

CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN GENDER-BASED-PROVERBS IN GERMAN AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract: This article focuses on the gender-specific portrayal of men and women in Uzbek and German proverbs within the framework of gender linguistics. At the core of the study is the analysis of linguistically encoded gender stereotypes, which originate from cultural and societal norms. It is demonstrated that in both cultures, women are frequently associated with attributes such as domesticity, emotionality, and submissiveness, while men are portrayed with qualities such as strength, rationality, leadership, and responsibility. The study illustrates how gender-specific role models are transmitted and subconsciously perpetuated through conceptual metaphors like “WOMAN – OBJECT” or “MAN – PILLAR.” The research highlights the need for a deeper comparative analysis of phraseological units and proverbs in the context of gender linguistics to gain insight into socially embedded patterns of thought and behavior. An interdisciplinary approach is adopted, combining cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic perspectives.

Key words: Genderlinguistik, Geschlechterstereotype, Sprichwörter, Konzeptuelle Metaphern, Kulturelle Identität, Mann und Frau in der Sprache, Vergleichende Linguistik.

Nowadays, gender studies have become widespread among all the humanities and encompasses a terminology specific to this field in scientific literature. The subject of gender education involves the differences between women and men that exist in society, as well as the distinctive characteristics of representatives of these two sexes. These considerations are referred to by the terms “man” and “woman”¹, and sometimes the term “femininity” (womanhood) can also be encountered.

Furthermore, the task of gender studies is to examine the various characteristics between representatives of the two sexes and to evaluate the subject of social research from a politically positive and democratic standpoint in a neutral and impartial manner. For this reason, gender studies deal with unique emotional stereotypes of people, interpersonal relationships, the stereotypes that shape their behavior and perceptions, and the ideals of the “perfect” human - all from the perspective of belonging to a particular gender.

Gender stereotypes are ideas about the differing characteristics between men and women that were stable for a given society during a specific historical period. Gender stereotypes can be observed both among individuals and within society. Therefore, gender studies primarily encompass psychological (psychoanalytic), economic, and political theories. It is known that the study of gender stereotypes consists of two stages:

1. Sexual identification
2. Gender roles.

Gender stereotypes are cognitive structures that include social knowledge about the characteristics of “women” and “men.” This definition highlights the dual nature of gender

¹ Thomas Eckes: Geschlechterstereotype: Mann und Frau in sozialpsychologischer Sicht. Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft Pfaffenweiler 1997. S.120.

stereotypes: on the one hand, they relate to “possessing individual knowledge,” and on the other, they form the basis for a “culturally shared understanding of the typical characteristics of the sexes.”²

This definition illustrates the dual nature of gender stereotypes: on the one hand, they relate to “possessing individual knowledge,”³ while on the other hand, they form the basis for a “culturally shared understanding of the typical characteristics of the sexes. Although gender stereotypes are based on knowledge, stereotypes themselves are the process of applying stereotype-based knowledge to certain individuals. The terms *gender stereotype* and *gender role* are closely related concepts. According to Dorothee Alfermann, the term *gender role* is used inconsistently in literature.⁴ In this context, unlike sex-based stereotypes, the concept of *gender stereotype* also encompasses the term *gender role*. The distinctive feature of a gender role lies in the attention given to socially shared behavior directed at individuals based on the socially assigned gender.

As we study gender linguistics, we have set out to identify, explore, and analyze the gender-related characteristics of both sexes in two nations - using proverbs that reflect the concepts of “woman” and “man” in both Uzbek and German languages. For example, throughout history, the Uzbek people have always regarded women with great respect and reverence. In particular, a woman is seen as a revered mother, a wife, and the keeper of the home. Examples include: “*Ayolning sarishtasi-ro‘zg‘orning farishtasi*” - “*A tidy woman is the angel of the household*”; “*Ona daraxt-bola meva*” - “*The mother is the tree - the child is the fruit*”; “*Ona olam faxridir*” - “*The mother is the pride of the world*”; “*Xotin erga oyna*” - “*A wife is a mirror to her husband*”; “*Ona mehribon-ota g‘amguzor*” - “*The mother is kind - the father is a supporter in sorrow*”; “*Ayol tilini ayol bilar*” - “*Only a woman understands a woman’s language.*” (Uzbek Folk Proverbs, p. 12).

The Uzbek people have always described men as symbols of bravery, courage, loyalty, the pillar of the household, and exemplary fathers to their children. *Er bor yerda zo‘r bor* - Where there is a man, there is strength; *Erning ishin el bilar* - People know a man's work; *Er yigit elga tortar* - A real man serves the people. *Ota g‘ayratli bo‘lsa, bola ibratli bo‘lar* - If the father is diligent, the child will be exemplary. *Erning otini el chiqarar* - A man's name is made known by the people; *Eringga yoqding, elingga yoqding* - If you please your husband, you please your community. (Uzbek folk proverbs, p.12b)

Unlike the term *sex*, which refers to the biological differences between men and women, the term *gender*-introduced by feminist scholars to emphasize the social aspects of distinction-refers to certain socio-cultural definitions that shape the concepts of men and women, and suggest an initial difference in their social status.

For example, one of the earliest feminist works, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, addresses social inequality and explains how this inequality manifests within the education system. It argues: “If women act like rational beings, they should be regarded not as slaves or domestic pets, but as companions to men.”

² Thomas Eckes: Geschlechterstereotype: Mann und Frau in sozialpsychologischer Sicht. Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft Pfaffenweiler 1997. S.123.

³ Ruth Becker. Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung: Theorie, Methoden, Empirie. 2008.S-23.

⁴ Dorothee Alfermann. Geschlechterrollen und geschlechtstypisches Verhalten. Kohlhammer edition, Paperback in German / Deutsch - 1. Auflage. 1996.

In German folk culture, women are often portrayed in proverbs as symbols of beauty, elegance, and delicacy. This can be observed in the following examples: *Der Mann ist was er isst; Ein hässlicher Mann findet eine schöne Frau; Ein Mann braucht nur so schön zu sein, dass sein Pferd nicht scheut; Frage einen alten Mann, wenn du einen guten Rat brauchst; Lieber einen Mann ohne Geld als das Geld ohne einen Mann;* (Redewendungen, S. 23) “A woman’s hair is her crowning glory; Beautiful women don’t age, because they can only count to thirty; Women have long hair and short minds; A good-looking woman needs no makeup; A blind man’s wife needs no makeup.” (Redewendungen, p. 23)

Men, on the other hand, are typically depicted in terms of intellect and physical appearance. For instance: *Ein Mann ein Wort, eine Frau ein Wörterbuch; Frauen sind großartige Erzählerinnen; Wer eine Frau hat, hat Streit; Ein Mann ist nur so weise, wie seine Frau meint; Der Mann ist Kopf, die Frau hingegen das Genick; Männer regieren aber Frauen beherrschen; Frauen und Elefanten vergessen niemals.* (Redewendungen, S. 23) “A man is what he eats; An ugly man finds a beautiful woman; A man only needs to be attractive enough not to scare his horse; Ask an old man if you need good advice; Better a man without money than money without a man.” (Redewendungen, p. 23)

Moreover, in German proverbs, explicit depictions of men’s mistreatment of women are relatively rare. For example, the sayings “*Wer seine Frau schlägt, der schlägt mit seiner linken Hand die rechte*” (“He who beats his wife is striking his right hand with his left”) and “*Weiber schlagen gibt schlechte Ehre*” (“Beating women brings dishonor”) suggest a cultural disapproval of violence against women. Another proverb states: “*Wer Weib und Kind nicht regieren kann, ist nicht einmal ein halber Mann*” (“A man who cannot rule over his wife and children is not even half a man”).

These proverbs reflect the cultural notions of gender roles embedded in language. Through the terms *Weib* (woman) and *Mann* (man), we observe an implicit representation of traditional expectations—such as female obedience and respect toward her husband—while qualities like authority, self-control, and the ability to lead a family are depicted as masculine virtues.

Thus, it becomes evident that gendered characteristics expressed in proverbs emerge from the distinct social roles, lifestyles, and external influences experienced by men and women. These expressions reflect how society historically constructed the identities and expectations of each gender within the framework of everyday life.

In proverbs, it is very important to give an accurate assessment of a woman’s role within the family and among friends—that is, a woman is seen as a mother, life partner, and homemaker. In German folk proverbs, a woman is often expressed as a predicate—an object that, while not based on precise criteria, embodies beautiful qualities. For example, in German, the proverbs “*Ein Weib ohne Tugend ist ein goldener Becher mit saurem Wein*” and “*Ein Weib ohne Tugend ist ein Buch ohne Register*” (Redewendungen, p. 23) translate to: “A woman without virtue is like an empty book” or “A woman without virtue is like a golden cup filled with sour wine.”

It is evident that a woman should be valued not only for her attractiveness and beauty but also for her admirable moral character. Proverbs often reveal women’s traits through artistic metaphors drawn from various objects or items. In the examples above, words like *Wein* (wine), *Becher* (cup), and *Buch* (book) serve as literary devices to highlight gender characteristics through vivid analogies.

At this point, it is worth mentioning some German sayings that express common wisdom, such as: “*Eine kluge Frau macht den Mann vernünftig*” (“A clever woman makes a man sensible”) and “*Ohne Frauen und Wein kann niemand fröhlich sein*” (“Without women and wine, no one can be happy”).

Similarly, it is well-known that Uzbek folk proverbs always describe men as symbols of bravery, courage, loyalty, the pillar of the household, and exemplary fathers. For instance: “*Er bor yerda zo ‘r bor*” (“Where there is a man, there is strength”), “*Erning ishin el bilar*” (“The people recognize a man’s work”), “*Er yigit elga tortar*” (“A man attracts the community”), “*Ota g ‘ayratli bo ‘lsa, bola ibratli bo ‘lar*” (“If the father is diligent, the child will be exemplary”), “*Erning otini el chiqarar*” (“A man’s name is honored by the people”), and “*Eringga yoqding, elingga yoqding*” (“If you please your husband, you please your community”). (O‘zbek xalq maqollari, p.12)

Using the proverbs discussed above, the gender characteristics of the concepts of "woman" and "man" as they appear in German and Uzbek languages were In gender linguistics, numerous views and theories have been put forward regarding the interrelated gender characteristics of the concepts of "woman" and "man," including their similarities and differences. However, much research still needs to be conducted on this subject within the Uzbek and German languages. It would be appropriate to contribute to the development of gender linguistics—an emerging field in both Uzbek and German linguistics—by analyzing gender-related phraseological units, expressions, and folk proverbs found in both languages.

Gender stereotypes typically refer to the traits, behaviors, and roles assigned to women and men. These stereotypes are shaped by social and cultural contexts and influence how individuals perceive themselves and interact with others. For example, gender stereotypes might depict women as caring, nurturing, and emotional, while portraying men as strong, aggressive, and confident. Such stereotypes often hinder women’s and men’s personal development, professional advancement, and decision-making in life.

Moreover, gender stereotypes can lead to inequality and injustice in interpersonal relationships by forcing individuals into predefined roles and denying their true abilities. For instance, the stereotype that "women should be caring" often places the responsibility of child-rearing predominantly on women. These stereotypes can also adversely affect specific groups, such as women from minority communities, women with disabilities, or economically disadvantaged women.

Furthermore, gender stereotypes associate individuals within social groups with certain fixed traits, ignoring their real characteristics. Examples include ideas like "men must be strong" or "women are only suitable for household chores." Overall, gender stereotypes reflect commonly accepted ideas about how individuals should behave and relate to others, and they frequently contribute to social injustice. Compared. This study examined how both concepts are employed from a gender perspective in proverbs, focusing on their features and stylistic usage. Through these proverbs, the emotions, interpersonal relationships, behaviors, and moral qualities attributed to both genders were analyzed within the framework of gender studies.

Gender identity is related to an individual's recognition of their own sex category and their evaluation of the ideals associated with masculinity or femininity. The development of gender identity involves several stages of sex identification. For instance, "primary" gender identity forms by around the age of three, when a child must adopt a stable perception of themselves as belonging to a particular sex category.

Gender identity requires the adoption of behaviors that confirm one's own sex and the internalization of stereotypes consistent with individual conceptions of masculinity or femininity. These stereotypical perceptions "exert regulatory influence on behavior because they provide knowledge about sex-appropriate behavior in certain situations or toward certain individuals."

Generally, sex-specific stereotypes encompass physical, psychological, and cognitive characteristics as well as language use traits of both genders. Physical characteristics are often associated with male physical strength — "physical masculinity" is linked to physical power, while weakness is viewed as a female characteristic.

The psychological traits attributed to each sex are partially based on role distribution. Traditionally, women's social roles are centered in the personal domain (home and family), closely tied to motherhood, whereas men's roles are more related to societal activities and family provision. Thus, women are perceived as delicate, gentle, in need of protection, friendly, and pleasant. Men, on the other hand, are attributed traits such as activity, adventurousness, straightforwardness, objectivity, competitiveness, and interest in rivalry.

It is important to note that analyzing the gender traits, signs, similarities, and differences of male and female images in German and Uzbek folk proverbs is one of the key tasks in contemporary gender linguistics. Since this area remains relatively underexplored in German studies, our research aims to shed light on this topic and contribute to the field.

Research shows that gender stereotypes are social and cultural perceptions deeply entrenched in the collective consciousness of society through language. They are often expressed through conceptual metaphors in language, reflecting the values, roles, and expectations assigned to male and female images in society. These stereotypes are especially vividly and generally manifested in paremias (proverbs and sayings).

A comparative analysis of gender-related paremias in German and Uzbek languages reveals that in both languages women are often associated with metaphoric attributes such as submission, domesticity, and emotionality, while men are attributed metaphoric qualities like strength, leadership, intelligence, and responsibility.

These stereotypes are expressed in linguistic units through conceptual metaphors such as "WOMAN - BURDEN," "WOMAN - OBJECT," "MAN - PILLAR," and "MAN - ANIMAL." Such metaphoric models in language uncover how gender thinking is shaped and how cultural values influence it.

Gender stereotypes are transmitted not only through language but are also subconsciously internalized from generation to generation. Conceptual metaphors serve as the primary means in this process. The metaphorical structures in paremias represent a fixed expression of gender relations within society. By identifying and analyzing these stereotypes in linguistics, we gain insight into the social norms present in cultural consciousness.

Furthermore, analyzing the stereotypical nature of metaphors demonstrates the need to study them not merely as linguistic relics but as products of social cognition. This approach within the research is grounded in cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, and gender linguistics.

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