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LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN UZBEK PHRASEOLOGY UNDER DIGITALIZATION

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Abstract:

This study examines the representation of gender stereotypes in Uzbek phraseological expressions from a multifaceted linguistic perspective, focusing on their semantic organization, cultural foundations, and mechanisms of development. The research seeks to determine how masculine and feminine images are conceptualized within phraseological units, to identify their evaluative and expressive meanings, and to clarify their role in shaping social identity. The article applies linguocultural, cognitive, semantic, and discourse-based analytical methods. The findings indicate that gender stereotypes embedded in Uzbek phraseology have been formed through long-standing historical and cultural traditions, functioning as linguistic models that reinforce conventional gender roles. In addition, the study reveals that ongoing social and technological changes are contributing to the semantic evolution and reinterpretation of certain stereotypical expressions.

Keywords: gender, stereotype, phraseology, linguoculturology, cognitive model, discourse, connotation, semantic field, social identity, patriarchal paradigm.



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Language is a complex semiotic system that embodies the social consciousness, system of values, and historical experience of society. Linguistic units, particularly phraseological expressions, function as stable semantic constructions reflecting the worldview and mentality of a nation. Phraseological units perform not only a nominative function, but also evaluative, expressive, and normative functions. Therefore, they hold special significance as linguistic mechanisms that preserve and transmit social stereotypes.

The term *stereotype* (derived from the Greek words *stereos* — “solid, firm” and *typos* — “mark, pattern, form”) was initially used in the terminology of printing technology, referring to a fixed mold or plate designed for repeated reproduction after being prepared once. However, the concept of stereotype has not always carried a positive connotation. For example, in the psychology dictionary compiled by M. Cordwell, the term *stereotype* is defined as follows:

“A stereotype is a rigid and often superficial perception of a particular group or category. Since people generally tend toward simplification, they create stereotypes in order to predict the behavior of others in advance. Such stereotypes are frequently based on negative assumptions, false perceptions, and criticism. However, stereotypes are not always entirely false; they usually contain a certain degree of truth. The fact that stereotypes are shared by the majority contributes to their persistence and internalization. Although stereotypes may change over time, it is often difficult for individuals who hold them to free themselves from these deeply ingrained perceptions.”

Gender stereotypes represent a system of social expectations, values, and roles associated with men and women. These stereotypes are often perceived in social consciousness as natural and unchangeable truths; however, they are in fact products of specific historical and cultural conditions. Language functions as a



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means of reinforcing and legitimizing such stereotypes. In particular, phraseological units convey stereotypical perceptions in a stable form through figurative meaning, metaphor, and imagery.¹

This study aims to systematically analyze the features of gender stereotype representation in Uzbek phraseological units. The relevance of the research lies in the fact that although issues of language and gender have been widely explored in modern linguistics, a comprehensive linguocultural analysis of gender stereotypes within the Uzbek phraseological system has not yet been sufficiently carried out.

Phraseology studies semantically unified, figurative, and stable units within the language system. The meanings of the individual components of phraseological units do not fully correspond to their overall meaning; instead, they generate a new figurative meaning through semantic integration. In this respect, phraseological expressions reflect the national mentality as products of collective consciousness.

The linguocultural approach is based on the inseparable relationship between language and culture. Every phraseological unit preserves a particular cultural code within its structure. Gender stereotypes are likewise formed within this cultural framework. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, stereotypes are expressed through conceptual metaphors and frames. For instance, conceptual models such as “man as strength” and “woman as delicacy” are reflected in phraseological expressions. These models are closely connected with the distribution of social roles within society.

The discourse-based approach, in turn, analyzes the function of linguistic units in real communicative contexts. When phraseological expressions are used in

¹ Usmanova Sh. *Lingvokulturologiya. (darslik) – T.: Toshkent, 2019. – 248.*



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specific contexts, they convey social evaluation and normative attitudes. Thus, phraseological units function as linguistic tools that contribute to the construction of gender identity.²

During the course of the research, numerous Uzbek phraseological units were classified into three groups according to their gender component: phraseological units related to female imagery, phraseological units related to male imagery, and units containing implicit gender components.

Phraseological expressions associated with women are mainly concentrated within the following semantic fields: emotionality and feelings, family roles and domesticity, cunning and deceit, endurance and patience. For example, the expression “*A woman has forty souls*” represents the stereotype of endurance and resilience. The phrase “*Long hair, short mind*” reflects a negative evaluation of women’s intellectual capacity. Likewise, the expression “*A woman’s cunning is a load for forty camels*” reinforces an ancient stereotype linking female identity with deceitfulness.

These phraseological units contain a strong emotional and expressive component in which evaluative connotations dominate. The tendency to associate the female image primarily with family and domestic space demonstrates the deep-rooted influence of the patriarchal social model embedded in language.

Phraseological Units Related to Male Imagery

Phraseological expressions associated with men are primarily represented within the following semantic fields: courage and bravery, strength and power, leadership and responsibility, reliability and determination. Expressions such as

² Yusupova, S. (2022). Ijtimoiy guruhlarda hurmat kategoriyasi ifodalanishi. *Science and innovation*, 1(B5), 350–352.



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“A young man’s word is an arrow,” “A brave man is recognized on the battlefield,” and “A true man is born for his people” portray the male image as active, strong, and socially responsible.

In these phraseological units, positive connotations prevail, and the model of male social superiority is normatively reinforced. Some phraseological expressions do not directly contain explicit gender markers; however, from a contextual perspective, they still contribute to the preservation and reinforcement of gender stereotypes.³

For example, phraseological units associated with strength and determination are commonly linked with men, whereas expressions related to delicacy and emotionality are generally associated with women. This demonstrates that gender stereotypes are deeply rooted in linguistic consciousness.

The connotative component of phraseological units determines their social evaluation. According to the findings of the study, most expressions related to men carry positive connotations, while phraseological units associated with women more frequently contain negative or ironic evaluations. This reflects the existence of gender asymmetry within the language system.

From a pragmatic perspective, such expressions shape normative models of behavior in communication. For instance, the expression *“Be brave”* is typically addressed to men and functions as a norm of courage and masculinity. In contrast, expressions directed toward women more often emphasize obedience, patience, and endurance.

Language not only reflects social reality but also shapes it. Through phraseological units, gender roles are legitimized and transmitted from generation

³ G. To‘lanboyeva, & S. Yusupova (2022). Lingvokulturologiya o‘rganilish tarixi. Science and innovation, 1(B6), 540–543.



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to generation. As a result, male and female identities become grounded in stable stereotypical models. With the growing influence of gender equality ideas in modern society, the active use of certain phraseological stereotypes has gradually decreased. Nevertheless, these expressions remain preserved within the language system and continue to exist as elements of cultural memory.⁴

The analysis demonstrates that the Uzbek phraseological system has encoded gender stereotypes as conceptual models. Strength and leadership are predominantly associated with the male image, whereas emotionality and domesticity are more commonly linked with the female image. This phenomenon is closely connected with the historical social structure of society. At the same time, language is a dynamic system that transforms in accordance with social change. In contemporary communicative practice, the process of gender neutralization can already be observed. However, due to the stability and persistence of phraseological units, the complete disappearance of such stereotypes remains a gradual process.⁵

Conclusion: Phraseological units in the Uzbek language serve as important linguistic tools for preserving and transmitting gender stereotypes. Male and female images within the language system are represented on the basis of traditional social roles. While phraseological expressions related to men are predominantly characterized by positive connotations and semantic features associated with strength and authority, units related to women often contain emotional and sometimes negative evaluative meanings. This reflects the existence of gender asymmetry within the linguistic system.

⁴ Vorobyev V.V. Lingvokulturologiya (teoriya i metodi): monografiya. – M.: Izd-vo RUDN, 2016.

⁵ journal.fledu.uz



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At the same time, contemporary social processes are also influencing language, leading to the transformation of certain stereotypical expressions. A deeper linguistic investigation of gender stereotypes can provide a valuable theoretical foundation for the improvement of language policy, educational practices, and public discourse.

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