

# 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, Steblyi, 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. (Lozynsky, 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 addressers would like to find a person to start a family. That is why almost every announcement contained such words as *for the matrimonial 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 matrimonial purposes, Halychankas are preferred* (Vpered, 13.11.1919). *A woman in a rural area will marry a Ukrainian* (Nedilya, 24.11.1929).









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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## Lwowskie ogłoszenia matrymonialne w okresie międzywojennym. Aspekty etniczne i płciowe

#### Streszczenie:

W artykule przedstawiono anonse matrymonialne obecne w czasopismach lwowskich w okresie międzywojennym. Autorka przeanalizowała męskie i damskie ogłoszenia, a także opisała ich specyfikę. Ponadto, na ich podstawie zidentyfikowała pożądane cechy, jakimi mieli charakteryzować się przyszła żona bądź też przyszły mąż.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ogłoszenia matrymonialne, gender, narodowość, etniczność, charakter, wygląd.