Marriage Announcements in Lviv during the Interwar Period: Ethnic and Gender Aspects

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Abstract:
The article dwells upon the marriage announcements in the Lviv periodicals during the interwar period. The author has analyzed men's and women's ads and has described the peculiarities of them. The author has defined the main character traits which the future wife or husband should have.

Keywords:
marriage announcements, gender, nationality, ethnicity, character, appearance.
In the time between the two world wars (1918–1939) Lviv belonged to the restored Rzeczpospolita. There was a large variety of the national and religious life in the city. Jerzy Habela and Zofia Kurzowa, who are the authors of the scientific research Songs of the Lviv’s streets, cabarets and outskirts by 1939 (“Lwowskie piosenki uliczne, kabaretowe i okolicznościowe do 1939 roku”), write that Lviv repeatedly changed the political independence between 1250 (the foundation year) and 1939 (entry into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic): the city was under Ruthenian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Polish, Austrian, Russian, Ukrainian and again Polish rule. Of course, it affected the ethnic allocation of the area, language and culture (1989, p. 9).

In 1921, compared with the Census 1910, the number of Poles increased by 6.06 p.p., Jews – by 33.92 p.p., while the number of Ukrainians decreased by 30.89 p.p. after the World War I (Isayevych, Lytvyn, Stebly, 2007, p. 43). The number of Ukrainian population reduced more than 20 p.p. because of military casualties, political emigration, changes of religion and some other reasons. And the share of the Ukrainian citizens in Lviv became the same as in the 60th years of the XIXth century.

In the 20–30th years of the XXth century migration processes that were typical for the pre-war period in Galicia were renewed. In Lviv and other big cities the share of the Ukrainian population began to rise again. According to the results of the census, in 1926 in Lviv the number of Ukrainians by nationality criterion was 10.3% and 75.3% of Greek Catholics. Compared to the census in 1921, the number of Ukrainians by the nationality criterion increased by 18 p.p., and the number of Greek Catholics – by 14.2 p.p. (Lozynskyy, 2005, p. 173). During the interwar period three main criteria showed the ethnicity of Galicians. They were religion, language, and ethnic consciousness, which was expressed by a sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group. According to religion, Ukrainians were mainly Greek Catholics, Poles – Roman Catholics, and Jews profess Judaism. Most of Jews spoke Yiddish, and only a small share of Orthodox Jews knew Hebrew. A small percentage of the population were Germans who were Protestant and Roman Catholics by religion. Of course, there were cases when Jews were Roman Catholics, Ukrainians – Roman Catholics or Orthodox, and Polish – Greek Catholics (Chorniy). In the interwar Lviv, in this multicultural and multi-ethnic city, was seen a dichotomy “it/stranger” that was traced in daily communication, literature, media and so on.

The object of our research is marriage announcements that are multifaceted phenomenon of the social and linguistic reality. We have analyzed such newspapers as “Nedilya” and “Vpered”. Matrimonial ads were printed on the last page of the newspaper in the section „Small ads”, along with the messages about finding work, buying and selling things or private correspondence. In most cases dressers would like to find a person to start a family. That is why almost every announce- ment contained such words as for the matrimo- nial purposes, or verbs ozhenytsya, podruzhyt that mean ‘gets married’. But there were also some texts, in which the authors did not write anything about marriage, because they were looking for a soul mate, intellectual or spiritual support. For example, A cute 30-year-old man with a higher education, well-heeled would like to meet a young, highly cultured, educated woman who would make a light into my gray days… (Nedilya, 03.11.1929). In those messages the men paid more attention rather to the educational and cultural level of women than their looks or financial status.

An important quality in the future wife or husband was an ethnicity. Often in these ads people wrote that they are looking for Ukrainians or prefer Galicians etc. For example, The teacher will correspond with Ukrainian woman. The young, 22-year-old sergeant of the Ukrainian Army, who is in captivity now, is looking to meet a woman for the matri- monial purposes, Halychanks are preferred (Vpered, 13.11.1919). A woman in a rural area will marry a Ukrainian (Nedilya, 24.11.1929).
emotionally, positively stained epithets as intelligent, staid, cute, and self-reliant were often used in the marriage announcements. In most cases, the authors noted their education, financial situation, etc. in the texts, trying to show that they are able to support a wife and a future family. For example, (…) the former Cossack officer, tall, and financially maintained wants to meet a woman to get married. Educated and cultured young man, whose field is 40 morgen and farm is developed, is looking for a woman who will agree to walk together through the pass of life (Vpered, 24.12.1919). Retirement official who is tall, good-looking, 54 years old, and prosperous… Respectable and likable man, self-alone, average years, intelligent and on a good position at work… (Vpered, 24.12.1919).

In this case, there is accordance between what the authors report about themselves (supply) and what the women would like to find (demand). Despite the fact that a number

As Galicia during the interwar period was the territory where nationally conscious Ukrainian elite was formed, in the matrimonial ads among a number of traits and qualities it was also mentioned that wife or husband should be nationally conscious. For example, I am looking for lady 22–27 years old that was born 27/XII, 11/I, religious, nationally conscious, good looking, who has good manners, has finished a gymnasium or a seminary, and thinks seriously about marriage… (Nedilya, 07.01.1932).

The religion was also stated in some messages. In this case it was actually equal to ethnicity (Greek-Catholic meant Ukrainian). For example, Greek-Catholic without property, labor and care (Nedilya, 22.06.1930). The wife with the same religion men were looking for. Moreover, people of the equal status, position and so on were named “akin”. One of the ads started with the slogan “Sister to brother!”. For example, “Sister to brother!” Gymnasium teacher, 31 year old, it is said to be nice, gets acquainted with a cute young lady with perfect manners; preferable are teachers by 27 years (Nedilya, 17.11.1929).

Discourse of marriage announcements reflects a particular gender view. Those texts represent some gender stereotypes that existed in the society. Thus, our analysis shows that matrimonial ads were written mostly by men in Lviv during the interwar period. They were of all ages (from young to pensioners), positions (professors, officers), professions (doctors, teachers, military men, and technician-builders), financial status (rich and not so wealthy) and others. These data were presented in the first place in the marriage ads, because this information is going to influence the recipient, to make him acquainted, and to interest the potential readers.

At the ads titles an addresser firstly wrote his age that was marked by the adjective young and nouns molodets’ or kavalyer which mean a young man. These characteristics also indicated a marital status. For example, such words as molodets’, kavalyer’ meant single. Sometimes the authors did not use euphemisms and wrote simply self-alone. For example, Respectable and likable man, self-alone, average years… (Vpered, 24.12.1919). The widowers wrote the marriage announcements too. In this way they emphasized that they had the experience of married life and could build lasting family relationships.

Men also pointed out the specific features of their appearance. Such feature as strong figure dominated. This characteristic was described by such lexical units as tall, strong and so on. These words are consistent with the stereotype of the ideal male beauty. Such
of women’s marriage announcements was smaller, the statement that a man should have a good financial status was written in almost every text. In some ads girls and women wrote preferred men’s age and the character qualities. According to women marriage announcements first of all man ought to be educated and cultured. We should mention that the men in their ads also wrote that they were cultured. In this situation, supply meets the demand. According to our research, in most of the cases teachers by profession were looking for their husbands. Here are some examples of their announcements:

Because of the lack of dating a teacher wishes to correspond in matrimonial purposes with a male who is not older than 47 years and has good financial status.

A teacher is looking for an educated man, who is not older than 36 years and has good financial status;

I need a man for friendship, in the future marriage is possible. A young, good-looking teacher, who has a dowry, wants to find a man who has appropriate financial status. The main aim is getting married.

As we can see, the women wrote much less about themselves in contrast to men who used all possible means of verbal attractions. Men, unlike women, had significantly more requirements to his future wife. First of all, they paid attention to the character qualities. For example, (…) get acquainted with a cute, young, and decent lady who has perfect manners (Vpered, 24.12.1919). (…) looking for intelligent, educated, and decent lady or a young widow (Vpered, 24.12.1919). (…) get acquainted with an honest, kindhearted, and placid girl (Vpered, 24.12.1919).

Besides the future wife’s age, the desirable height, hair color, figure etc, were also mentioned in some advertisements. For example, (…) get acquainted with a cute, kindhearted, and placid, brunette girl, who is in ideal height, not older than 25 years, and comes from a good family (Vpered, 24.12.1919). Retiree official (…) will get married with healthy, well built, cute blonde girl, who is not older than 35 years (Vpered, 23.11.1919).

Sometimes hair color was the only requirement, like in this message: A young, 28 years old, cute man, owner of the tailoring workshop is looking for wife who is good looking brunette girl (Vpered, 13.11.1919).

There are ads where not only general, but also specific requirements were written. For example, only certain date of birth is considered: I am looking for a lady 22–27 years old that was born 27/ХІІ, 11/І, religious, nationally conscious, good looking, who has good manners, has finished a gymnasium or a seminary, and seriously considers marriage… (Nedilya, 07.01.1932).
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Some men were looking for a woman who can cook. It was the obligatory requirement. For example, the knowledge of French and dance art are not required, but cooking skills are necessary (Nedilya, 14.01.1932). In this case, gender stereotype is incorporated into marriage announcements. Women were considered to be the ones who should cook in a household.

We have roughly divided some of the men’s announcements into two groups: the messages in which future wife’s dowry is important for the authors and those announcements in which the dowry is not necessary. The first category includes such ads: A doctor in the province will marry a young placid girl who has an appropriate dowry. Doctor of medicine will start to correspond with beautiful young girl to get married in the future. Appropriate dowry is necessary (Nedilya, 21.09.1930). Some guys were even ready to marry a widow if she had a dowry: A young 29 years old man, graduated from High School of Art, photo studio owner, will marry a girl or a widow who has a dowry. She may be from a peasant family (Vpered, 12.12.1919).

This group also contains the ads written by so called gigolos who needed financial support and did not conceal it. For example, The young guy, who because of the material and political reasons cannot study at the university, will correspond with the purpose of marriage to a young lady, 19 years old, who could temporarily financially secure him, would have a larger amount of money to found a commercial enterprise or produce to him a good paid position. I’ll get married to a wealthy woman who is not older than 40 years and could contribute $ 1,000 to my company (Nedilya, 21.09.1930).

The second group includes those marriage announcements in which men paid attention to girl’s look and character qualities. In this case dowry was not necessary. For example, A decent young man with secondary education degree wants to get acquainted with the moral, young, delicate and beautiful girl. The dowry is not necessary. I get married with a young, beautiful and painstaking girl. The dowry is not important (Nedilya, 07.01.1932).

Thus, in the marriage announcements published in the Lviv’s newspapers during the interwar period personal qualities and nationality took the most important place. At that time men had a chance to choose a partner. That is why a number of their adverts in the press prevailed.

Men were looking for attractive and careful women, and women wanted men to see their character, not only appearance. Like women, men first of all distinguished the positive psychosocial character qualities. However, the names of psycho-emotional characteristics and intellectual qualities were used in the men’s announcements more often.

The lexical units, which name specific appearance features and physical characteristics, were mostly used in the male marriage ads. In their texts names of professions which are relevant to the realities of the macrocosm and emphasize the high social status of the addressee dominated. We should mention that the range of men’s professions and jobs is much wider. This generally indicated high social status of the addresser. Thus, we note a greater impact of the factor profession in the male’s marriage announcements that confirms the higher status of the professional role in a set of men’s social features. This is indirectly evidenced by the fact that the woman’s social status was often identified by the social status of her husband or father.

Although the marriage announcements analysis allowed revealing some gender-specific features of the marriage ads, there is one common thing: both men and women aimed to find a reliable partner in life and create a family with their significant other.

Liudmyla Pidkuimukha is an Assistant Professor at the Ukrainian Language Department, Faculty of Humanities, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Kyiv, Ukraine). Liudmyla has completed her PhD thesis, entitled Lexical Characteristics of Western Region Varieties of Standard Ukrainian Language (Based on Lviv Writers’ Texts 1-st Half of XXth Century), which is focused on language situation in Lviv during the interwar period and is rooted in both social sciences and humanities. The interwar Lviv is the central focus of this research because it is a case
of great interest to compare ethnic situation with language situation during this period, to study state and status of the Ukrainian Language at that time Lviv. Liudmyla is particularly interested in the literary production of interwar period and in modern Ukrainian prose. Besides linguistics, Dr. Pidkuimukha is interested in cultural, historical and urban studies.

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Streszczenie:

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