

Preface

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/impact.36.002pre>

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Gender Across Languages: Volume 4

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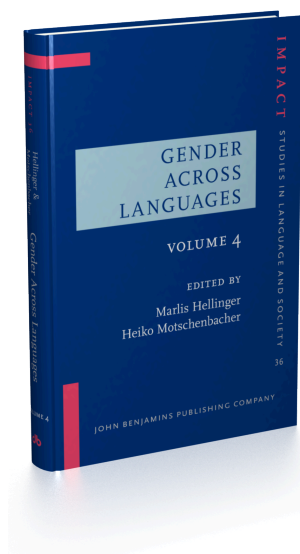
[IMPACT: Studies in Language, Culture and Society, 36]

2015. xv, 415 pp.

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Preface

This is the fourth volume of *Gender across languages*, a comprehensive reference work which provides systematic descriptions of the manifestations of gender in languages of diverse areal, typological and socio-cultural affiliations. To the 30 languages already analysed in previous volumes, Volume 4 adds another 12, among them languages whose gendered structures have received little or no scholarly attention in the past.

The collection includes a broad spectrum of languages, i.e. it contains languages without nominal classification, grammatical gender languages, and a classifier language, larger national languages as well as smaller languages with minority status; also, members of diverse language families are represented: Indo-European as well as Finno-Ugrian, Iroquois, Tai-Kadai and Niger-Congo. Of course, no claim can be made that all language families are covered adequately in this volume, nor in the previous volumes for that matter. Critics will easily identify languages whose gendered structures would also present extremely rich and interesting data requiring analysis. This would be especially true for the immense number of African, Asian and Austronesian languages about whose gendered structures we know very little. Thus, there remains an urgent need for future investigations into gendered linguistic structures.

The previous volumes of *Gender across languages* were the successful result of a most fruitful and cooperative collaboration between the two editors, Hadumod Bußmann and Marlis Hellinger, and all individual authors. Since the publication of Volume 3, Hadumod Bußmann has turned her academic interest on biographical research, so that the publication of any future volume depended on the emergence/formation of a new team of editors. I was most fortunate in that Heiko Motschenbacher, a widely published expert in gender and queer linguistics, agreed to join me on the project. Working with him on the fourth volume of *Gender across languages* has been a most rewarding experience.

Volume 4 continues the conceptual tradition of the previous volumes. Each chapter addresses most of the issues that were raised in our original guidelines which, however, were neither intended – nor interpreted by authors – to impose our own expectations of how gender is represented in a particular language. Therefore, chapters basically have the same overall structure, with variation due

to language-specific properties as well as the state of research on the respective language. The four volumes of *Gender across languages* illustrate the tremendous variation found in the area of gendered structures; at the same time, they provide the much-needed material required for an explicitly comparative approach to linguistic manifestations of gender.

Marlis Hellinger, Frankfurt am Main

October 2014