

EXPLORING THE COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC DIMENSIONS OF GENDER-SPECIFIC IDIOMS.

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Abstract

Presently, anthropocentric research is undergoing rapid advancement, a trend underpinned by the substantial role that human-centric studies occupy within the scientific discourse. This article delves into the genesis and framework of gender linguistics, examining the coalescence of gender alongside the male and female paradigms, as well as the socio-cultural characteristics and methodologies inherent in gender research. The discourse extends to elucidate methodologies for fostering a gender-focused approach, encompassing areas such as comparative and contrastive gender linguistics, gender paralinguistics, gender lexicography, and the interplay between gender dynamics and language acquisition. Methodologically, the study leverages approaches like descriptive analysis, lexicon definition scrutiny, gender-centric analysis, conceptual examination, and comparative-contrastive techniques. The research scrutinizes phraseologies pertinent to 'male' and 'female', undertaking a thorough gender and conceptual analysis, with a special focus on the cognitive-semantic exploration of gender idioms. The foundational elements of this article are anchored in the scholarly works of both national and international academics pertinent to the subject, encompassing gender terminologies, social linguistics lexicons, phraseological dictionaries, literary sources, and mass media content.

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Introduction

Today, one of the rapidly developing areas in linguistics is research in the anthropocentric direction. Within the framework of the anthropocentric approach, an important area of research is gender linguistics, which is currently a scientific field with established principles and methods. The methodological basis of gender linguistics should involve the language and personality, the linguistic function of language and society, and the interaction laws. A defining aspect of gender linguistics is the three syncretic aspects of human language: first, the internal structure of the language; second, the external system influencing the language, social factors; and third, the mental structure reflected in the language, an indirect image of the world. This includes the linguistic image of the world, the pragmatics of the linguistic personality, the linguistic consciousness of the language user, the ethnic structure of thinking, the evolving lifestyle, national character, and mentality [Hasanuly, 2003]. Gender emerged simultaneously with the concepts of male and female at the inception of humanity. Over time, based on biological sex, the concept of social sex emerged, eventually leading to the development of genderology as a field of study. Gender relations, encompassing many areas of human activity, are reflected in language as cultural concepts and influence an individual's behavior, speech peculiarities, and linguistic socialization. It is related first to the diversity of gender roles and socialization systems, and secondly, based on an individual's cultural level, meaning the adaptation of men and women to socially designated norms and roles (speech etiquette, behavior, dress, etc.), i.e., an individual's self-alignment [Shoqym, 2012]. In the current stage of gender research, its social and cultural characteristics are emphasized. In other words, gender is considered as a cultural and historical comparative phenomenon, "...its meaning and interpretation can vary across different cultures, which can be the cause of historical changes in the language system" [Zykova, 2003]. Since language is a crucial part of human consciousness, gender

linguistic research not only explores the influence of sex on communicative behavior and language use but also how language constructs gender compatibility [Kirilina, 2003]. According to P. Eckert and S. McConnell-Ginet, the contemporary approach to studying gender in language can practically be summed up as thinking locally, observing locally. This implies avoiding any generalizations about differences between men and women. Researchers believe that gender and other social parameters are always intertwined, and linguistic aspects of gender can vary in different communities and cultures. Thus, research into the differences between men and women takes into account the socio-cultural norms of a particular society [Eckert, 1992]. The history of gender studies in linguistics can be traced back to ancient times. It is observed that during the study of local tribal languages, scholars paid attention to the characteristics evident in the speech of different gender representatives, as women's speech often differed and followed certain patterns compared to men's. Gender studies began to be conducted as a specialized field from the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Domestic gender studies in linguistics became prominent in the 21st century. In Kazakh linguistics, gender factors have been considered before, especially in the scientific and ethnographic works of Kazakh enlighteners and intellectuals such as Y. Altynsarin, Sh. Ualikhanov, A. Baitursynuly, Q. Zhubanov, etc. Currently, in Kazakh linguistics, gender linguistic markers have become a specific subject of study. The contributions of B. Hasanuly and G. Shoqym are significant in this new direction. Professor B. Hasanuly states: "It is essential to study the manifestation of the gender factor at all levels of language," and outlines the following paths for developing the gender direction in Kazakh linguistics: Comparative and contrasting gender linguistics (for example, at the morphological level, the use or non-use of a certain suffix in a person's name and surname, father's name, the presence or absence of the (rod) category in the current language, its history, etc.)

Gender paralinguistics. This direction should be based on the signs of gesture and expression in the Kazakh language. Research conducted from the perspective of Kazakh gender paralinguistics would contribute to the development of various fields of life (art, public speaking, etc.). Gender lexicography. This direction should be implemented based on Kazakh and other languages. Gender and language acquisition. Research in this area is extremely necessary for language planning [Hasanuly, 2003]. Gender markers are found in all areas of language and manifest to varying degrees in different languages. Among them, phraseological gender distinctions form a significant layer.

Methodology

In the process of writing my article, I have utilized various academic methods, including descriptive methods, the method of analyzing lexical definitions, and comparative analysis methods. My research focused on exploring gender and conceptual analysis related to idioms involving the terms "er" and "әйел." From a cognitive-semantic perspective, I have identified unique features that help distinguish gender-related idioms and elucidate the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity. My work is anchored in the contributions of national and international scholars, encompassing phraseological dictionaries, gender terminology, lexical items in sociolinguistics, materials from the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, and literary works. The selection of material was conducted based on the semantics of lexical units in the context of linguistic unity, with a particular emphasis on their gender-related attributes.

Result and Discussion

In the context of gender linguistic research, it is necessary to consider the acceptance of the gender category or gender categorization (classification) based on general cognitive patterns. Cognitive methods help to form new meanings and concepts in terms of gender, framing them as components of collective and individual human consciousness. The nature of the concept is reflected in various cultural elements specific to a particular nation, including customs, traditions, national identity, and knowledge. For example, within the concept of

"mother," there are elements such as "Батыр ана" or "көкек ана" (brave mother, blue mother) that serve as evidence. In analyzing the concept, it is essential to scrutinize and classify opinions and ideas about the concept, ultimately articulating its fundamental dimensions. These dimensions include clarity, significance, and depth. They encompass attributes such as universality, emotional, and ethical qualities. All of these are various facets that allow for the recognition, exploration, and comparison of the concept. The cognitive structuring of the concept is vital for representing the world in various linguistic structures. This structuring relies on diverse expressions that encapsulate the concept. For instance, concerning humans: "er" – a male, "әйел" – a female, "жігіт" – a young man, "қыз" – a girl, "бала" – a child. These expressions have been shaped into linguistic units with specific features that express the characteristics of the concept, framing it within certain frames. The clarity of the concept is manifested in the presence of these features, which allow for its recognition, analysis, and comparison. The semantic richness of the concept lies in its ability to adapt to individual and collective perceptions and to facilitate examination and comparison through linguistic analysis. The concept's specificity is reflected in the characteristics of words in the language, including their meanings and forms. The concept's universality enables it to be understood, studied, and compared based on the attributes of words in various languages.

Creating a unified cognitive structure for the concept involves the formation of various expressions, which are then used in phraseological units. These phraseological expressions play a significant role in representing the concept. For example, in the case of humans: "оймақ ауыз" – a talkative mouth, "алма мойын" – a greedy mouth, "асқар бел" – a sweet tongue, "ақша бет" – a money lover, "сүмбідей сұлу" – a cunning tongue, "омыртқасы түзу жігіт" – a guy with a strong beard. These idiomatic expressions capture the characteristics of the concept and assess them [Smagulova 2020].

When recognizing and understanding the world, as well as in defining it from a cognitive point of view, the formation of national mentality and the manifestation of ethnic identity are

essential. Phraseological units play a significant role in this process, serving as a fundamental tool for dividing and perpetuating linguistic knowledge. As G. Sh. Unarokova notes, "The study of phraseological units is vital for understanding the division and development of linguistic knowledge since it serves as a crucial tool for dividing and perpetuating linguistic knowledge" [Unarokova 2013: 96].

In contemporary research in gender linguistics, scholars like K. Kedron and A.L. Kormiltsva have categorized masculine and feminine categories within phraseology, verbalizing them through various linguistic tools, including phraseological units, proverbs, and aphorisms. A. L. Kormiltsva, in her work "Gender in Phraseology" [Kormiltsva 2020], categorizes gender phraseology into clear gender-specific phraseology, phraseology with gender semantics, and non-exclusive (applicable to both genders) phraseology. On the other hand, E. Burankulova, in her research, organizes gender phraseology in Turkic languages into four semantic categories. They are as follows:

Gender phraseology that highlights the external characteristics of men and women (external appearance, physical traits): "оймақ ауыз" (chatty mouth), "алма мойын" (greedy mouth), "асқар бел" (sweet tongue), "ақша бет" (money lover), "сүмбідей сұлу" (cunning tongue), "омыртқасы түзу жігіт" (guy with a strong beard).

Gender phraseology that focuses on the qualities and characteristics of men and women (character traits): "қазан бұзар қырыс" (pot-breaker husband), "көк долы" (blue darling), "қанды шелек" (bloody fur), "(мінезі) салған төсектей" (person with a stuck horn).

Gender phraseology that centers around the social role and status of men and women (family situation, marital status, professional life, material condition): "басы бос" (head of the house), "сүр бойдақ" (thread in the needle), "жесір әйел" (tough woman), "есік көрген" (door watcher), "қыз тартушы" (girl snatcher).

Gender phraseology that denotes the social role and status of men and women in society (family situation, marital status, professional life, material condition): "басы бос" (head of the

house), "сүр бойдақ" (thread in the needle), "жесір әйел" (tough woman), "есік көрген" (door watcher), "қыз тартушы" (girl snatcher) [Burankulova 2023]. The cognitive analysis of the concept helps us understand it better, starting from an individual and then extending to the collective perceptions of people, societies, and entire nations. The concept of "mother," for instance, embodies in the Kazakh culture various qualities, including compassion, morality, and aesthetic values, that are prevalent in all aspects of life.

Conclusion

In the field of Kazakh language studies, gender research has gained significant traction in the 21st century, particularly in the context of emerging interdisciplinary areas. Gender studies in Kazakh language encompass various domains, including sociology, psychology, cultural studies, anthropology, cross-cultural and non-verbal communication, as well as linguistics. Typically, the term "gender" relates to the understanding of norms and perceptions associated with both male and female individuals. Gender goes beyond mere biological and physical distinctions, holding cultural and societal significance.

The cognitive approach to gender, as a structural component of individual and group identity, has introduced new concepts and perspectives. It plays a vital role in shaping emerging ideas and understanding the distinctiveness and nature of gender-related concepts. Since the concept is closely tied to a specific national context, it evolves in response to the unique characteristics of a given culture.

Furthermore, gender linguistics in Kazakh language features prominently in phraseology. The idiomatic expressions in the language use metaphors, comparisons, symbols, prototypes, and standards to convey the cultural and moral aspects of people's lives, their customs, and traditions. Consequently, gender research leads to a rich and diverse array of phraseological expressions that provide valuable insights into societal dynamics and perspectives.

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