

**TILTM 2020****Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication****PHENOMENON OF FEMALE SOLIDARITY IN MODERN WEB-SPACE**

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***Abstract***

The field of web-based communication is constantly expanding. This trend is associated with the processes of globalization and informatization of society. In this regard, this communicative space needs thematic structuring of information in order to be able to highlight the information fragment demanded by the addressee. For the purpose of differentiating information on social networks, personal blogs and media platforms, the hashtag method is often used. So, in this study using hashtag tags in Russian, English and French disseminated by women in the web space, we will consider topical problems associated with the problems of modern women. Hashtags, due to their semantic and functional-pragmatic features, are interesting representative material for the study of modern linguistic and cultural trends. The purpose of the article is to describe the semantic and connotative meanings that are inherent in hashtags disseminated by women on the Web. The research material was 53 hashtags in English, French and Russian, the content of which dealt with urgent problems faced by women in modern society, published on the Internet for the period from 2018 to 2020. The work used methods of semantic, linguoculturological and content analysis. The combination of methods used allowed us to highlight the general and particular features inherent in the considered language variants of hashtags.

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**Keywords:** Internet-communication, hashtag, gender linguistics, semantics.



## 1. Introduction

In the era of the global spread of media resources, social networks begin to play the function of a global communication space, uniting participants with different geographical locations in a single virtual space (Gygax et al., 2018; Kharkovskaya & Krivchenko 2017; Malyuga, 2016). Communication in the virtual space acquires its own characteristic features, among which are: globality, internationality, time stability, as well as subject or thematic localization, mass nature of communication, synchronization of communication of several participants, multichannelism, etc. (Bem & Bem, 2018). The interconnection of all resources represented by media technologies allows us to create new types of global communication, attracting the attention of the masses to thematic communication messages in a world which is digitalized, globalized and multicultural in nature (Flores Farfán & Holzscheiter, 2015; O'Dowd, 2017).

This trend is associated with general issues of globalization of society, as well as with acute social problems, which may have the status of local or global trends. With the help of existing media platforms, such as social networks, personal blogs, personal profiles, and community profiles on various Internet platforms, a single tendency verbalized in the virtual space can resonate thanks to the updated theme (Rebellyon, 2018). Due to the tendency to reduce communicative acts to symbolic in some social networks, actualized messages are verbalized in the special form of hashtags, the main task of which is to introduce the main component of the significative code into the communicative code. The hashtag is the basic communicative code of the message, formulated according to the principle of keywords. Being integrated into the communication space, hashtag forms own communication space, its localization is determined by subject basis, i.e. corresponds to the main signifier of the updated message (Blaubergs, 2019). The space remains open by the principle of the key (keywords), where the key is the updated message label - the hashtag label. At the same time, the content of messages in this space is available for viewing by other users and is distributed using viral media technologies (Boroditsky et al., 2016). Due to the associated structure of media resources, the most popular trends emerging on the expanses of social networks leave virtual space and become objects of social advertising on a global scale (Gygax et al., 2012).

The specificity of the phenomenon of social advertising, as one of the components of the advertising discourse, lies in the conceptualization of acutely social images on a non-commercial basis. The transformation of Internet trends into a specific type of social advertising is a process of spontaneous mass communication with a basic subject-localized concept (Rajilić, 2017). The main features that allow us to determine the transformation data for advertising discourse are: the impersonal and social nature of the message, mass involvement, problematic, conceptual, viral distribution, polemic, involvement of organizations and communities in the polemic (Rebellyon, 2018). Virtual trends that have moved into the field of social advertising, as a rule, acquire the status of international trends and cause wave-like distribution across all segments (localizations) of virtual space (Stout & Dasgupta, 2011).

## 2. Problem Statement

One of the pressing problems of our time is the problem of the image of a woman in the modern world. In developed countries, the trend of emancipation reaches peak values and has a number of well-established features and directions. At the same time, the term “emancipation” as the struggle of

women for the existence of rights becomes irrelevant, since it is stipulated at the legislative level in most countries of the world that women have equal rights with men, or all citizens have equal rights. The term “feminism” came to replace emancipation in the 1960s, the main connotation of which is not the liberation of women, but the equalization of gender rights, which is a logical development of an old idea (Pradalier, 2016). However, nowadays the term “feminism” in some countries (Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Thailand, Pakistan, Iran, etc.) has acquired additional negative connotations associated with the activities of ultra-feminist or promatriarchal communities (Django Girls, Ru Ladies). The relevance of the ideas of feminism as a movement of female solidarity and the struggle for the rights of women can now be analyzed using the study of trends in the media space.

### **3. Research Questions**

The selected material is divided into 3 main categories that correspond to the urgent problems of modern women: violence against women and issues of female appearance and health-beauty ratio and female sexuality. Let us consider each of the categories in more detail.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

In this study using hashtag tags in Russian, English and French disseminated by women in the web space, we will consider topical problems associated with the problems of modern women. Hashtags, due to their semantic and functional-pragmatic features, are interesting representative material for the study of modern linguistic and cultural trends. The purpose of the article is to describe the semantic and connotative meanings that are inherent in hashtags disseminated by women on the Web. The research material was 53 hashtags in English, French and Russian, the content of which dealt with urgent problems faced by women in modern society, published on the Internet for the period from 2018 to 2020. The work used methods of semantic, linguoculturological and content analysis. The combination of methods used allowed us to highlight the general and particular features inherent in the considered language variants of hashtags.

### **5. Research Methods**

This article analyzes the most popular hashtags related to feminist trends and spontaneous movements in the fight for women's rights using semantic, linguocultural, and content analysis technologies.

The paper will consider hashtags in 3 languages (53 hashtags): English, Russian and French. The study base is as follows: social networks such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Reddit, the world's media (RT, Esquire, Cosmopolitan, NY Times, Times, Le Monde, Le Figaro, etc.), and social facilities advertising disseminated both through physical media (banners, installations, etc.) and in the web space (internet advertising).

## 6. Findings

### 5.1. Hashtags relevant to violence against women

One of the most modern and discussed problems in the world is the problem of violence (physical, sexual and psychological), including the problem of violence against women. The actualization of this trend in 2018-2020 is directly related to the distribution of the hashtag *#metoo* in the Internet space and then throughout the world. The initial communicative act, indicated by this label, carried factual information about sexual violence in the cinema industry in 2017. The initial goal of communication was to stir a public outcry around the criminal case against movie producer Harvey Weinstein, but the updated message label survived several waves of popularity: popularity in the Hollywood community and distribution of news stories about violence on the set, popularizing tags on the English-speaking Internet and stepping up feminist campaigns to protect women from sexual violence, popularizing the global web community and creating localized language replicas of the hashtags (*#balancetonporc* (show your pig - trans. from French.) - in the French-speaking segment of the Internet), thus going beyond the online community into an international social advertising aimed at combating sex violence against women. The main signifier of the English-language version is the connotation of ownership, solidarity of victims of sexual violence. Among the connotations of the second plan, one can single out the desire to share what has been experienced (through the first person singular pronoun as actualization of one's own experiences), factual content (too - also as an appeal to the fact already mentioned and transferring it to one's own person) and the desire for popularization (appeal for dissemination contained in the primary communicative act).

French-language localization hashtags acquired additional connotations of aggressiveness (animalize comparison *porc - pig*), ownership (through the second person singular pronoun as a marker as a generality, proximity) and the call for spreading and ambiguity (by use of the verb forms *balance* from verb *balancer*).

In the internet communities, the English language serves as the lingua franca for a number of international communities and projects. Therefore, the spread of trends on a global scale without reference to localization most often occurs through the English language.

The next hashtag under consideration is *#whyididntreport*. Unlike the previous object under consideration, here the main signifier is not the resistance to violence itself, but the suppression of violence against women in society and the underestimation of the scale of the problem. This hashtag is made in the form of a whole syntactic structure and, in the standard form of a question to the simplification of the sign composition (the reduction of the apostrophe, question mark and inter-word spaces). The simplification format is characteristic of social networks and the hashtag format. The question word *why* indicates a causal relationship of the main communicative messages in the format of stories - answers to the asked questions. Also, the interrogative form is emotive in nature and can be a carrier of a connotation of defenselessness, powerlessness of an individual in the format of the stated problem. The use of the first person singular indicates the personal orientation of the declared message-signifier, and is also a marker of a personality-oriented humanistic approach to the consideration of a problem (violence against women). Also, from the point of view of the grammatical form, the denial form used is of particular interest, indicating the past tense (Past Simple Tense) and the corresponding time markers. The verb *report* may

also indicate an existing duality of connotations - not only in the sense of the story, but also with the connotation "to declare (to call the police, etc.)".

The next object under consideration is a hashtag with French-language localization *#mettezdurouge* (*follow the red* - translated from French). The main signifier is also the actualization of violence against women, however it acts as a primary connotation here drawing attention to the problem. The hashtag *#mettezdurouge* was originally created as an object of social advertising and went beyond the boundaries of web space as a result of the ongoing campaign. The main indicative load in this case will lie on the imperative form of the verb (*mettez* - the imperative form of the verb *mettre*). The use of the imperative form is an indicator of the basic meaning of the label, and also contains a connotation of appeal and emotive shades of aggressiveness. The noun *rouge* - red (French) refers the researcher to the color emoticon and updates the already declared topic of aggressiveness, while the visual sending of the message also focuses on the femininity of the declared color, thus making a dichotomy "*blood-beauty*" in the sense of perception of color connotations.

Another popular trend affecting violence against women is the *#NousToutes* French hashtag. Unlike the previous labels examined, this trend as the main signifier calls for the solidarity of women in the fight against violence. Here, the researcher's interest can be attracted by the form of the feminine *toutes*. It indicates the feminist orientation of this label and the prevalence of distribution precisely among the target audience of women, rather than seeking support from the entire world community.

The analysis of Russian hashtags of the Russian-speaking Internet space is also of particular interest.

The first object under consideration is the hashtag *#самавиновата* (*blame yourself* - translation from Russian), distributed in the countries of the former Soviet Union (the CIS countries, the Baltic republics, etc.), as well as among Russian-speaking migrants in all parts of the world. Here, the guilty component becomes the main signifier, and the connotative emphasis is placed on the feminine form in the construct expression. You can also talk about passive-aggressive messages because at a deeper level of meaning, this expression carries a pronounced connotation of opposition, sarcastic ridicule, and challenge. Consider the vocabulary content of the label: the main semantic stress lies on the pronoun *сама* - an indication of a retaliatory charge, a provocation in conjunction with the form of the feminine. The meaning of the accusation is also emphasized by the main connotative meaning of the short form of the adjective in grammatical terms. Thus, "guilty" is a guilty act, emphasizing not only the descriptive, but also the active component of the content. Along with the hashtag *#самавиновата*, *#самаНЕвиновата* stands for its rephrase, which is a pointing object for the dichotomous connotation of the message: the external form is opposed to the content of the message.

Another example is the hashtag *#янехотелаумирать* (*I didn't want to die* - translation from Russian), which has the same localization. Unlike other objects under consideration, the illustrative material accompanying this tag also carries an important communicative function. The hashtag *#янехотелаумирать* was originally distributed as an art object, where the vocabulary component was located on the bodies of women subjected to violence: on the face, naked body, chest, neck - with the content of an eroticized non-verbal component, as well as with visualization of traces of physical violence (bruises, abrasions). In contrast, the writing style was deliberately crude: jagged letters with pointed font components, bold and broken lines in black, which supported the dichotomous connotations of the

message. In the linguistic aspect, we can also observe external signifiers indicating the victim's position, weakness, a call for help and pity. However, the internal meaning, as well as the previous object under consideration, is antonymic to the external form: the main connotation is a call to popularize the problem, a challenge, a passive-aggressive form of protest. It can also be noted that the form of the message is the reception of hyperbolization and the depersonalized transfer of the situational component of death from violence to victims of violence. In terms of grammatical content, the hashtag is a complete sentence. The complex verb form of the predicate emphasizes the active component, and also introduces an element of subjective assessment, evoking a sense of ownership in the-communicant (using the verb *desire* "хотела"). You can also note the increased sense of transfer - now to the personality of the receiving party causes the effect of transferring the message to oneself by using the first personal pronoun form of the singular, which emphasizes the functional significance of the manifestation of solidarity.

## 5.2. Hashtags for women's right for their own sexuality

Let's move on to the following category: female sexuality and the right for it. This category is one of the fundamental issues of modern feminist movements, because the topic of female sexuality has long been a taboo in society, which undoubtedly is reflected in many cultural and linguistic phenomena. Modern society adheres to two paradigms in relation to open female sexuality: active and open support of women's rights to demonstrate their sexuality and, on the other hand, passive and hidden resistance to its manifestations. As a result of this, movements for the rights of women in their body and their sexuality are of great importance for both the legal and social spheres. Let us consider the manifestation of this trend in component messages, updated in the form of hashtags, which have gained wide public resonance and become an advertisement of women's rights to manifestations of sexuality.

As mentioned earlier, English-language tags have become most widespread in the Internet community due to the Englishization of the web space and the use of English as the language of universal communication.

The tendency also trends to originate in the English-speaking sector of the Internet due to the greater prevalence of feminist ideas in the countries of the Western sector and developed countries, as well as countries with a highly developed concept of supporting public initiatives, which include the central countries of the EU, USA, Canada, etc. Thus, one of the most popular feminist initiatives aimed at fighting women for the right to own a demonstration is the English hashtag *#thisisnotconsent*. Possessive labels with a basic signifier often have a complete grammatical construction at their core, formalizing the form of appeal to the interlocutor. If we analyze the composition of the structure, the first semantic construct becomes the indefinite-personal pronoun *this* with value indication. The indefiniteness of the indication allows you to attach a wide range of values to the signifier, and also expands the area of tag application. In addition, the pronoun has a pointing function, allowing you to focus the communicant on a designated aspect. The design *does not* allow you to define temporary accentuation as relevant through the use of Present Simple Tense. The *consent* token allows you to determine the basic value of the message in the "consent, permission" field, which emphasizes the connotation of the translator's right to the designated object. Thus, the main connotation of the message becomes a statement of one's own right, an indication of the acceptability of actions and / or objectivization, as well as a ban on the right of some to decide for others due to the use of a negative verb construction.

The hashtag #JaiPasDitOui becomes the French-language localization of this trend (*I did not say "yes" – translated from French*). Here we can see how the preservation of the common elements that indicates the localization and some differences that allow hashtags to acquire additional linguistic values. So, among the differences, one can single out the use of the past tense form, which indicates the completeness of the action and gives a connotation of the completeness of the decision. The second characteristic difference is the use of the word-phrase *oui* - in the meaning "yes", which is close in meaning to the consent token considered above, but contains more personal connotations, which stimulates the effect of transferring the contents of the communicative message to oneself. Also, this effect is promoted by the use of the first person singular. Among the similarities, the following can be noted: the use of a holistic grammatical construction (full sentence), the use of negation (the *pas* form is a negative particle). A characteristic tendency for the French-speaking hashtag is the reduction of character signs, in this case an apostrophe.

It is interesting to note the similarity of the Russian-language localization of the trend with the French. The hashtag #янеговорила (*I did not say yes - translation from Russian*) is a literal translation of the French version. Here, the researcher can also highlight the past tense form of the verb in the feminine, the use of the word-phrase "да", the use of the personal pronoun of the first person singular. The main signifiers, as well as in the French-language version, are the semantic categories of expressing the position of disagreement (through the form of denial of consent), the call for solidarity, and the desire to popularize the trend.

### **5.3. Updating the ratio of female beauty and health in the format of hashtags**

Next, we consider the category of questions relating to women's appearance and the relationship between health and beauty of women, as well as beauty standards set by society. So, this tendency has a connection with the above category of women defending the right to their own sexuality, but in a different aspect. The body of a woman should not be exclusively the object of sexualization or be an example of beauty standards relevant to society. In this regard, the concept of the struggle of women for the right to independently solve issues related to their own bodies appears, including the following: issues of childbearing, pregnancy and abortion, issues of body modification, compliance with standards of beauty and painful conditions associated with resistance to public opinion (genetic or associated with social standards such as anorexia and bulimia).

The first hashtag to be considered in this aspect is #mybodymyrule. This label in form and content is very similar to the previous object under consideration, however, it has a different main signifier, due to which it has gained great popularity in the world. So, the meaning-forming concept here is the assertion that society should not dictate to the same woman how she should look and that she herself chooses her own standards of beauty. Later, this tendency also extended to the issues of stigmatization of people with unusual appearance (innate features and acquired modifications). In this hashtag, the grammatical construction also emphasizes the connotation of community and solidarity, and also gives it the character of a slogan and advertising image. You can also note the use of the token body with rotating connotation and use of personal possessive pronouns my to emphasize the importance of personal communication. However, it is worth paying attention to the choice of the rule token with the value "rule,

norm." The researcher will be interested in just the second semantic form, which implies the connotation of the recognition of normality, the call for equation and the opposition of stigmatization.

Another topic regarding the appearance of women and attitudes towards this general public is the topic of skin inflammation (acne), which is especially important for young girls with breakouts on the face. The hashtag *#freethepimple* reflects the female movement against the stigmatization of women with skin inflammations as ugly or defective. The main signifier here is the call for freedom from stigma and acceptance of one's appearance. Lexical analysis of the hashtag allows us to highlight the following features. The token *free* is used here with the meaning of the action, and is a classic slogan appeal in the English language. Moreover, the main connotation of the token lies not only in the field of definition of freedom and liberation, but also in the field of normativity. Also, the verb bears the connotation of a call to be revived due to the form of a directive and a call directed to society (outside the distributed community). The use of the definitive article *the* allows the message to emphasize the connotatively individual significance of the stated problem for each of the communicants. The noun *pimple* has a connotation of generalization, allowing you to include various narrower variations (acne, inflammation, etc.) in a number of related problems. Thus, the main connotation of the message is the fight against the stigmatization of skin inflammation as unaesthetic, the call for a pluralistic perception of beauty and the equation of identity: the concept of a woman is not equal to the concept of her appearance.

Also relevant is the trend associated with the ban of the naturalness of the female body: two topics will be addressed on such issues - stigmatization of hair on the female body. Let us consider them in more detail.

In the English-speaking sector of the Internet, the tendency to combat the ban of the naturalness of the female body first appeared in 2019. The first global flash mob launched on social networks in connection with this topic was a campaign related to the hashtag *#Januhairy* (*Мохнабрь* - translation from English in Russian-language localization). This action began with the appeal of the British woman Laura Jackson for women to feel comfortable in their body. The main signifier of the message is the call for tolerance and naturalness, female solidarity, and opposition to the stigmatization of the female body. Let us delve into the linguistic aspects of the formation of this hashtag tag. You can notice that this hashtag tag is a single token that was formed by connecting the two bases: *January* and *hair*. At the same time, we can also note the stylistic aspect of the formation of a new token: preservation of the ending - *y* to better emphasize the advertising aspect of the action. The presence of the root of the *January* lexeme in the word indicates the beginning of the campaign, and is also a secondary reference to the social component: in many countries, in the winter, women refuse to remove body hair, because they do not show the public bare parts of the bodies. The token *hair* is used in the direct and wide sense of any hairline on the body (including pubic hair, hair in the armpits and on the limbs). However, the already mentioned form of the newly formed token also contains connotations of advertising, an artistic image and flirting (due to the use of endings with a connotation of mitigation).

In the Russian-speaking environment, the attitude toward women outside the majority remains traditional both on the part of society as a whole and women in particular, and therefore the spread of trends related to the right of women to look the way they want is at a rather low level. Thus, we can say

that the index of distribution of hashtags in the direction of the ratio of women's health and beauty on the Russian-speaking Internet is quite low.

We can meet special cases of the use of hashtags that relate directly to issues of female appearance and health. So, the hashtag *#моётеломоёдело* is popular in the Russian sector, following the English-language trends, which completely repeats the English hashtag *#mybodymyrule* in form and connotative content.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us summarize: by increasing the global role of web resources in the modern life of society, many social problems are actualized directly in the Internet space, where they are subsequently disseminated using viral transmission technologies. One of the key points in launching such a mechanism is hashtag that update the message according to the principle of keywords, helping not only to spread the communicative message, but also to update it for representatives of the target audience.

One of the trends of our time is the idea of feminism or women's solidarity in the struggle for their rights. Moreover, the struggle for rights involves a wide range of included components, such as: the right to one's own sexuality, to a certain position in society, etc. At the same time, the problems of violence against women, both physical (and sexual) and psychological, have become much more acute. In this regard, one of the trends in modern feminism is women's solidarity and mutual support in their fight against violence and for the rights to their own bodies. In this article, we examined how the identified trend is implemented in the web space (social networks, blogs, media and other media resources) by including key hash tags in the communicative message on the basis of keywords. We examined hashtags in 3 languages: English, French and Russian, and also provided their semantic and comparative analysis based on the identified components. As a result of the study, we found out that the hashtags in English are most widely used on the Internet, because English is used as a lingua franca in web space. At the same time, many national hashtags have the format of localization of the initial English-language variants.

The main connotations of hashtag are solidarity, opposition, struggle, public appeal, and challenge to the existing order of things. It can also be said that the global female community is becoming the target audience for such messages; however, the trends examined in the study also spread to the web community and to men (to a lesser extent) with a basic connotation of solidarity with women. At the same time, such methods are often used as shifting (using personal and possessive pronouns, singular and plural), focus on the recipient of the message, using negative constructions, using imperative constructions, as well as using integral grammatical constructions in the hashtag format to maintain the integrity of the ideological component. Among national precedent phenomena, it is possible to distinguish: 1) for French-speaking variants, enhanced connotations of aggressiveness are characteristic (high frequency of using imperative constructions and offensive vocabulary); 2) for Russian-language constructions, connotations of passive aggression and victimization are more characteristic (using reverse transference and focusing directly on the result of violence, rather than its prevention); 3) for English-language variants, the use of incomplete constructions (without the main members of the sentence), as well as a greater creative potential (inclusion of word-making components) is typical.

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