

TYOLOGY OF GENDER-MARKED PHRASEOLOGISMS IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON

Viktoria Gofurova

Independent researcher of UzSWLU, Tashkent, Uzbekiston

E-mail: viktoriagofurova@gmail.com

ORCID iD: 0009-0000-0027-8035

Abstract. The present article investigates gender-marked phraseologisms from a cross-cultural perspective, with the aim of developing a typology based on their semantic, conceptual, and axiological characteristics. Phraseological units are examined as culturally conditioned linguistic signs that encode collective representations of masculinity and femininity (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2005; Sabban, 2008). The material is drawn from several linguocultural traditions and includes idioms containing explicit gender markers as well as units with implicit gender reference. Using semantic and comparative analysis, the study identifies major typological groups of gender-marked phraseologisms and demonstrates both universal tendencies and culture-specific patterns in the linguistic conceptualization of gender (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001–2003; Wierzbicka, 1997). The findings reveal that while many cultures share common metaphorical models of masculinity and femininity, their evaluative orientation and functional distribution differ significantly across languages.

Keywords: phraseology, gender linguistics, typology, cross-cultural analysis, linguistic worldview, masculinity, femininity.

Introduction. In contemporary linguistics, phraseology is increasingly recognized as a key domain for exploring the interaction between language, culture, and cognition. Phraseological units preserve culturally significant images, stereotypes, and value judgments, functioning as condensed representations of collective experience (Corpas Pastor, 1996; Sabban, 2008). Among the most culturally salient conceptual oppositions reflected in phraseology is that of gender.

Gender-marked phraseologisms are of particular interest because they not only describe men and women but also encode socially constructed models of behavior, appearance, morality, and power relations (Talbot, 2010; Pavlenko, 2008). When examined cross-culturally, such units make it possible to identify both universal cognitive patterns and culturally specific modes of conceptualizing masculinity and femininity (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2005).

The aim of this study is to develop a typology of gender-marked phraseologisms based on their semantic and conceptual properties and to analyze their distribution across linguocultures.

Theoretical Framework. The research is grounded in the principles of cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, and gender linguistics. From this perspective, phraseological units are viewed as verbalized conceptual structures integrating notional, figurative, and axiological components (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). Gender is treated not as a purely biological category, but as a socio-cultural construct reflected and reproduced in language (Butler, 1990; Bem, 1993).

Previous studies have shown that gender-marked phraseology frequently exhibits conceptual asymmetry, whereby masculine and feminine images are distributed unevenly across semantic domains and evaluative scales (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001–2003; Wierzbicka, 1997). Spanish and other European phraseological systems demonstrate stable associations of masculinity with agency and authority, and femininity with emotionality and moral regulation (Corpas Pastor, 1996; Talbot, 2010).

Material and methods. The empirical basis of the study consists of phraseological units drawn from phraseological dictionaries and corpora representing different languages and cultural traditions (Corpas Pastor, 1996; Zuluaga, 1980). The selection included units with explicit gender markers as well as idioms in which gender is implied through stable metaphorical or cultural associations (Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, 2005).

The methodology combines semantic analysis, conceptual modeling, and cross-cultural comparison (Kövecses, 2010; Sabban, 2008). Phraseologisms were grouped according to the dominant conceptual traits they express and the evaluative orientation they display.

Typology of Gender-Marked Phraseologisms:

1. Anthropometric and Physical-Trait Phraseologisms

This group includes units describing bodily strength, beauty, age, or physical appearance. Cross-culturally, masculine phraseologisms tend to emphasize strength and endurance, while feminine phraseologisms more often foreground attractiveness and corporeality (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001–2003; Wierzbicka, 1997).

2. Characterological and Psychological Phraseologisms

Phraseologisms in this category verbalize intellectual and emotional traits. Masculinity is frequently conceptualized through rationality, determination, and emotional restraint, whereas femininity is associated with sensitivity, emotional expressiveness, and communicative behavior (Talbot, 2010; Pavlenko, 2008).

3. Social-Role and Status Phraseologisms

These units encode traditional role distributions and power relations. Masculine phraseologisms commonly foreground leadership and public activity, while feminine units emphasize relational and family-oriented roles (Bem, 1993; Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001–2003).

4. Moral and Normative Phraseologisms

This type includes phraseologisms that assess virtue, reputation, and conformity to social norms. Cross-cultural evidence indicates a higher degree of moral regulation in feminine phraseology, reflecting historically established systems of social control (Butler, 1990; Talbot, 2010).

5. Metaphorical and Symbolic Phraseologisms

This group comprises metaphor-based units drawing on animal imagery, mythological figures, and natural phenomena. Although many metaphorical models are shared, their evaluative interpretation is culture-dependent (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010; Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, 2005).

Discussion. The proposed typology demonstrates that gender-marked phraseologisms form a structured and internally differentiated system. Cross-cultural analysis reveals both recurrent conceptual oppositions and culturally specific elaborations (Wierzbicka, 1997; Sabban, 2008). Masculinity is predominantly associated with agency and social power, while femininity is framed through relationality and moral evaluation (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001–2003; Talbot, 2010).

Thus, phraseologisms function as mechanisms of cultural transmission, preserving traditional gender models and value hierarchies (Dobrovól'skij & Piirainen, 2005).

Conclusion. The study has demonstrated that a typological approach to gender-marked phraseologisms enables a systematic description of their semantic and conceptual diversity. The identified categories reflect the principal domains through which gender is linguistically conceptualized across cultures: corporeality, character, social roles, morality, and symbolism (Kövecses, 2010; Wierzbicka, 1997). Future research may involve corpus-based quantitative analysis or diachronic comparison in order to trace the dynamics of gender representation in phraseology.

References

1. Barcelona, A. (2000). *Metaphor and metonymy at the crossroads: A cognitive perspective*. Mouton de Gruyter.
2. Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. Yale University Press.
3. Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
4. Corpas Pastor, G. (1996). *Manual de fraseología española*. Gredos.
5. Dobrovól'skij, D., & Piirainen, E. (2005). *Figurative language: Cross-cultural and cross-linguistic perspectives*. Elsevier.
6. Fillmore, C. J., Johnson, C. R., & Petruck, M. R. L. (2003). Background to FrameNet. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 16(3), 235–250. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/16.3.235>
7. Hellinger, M., & Bußmann, H. (Eds.). (2001–2003). *Gender across languages* (Vols. 1–3). John Benjamins.
8. Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
9. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
10. Mieder, W. (2004). *Proverbs: A handbook*. Greenwood Press.
11. Pavlenko, A. (2008). Gender and sexuality in language. In B. Spolsky & F. M. Hult (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics* (pp. 433–442). Blackwell.
12. Sabban, A. (2008). Critical observations on the culture-boundness of phraseology. *Yearbook of Phraseology*, 1, 229–251.
13. Talbot, M. (2010). *Language and gender* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
14. Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding cultures through their key words*. Oxford University Press.
15. Zuluaga, A. (1980). *Introducción al estudio de las expresiones fijas*. Peter Lang.