

**O‘ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI
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URGANCH DAVLAT UNIVERSITETI
XORIIY FILOLOGIYA FAKULTETI**

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MASALALARI**

**XALQARO ILMIY-AMALIY ANJUMAN
MATERILLARI**

URGANCH, 2024 YIL 22-23 OKTABR

GENDER IN PROVERBS WITH THE CONCEPT OF FRIENDSHIP AND ENMITY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract: The article describes the expression of gender characteristics in folk proverbs. It is known that proverbs are a reflection of society in language and reveal the worldview of the people. The article analyzes the coverage of gender characteristics in proverbs covering the concepts of friendship and enmity.

Key words: proverb, gender, gender identifier, society, stereotype.

Language is a complex communication system used by humans to convey thoughts, ideas, feelings, and information to others. Language is a distinctive feature of humans and plays an important role in everyday life, culture, and social development. We can express our thoughts and feelings to others with language, understand and communicate with others, and build social relationships. To express the common thoughts in society proverbs can be indispensable tool.

A proverb is a short, well-known saying that expresses a general truth or piece of advice. Proverbs often convey wisdom, moral lessons, or cultural values, and they are typically passed down through generations. Many definitions were given to proverbs, but no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial [1]. More constructively, Mieder has proposed the following definition, "A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation"[2].

Language is an important communication tool in everyday life, and an understanding of how language reflects and shapes gender roles can provide valuable insights into the social construction and perception of gender in society. The study of gender in proverbs can give us much information. Gender in proverbs often reflects societal norms and stereotypes. Many proverbs can reinforce traditional gender roles, such

as those emphasizing women's domestic responsibilities or men's roles as providers. However, some proverbs challenge these norms or celebrate qualities like strength and intelligence in all genders. Examining proverbs can provide insight into how different cultures perceive gender roles and can also reveal shifts in attitudes over time.

Studying the relationship between gender and language is not a recent interest of social scientists. The link between gender and language in scholarly writings was developed even before the second wave of the Women's movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s [3].

Proverbs are chunks of a language and language is considered as a mirror to nation. Edward et al., consider language as a pathway to social reality [4]. Being a mirror to the nation, language not only throws light on the nation's history and culture but also depicts its beliefs and values. All in all gender-related proverbs give us insight into the social reality of a particular gender in the culture of a nation.

The proverb is the product of specific culture and concept, describing as "living fossil of language". The feudal consciousness of "man is superior to woman" reflected in English proverb incisively and vividly [5]. As a result, the English proverb has further strengthened the cultural pattern of gender, enhancing the social status and superiority of men, and reducing the self-consciousness of women. There are countless proverbs in various cultures regarding gender roles and gender identities.

We have collected the proverbs with the concept of friendship and enmity in English. In the English language gender identity can mainly be expressed by gender expressing nouns (*waiter-waitress, father-mother, king-queen*); syntactics (*male nurse*); some prepositive gender identifiers (*Miss Smith, Sir Thompson*). According to it, we can divide the proverbs with gender characteristics into three types:

There are number of proverbs expressing male gender: *Be a good husband, and you will get a penny to spend, a penny to lend, and a penny for a friend* (husband—word describing family relation). The phrase reflects conventional expectations of husbandry, where being a "good husband" implies fulfilling certain roles—provider, caretaker,

and supporter. It suggests that adhering to these roles may lead to rewards, both material and relational. *A father is a treasure, a brother a comfort, but a friend is both.* It emphasizes that meaningful connections can be found outside traditional family structures.

The most proverbs have the word *man*. But it is known the word *man* has the meaning “human being” and “person” before the meaning of “adult male” in some dictionaries [6]. Because of this, a number of proverbs can be used for both gender: *Man's life is filed by his foe; A man is known by the company he keeps; You should know a man seven years before you stir his fire* [7]. Besides that, third person singular pronoun *he* (male pronoun) is freely used to refer to individuals without reference to gender: *Assume your enemy will do his worst to hurt you, and you'll probably be right; He, who finds a friend, finds a treasure; He is my friend that grinds at my mill; Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing him.*

The second type is proverbs with the characteristics of female gender: *Girl's friend is her mother* [8]. The statement highlights traditional gender roles where women, particularly mothers, are expected to nurture and provide emotional support. This can challenge or reinforce stereotypes about female relationships being primarily relational rather than competitive. *The jealousy of a woman sets a whole house aflame; Women are like wasps in their anger; There was never a conflict without a woman; Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are a tempest and a hailstorm.*

The third type of proverbs with characteristics of gender are the proverbs expressing both gender in it: *The female of the species is more deadly than the male.* This phrase can be interpreted as a commentary on how women's power can be both celebrated and feared. It can highlight the complexities of female agency in a patriarchal society, where women's actions are often scrutinized differently than men's. *A man's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but a woman's wrath is as the raging of a tempest.*

In examining proverbs through the lens of gender characteristics, we can identify distinct patterns that reflect societal views on

masculinity and femininity. Proverbs emphasizing male attributes often highlight qualities like responsibility and financial acumen, as seen in the saying about being a good husband. Female-centered proverbs, on the other hand, frequently underscore emotional intensity, with cautionary tales about jealousy impacting family dynamics. Lastly, proverbs that encapsulate both genders reveal shared human experiences, such as the power of emotions, represented by the metaphor of a man's wrath.

Overall, these proverbs not only reflect cultural attitudes toward gender roles but also illustrate the complexities of human behavior and relationships, highlighting both the strengths and vulnerabilities associated with each gender. Understanding these proverbs enriches our appreciation of the interplay between language, culture, and societal norms.

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