

GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF PHRASEOLOGISMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. *The study of phraseological units uncovers their significant role in reflecting social and cultural variations in language use. This article investigates gender-based differences in the use of phraseologisms in English and Uzbek, focusing on their sociolinguistic, cultural, and pragmatic dimensions. Drawing on cross-linguistic and sociopragmatic research, we analyze how male and female speakers employ idiomatic expressions differently, reflecting gender roles, identity, and communicative preferences. This study emphasizes the importance of phraseologisms as markers of gender-based discourse, contributing to comparative phraseology, sociolinguistics, and cross-cultural communication studies.*

Keywords: *men, women, phraseologisms, sociolinguistics, gender, expressions, social roles, language.*

Language is not only a tool for transmitting information but also a medium through which social values and identities are expressed. Among its many resources, phraseologisms hold a distinctive place because they encode cultural attitudes, behavioral norms, and symbolic meanings that go beyond literal expression. Idioms and fixed expressions frequently highlight gendered perspectives, assigning qualities, roles, or expectations to men and women in ways that ordinary vocabulary cannot. For example, English employs expressions such as *a man of action* or *to wear the pants* to emphasize authority and decision-making, while Uzbek uses idioms like *oqila ayol* (“wise woman”) to stress patience and family devotion. Such phraseological units demonstrate how gender is linguistically constructed and culturally reinforced.

Phraseology today is studied not only as a branch of lexicology but also as a domain that reveals the interplay between language, culture, and society. Gender, as a universal social category, acquires language-specific expression through idioms that embody shared cultural archetypes and symbolic imagery. These idioms often rely on metaphors that associate men with strength, rationality, or leadership, and women with care, modesty, or emotional sensitivity. At the same time, phraseologisms illustrate both common human experiences and culture-specific representations. While English idioms often reflect individualism and personal achievement, Uzbek idioms tend to foreground collective values and family-centered roles.

The study of gender-based phraseology therefore requires attention to both linguistic form and cultural content. It explores how idioms encode stereotypes, reinforce social expectations, and function as markers of identity in communication. Gendered phraseologisms are not arbitrary; they are the product of historical traditions, social structures, and cultural models that influence everyday speech. Their persistence in discourse shows how language preserves and transmits social attitudes across generations.

A distinctive feature of gender-related idioms is their figurative grounding in domains such as the body (broad shoulders), domestic life (as busy as a housewife), or authority (iron hand). These images provide a symbolic framework for representing masculinity and femininity in culturally recognizable ways. In this sense, phraseologisms highlight the anthropocentric nature of language, since they not only describe but also evaluate human behavior. Through idiomatic expressions, speakers give voice to cultural conceptions of gender that combine both universal human traits and society-specific values. By examining these patterns in English and Uzbek, it becomes possible to trace how phraseological systems mirror social hierarchies and gender norms, while also revealing important differences between linguistic communities.

Sociolinguistic studies have long emphasized that language reflects social categories such as gender, and phraseologisms serve as a particularly rich site for observing these differences. Lakoff's early work on language and gender highlighted how linguistic patterns reproduce social roles and expectations, later extended by scholars who analyzed idiomatic usage as a marker of male and female communication styles. More recent psycholinguistic research (e.g., Charteris-Black) has demonstrated that metaphorical phraseology often embodies cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, framing men through metaphors of strength and authority and women through imagery of care, modesty, or fragility.

Cross-linguistic comparisons have also contributed significantly to understanding gender-based phraseology. For example, studies by Mieder and colleagues show that English idioms often depict men as active and competitive ("to wear the pants"), while women are associated with domesticity and emotional expression ("mother hen"). Comparative research in Turkic and Indo-European languages (e.g., Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen) has further revealed that gendered idioms frequently draw on universal metaphorical domains—such as the body, nature, and animals—yet diverge in their cultural connotations and evaluative meanings.[1,p.p25-26]

From the Slavic tradition, linguists such as Maslova have explored how Russian phraseology encodes gender stereotypes through somatic imagery and cultural archetypes, illustrating the persistence of patriarchal values in proverbial and idiomatic discourse. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars including Yo'ldosheva and Rakhmatullaeva have examined how phraseologisms in oral tradition and literary texts emphasize female patience, chastity, and family devotion, while male-associated idioms highlight authority,

honor, and endurance. These findings underscore how idioms act not only as linguistic devices but also as cultural carriers of gender norms.

At the same time, contemporary discourse studies (e.g., Wodak, Cameron) have drawn attention to the shifting nature of gender representation in language. With social changes and globalization, traditional idioms may be reinterpreted, challenged, or replaced, reflecting evolving gender roles in modern communication. This perspective highlights the dynamic function of phraseologisms as both preservers of cultural stereotypes and adaptable elements within discourse.[2, P.41]

Conclusion. In conclusion, gender-based phraseologisms in English and Uzbek reveal both shared conceptual metaphors and culturally distinct patterns of representation. By mapping qualities, roles, and emotions onto figurative language, idioms provide insight into how societies view men and women, shaping perceptions across generations. The study affirms the importance of phraseological research not only for linguistic theory but also for understanding cultural identity and social values. Future research may expand the scope to include other languages or explore the ways in which contemporary discourse challenges or reshapes traditional gendered idioms.

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