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# LINGUOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PHRASEOLOGY

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**ABSTRACT:** Recent developments in cognitive linguistics have brought about significant changes in the understanding of categorization processes, emphasizing the subjective nature of human experience rather than exclusively objective interpretations of reality. Alongside the growing scholarly interest in individual perceptions and personal experiences, the emergence of new approaches to identity, particularly social constructivism, has encouraged researchers to reconsider traditional perspectives on sex and gender, which were previously explained predominantly through biological determinism. These intellectual developments have contributed to the establishment of interdisciplinary fields examining the sociocultural mechanisms through which different dimensions of social identity, including gender, are constructed and represented.

**Keywords:** gender stereotypes, phraseological units, masculinity, femininity, Language and Gender, social characteristics, psychological characteristics, physiological characteristics.

## Introduction

A strike on symbolic-semantic nature of gender allows assuming that it has acquired extra positive and negative features based on the experience. Today, "gender studies are concerned with the issues such as the definition of femininity and masculinity as two socio-cultural constructs, their relationship with sexuality, the analysis of the ideas built upon the differences between men and women, and the roles that men and women play and are expected to play in society"[1].

The fundamental approach to gender and language studies dates back to the early XX century. Gender aspect of language and communication had been the main subject of the researches[2] but still remaining invisible to the linguistics. The development of sociolinguistics, the formation of the postmodern theory of knowledge and the rise of the feminist movement played an important role in the emergence of fundamental gender issues, as an independent aspect within an interdisciplinary field.

Gender Studies have become a core branch of scholarship which best expresses the need and demand for a change in the social life of the society, the need which is mostly addressed to women (in the context of present work) and other social minorities.

Modern researches dealing with *Language and Gender* topic work from the premise that we should not take the language of gender for granted. However, the very topic in the form of

[1] De Marco M. Audiovisual translation through a gender lens. – Amsterdam-NY, 2012. – p. 25.
[2] Jespersen O. Language: its nature, development and origin. – London: Allen & Unwin, 1922; Haas M. 'Men's and women's speech in Koasati'. Language 20, 1944. – p. 142–9.; Trudgill P. Sociolinguistics. – London: Penguin, 1974, 1983, 1995;

linguistic forms in the special language has intricate, interesting, and sometimes debatable histories to study, as "Debates about language are really about issues of race, gender, class, or culture"[3].

Language change from gender perspective may be seen in the form of two challenges: early feminist challenges to the sexist nature of various aspects of language (particularly in the 1970s), and more recent feminist and post-structuralist challenges to those early challenges. The study of the relationship between language and sex may be divided into two periods, the boundary of which is the 1960s:

1) biological determinism – irregular (apart from interdisciplinary view) studies, based mainly on observations of disparate facts;

2) fundamental approach – an important turn of gender researches that goes back to the late 1960s and 1970s; a milestone characterized by the growing interest in the pragmatic aspect of linguistics, the development of sociolinguistics and the significant changes in the traditional distribution of gender roles in society, all of which enabled to see linguistic facts in a new light, under new interpretation[4].

The factor of biological sex in the language, for the first time, arose in antiquity in connection with the understanding of a grammatical gender category as a conceptual category[5]. For a long time a symbolic-semantic character of the category of gender was the only hypothesis about the origin and functioning of the category of *gender* in the language based on two features of the mythological thinking – animism and anthropomorphism. It is worth mentioning that the researchers tried to implement their own (non-linguistic) experience to understand and explain extra-linguistic motivation of the category of *gender*: the masculine gender was to be paramount, hence, it ascribed power, activity and energy to the nouns described, the names of the feminine gender, on the contrary, were characterized to be passive, subordinate[6].

The symbolic-semantic hypothesis became challengeable until the discovery of the languages in which the category of gender was absent. Nevertheless, in the framework of criticism of this hypothesis the recognition of the category of gender itself, which is capable to influence the human perception of the corresponding words and concepts, remained unchanged, all of which suggest that the grammatical gender of the subject influences the perception of reality activating in the consciousness frames associated with the concept of the biological sex and, what is more essential, participates in the formation of positive or negative connotations.

Women's and men's speech as a subject of researches has been of particular interest to sociolinguistics. The study of gender differences in women's and men's talk by Otto Jespersen claims that women often shift from one topic to another, because they do not think of what they are going to speak[7]. Mary Haas studies men's and women's speech in Koasati (Native American language spoken in Louisiana)[8] based on the vocabulary, texts and verb paradigms collected. In this

[3] Romaine S. Sociohistorical Linguistics. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
[4] Кирилина А.В. Гендер: лингвистические аспекты. – Москва, 1999. – С. 22.
[5] Расулова М.И. Основы лексической категоризации в лингвистике. – Ташкент: Фан, 2005. – С. 70-75.
[6] Кирилина А.В. Гендер: лингвистические аспекты. – Москва, 1999. – С. 23.
[7] Jespersen O. Language: its nature, development and origin. – London: Allen & Unwin, 1922. – p. 251.
[8] Haas M. 'Men's and women's speech in Koasati', Language 20. – № 3: 1944. – p. 142–9.

context, it is worth mentioning the empirical studies of William Labov[9] and Peter Trudgill[10] on variation in the language.

From the 1970s gender and language studies got a new level of approach by Women's Movement known as the Second Wave of Feminism or Women's liberation movement; however empirical works on gender and language did exist well before the modern Women's Movement. In spite of the fact that feminism was criticized occasionally, the results are remarkable today: CEDAW 1975 and the Beijing Conference on Women 1995 are the most essential landmarks which have changed the overall view on *equality* conception. It is worth noting that language has served as a particular "tool" in demonstrating the women's status through androcentrism existing in the language[11].

An issue of natural language study has been addressed by Robin Lakoff in 1975, in her famous "Language and Woman's Place"[12]. The study covers the questions of non-sexist language from a feminist viewpoint; moreover, it was an important step toward further development of 'gender and language' issues.

A short while later, in 1980 Dale Spender's "Man Made Language"[13] was released in the UK. The book addresses the issues of "silenced women" in language, as well as the problems of *generic he* and *generic man*. She argues that theories and categories are not gender-neutral, and that, "When there are a sexist language and sexist theories culturally available, the observation of reality is also likely to be sexist. It is by this means that sexism can be perpetuated and reinforced as new objects and events, new data, have sexist interpretations projected upon them"[14].

The same focus was touched in the PhD research we have done, in particular the paragraph, which dealt with the generalization of *HE*. An empirical study of proverbs with the component *man* based on the "Oxford Concise Dictionary of Proverbs" showed that in 63 cases of the 72 *a human being* has been connotated, whereas only 9 proverbs defined the seme of *a male being*[15].

In the "English-Russian phraseological dictionary" by A.V. Kunin 109 out of 130 phraseological units bear a connotation of *a human being*, and only 21 *a male being.*

Data gathered indicate an identification of (male) *man* with *human being.* However, the feminist theory explains the identification by distribution of gender roles in society, rather than linguistic factors, since according to the sociolinguistic research, the English language has been developed under influence of Jewish-Christian traditions which supported male dominance over female[16]. According to Pamela Fishman, who studied a conversational activity in "Language,

[9] Labov W. The Social Stratification of English in New York City. – Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. 1966; Language in the Inner City. Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972.

[10] Trudgill P. 'Sex, covert prestige and linguistic change in the urban British English of Norwich', Language in Society 1, 1972. – p. 179–195.

[11] Morgan R. Going Too Far. – New York: Random House, 1977; Toth E. 'How can a woman "man" the barricades?' Women: a journal of liberation 2 (1): 57. 1970; Greer G. The Female Eunuch. London: Paladin. 1972; Miller Casey and Swift Kate. Words and Women. – New York: Anchor Press, 1976.

[12] Lakoff R. Language and Woman's Place. – New York: Harper & Row, 1975. Reprinted 2004.

[13] Spender D. Man Made Language. – London: Routledge, 1980.

[14] *Ibid,* – p. 141.

[15] Ergasheva G.I. Comparative-typological research of gender aspect in the phraseological units and proverbs of the English and Russian languages. PhD thesis. Tashkent, 2011.

[16] Семенова И.В. Гендерный аспект концептуального анализа лексем "мужчина" и "женщина" (на материале фразеологии английского, русского и кабардинского языков): Дисс. … канд.филол.наук. – М., 2006. – С. 128.

Gender and Society"[17] language is the constructor and keeper of hierarchical status between males and females.

A new approach to gender and language has been put forward by Deborah Tannen and her followers[18], supporters of the theory of gender subcultures, which assumes that women and men experience language socialization in different ways. Being brought up in different sex groups (sociolinguistic subcultures) in their childhood with different tactics of speech behavior, the verbal communication between men and women provokes an inadequate reaction. Therefore, they have to be regarded as two distinct subcultures characterized by special speech practices. Having originated in the US, the most prevalence of feminist linguistics in Europe has been affected by the works of Trömel-Plötz "Linguistik und Frauensprache"[19], and L. Pusch "Das Deutsche als Männersprache"[20].

The ideology of feminism is often seen as one of the branches of postmodern philosophy. As to feminist linguistics, the language represents the world from masculine viewpoint, whereas feminine is considered to be "alien".

A. Kirilina distinguishes the following features of androcentrism from feminist linguistics viewpoint:

1. Identification of the concepts *man* and *human being*. They are denoted by one word in many languages of Europe: *man* in English, *home* in French, *Mann* in German.

2. Nominations of feminine nouns are usually derived from the male, and not vice versa. They are often associated with negative estimations. The use of the masculine designation to the woman referent is acceptable, allegedly enhancing her status. On the contrary, ascribing feminine nouns to the males carries a negative assessment.

3. Masculine nouns can be used unspecified, that is, to refer for both sexes. Thus, according to the feminist criticism of language, women are generally ignored in the language in the majority of cases.

4. Agreement at the syntactic level is based on the form of grammatical gender of appropriate parts of speech and not on the natural sex of the referent.

5. Femininity and masculinity are sharply separated and opposed to each other, in a qualitative (positive and negative evaluation) and quantitative (universal male dominance) respect, which leads to gender asymmetries formation[21].

Another approach to Gender and Language studies is seen in G.Ergasheva's attempts to evaluate the cognitive semantics analysis in demonstrating the language potential, how we consciously and unconsciously categorize and conceptualize the world through gender lens to reach understanding: "The development of cognitive psychology and linguistics urges the revision of the process of categorization in a new format, with its own patterns and tendencies, since it is represented as a complex mental and linguistic process"[22].

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[17] Fishman P. 'Interaction: the work women do', in Barrie Thorne et al. (eds) Language, Gender and Society. Rowley, Mass.: – Newbury House, 1983. – p. 89.

[18] Tannen D. You Just Don't Understand! Women and men in conversation. – London: Virago, 1991; Maltz D.N., Borker R.A. Mißverständnisse zwischen Männern und Frauen - kulturell betrachtet // Günthner, Kotthoff (Hrsg) Von fremden Sttimmen. Weibliches und männliches Sprechen im Kulturvergleich. – Frankfurt am Main, 1991. – S. 52-74.

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[21] Кирилина А. В. Гендер: лингвистические аспекты. – М.: Институт социологии РАН, 1999. – С. 9.

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**Conclusion**

As is known, in English phraseological units, the gender index is expressed only in lexical and semantic aspect, which can be explained by the absence of grammatical category of gender in both, English and Uzbek languages. Thus, gender indicators are represented by gender marked lexemes or meaningful components present in the semantics of phraseological units.

"In languages that do not have a grammatical category, natural gender does not have a grammatical expression in the language system and is mainly expressed through lexical semantics"[23]. Therefore, the explicit and implicit expression of the studied language sources should have a gender index[24].

Given the absence of a grammatical gender in English, the gender index in explicit form of phraseological units is important. I.V. Zikova divides the set of lexemes of the expressive aspect into the following three main groups:

1) anthropometric lexemes;
2) lexemes denoting kinship;
3) anthroponymic lexemes.

"Anthropometric lexemes are mentioned in A.V. Silinsky's monograph "Речевая вариативность" (1995) and refer to "nouns named according to the sex and age of individuals"[25]. According to Zikova, the words girl - boy, lady - gentleman, Miss - Mrs - Mr, etc. belong to the group of anropometric lexemes, and the main part of words belonging to this group are double words, that is masculine gender words and feminine gender words made from masculine words, e.g. : prince - princess; duke – duchess, etc. Suppletive gender pairs of words are relatively rare like: boy - girl, gentleman - lady.

The emergence of gender anthroponyms is explained as follows:

1) Anthroponyms formed as a result of communicative processes: Tom, Dick and Harry.

A.V. Kunin's English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary (1984) and Oxford Concise Dictionary of Proverbs (2003) served as the main source of the study. More than thousand phraseological units were selected from these dictionaries based on the method of integral selection.

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3. Romaine S. Sociohistorical Linguistics. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
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