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## ГЛÓВНЕ ЗАГАДНИЕННЯ В ПРОЦЕСІ КШТАЛТОВАНЯ КУЛЬТУРИ ПЛЦИ СТУДЕНТÓВ УНІВЕРСИТЕТУ

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**Adnotacja.** Badanie koncentruje się na wyjaśnieniu podstawowych zagadnień niezbędnych do procesu kształtowania kultury płci studentów uniwersytetu, która postrzega manifestację unikalnych cech płciowych studentów jako warunek ich skutecznej przyszłej działalności zawodowej i zachęca studentów do zrozumienia, że uprzedzenia i stereotypy dotyczące płci są barierami dla dalszej komunikacji interpersonalnej i produktywnego życia. Przeprowadzona analiza teoretyczna, obserwacja i wywiady studentów pozwoliły zidentyfikować główne kwestie, które należy rozważyć w treści dydaktycznej dyscypliny w celu kształtowania kultury płci studentów uniwersytetu. Idea równości płci jako jednej z podstawowych wartości współczesnego społeczeństwa demokratycznego stała się podstawą procesu kształtowania kultury płci studentów.

W celu kształtowania kultury płci studentów zidentyfikowano główne kierunki promowania skutecznego przyswajania przez studentów podstawowych składników kultury płci. Proces kształtowania kultury płci studentów uniwersytetu odbywał się podczas zajęć w dyscyplinie „Język obcy o kierunku zawodowo-komunikatywnym”.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Student, równość płci, kultura płci studentów, stereotyp płci, uprzedzenia płciowe.

## THE MAIN ISSUES IN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' GENDER CULTURE

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**Abstract.** The focus of the research is on the finding out the essential issues needed for the formation of university students' gender culture that consider students' unique personal gender characteristics as a condition for effective future professional activity and promotes students' understanding that gender bias and stereotypes are invisible barriers for successful communication and productive life. The conducted theoretical analysis, observation, and students' interviewing allowed defining the essential areas needed to be implemented in the educational content to form university students' gender culture. It is noted that an idea of gender equality is a fundamental value of students' gender culture. To form students' gender culture the main directions have been developed to promote effective students' assimilation of basic components of the gender culture. The content of the discipline English for Specific Purposes was chosen to form university students' gender culture.

**Key words:** student, gender equality, students' gender culture, gender stereotype, gender prejudice.

## ГОЛОВНІ ПИТАННЯ У ПРОЦЕСІ ФОРМУВАННЯ ГЕНДЕРНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ СТУДЕНТІВ УНІВЕРСИТЕТУ

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**Анотація.** Основна увага дослідження зосереджена на з'ясуванні основних питань, необхідних для процесу формування гендерної культури студентів університету, яка розглядає прояв унікальних гендерних характеристик студентів як умову їхньої ефективної майбутньої професійної діяльності та спонукає студентів зрозуміти, що гендерні упередження та стереотипи є бар'єрами для подальшого міжособистісного спілкування та продуктивного

життя. Проведені теоретичний аналіз, спостереження та інтерв'ю студентів дали змогу визначити основні питання, які необхідно розглянути в навчальному змісті дисципліни задля формування гендерної культури студентів університету. Ідея гендерної рівності як одна з основних цінностей сучасного демократичного суспільства стала основою для процесу формування гендерної культури студентів.

Задля формування гендерної культури студентів було визначено основні напрями сприяння ефективному засвоєнню студентами основних компонентів гендерної культури. Процес формування гендерної культури студентів університету відбувався під час занять із дисципліни «Іноземна мова професійно-комунікативного спрямування».

**Ключові слова:** студент, гендерна рівність, гендерна культура студентів, гендерний стереотип, гендерне упредження.

**Introduction.** Among the key competencies in the education and training proposed by the European Commission for lifelong learning in order to prepare people for productive life in society there are social, civic competencies, cultural awareness, and communication in foreign language. It is highlighted that education should not be aimed only at the development of students' professional skills and abilities, but it should take into account essentials competences that develop students' skills and abilities to work in a team and be effective during interpersonal communication. Ukraine's intention to join European Community demonstrates the readiness of the country to share and support democratic values and norms of behavior. One of such values is an idea of gender equality.

In 2005 the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the "Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" establishing equal participation of women and men in making socially important decisions, the culture of gender equality. But according to the conclusion made by Ukrainian Women's Congress gender inequality is still a problem for Ukraine.

The gender theory and implementation of a gender component into the content of compulsory and elective disciplines have received increased attention in the curricula of higher education institutions due to the European choice of Ukraine.

But as it has been mentioned, this problem still needs to be paid attention to. It is caused by the demand of the modern labor market for professionals who are ready to change their roles, be flexible and execute their duties at the workplace based on the principle of parity, equality, and as a result be successful during problem-solving process. Thus, the Ukrainian system of higher education faces the challenge of modern society that implies evolving the most effective forms and methods of implementation of the idea of gender equality.

Students at university come to the educational establishment with their own experience of gender socialization. They have already assimilated traditional gender stereotypes and prejudices about the roles of men and women in different spheres of the society.

So, we believe that the mission of the university in this frame is to reveal and demonstrate students that gender inequality is one of the basic human rights violations. The university creating gender-sensitive educational environment can advocate gender equality that promotes personal self-realization and effective interpersonal relationship avoiding prejudices in different domains of human life.

**Materials and methods.** An analysis, systematization, and generalization of scientific findings on the problem were used to clarify the essence of the basic concepts of the research.

Structured questionnaires, informal interviews of the students were conducted to determine the students' gender sensitivity and their comprehension of the idea of gender equality. The observation was applied to identify the most successful forms and methods of the formation process.

**The main text.** The purpose of the research is to determine the essential directions that should be implemented in the content of the discipline "English for Specific Purposes" to form university students' gender culture.

The process of formation of students' gender culture has outlined the following tasks. Firstly, to define the notion of university students' gender culture and its main components. Secondly, to identify effective forms and methods in the process of formation university students' gender culture. Next, to analyze how gender characteristics affect personal's performance and self-fulfillment in different spheres of the human life.

So, to grasp the concepts of gender culture and what students' gender culture is we must answer two questions: 1) what are the basic components of the gender culture; 2) what are the ways of its assimilation by people (students).

To understand the phenomenon of gender culture we should consider the notion of culture. Thus, findings on different aspects of culture have been analyzed (Kothari, 2001; Miller, 2001; Levy, 2007; Johnson, 2013; Kim, 2020) and it has been concluded that the cultural study is a subject of investigation across disciplines that seek to understand the ways in which culture produces, keeps, and transfers its knowledge, ideas, values, traditions, beliefs, norms of behavior, etc. from one generation to another. We share the statement that "people are not just consumers, but producers of new social values and cultural languages" (Miller, 2001: 70). Knowledge is considered as a human product that socially and culturally constructed (Kothari, 2001: 148). According to M.T. Johnson, culture's essential values are solidarity, equality, and non-domination (2013).

The main questions that are discussed among scientist on cultural studies, to our mind, are those that allow to understand who dominates and why in a certain community or society, and how values influence on the distribution of power between the members of society. Having analyzed the findings on culture and its elements we have concluded that its basic components are presented as knowledge, values, norms of behavior that are maintained and transferred by people in their culture.

One of the first definitions of the concept gender culture, to our mind, was made by O. Voronina (2000) who had determined it as a traditional, patriarchal culture or male dominated. According to the gender culture of the patriarchal society the role of the woman is to be kept under control in social relations, at the workplace, in the family. Additionally, the gender culture determines people's appearance and psychophysiology, and influences their professional culture, production, and life efficiency (Піпех, 2002).

Language as a product of society and reflection of society's culture demonstrates the relationship between men and women and their position in our society through words, intonation, and gestures. There is a close relationship between our language use and our social reality.

Thus, the main stress during the process of formation students' gender culture within their professional training at university should be made on such aspects as:

- implementation of the idea of gender equality in the educational environment as the crucial value of the gender culture in the democratic society;

- revealing the situations of gender inequality in the society and how it is reflected in it;

- promotion students' sensitivity to recognizing gender stereotypes, prejudices.

Defining the gender culture of society, the Ukrainian scientists point out that the gender culture is a system of social, economic, ethnical and psychological conditions of society's existence that facilitates the formation of an equal relationship between a man and woman (Кікінежді, Кізь 2007).

Taking into account the diversity of gender studies and proposed definition of the gender culture we identify university students' gender culture as a part of personal general culture consisting of students' gender values, gender knowledge, and gender norms of behavior based on the idea of gender equality that means respect for gender identity of another person, ability to cooperate during communication avoiding stereotypes, bias that are barriers for student's self-realization.

To form students' gender culture the foreign language discipline was chosen as its learning can foster empathy and understanding if the pedagogical process uses an adequate account of language and culture (Kim, 2020: 519).

**Research and discussion.** To identify the crucial issues that should be implemented in the process of the formation university students' gender culture, 79 students of the first and second years (25 boys and 54 girls, age 17–19) of Zaporizhzhia National University were asked to answer proposed questions. Students of different faculties and specialties took part in the questionnaires' and interviewing. Among them students who studied at the Faculty of Mathematics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Philology, Faculty of Social Pedagogy and Psychology.

The wide range of specialties is explained by the fact that discipline English for Specific Purposes, that is a compulsory subject for all specialties at the university, has been chosen as the main educational environment for the formation students' gender culture. Additionally, foreign language lessons have a great potential in applying their interactive methods, forms, and teaching/learning material in terms of culture components manifestation and what is the most important, to our mind, give opportunity for students' interpersonal communication.

So, we suggested students to answer some sets of questions. The first set of questions was devoted to the students' recognizing the existing of human rights violation in Ukrainian society. Students were asked to answer questions concerning discriminatory practices in different spheres of people's lives, women's and men's discrimination, and different types of violence. The second set of questions proposed students to analyze their experience, whether they had met abusive behavior, violence in their private lives and what should be taken to prevent violence. And the third set of questions considered the role of women and men in the professional, public, and private spheres of Ukraine. Informal interviews of the students in the form of conversations helped us to highlight peculiarities of students' gender socialization, their unique gender experiences.

Thus, in order to form university students' gender culture, the students' answers were collected and analyzed. It allowed us to develop the following directions in the pedagogical process of the formation of university students' gender culture in the form of sets of topics: 1) public sphere; 2) professional sphere; 3) family sphere.

Each area has its own features, but, from our point of view, they are interconnected because a person who is a bearer of certain cultural values of his or her environment, where there is either dominant or partner interpersonal relations conveys certain values and acts according to expected patterns of behavior, in other words, presents his or her gender culture and it is not always based on the idea of gender equality.

These key issues have been presented as a gender component that has been introduced in the content of the learning/teaching material of the discipline English for Specific Purposes, students' extracurricular activity (students' independent work) where informal gender socialization takes place.

Thus, learning foreign language helps students find out directly from original sources information about the processes taking place in the world, provides an opportunity to compare problematic situations faced by men and women, girls, and boys abroad and in Ukraine, and discuss ways to solve them. So, the emphasis in the development of defined sets of topics is on the assimilation of the main components of the university students' gender culture by revealing and interpretation of the most common gender stereotypes and prejudices against men and women within the defined circle of problems.

So, the first area or direction in the process of the formation of students' gender culture is the public sphere of human activity. We support the statement that discriminatory gender norms can be changed due to girls' and women's individual and collective leadership (O'Neil et al., 2015). The forms and methods of the pedagogical process are aimed at the promotion of girls' leadership qualities based on their individual characteristics. In order to implement gender component in the content of the educational discipline, we have taken into account the findings of Ukrainian

historians that state that there are examples of women's active role in the public sphere and their role in the decision-making process. So, that is why in this context it is important to stress the contribution of Ukrainian women in the development of Ukrainian society, their participation in non-governmental organizations.

Students get acquainted with the experience of women's non-governmental organizations by involving in the work on solving gender problems in Ukraine, and the region at the lessons in the form of brainstorming or group projects. During extracurricular activity girls and boys can have opportunity to take part in the conferences, workshops devoted to gender problems. Problematic discussions include the role of women's organizations in preventing cases of domestic violence, human trafficking.

The issues proposed for students' debates point out that existing gender stereotypes and prejudices about the role of women and men cannot be obvious at first, and they can be taken for granted by people as norms of people's behavior in a certain culture. For example, according to one of the stereotypes women are expected to be more emotional while men are more confident and active. Consequently, social life is not for women but for men only. To contradict this stereotype, we propose students to review authentically texts, with their subsequent discussion, where women play an important role in public sphere being leaders of nongovernmental organization.

The content of the gender component concentrates on considering the students' gender characteristics, personal achievements which boost students' self-confidence and will make it easier for future specialists to find a well-paid job, take part in decision-making process or be a participant of public debates on socially meaningful problems. Students are suggested to analyze their skills, abilities. For example, students should write an essay "I am good at...".

Students are future professionals, so the next set of topics are devoted to the professional area based on the most widespread gender stereotypes and prejudices at the workplace (Берн, 2002; Кімелл, 2003). The focus is also made on the "hidden" contribution of women-scientists into the development of science, technology. We believe that it fosters developing skills of students' gender analyses, reflection. At the same time, it motivates students to evolve skills of positive, dialogic speech avoiding aggression during communication that is to demonstrate gender sensitivity.

During discussions, students often work in groups (teams), pairs, and try to follow rules such as not to interrupt another speaker, involve all group members in expressing their points of view, and respect opinion of others. Tasks are oriented on the students' comprehension of the fact that the most effective way of decision-making process is the common creative activity of the representatives of both sexes, which provides an opportunity to show unique gender characteristic and give possibility for some students to realize him or her during such types of work. Among the wide range of methods and forms, the most preferable have become group work, business games, and roleplaying. These forms promote students to assimilate gender values based on the principle of gender equality and cultivate gender norms recognizing the importance of a tolerant, respectful attitude to another opinion.

The following direction in the process of formation university students' gender culture is focused on the family issues. Defining this area is based on the statement that a family is the basis of the natural environment of human existence and the leading micro factor of his or her gender socialization. It should be noted that this field remains the most hidden sphere of interpersonal relations. In terms of this direction pedagogical activity is aimed at the prevention of gender inequality, gender (domestic) violence, and issues of responsible parenthood.

According to received answers, 10% of students said that they experienced violence through the cases of their friends, neighbors who were victims of domestic violence, sexual assault. 70% of students heard about it from mass media. So, these numbers can witness that young people are not fully recognize that there are different types of violence. It has been proved as well while students were answering the question, whether the abusive words were violence. 90% of students asked did not consider abuse as a kind of violence and believed that it could be only physical action against a person.

The development of this direction facilitates, to our mind, students' understanding of importance of harmonious relations between all family members, the awareness of the unacceptable ways of solving problems using different kinds of violence whether physical or psychological one. It has been emphasized that it is the family that forms children's values, dictates norms of behavior for men and women, and transfers them from one generation to another keeping the traditions, stereotypes about men and women and their roles in the family and society. To demonstrate it students were proposed to think about family traditions, customs and explain the roles of men and women in sharing duties. Pedagogical activity was in the context of the module "About Me. My family". The most effective methods in this framework, to our mind, have become a case-method, role-playing that allow students to analyze gender roles, bias, activate abilities of reflection.

The main difficulties that we faced while doing this type of tasks were finding the ways to adjust them for students with family problems (orphans, single-parent family, and difficult relationship with parents). In this case we proposed to imagine ideal family or family of the future. At the same time writing *ecce* have become effective for students who wanted to share their experience.

Responsible parenthood is the issue that paid attention to in the context of this direction as well. So, students are offered to analyze gender situations where parents were divorced or separated. The suggested learning material aims at students' understanding that men should not be eliminated from their duties of a father and both parents are important for a child's development. Otherwise, children can consider the role of the father as a worthless person in the family.

Since family is a private sphere and, consequently, the most hidden one of human life, writing an essay has been recognized as the most comfortable way for students to reflect their ideas and thoughts. Thus, for example, students have the opportunity to describe their own experience with their parents, predict their own behavior in domestic

violence situations. Roleplaying used at the lessons has given the possibility for girls and boys to dramatize the role of parents and think what gender stereotypes and prejudices might interfere with effective interaction between members of the family.

Thus, the formation of university students' gender culture at the university environment has been taking place through the filling it with the gender component.

The issue of formation of university students' gender culture highlights the questions that young people face every day in different domains of their lives. Students' negative gender socialization, confusion of gender roles, inconsistency with the gender role, uncertainty in their own abilities, low self-esteem can lead, to our point of view, to the negative effect in their social adaptation in the future.

But young people's recognition of how culture forms and supports gender stereotypes will promote them to understand that gender stereotypes and prejudices are hidden barriers that interfere with their personal self-realization, and girls and boys will be ready to identify gender bias and distinguish the situation of gender inequality in their future public, professional or personal life. It will result, to our mind, in student's personal development, revealing gender sensitivity during communication. Students' gender culture and assimilating its basic components based on the idea of gender equality will develop, to our mind, their abilities, and skills of successful interpersonal communication, and foster appreciating the value of the parity between men and women at any fields of their common activity.

**Conclusion.** Analyzing the concept of the gender culture, we have determined that the essential issue of cultural studies is the problem of dominance and distribution of power in society. That is why the main stress while forming students' gender culture at university should be made on the implementation of the idea of gender equality in the educational process.

University students' gender culture was defined, and its basic components were identified. Among the basic components there are gender values, gender knowledge, and gender norms of behavior based on the idea of gender equality. Analyzed findings and collected data allowed us to detect the main directions of the formation process and presented them in the form of sets of topics: 1) public sphere; 2) professional sphere; 3) family sphere. The determined areas correspond to the most important domains of human life where gender socialization of student's personality takes place.

The emphasis in the formation process was made on the revealing existing gender stereotypes and prejudices about the role of women and men in the culture of Ukrainian society that could interfere with personal self-realization and lead to gender violence in different spheres of people's lives.

The formation of students' gender culture was realized through the implementation of the gender component in the content of the discipline English for Specific Purposes and students' extracurricular activity. Learning foreign language appeared effective educational environment for the formation of students' gender culture as it allowed girls and boys to communicate departing from traditional topics and analyze real-life gender situation.

The perspective of our further research we see in the finding out the influence of social network on the formation of gender culture of the university students.

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