

SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF THE FEMINISATION OF NAMES OF PROFESSIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY FRENCH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The access of women in all fields of activity has provoked fierce linguistic polemics on feminisation of names of professions which has represented a wide range of linguistic investigations in France and in many French-speaking countries such as Canada, Belgium and Switzerland.

This paper aims to examine the manifestation of the process of feminisation of names of professions in the French press, in other words, to observe how feminisation of names of professions in the French written media discourse is applied, knowing the fact that the press represents a favourable environment in which two areas conjugate, namely, the society and linguistics. Therefore, this study is part of a sociolinguistic framework and will follow two approaches, one regulatory, related to linguistic habits and the other, innovative, revealed by the actual language-based practices that concern the visibility of women on the linguistic level.

This micro research is justified by the assumption already advanced that the media has a very important role in the enrichment of languages, accompanying the evolution of the society by familiarizing the readers with new forms denoting new realities, thereby facilitating their further use.

The objectives of this study are the study in the French press of the feminine forms used to designate women, comparing these forms to those indicated in the feminization guides and the Dictionary of the French Academy, which is the linguistic norm. The second part of the study is dedicated to analysing the procedures used to create the feminine form, in case of finding a lexical variation, but also explaining the factors favouring the option of using a form or another.

Keywords: French, sociolinguistics, feminisation, names of profession.