

The Expression of Gender in Paremiological Units in English

 Chutpulatov Mukhammad Chariyevich

PhD, Associate Professor, Vice-rector for Academic Affairs, Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Uzbekistan

E-mail: chutpulatovmukhammad@gmail.com

Received: 15 March 2026; **Accepted:** 03 April 2026; **Published:** 29 April 2026

Abstract: This article investigates the representation of gender in English paremiological units, with particular emphasis on how proverbs and sayings reflect both universal and national-cultural dimensions of the linguistic worldview. The study is situated within the framework of contemporary gender linguistics and adopts an anthropocentric approach, conceptualizing gender as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon mediated through language. Special attention is paid to the concept of gender asymmetry, which reveals the predominance of androcentric perspectives in linguistic structures. The analysis demonstrates that English proverbs frequently reproduce traditional gender roles, portraying men as active and dominant, while associating women with domesticity and subordinate social positions. At the same time, paremiological units encode broader moral values and culturally shared norms that extend beyond gender distinctions. The findings suggest that proverbs constitute a significant linguistic resource for identifying gender stereotypes and provide valuable insights into the role of language in the construction and transmission of gender identities across generations.

Keywords: Gender, gender linguistics, feminist linguistics, masculinity, femininity, gender asymmetry, paremiology, proverb, saying, cultural worldview.

Introduction: It is common knowledge that the problem of the connection of language and gender is one of the most disputable and interesting issues of present-day linguistic investigations. There are a number of theories and approaches dealing with the specific features of gender linguistics. One of the first approaches was developed by Robin Lakoff, who is considered a pioneer who initiated the academic study of language and gender. The key aspects of Lakoff's theory include:

- The Deficit Model: Lakoff argued that women's language is deficient compared to the male norm, which is associated with authority and power.
- Linguistic Features: Women's speech is characterized by specific markers such as Hedging, Tag Questions, Super-polite forms; Intensifiers; Hypercorrect Grammar; Empty Adjectives.
- Social Implications: These linguistic habits limit a woman's ability to express herself strongly, leading to

a "submerged" personal identity and treatment as a "sex object or servant" [1]

It is natural that modern gender studies have branched off from anthropocentrism and use an anthropocentric approach, centered on the person, in which all phenomena and relationships are considered from the perspective of their significance for a person and their interests. One of the subtle nuances of anthropocentrism from the point of view of feminist linguistics is androcentrism, that is, the manifestation of a conscious or unconscious practice in which a man/male point of view dominates in the center of the world picture, its culture and history [2: p.108].

It should be noted that although feminist criticism of language differs from other areas of gender studies in linguistics due to its pronounced interdisciplinary approach [3: p.61], it is nevertheless a natural continuation of the anthropocentric approach, since feminist linguistics has introduced a number of new linguistic concepts and expanded the topics and

prospects of language research. For example, the study of gender asymmetries in language contributed to a more in-depth examination of word-formation and nominative systems, as well as of cultural stereotypes of femininity and masculinity in general [4].

The key approach of feminist linguistics was the search for and recording of the dominance of male subjectivity, the male picture of the world in opposition to the secondary role of women, the search for signs of superiority and primacy of men in a patriarchal society in language; the concept of “gender asymmetry” entered scientific circulation [5: p. 11]. As a result, linguistic gender studies (sometimes genderology) emerged - a direction that deals with the consideration of clichéd models of masculinity and femininity, gender asymmetries, as well as the peculiarities of speech behavior in men and women, assuming macro- and micro-levels of analysis. The micro level of analysis examines the relationship between the grammatical category of gender and the idea of biological and social sex, the ways of presenting these meanings by linguistic means, different types of connotations and semantic increments that accompany the nominations of masculine, feminine and neuter gender.

Gender linguistics analyzes the following tasks:

- 1) Studying the gender dichotomy in language, that is, gender asymmetries indicating the dominance of the male picture of the world in language, which allows us to speak about the androcentricity of language;
- 2) Studying speech communication, describing monologue forms of speech characteristic of men and women, as well as factors influencing these processes.

Within the framework of these tasks, researchers identify the following main signs of androcentrism in language: complete replacement of the concepts of “person” and “male”. In many languages, they are denoted by one word: in English - man, in French - homme, in German - Mann; the formation of feminine nouns from masculine nouns. For example, in English, by adding suffixes (-ess, -ine, etc.) to a masculine noun: author – authoress, instructor - instructress, duke- duchess, heir – heiress, waiter-waitress, hero - heroine. In these examples, we are dealing with the English language that is mainly considered to be as an inflectional language, in which the manifestation of gender through the formation of nouns from masculine to feminine is achieved with the help of the corresponding inflections. Thus, gender in linguistic units is able to emphasize not only the social and cultural status, principles and manifestations of androcentrism in the language, but also through gender asymmetry to show the uneven representation of people of different genders (sexes) in the language,

or the lack of representation of gender – depending on the specific characteristics of the language.

Today, gender studies are promising to analyze the principle of interdisciplinarity, considering gender asymmetry through the historical processes of the formation of society and culture as a whole. Such studies are conducted at the intersection of various sciences, such as sociology, statistics, economics, demography, philosophy, anthropology, history, political science, psychology, cultural studies, ethnography, semiotics, and, of course, linguistics and sociolinguistics. There is no doubt that gender relations, as elements of culture, are reflected in the linguistic picture of the world and are communicated to the next generations of a particular society with the help of national-cultural mechanisms. Since language is an important part of human consciousness, it is necessary to emphasize once again that linguistic gender studies consider not only the influence of gender on communicative behavior and the use of language, but also what morphological means the language itself has for creating gender identity [6: p. 93].

Gender studies of our time are represented by such areas as the study of ideas about gender (the concepts of “masculinity” and “femininity”, gender at different levels of language); gender specificity of verbal and non-verbal communicative act; reflection of gender stereotypes in social and linguistic consciousness; gender in lexicography; gender in advertising; gender in the media; gender in criminology; gender on the Internet; gender in fiction. If we talk about the peculiarities of male and female speech behavior, then here we can also highlight several areas of research:

- identifying certain differences in linguistic levels: phonetics, morphology, semantics and syntax, as well as differences in the area of verbal stereotypes in the perception of women and men;
- identifying semantic differences that are explained by the peculiarities of the redistribution of social functions in society, - an approach exclusively from a gender position associated with the social nature of the language of women and men; – construction of psycholinguistic theories in which “female” and “male” languages are reduced to the peculiarities of linguistic behavior of women and men;
- cognitive explanation of the identified indicators (in this case, it is important not only to determine the frequency of discrepancies, but also to establish a connection with various aspects of the world picture) [7: p. 111].

Directly in paremiology, the study of proverbs from the point of view of the gender aspect led

researchers to the conclusion that in the corpus of traditional proverbs, a woman and her activities, in comparison with a man and his activities, have historically been given a much less significant place in social life, whereas the natural spheres of public life in which women's participation was allowed and welcomed were home, family and raising children. For example, Wife is a key of the house; The foot on the cradle and hand on the distaff is the sign of a good housewife; A man should never trust a woman, even if she has borne him seven children; but: A man is a lion in his own good cause; A man is not measured by inches; Nature makes women to be won, and men to win.

Universally and explicitly, human-centeredness in English proverbs is expressed through direct reference to the individual, using vocabulary from various parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, verbs, etc.) that denote the individual or their moral qualities, those around them (family members, friends, colleagues), etc. – that is, everything that differentiates a person from the material and animal/natural world around them. For example, patience, endurance, integrity, and responsibility for one's actions, as well as the ability to bear responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, are valuable moral qualities that are universal in nature and are found in proverbs such as Patience is a plaster for all sores; Anger and haste hinder good counsel; Think before you speak; Promise is debt; Promise little, but do much; As you brew, so you must drink; As you make your bed, so you must lie on it; You reap what you sow.

Anthropocentric proverbs can sometimes be related to the human intellect where gender asymmetry plays an essential role, for example A man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks.

The nationally specific aspect of anthropocentrism in the paroemiological fund of the English language is conveyed through the conservatism inherent in English society. One manifestation of English conservatism is undoubtedly the preservation of the monarchy and its associated traditions, perceived as a means of preserving national identity, as evidenced by the following proverbs and sayings: Kings have long arms/hands, many ears and many eyes; The King never dies; The King's word is more than another man's oath; The King can do no wrong

Thus, paremiological units serve as very valuable linguistic material in terms of identifying and describing both gender stereotypes and related national-cultural stereotypes recorded in the language. Analysis of various language structures - lexical, morphological, stylistic, paremiological, etc., can largely reveal the

content of gender and the features of its manifestation in languages of various types, taking into account the universal and national-cultural aspects.

REFERENCES

1. Robin Lakoff, Language and Woman's Place // Language in Society, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Apr., 1973), pp. 45-80
2. Krugova M.S. Gender language policy in modern Spain. Bulletin of Moscow University. Series 9: Philology. No. 2. – 2007 - P. 103-111. (Krugova M.S. Gendernaya yazykovaya politika v sovremennoy Ispanii. Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 9: Filologiya. №2. – 2007 - S. 103-111.)
3. Kirilina A.V. Gender and gender linguistics around the third millennium // Questions of psycholinguistics. - No. 3 (49), 2021. - P. 109-147. (Kirilina A.V. Gender i gendernaya lingvistika na rubezhe tret'yego tysyacheletiya // Voprosy psikholingvistiki. - №3 (49), 2021. – S.109-147.)
4. Goroshko URL: <http://www.owl.ru/library/043t.htm>
5. Tochilkina T.G. Use of representatives of the concept "acquaintance" in male and female speech on the example of Russian and English languages // In the world of science and art: issues of philology, art criticism and cultural studies. Novosibirsk, 2015, - P.55-62. Access mode: <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=23456702> (Tochilkina T.G. Ispol'zovaniye reprezentantov kontsepta «znakomstvo» v muzhskoy i zhenskoy rechi na primere russkogo i angliyskogo yazykov // V mire nauki i iskusstva: voprosy filologii, iskusstvovedeniya i kul'turologi. Novosibirsk, 2015, - S.55-62. Rezhim dostupa: <https://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=23456702>)
6. Vepreva I.T. Woman in grammar, vocabulary and speech practice // Man about language - language about man: Collection of articles in memory of academician N. Yu. Shvedova / Ed. M. V. Lyapon. Moscow: Azbukovnik, 2012. - P. 91-99. (Vepreva I.T. Zhenshchina v grammatike, slovare i rechevoy praktike // Chelovek o yazyke — yazyk o cheloveke: Sb. statey pamyati akad. N. YU. Shvedovoy / Otv. red. M. V. Lyapon. M.: Azbukovnik, 2012. - S. 91-99.)
7. Potapov V. V. Multilevel strategy in linguistic genderology // Voprosy yazykoznaniya. - 2002. - No. 1. - P. 103–130. (Potapov V. V. Mnogourovnevaya strategiya v lingvisticheskoy genderologii // Voprosy yazykoznaniya. - 2002. - № 1. - S. 103–130.)