Серія «**Іноземна філологія. Методика викладання іноземних мов**».   ISSN 2786-5312 (Print)   ISSN 2786-5320 (Online) | **7**

Series: **Foreign Philology. Methods of Foreign Language Teaching**.   **2025**. Випуск/Issue **102**

Alla Belova
Doctor of Sciences in Linguistics, Professor,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; e-mail: profbelova@gmail.com;
ORCID: 0000-0002-3014-326X; GOOGLE SCHOLAR:https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=ru&user=gLn7TwoAAAAJ;
RESEARCH GATE: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alla-Belova

ATTITUDE TO ELDERLY INDIVIDUALS VISIBILITY: POLITICS VS FASHION

The article highlights the verbal packaging of attitude to visibility of older people in politics and fashion – the two professional fields marked by unrivaled visibility and exceptional interest of the public. Statistics, gerontolinguisitcs, multiple reports reveal the greying of the world, the skyrocketing propotion of people 65+, with the soaring share of octogenarians. Nevertheless, elderly individuals remain invisible in public places, workplaces, being excluded from decision-making process. In the 21st century visibility of the elderly becomes a component of inclusive societies and sustainable development. Age limitations keep people of retirement age out of employment in many fields but outstanding professionals in their eighties break age stereotypes and remain active, stealing the limelight due to their extraordinary talent and exceptionalism. Gerontocracy in the US politics in the 2010-2020s is being severely criticised in mass media and gets lots of negative comments on social media. Gerontocracy has crept into the White House, Congress, The Supreme Court where octogenarians are obsessed with workism, nonagenarians cling to power. The articles on US political gerontocracy are marked by obvious negative sentiment, usage of age-related idioms, words with the negative evaluative meaning. Vice versa, senior models catwalking at prestigious fashion shows and invited to luxury brands advertising campaigns are perceived positively as the embodiment of taste, elegance and a healthy way of life. Laudatory articles about clothes-wise mature female models – successful actresses, singers, writers – have positive sentiment. Age-related words (*wrinkle, grey*) are used in the articles about fashion in a positive context. Brilliant careers of octogenarian and nonagenarian politicians are neglected in the articles while the past achievements of senior models are presented in the advantageous way.

Key words: *age-stereotype, fashion, gerontocracy, gerontolinguistics, nonagenarian, octogenarian, politics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ageing and longevity science originated in the 20th century and has gone through remarkable progress in recent decades. Ageing has become an important issue of research in diverse disciplines – aging biology, biogerontology, biology, medicine, geriatrics, gerontology, sociology, demography, statistics, social linguistics, variationist sociolinguistics, gerontolinguistics, queer linguistics. In contemporary times, gerontology has evolved into a multidisciplinary science, with the range of new theories that have emerged over the past 30 years, technological innovations and social policies to address the complex needs of ageing populations, strategies that promote dignity, health, and inclusion in aging societies [41, 53, 68].

Scholars distinguish chronological age (the number of years since birth), biological age (physical maturity), and social age which is tied to life events or legal status [7]. Age-grading – ten-year and five-year groups – allow identification, monitoring and research. Population ageing is fixed worldwide, even in developing countries, with the expanding share of people 85+ and the growing number of centenarians. Global average life expectancy at birth increased from 32 in 1900 to 73 today, largely because infant mortality rates were greatly reduced [4]. Between 1974 and 2024, the worldwide share of people aged 65 almost doubled – increasing from 5.5% to 10.3%. Between 2024 and 2074, this number will double again, increasing to 20.7%, according to United Nations population projections. During the same time, the number of persons aged 80+ is projected to more than triple. Population ageing is an inevitable outcome of the *demographic transition* — the historic shift from higher to lower levels of fertility and mortality that yields a period of rapid population increase and, eventually, an older population that is much larger as a share of the total [67]. Ageism observed worldwide in many forms, not only fosters discrimination but also leads to the ongoing unavailability of reliable data on older populations and their visibility [17]. Thousands of old people all over the world face hardships, ageism at work, sickness, disability, widowhood, poverty, low pensions, living below national poverty line, unemployment, neglected diseases, violence, abuse, social isolation, invisibility in retirement and in public spaces and many other problems and challenges [28, 47]. *The concept of visibility* for elderly individuals spans their representation in media and public discourse, their overall well-being and inclusion in society, participation in activities, decision-making processes and the facts potentially leading to social isolation.

Many researchers and laboratories are looking for ways to promote longevity, conduct research to invent drugs to postpone ageing and increase life span, to cope with the aging-related diseases like dementia, Parkinson and Alzheimer disease. Population ageing has become a dominant driver of the growing global stroke burden, necessitating targeted public health interventions for ageing populations [63]. Scholars emphasize the intersection of ageing and disability [44]. According to gerontology, non-repaired molecular damage and accumulation of reactive oxygen species (ROS) cause ageing. Knowing ageing pathology can slow down or limit ageing, pharmacologically. Whether ageing should be treated pharmacologically or not may still be debated, but the availability of drugs can render the issue of ageing management sensibly, ethically and equitably [49]. Artificial intelligence may spur further advancements in anti-aging biomedical technologies [4].

Recent works have highlighted fundamental knowledge gaps and strong disagreements amongst scientists studying ageing. Addressing these challenges is critical for unlocking new insights and developing effective interventions to extend both lifespan and health span [55] as a commitment to sustainable development.

Many scholars investigate age stereotyping in mass media, advertising and cinema. Old people are isolated, marginalised and underrepresented and hardly identified in media. Aged politicians enjoy more visibility (23.6%) than other categories [56]. Ageism is subtle, unintentional, deeply embedded in our families and society and reflected in our conversations and conduct. Digital technologies can become a transformative way of looking at ageing and bridge the gap between generations [13].

Octogenarians are getting more attention in cinema: since the 2010s more movies about senior people, their lifestyle, challenges, needs, habits, hobbies appear annually with the most popular, outstanding actors and actresses starring. In the 21st century cinema stars – Michael Caine, Anthony Hopkins, Franco Nero, Vanessa Redgrave, Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep, Diane Keaton, Glenn Close – have much longer careers than Hollywood stars of the 20th century such as Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford and many others who shunned publicity and started looking for seclusion and hermitage in their forties. The current generation of cinema stars care less about wrinkles and other age markers and prefer to be visible. Some fashion models resume their career in their sixties after retirement when thirty-something becoming role models for many average women and inspiring new generations of models. The average ages of university professors and administrators, banking executives and corporate CEOs, and many other leading figures have all been steadily rising for some time [24]. So, a small proportion of elderly people remain active in some professional fields where there are no age limitations though some less senior and less competent people are being pushed out of their jobs due to their age. ''Thus, in the era of *"workism"* most affluent people have actually cut back on leisure and report the longest workweeks'' [23]. In the 2020s old people became domineering in the political elite in the USA described nowadays as

Серія «**Іноземна філологія. Методика викладання іноземних мов**».   ISSN 2786-5312 (Print)   ISSN 2786-5320 (Online)   9

Series: **Foreign Philology. Methods of Foreign Language Teaching**.   **2025**. Випуск/Issue **102**

gerontocracy. Visibility of elderly politicians triggers debates and conflicting opinions.

Social and healthcare policies to support a growing older population, ensuring their well-being, favourable portrayal of the elderly in public, advertising, marketing, mass media discourses as a contribution to sustainable future, as one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) confirm the r e l e v a n c e of the research. Theoretically, the research is based on the concepts of modern demography such *demographic change*, *demographic transition, older people visibility;* the concepts of social linguistics such as *age-grading, categorization* approach relevant to naming theory and cognitive linguistics; *evaluation theory* in linguistics. The g o a l of the research is to identify the attitude in mass media to octogenarians and nonagenarians visible in politics and fashion. Nowadays, politics as a professional field hardly has a rival in terms of visibility: politicians have become mega media stars. Visibility-based fashion shows where mature models became visible during the last decade were selected for comparison. The l a n g u a g e d a t a for the research was retrieved from one hundred online articles devoted to ageing in current US politics and inclusive fashion shows. Age-related words and word clusters, their distribution and context make the o b j e c t of the research. The s u b j e c t of the research is evaluative meaning of lexical units and word collocations used to voice opinion and shape the sentiment of the articles. M e t h o d s of the research span distribution analysis, context analysis, definitions analysis, semantic analysis, discourse analysis.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

In the 21st century gerontolinguistics has become a new multidisciplinary trend of unique practical value [14, 15, 17, 18, 48, 59] though the first fundamental editions started to appear in the 1980s [37, 52]. A new generation of young linguists conduct the reseach on the basis of diverse languages and linguistic theories and enjoy sharing their observations on different platforms [12, 30, 42, 61].

Linguistic research of age markers in language and communication is based mostly on sociolinguistic theory of age-grading pioneered by William Labov [25] – a component of language change theory and variationist linguistics. Since that time age-grading theory has had further age categorization as there is a noticeable group of octogenarians, nonagenarians, centenarians in the world whose language and communication patterns differ considerably from speech and discourses of people 60+. Thus, now more detailed categorization includes the "young-old" (ages 65-74), the "old-old" (ages 75-84), and the "oldest-old" (age 85 and above). Linguistic change at the individual level, a variant with a particular lifestage ('age grading', age-specific use of language) is differentiated from linguistic change at the community level (generational

change', generation-specific use of language) [1, 7, 62].

Mass media and young people are considered the main contributors to old people stereotyping and negative attitude to the elderly. There are attempts to decrease negative stereotyping and ageism through intergenerational programs [16, 40, 50]. The outcomes can be very different from one person to the next, but people's personal frame of reference strongly influences the outcomes of intergenerational contact [60].

Longevity changed the demographic landscape. Internet and digital technologies contributed to visibility of older people. In the era of social media and websites many Internet users voice and share their opinions on ageing and old-old people activities. Political gerontocracy **in the USA is discussed on social media, predominantly on Twitter/X.** Attitudes toward older politicians are commonly tied to negative stereotypes surrounding old age. As the population ages, it is paramount that society focuses on potentially more important considerations in the evaluation of the actual caliber of a politician [33].

3. RESEARCH

The growing share of old people worldwide is mirrored by the English language via new lexical coinages, broadening combinability and rising frequency of age-related words. Words naming old people in English are becoming more and more conspicuous in mass media though their frequency remains statistically insignificant in comparison with other words. For instance, *gerontocracy* – the system of government by old people – known from 1830 has the frequency about 0.05 occurrences per million words in modern written English [38].

Historically, population ageing is reflected by the emergence of age-related words in English: *sexagenarian* known from 1646, *septuagenarian* (1715), *centenarian* (1747), *nonagenarian* (1805), *octogenarian* (1815) [38]. Other words to denote younger individuals such as *semi-centinarian* (a person of 50 years of age) (1828), *quadrinarian* (1834) [38] were coined later to match the paradigm.

Increasing frequency of the word *gerontocracy* is coupled with extending combinability: *recent <u>taste for</u> gerontocracy, <u>the perils of</u> <u>unchecked</u> gerontocracy, <u>brittle</u> gerontocracy; the gerontocracy was no longer <u>sustainable</u>, <u>maintaining</u> a gerontocracy / The next government will be a <u>veritable</u> gerontocracy, with an 80-year-old speaker of the House and perhaps a 78-year-old Senate majority leader/ And now television is turning into a <u>virtual</u> gerontocracy as well* [31]. *"We have a <u>sclerotic</u> gerontocracy," posted 48-year-old Rep. Ro Khanna (D–Calif.) in December* [4].

Analysis of the recent examples on the Web (2022-2025) given by Merriam-Webster Dictionary reveals that the attitude to *gerontocracy* is negative: *a **gerontocracy**, <u>out of touch with the generational changes beneath them</u> / Unlike the Eastern Bloc **gerontocracies** of <u>the</u>*

zastoi era [31]. Only one sentence is marked by positive sentiment: *The **gerontocracy** critique also threatens to deprive us of our most experienced leaders* [31].

Other lemmas in the Merriam Webster Dictionary naming people 80+ are also perfectly exemplified from the Web what proves these demographic trends are discussed on regular basis. Noteworthy, lately *octogenarians* have become more numerous and visible therefore they attract more attention than individuals of other ten-years groups.: *Pope Francis proved that octogenarians are the new fiftysomethings/ Octogenarians, teenagers, amputees and even a blind man have reached the top of the world / The drummer became the first octogenarian in the band with his birthday last month/ Biden at 81 is a young octogenarian whose busy schedule of travel, meetings and phone calls with heads of state would outpace anyone even half his age* [31].

The examples with the word *nonagenarian* show that ten years look like the considerable period of life when a person has one companion – loneliness, though some people 90+ do their best to be physically and intellectually fit: *a lonely nonagenarian moving to New York City/ The transition proves difficult when the nonagenarian realizes that no one has any time for her/ Twice a week, the nonagenarian drives himself to a local batting cage and practices his swings to gear up for the weekend games against others aged 55 and over./ After decades in the spotlight, the wily nonagenarian is still center stage/ The film chronicles Alvarez's life, her love of music and her path to pursuing a singing career as a nonagenarian/ The nonagenarian was recovering from a fall – taken while jazz dancing – but was in good spirits / For a nonagenarian, a robot that offers brain-teasing games to help keep her mind sharp could become an ideal companion* [31].

Centenarians can be described as unique: *Of those who make it to 100, only a tiny fraction of centenarians have siblings still alive, much less one who is their senior / The notion that there are centenarians with 80-year-old kids?/ The centenarian is seen using her walker to make her way to the curb to watch the parade / Her family said the centenarian has a life-long passion for learning and has passed that along to her children and grandchildren/ In one survey, a quarter of centenarians said keeping a positive attitude topped the list of ways to stay healthy / Half of centenarians have a gene that taps the brakes on height and weight* [31].

In Modern English there other words and idioms to describe senior citizens: *But high-profile symptoms like Mr. Biden's difficulties provide an opportunity to confront the issue — a social form of sclerosis that will persist unless and until more power is transferred from **the wrinkled** to the rest* [32]; *Joe Biden and members of Congress are increasingly **long in the tooth** – and more and more out of step with a much younger US public / But there are finally signs of erosion in **the grey wall*** [51] / *The Oxford economist Tim Vlandas has linked*

gerontocracy to **gerontomania**: *"a stagnating political economy that increasingly prioritizes the socioeconomic needs of the elderly at the expense of future economic performance"*[4] / **gerontophobia** – morbid fear or dislike of old persons [31].

US political elite started aging in the 1990s. The median age of members of Congress was about 53 from 1960 to 1990. In the three decades after, it jumped to nearly 60. Only 5 percent of Congress is, with almost a quarter of members 70 or older, and 21 over 80. While half of Americans are under 40 [32]. Some politicians became record-setters earlier: William Henry Harrison, 68, who served as president for a month in 1841, was long the oldest man to become president until Ronald Reagan beat his record when he defeated former vice president Walter Mondale and began his second presidency in 1985. At a debate in 1984, the moderator reminded Ronald Reagan that he was already the oldest president in history at that time. Reagan, 73, replied: "I want you to know that also I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." Even his Democratic opponent, Walter Mondale, laughed at the line. Reagan won re-election in a landslide [51]. In the 1980s, 70-year-old Ronald Reagan was an exception in the US political leadership but he left a remarkable footprint (*Reagan Era*) in American and international politics and economics (*Reaganomics)*. He was supported by young voters, not much criticised, newsmen readily forgot his mistakes, hence, he was nicknamed *Teflon President*. In the 1990s gerontocracy was slowly creeping into American corridors of power. The biggest contributor to the 21st century gerontocracy is the gift of longevity [32]. Symbolically, 1 October 2024, Jimmy Carter (1924-2014), the 39th president of the USA (1977-1981), turned 100, the first former U.S. president to do so.

The attitude to US political gerontology is negative: '*…this burgeoning problem that is morphing and spreading into all facets of American public life*' [2]. '*Gerontocracy is demonstrably harmful for economic growth*' [4].''*You've probably heard it said of American politics: we're stuck in a gerontocracy. Some of the same forces that have created our political gerontocracy – medical advances enabling graceful aging, combined with a generation unwilling to relinquish power – have also allowed the old to tighten their grip on other areas of American life*'' [23]. ''*Hubris. Arrogance. Greed. How else does one account for America's gerontocracy?Joe Biden, 80, and Donald Trump, 77, are clearly not the country's best 2024 presidential candidates, yet they cling tightly to power in their respective parties*'' [29]. *An aging elite disconnected from society's evolving needs will slow growth and hinder innovation in dangerous ways* [4]. *Throughout US history, young people have faced systematic exclusion from the political process as if not uninterested but disenfranchised* [8].

Серія «**Іноземна філологія. Методика викладання іноземних мов**». ISSN 2786-5312 (Print) ISSN 2786-5320 (Online) 11

Series: **Foreign Philology. Methods of Foreign Language Teaching**. **2025**. Випуск/Issue **102**

The Presidency is one of the few jobs in the world where 60 is considered youthful [47]. In 2017 Donald Trump, then 70, became the oldest president at the time of the inauguration. His record was broken four years later by Joe Biden, who was 78 years and two months old when he was sworn in [11]. The period 2017-2025 in the US administration looks like a gerontocratic reign as American presidents aged so much. ''The past three presidential inaugurations have set a dubious record: Each saw the oldest man in history sworn into America's highest office'' [64]. Hectic debates on gerontocracy were fueled by the age of Joe Biden and Donald Trump in 2024. In 2021 Joe Biden, 81, became the first octogenarian to occupy the Oval Office. After a poor debate performance, due to age, numerous missteps, cognitive condition, and pressure to bow out from Democrats, Biden decided not seek reelection ''clearing the path for Vice President Kamala Harris to take on Trump, who had attacked Biden relentlessly as "Sleepy Joe" [64]. A CNBC All-America Economic Survey found that 70% of Americans did not want Biden to run for re-election, giving his age as the principal reason [51]. Donald Trump was a mere four years younger than Biden and had a wealth of documented behavioral issues and medical risks [2]. Donald Trump, 78, was the oldest nominee for the US Presidency in history and the oldest person ever elected to the office, the oldest US president to start a new term. ''That's slightly more than double the U.S. population's median age of 38.9''[4]. "Some may claim that Trump projects a powerful and vigorous image, but he will turn 80 in the White House. That's a big number. Most Americans understand that as being "old" [27]. Negative attitude to presidential gerontocracy has just one counterargument – age limits for politicians look wrong-headed and anti-democratic.

Gerontocracy in the USA is not limited to the White House. *Numerous articles about the American political elite are peppered with the names of octogenerians, their extreme age and critical comments:* Mitch McConnell is 82. Nancy Pelosi is 84. Chuck Grassley is 90. At least 20 members of Congress are over 80. The average ages in the US House and Senate are 58 and 64, respectively. Only 6% of Congress is under 40. In terms of age, Congress does not represent the electorate [47]. Chuck Grassley, 90, recently won reelection to a seat he has held since 1980 and if he survives, he will be 95 years old when his current term expires. He might run again [29]. Three elderly Democrats have already died in this congressional session. Nine of the 100 senators have served more than 25 years [26]. *In 2023 Democrats' top three leaders in the House – Nancy Pelosi, 82, Steny Hoyer, 83, and 82-year-old Jim Clyburn – make way for a new generation in Hakeem Jeffries, 52, Katherine Clark, 59, and 43-year-old Peter Aguilar, as well as the arrival of* Maxwell Frost, *now 26, hailed as the first Gen Z congressman* [51]. *Democrat Congresswoman Annie Kuster of New Hampshire served seven terms in the House before resigning in December of 2024 to "set*

a better example … there are colleagues—and some of whom are still very successful and very productive—but others who just stay forever" [2]. *Last week, something happened that is extremely rare in Washington, D.C., but completely normal outside of it: People openly described an octogenarian as frail and overdue for retirement. The subject of discussion was Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia's nonvoting congressional delegate, who turned 88 on Friday. Recently, several D.C. figures have questioned her ability to serve. Holmes Norton dismissed concerns about her age and, for good measure, also said that she was planning to run for another term. "I don't know why anybody would even ask me," the Democrat added, to which anyone outside of American politics would surely respond: because you're older than nylon stockings and the ballpoint pen*![26]. *Last month Patrick Leahy, 82, a Democrat from Vermont, stepped down after 48 years in the Senate. Last week Senator Dianne Feinstein of California announced her retirement at 89 after months of difficult debate about her mental fitness* [51]. *''…the Democrats chose similarly aged individuals to lead key committees such as the Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, and Appropriations, the youngest ranking member being 73 and the oldest being 86* [2]. "*…septuagenarian and octogenarian [older white male] class" of Democratic leadership "are by and large ill-equipped"for a second Trump administration while also blocking "an incredible bench of Gen Z and millennial leaders"* [2].

The Constitution imposed an age minimum of 30 on the Senate. Due to absence of age maximum Dianne Feinstein (age 90), Robert Byrd (92) and Strom Thurmond (100) all either died in office or just months after retirement. *The late Dianne Feinstein, for example, spent the last few years of her life clinging to her Senate seat, even as she approached 90, despite serious concern about her mental fitness and clear signs of cognitive decline, including memory loss* [9]. Noteworthy, Dianne Feinstein, had a glittering career holding some positions for the first time in history. For instance, she was the only Jewish student at an elite Roman Catholic high school, she served as the first female mayor of San Francisco (1978–88), she became the first woman to serve as senator from the state (California). In 2009 she became the first woman to chair the Select Committee on Intelligence. Joe Biden has even more impressive career being elected in 1972 to the Senate at 30 and remaining the youngest senator in the US history until 1979, he served as Senator from Delaware (1973-2003), as vice-president of the USA (2009-2017), finally, as the 46th President of the USA (2021-2025), staying in American leadership and political elite for half a century. These brilliant careers are never mentioned in the articles picturing gerontocracy in the gloomy light.

Outbursts on social media happen when some old politicians become invisible, absentees, for example, *''Khanna's outburst on X was provoked by*

the revelation that an 81-year-old Rep. Kay Granger (R–Texas), who had been absent from Congress for months, had in fact been diagnosed with dementia and was residing in a memory care facility [4].

The gerontocratic crisis in the US corridors of power is worsening. The Supreme Court of the United States, quasi-gerontocratic from the start, is another outpost of gerontocracy. Federal judges have life tenure, and they can make a choice whether to depart alive or dead. Antonin Scalia died at 79, William Rehnquist at 80, Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) at 87. Overall, five federal judges have turned 100 while on the bench. Before 1970, justices served for 15 years on average. Since then, that number has nearly doubled to 26 years [32]. *But the rot really set in with the PR campaign for Ruth Bader Ginsburg staying on the Supreme Court despite her advancing age and pancreatic-cancer diagnosis. ''What was presented as perseverance and stamina—or even as a feminist act of judicial girlbossery—now looks like narcissism. The court needs* me. *No other Democratic appointee will do* [26]. RBG' distinguished career, superior intellect and vast knowledge were neglected in the articles on Supreme Court gerontocracy. RBG's age and failing health turned out more significant than her professional achievements. Age is not a guarantee of wisdom or intelligence, in particular, in the era of digital technologies and artificial inteligence. ''While countless individuals of advanced age hold the degrees, experiences, and proper intellect needed, at a certain point, those experiences and degrees matter little if one's intellect and health are faltering' [2].

Many experts and citizens in the USA insist on a mandatory mental competency test for politicians 75+. Some favor term limits and setting a maximum age limit for Congressmen what would increase turnover. Nearly 80 percent of both younger and older Americans favor maximum age limits on federal elected officials. There are recommendations to tackle the experience of other gerontocratic clubs like the Roman Catholic Church's College of Cardinals that are asked to submit their resignations at age 76 and all are barred from voting in papal elections when they turn 80. Gerontocracy's reign in US politics might be over in 2029 and generational change is due.

The attitude to senior models who remain one-offs in the fashion world is the opposite, much more positive.

In the 17th-19th centuries fashion existed for the rich and famous. Age was not of primary importance: kings and queens, major nobility – then-top-models – were usually much over twenty-something. In the 20th century fashion became more democratic and flawless-youth-obsessed. In the 2010s senior fashion models started to appear on catwalks and advertising campaigns, some of them at the very top of high fashion. Older models movement did not ruin the cult of young models but models over 50, septuagenarians, octogenarians and even nonagenarians have become visible and much spoken about. The most popular

models over the age of 50 are all Caucasian, cisgender, and slim [10]. Naturally, new lexical coinages emerged in English: *age-positive, pro-ageing, ageless women, age-friendly gorgeousness, mature models, senior models, inclusive fashion, inclusive catwalk, alternative ageing, anti-ageism etc.*

The proportion of mature models is insignificant in fashion as young models still have the majority: in 2025 41% of models identify as Gen Z (born 1997–2012). Luxury brands and other fashion companies are actively recruiting younger models to have better connection with younger consumers. When the age issue is discussed in fashion industry *''as catwalk models are apparently 'definitely getting older'....and by this they mean 18 rather than 15''* [35]''... *older, and not just in terms of conventional fashion parlance (which historically would mean 25)* [39].

Many fashion brands (Versace, Celine, SaintLaurent, H&M, Balmain, Gucci, Calvin Klein, Bottega Veneta etc.) have become *opinion-altering* and *age-positive* and cast models over 50. ''*Brands are now waking up to the fact that they have to be pro-ageing rather than anti-ageing*'' [65]. One of the most exciting sights was the autumn/ winter 2024 runways [5].

Generally, older models are well known and have had successful careers in fashion, cinema, theatre, literature. Jane Fonda, Isabella Rossellini, Faye Dunaway, Charlotte Rampling, Maggie Smith, Vanessa Redgrave, Helen Mirren, Catherine Deneuve, Twiggy, Joan Didion, Lyn Slater, Celine Dion, Julianne Moore, Julia Roberts, Jennifer Aniston, Reese Witherspoon are legendary models, actresses, writers, singers. "Advertisers and customers want to see personality, confidence, and a real person behind the facade. And part of that is life experience: older models have that" [45]. Older fashion models inspire both average women and young models in their twenties. *The Times of London* dubbed the growing cohort of older fashion influencers the "*silvfluencers*" These women still represent very classic standards of youth and beauty" [6]. Lyn Slater, founder of *Accidental Icon* and author of *How to Be Old*, accidentally became an influencer in 2017 at the age of 63 [58]. The slogan of *GreyModel Agency* ''Beautifully Ageing – Elegant Eccentric'' (https://www.greymodelagency.com/) often mirrors the basis of mature female models' participation in fashion shows. Some senior models started modelling when they were 60+ and considered modeling as a new adventure. Women over 50 spend more on clothes, accessories than other age groups. Thus, demographically, brands are ready to offer clothes for this group and ready to invite older models to their advertising campaigns. In fashion shows dignitaries and other guests can see highly privileged women who are ageless and clothes-wise but the majority of women are in the middle of the two extremes.

One of the best known mature models is Carmen Dell'Orefice, 94, who had a successful career in high fashion and appeared on VOGUE covers, retired in

Серія «**Іноземна філологія. Методика викладання іноземних мов**».   ISSN 2786-5312 (Print)   ISSN 2786-5320 (Online)   13

Series: **Foreign Philology. Methods of Foreign Language Teaching**.   **2025**. Випуск/Issue **102**

her thirties and embraced modelling again at 65. *In an industry which prizes youth, Dell'Orefice says she's proof of the nation's general acceptance of a graying population. Corinne Nicolas, president of Trump Model Management, which represents Dell'Orefice, said the octogenarian's glamour and presence has helped redefine what society defines as beautiful* [22]. In the 2020s she hasn't retired her heels and she is still catwalking.

Positive sentiment of the articles and positive attitude to ageing models is clear from the distribution of the words associated with old age, for example, *wrinkle, grey*: *"This isn't only about showing wrinkles and grey hair, but about being true to the older age group, which is as diverse as any other," …Grey is clearly having its fashion moment, but fashion, as we know, moves fast* [64]. *It's a lot of gray hair and wrinkled skin in the name of fashion. You could get breathless over these women, all old, and all magnificent. (And all, it must be noted, blindingly white)* [55].…*it wasn't always as the "token gray-haired model" sprinkled into the show like so many salt-and-pepper highlights* [19]. *Hutton is beautiful, and her face has lines upon lines, wrinkles spreading from her smile like crepuscular rays from the sun. Though she is visibly older, her looks still stun, and in the past few years, she has been featured in major campaigns…* [55]. *Sky-high demand for older models—women in their 60s, 70s, 80s and even 90s—is creating a silver wave in the modeling industry* [46].

The articles about oldest models are totally complimentary and laudatory what is evident from the word collocations, beads of adjectives with positive evaluative meaning and semantic superlatives, for example: *Daphne Selfe, born 1928, with her stunning beauty and timeless confidence, has become an icon in the fashion and beauty industry. With extraordinary spirit and perseverance to overcome all obstacles, she has proven that age is no barrier to success and radiance. With her unique beauty and graceful style, she became one of the top models of that decade./ Particularly, Carmen Dell'Orefice, born 1931, is known for her ageless beauty and adaptability over time. With her remarkable appearance and graceful style, she has continued to work in the fashion industry to this day, earning her the title of 'Supermodel of Maturity' and inspiring many with her ability to showcase allure and style at any age. With a career spanning decades, Carmen Dell'Orefice has proven that beauty and style know no age limits. She is*

an icon in the fashion industry / Lauren Hutton is an icon of confidence, individuality, and diversity in the fashion industry./ Veruschka von Lehndorff (84) is a renowned supermodel from the 1960s. With a slender figure, towering height of 6 feet, and stunning beauty, Veruschka became a fashion icon. / Penelope Tree(74) an epitome of pioneering fashion and iconic beauty [3, 21, 36, 57, 66]. The words *icon, iconic* are attributed to every mature model. Unlike articles about older politicians these publications include descriptions of great careers of senior models which are full of admiration and respect.

Younger models, over 50, are also described in the advantageous way: *''…it was J.Lo who stormed it better than anyone else.'…nobody did it better than J-Lo at Versace. Bronzed and buff, completely self-assured, she showed how powerful it is to see a woman in clothes, rather than a teenaged waif''* [36]. Names like Campbell, Schiffer, Crawford, Bruni and Christensen – the supers – are still well-known in fashion but ''it wasn't until the Versace SS18 runway that the industry *really* took note that you can't put an expiry date on style and class'' [36].

Male mature models happen to be on a catwalk quite rarely. Wang Deshun, an octogenarian from China, became famous after a fashion show when he catwalked shirtless with a strong and fierce style. The video went viral and in several hours, he was known as the world's hottest grandpa [43].

4. CONCLUSION

Older people visibility is perceived and assessed positively if it correlates with wisdom, exceptional talent, elegance, attractive appearance, unique personal achievements and efficiency. If weakened intellect, failing health prevent elderly individuals from exercising professional responsibilities, emotional tone in the articles changes from positive to negative. One of the reasons US political gerontocracy is bitterly criticised is the fact that elderly politicians are involved in decision-making and are still in the position to take fateful decisions. The emotional tone might be more positive if politicians take decisions to leave room in due time.

Further research on portrayal and stereotyping elderly individuals can span, on the one hand, emotional speech on social media, on the other hand, increasing visibility of older people in mass media and social media, in advertising discourse.

REFERENCES

1. Ain, N. A. (2018). Real Time, Apparent Time and Age Grading. *Research on Humanities amd Social Sciences, 8*(8), 56-60.

2. A Modern Day Sparta: The American Gerontocracy and the National Security Implications of Elderly Rule. Retrieved from: https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2025/06/19/a-modern-day-sparta-the-american-gerontocracy-and-the-national-security-implications-of-elderly-rule/

3. Apatoff, A. & Krarofill, C. (2022). *Celebrity Models Over 50 Rocking A-List Ad Campaigns*. Retrieved from: https://people.com/style/celebrity-models-over-50-years-old/

4. Bailey, R. (2025). *Can America Get Out of the Gerontocracy Gap?* Retrieved from: https://reason.com/2025/04/26/the-present-and-future-of-the-gerontocracy/

5. Borrelli-Persson, I., Criales-Unzueta, J., & Garcia-Furtado, L. (2024). *Ageing as a Process. It's Up To Us To Make It Beautiful: 4 Older Models On Changing The Guard.* Retrieved from: https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/older-models

6. Brown, A. (2022). *Is fashion finally becoming more age inclusive?* Retrieved from: https://www.vogue.com.au/fashion/news/mature-age-models/news-story/9b72a6863d2a14c788badf7fe04c8654

7. Cheshire, J. (2006). *Age and Generation-specific use of language.* Retrieved from:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251784426_Age_and_Generation-specific_use_of_language

8. Clifton, Z. & Yale, Ch. (2024). *Systemic Solutions for Dismantling the American Gerontocracy.* Retrieved from: https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/systemic-solutions-for-dismantling-the-american-gerontocracy/

9. Fayyad, A. (2024). *Why American politicians are so old. And why the solution isn't age limits.* Retrieved from: https://www.vox.com/policy/358863/old-politicians-gerontocracy-age-limits

10. Fetherston, S. (2018). *Fierce Over 50's: 5 Older models slaying the runway.* Retrieved from: https://www.rte.ie/lifestyle/fashion/2018/0204/937327-fierce-over-50s-5-older-models-slaying-the-runway/

11. Fleisher, G. (2024). *America's Gerontocracy is Almost Over. Generational change is arriving in Washington.* Retrieved from: https://www.wakeuptopolitics.com/p/americas-gerontocracy-is-almost-over

12. Gasain, N., Mishra, M., & Gupta, A. (2025). *Redefining Successful Ageing: Conceptualising Successful Ageing in the Indian Context.* Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391930330_Redefining_Successful_Ageing_Conceptualising_Successful_Ageing_in_the_Indian_Context

13. Ghosh, M. (2025). Ageless bonds: reimagining ageing, family and digital connectedness. *Working with Older People.* DOI: 10.1108/WWOP-05-2025-0024

14. Gravell, R. (1988). *Communication Problems in Elderly People: Practical Approaches to Management.* London: Routledge.

15. Hamilton, H. E. (Ed.). (1999). Language and Communication in Old Age.Multidisciplinary Perspectives. Routledge.

16. Hawes, F. & Cernohous, I. (2024). Student-led intergenerational programs in nursing homes. *Innovation in Aging*, *8*(1), 482. DOI: 10.1093/geroni/igae098.1572

17. Hogg, J., Mos, S., & Cooke, D.(2025). *Ageing and Mental Handicap*. London: Routledge.

18. Holden, U. (2025). *Ageing, Neuropsychology and the 'New' Dementias: Definitions, Explanations and Practical Approaches*. London: Routledge.

19. Hyland, V. (2016). *This Fashion Week, Designers Weren't Afraid to Use Older Models.* Retrieved from: https://www.thecut.com/2016/09/older-models-walk-at-new-york-fashion-week.html

20. *Improving the visibility of older persons in global statistics.* (2024). Retrieved from: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/citygroups/2487%20Improving%20the%20Visibility%20of%20Older%20Persons%20in%20Global%20Statistics%20v1-0.pdf

21. Jackson, M. (2024). *The over 70s models tearing up the runway.* Retrieved from: https://www.hellomagazine.com/fashion/516843/these-over-70-models-are-still-tearing-up-the-runway/

22. Kim, E. (2012). *81-year-old Fashion Week model: 'Life exists beyond 50'.* Retrieved from: https://www.today.com/style/81-year-old-fashion-week-model-life-exists-beyond-50-989595

23. Krauss, B. (2025). *Gerontocracy is everywhere.* Retrieved from: https://www.slowboring.com/p/gerontocracy-is-everywhere

24. Krein, J. (2020). *America's Unhealthy Gerontocracy.* Retrieved from:https://americanaffairsjournal.org/2020/06/americas-unhealthy-gerontocracy/

25. Labov, W. (1963). The Social Motivation of a Sound Change. *Word*, *19*, 273–309.

26. Lewis, H. (2025). *The Democrats Must Confront Their Gerontocracy. The party needs a polite way to usher politicians toward retirement.* Retrieved from:https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2025/06/us-needs-polite-way-usher-politicians-out/683230/

27. Litwack, M. (2025) *American gerontocracy.* Retrieved from: https://mishpacha.com/american-gerontocracy/

28. *Making older persons visible in the sustainable development goals' monitoring framework and indicators.* (2024). Retrieved from: https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/376154/9789240090248-eng.pdf?sequence=1

29. Matthews, J. J. (2023). *America's gerontocracy dilemma.* Retrieved from: https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/americas-gerontocracy-dilemma/

30. Meiners, N. (2025). Between Demographic Reality and Advertising Perception: Age-Appropriate Advertising in the Context of Socially Sustainable Corporate Responsibility. *International Journal of Sustainability in Business and Economics, 1*(1). DOI: 10.51137/wrp.ijsbe.2025.nmbd.45819

31. *Merriam Webster Dictionary*. Retrieved from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/

32. Moyn, S. (2024). *America's Gerontocracy Problem Goes Far Beyond the President.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/14/opinion/america-gerontocracy-biden-trump.html

33. Ng, R., & Indran, N. (2023). Does Age Matter? Tweets About Gerontocracy in the United States. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B, 78*(11), 1870–1878 DOI: 10.1093/geronb/gbad113

34. *Older models in fashion; slowly but surely making their mark.* (2014). Retrieved from: https://www.thewomensroomblog.com/2014/03/03/older-models-in-fashion-slowly-but-surely-we-are-seeing-more-of-them/

35. *Older women star in fashion campaigns – in pictures*. (2023). Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/gallery/2023/oct/27/older-women-star-fashion-campaigns-in-pictures

36. O'Malley, K. (2020). *11 Women Over 40 Reclaiming Their Space In Fashion, From Jennifer Lopez To Celine Dion.* Retrieved from: https://www.elle.com/uk/fashion/celebrity-style/a32006376/older-women-fashion/

37. Orleans, H. (Ed.). (2025). Adjustment to Adult hearing Loss (2025). Routledge

38. Oxford English online dictionary (n.d.). Retrieved from: https://www.oed.com/?tl=true

39. Paton, E. (2024). *More old(er) models walked on the runways this season, marking a step in the right direction for age representation.* Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/12/style/models-fashion-age.html

40. Pinazo-Hernandis, S, & Carrascosa- Sánchez, C. (2024). Effectiveness of Intergenerational Programs to Reduce Loneliness: A Scoping Review and Reflections. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, 23*(3),1-18. DOI: 10.1080/15350770.2024.2400278

41. Powell. J. (2025). Unpacking Gerontology. *Baudrillard and Aging* (pp. 101-109). Berlin: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-83663-3_7

42. Previtali, F., Durnova, A., Timonen, V., & Batista, L. G. (2025). CFP - Emotions, ageing and environmental change: Making sense of current and future worlds through collective and individual lenses. *Emotions and Society*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

43. R, D. (2025). *9 oldest models in the world.* Retrieved from: https://www.oldest.org/culture/models/

44. Sahraoui, M. & Hagège, M. (2025). Disability and Ageing. *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Disability (pp. 1-13).* New York: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-40858-8_406-1

45. Sams, L (2021). *Why senior fashion models are increasingly in demand.* Retrieved from: https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/fashion-and-style/why-senior-fashion-models-are-increasingly-in-demand-20211014-p58zvu

46. Satran, B. (2023*). They're Cover Girls. They're in Their 70s.* Retrieved from: https://www.wsj.com/style/fashion/older-models-fashion-over-60-aging-11673668643

47. Scarborough, R. (2024). *Is the United States a Gerontocracy?* Retrieved from: https://www.ccga.edu/reg-murphy-publications/is-the-united-states-a-gerontocracy/

48. Segal, J. Z. (2019). Ageism and Rhetoric. In *Routledge Handbook of the Medical Humanities (pp. 163-175)*

49. Sen, M. (2025). Treating ageing: a review. *Research Journal of Life Sciences Bioinformatics Pharmaceutical and Chemical Sciences*, *11*(1). DOI: 10.26479/2025.1101.04

50. Shih, Y.-H. & Tzeng, Sh.-Yu. (2025). Culturally Oriented Intergenerational Learning Programs Between Older Adults and Young Children: A Review Study. *Journal of Management World, 2025*(1), 77-84 DOI: 10.53935/jomw.v2024i4.614

51. Smith, D. (2023). *Gerontocracy: the exceptionally old political class that governs the US.* Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/feb/19/us-congress-presidency-gerontocracy

52. Sperry, L. & Prosen, H. (1996). *Aging in the Twenty-first Century A Developmental Perspective.* London: Routledge.

53. Sullman. M. J. N. & Mohammadinasab, R. (2025). The Evolution of Aging and Gerontology: A Historical Odyssey. *International Journal of Aging 3:e6*. DOI: 10.34172/ija.2025.e6

54. Summers, Ch. G. (2018). *Aging, but Make It Fashion.* Retrieved from: https://www.racked.com/2018/9/6/17818750/fashion-aging-older-models-lauren-hutton-isabella-rossellini

55. Talay, A. et al., (2025). Open problems in ageing science: A roadmap for biogerontology. *Quantitative Biology.* DOI: 10.48550/arXiv.2507.18602

56. Thomson, T., Miller, E., Holland-Batt, S., Seevinck, J., & Regi, S. (2022). Visibility and invisibility in the aged care sector: visual representation in Australian news from 2018–2021. *Media International Australia*, *190*(1), 146-164. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878X221094374

57. Top 8 Oldest Fashion Models Worldwide. (2025). Retrieved from: https://mytour.vn/en/blog/bai-viet/top-8-oldest-fashion-models-worldwide.html#google_vignette

58. Tsui, D. (2024). *Fasion Is Enbracing The Beauty of Getting Older.* Retrieved from: https://www.thezoereport.com/fashion/models-over-40-casting-fashion

59. Twigg, J. & Martin, W. (2015.) Routledge Handbook of Cultural Gerontology. Routledge.

60. Verhage. M., Schuurman, B., & Lindenberg, J. (2021). How young adults view older people: Exploring the pathways of constructing a group image after participation in an intergenerational programme. *Journal of Ageing Studies, 56*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jaging.2021.100912

61. Videnovic, M. & Baucal, A. (2025). Discourses we are ageing by: the role of personal responsibility and societal obstacles in successful ageing. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 40(3).* DOI: 10.1007/s10212-025-00983-1

62. Wagner, S. E. (2012). Age Grading in Sociolinguistic Theory. *Language and Linguistics Compass 6*(6), 371–382.DOI: 10.1002/lnc3.343

63. Wang, Y., Wang, H., & Fang, Y. (2025). Impact of population ageing on stroke-related disability-adjusted life years: a global decomposition analysis*. Aging Clinical and Experimental Research*, *37*(1). DOI: 10.1007/s40520-025-03145-x

64. Wilson, A. (2025). *Active Seniors: America's Gerontocracy Problem*. Retrieved from: https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/5123881-active-seniors-americas-gerontocracy-problem/

65. Woods, J. (2015). *The older models at the very top of high fashion.* Retrieved from: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11678060/The-older-models-at-the-very-top-of-high-fashion.html

66. Woods, C. (2021). *Older Models Aren't a Passing Fashion, They Make Sense Financially and Socially | Opinion.* Retrieved from: https://www.newsweek.com/older-models-arent-passing-fashion-they-make-sense-financially-socially-opinion-1601701

67. World Population Ageing. (2023). *Challenges and opportunities of population ageing in the least developed countries.* Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2024_wpa2023-report.pdf

68. Zarit, S. (2024). Rich history of gerontology and gsa. *Innovation in Agin*g, *8*(1),505. DOI: 10.1093/geroni/igae098.1650

Бєлова Алла Дмитрівна – доктор філологічних наук, професор, завідувач кафедри англійської філології та міжкультурної комунікації Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка; e-mail: profbelova@gmail.com; ORCID 0000-0002-3014-326X;GOOGLE SCHOLAR: https://scholar.google.com.ua/citations _?user=gLn7TwoAAAAJ&hl=uk; RESEARCH GATE: https://www.researchgate. net/profile/Alla-Belova

СТАВЛЕННЯ ДО ВИДИМОСТІ ЛЮДЕЙ ПОХИЛОГО ВІКУ В ПОЛІТИЦІ ТА ІНДУСТРІЇ МОДИ

У статті на матеріалі англійської мови висвітлюються засоби емоційного ставлення до людей похилого віку в політиці та моді – двох професійних сферах, що характеризуються безпрецедентною видимістю діючих осіб та винятковим інтересом громадськості. Статистика, геронтологія, геронтолінгвістика, численні аналітичні звіти свідчать про старіння світу, стрімке зростання частки людей віком 65+, в тому числі групи вісімдесятирічних. Тим не менш, люди похилого віку залишаються невидимими у громадських місцях, на робочих місцях, осторонь процесів прийняття рішень. У XXI столітті видимість людей похилого віку стає складовою інклюзивного суспільства та сталого розвитку. Вікові обмеження не дають можливості людям пенсійного віку працювати у багатьох галузях, але видатні фахівці у віці вісімдесяти років ламають вікові стереотипи та залишаються активними, привертаючи увагу завдяки своєму надзвичайному таланту та винятковості. Президенти США у 2010-2020-х роках, вісімдесятирічні та дев'яностолітні сенатори та судді Верховного Суду Сполучених Штатів зазнають жорсткої критики в ЗМІ та отримують багато негативних коментарів у соцмережах. Статті про політичну геронтократію у США мають явний негативний тон, позначені використанням слів та ідіом з негативним оцінним значенням, традиційною негативною стереотипізацією людей похилого віку. І, навпаки, старші моделі, які беруть участь у престижних модних показах та запрошуються до рекламних кампаній люксових брендів, сприймаються позитивно як взірець елегантності, здорового способу життя. Хвалебні статті про моделей 60+, успішних акторок, співачок, письменниць, моделей, які повернулися на подіум у зрілому віці, мають позитивний контекст. Лексичні одиниці, які у публікаціях традиційно пов'язують з похилим віком (зморшка, сивина), вживаються у статтях про зрілих моделей у позитивному контексті і набувають позитивного оцінного значення. Автори публікацій ігнорують блискучі кар'єри вісімдесятирічних політиків, тоді як минулі досягнення старших моделей у світі моди або за його межами висвітлюють детально та позитивно.

Ключові слова: *віковий стереотип, вісімдесятирічний, геронтократія, геронтолінгвістика, дев'яностолітній, мода, політика.*