. (herself, alone) $-ipsum$ n . (itself)	
Numerals	<i>unus</i> m. (one) <i>– una</i> f. (one) <i>– unum</i> n. (one)		
(cardinal and	duo m. (two) $-duae$ f. (two) $-duo$ n. (two)		
ordinal numbers)	<i>nonus</i> m. (the	ninth) - nona f. (the ninth) - nonum n. (the ninth)	

Legend: m. – masculine, f. – feminine, n. – neuter

Results

In the subchapters 3.1 (English gender), 3.2 (Slovak gender), and 3.3 (Latin gender) were described various forms how gender is expressed in all three languages. The influence of Latin is obvious in English and Slovak genders in terms of grammatical, natural, and dual genders. We can see the forms of gender compared in table 6 (see below).

Table 6: Expressing Gender in English, Slovak, and Latin

language	English	Slovak	Latin
gender			
Natural gender (nouns)	male — female father — mother son — daughter brother — sister boy — girl	muž – žena otec – matka syn – dcéra brat – sestra chlapec – dievča bratranec – sesternica	vir — femina pater — mater filius — filia frater — soror puer — puella frater patruelis — soror patruelis
	cousin teacher	učiteľ – učiteľka občan – občianka	magister – magistra civís
Grammatica l gender (nouns, pronouns)	citizen book n.	dievča n. (girl) kniha f. (book) sirota f. (orphan) ochota f. (goodwill) oni m. (they) ony f. (they)	liber m. (book) carmen n. (poem, song)

Dual gender (nouns, pronouns)	artist, cousin, citizen, doctor, friend, minister, president, reader, singer, student, teacher, worker, writer; who, they	ty (you – singular) vy (you – plural) my (we)	civís m./f. (citizen) comes m./f. (conductor) dux m./f. (leader) heres m./f. (heir, heiress)
Other parts of speech and forms expressing gender	some nouns (actor – actress); personal pronouns s/he; reflexive pronouns herself and himself	nouns – chlap m. (man), žena f. (woman), mesto n. (town), pieseň f. (song); adjectives – pekný m. (handsome), pekná f. (pretty), pekné n. (nice); pronouns – on m. (he), ona f. (she), oni m. (they); verbs in the 3. ps. sg. of the past tense – robil m. (he did), robila f. (she did), robilo n. (it did)	nouns – vir m. (male), femina f. (female), carmen n. (poem, song); adjectives – clarus m. (famous), clara f. (famous), clarum n. (famous); pronouns – is m. (he), ea f. (she), id n. (it)

Legend: m. – masculine, f. – feminine, n. – neuter; crossed expressions are provided for the sake of translation into a particular language

To sum up we can say that Latin influenced English personification of nouns, such as *moon*, *death*, or *sea* because these usually take the similar gender as in Latin. Like Latin, Slovak has 'complicated' declination paradigms in masculine, feminine, and neuter. Unlike Latin and Slovak, English prefers natural or dual gender especially when referring to persons. All our findings of our comparison of English, Slovak, and Latin gender(s) are presented in table 6 above.

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Выражение рода на английском, словацком и латинском языке – сравнение

Петра Есенска

Университет им. Матея Бела, Словакия 974 01, г. Банска Быстрица, ул. Таёвского 40, Кандидат филологических наук (общее языкознание), асистент профессора E-mail: petra.jesenska@umb.sk

Аннотация. Статья объясняет термин рода в лингвистике и его выражение в трёх европейских языках. Словацкий язык выражает род с помощью имён существительных, прилагательных, некоторых местоимений, числительных, глаголов 3 лица единственного числа и с помощью причастий прошедшего и настоящего времени. В латинском языке род выражается именем существительным, прилагательным, местоимением, а в некоторых случаях числительными, в то время как на английском языке род выражается прежде всего именами существительными и некоторыми личными местоимениями.

Ключевые слова: лингвистика; род; европейские языки.