

GENDER-MARKEDNESS IN RUSSIAN, ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS WITH RELIGIOUS CONTENT

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Abstract

The study of the paremiological fund of various languages occupies a special place in the world linguistics. The component composition of proverbs is one of the polemical issues of paremiology, as proverbial units can contain a number of components from various spheres of human activity and the surrounding world. The interweaving of proverbial components creates a specific meaning that reflects the thinking and mentality of peoples. This article examines the gender and religious components of Russian, English and Uzbek proverbs. Comparative and contrastive analyses are used to identify similarities and differences between proverbs of different system languages. A thematic classification of proverbs with negative and positive connotations is proposed. Cultural differences in the study of proverbial components as well the metaphorical meaning are identified.

Keywords and expressions: proverbial units, paremiological fund, component, gender-marked, religious, thematic classification, positive and negative connotations, differences, similarities.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the study of proverbial units has become a priority in Uzbek linguistics, requiring comprehensive research in this area. In particular, studying proverbial units through comparison with those of other nations helps to better understand the role of proverbs in the lives of people. Proverbs, as a product of a nation, demonstrate the extent to which the everyday life, traditions and customs, religion, and beliefs of peoples are reflected in language and embodied in proverbs.

Proverbs are still being comprehensively studied today, adding to the body of scholarly work. Separate studies examine the components of proverbs. Componential analysis allows for a semantic and linguoculturological study of the nature of proverbs and their role in the lives of people.

This article focuses on a comparative analysis of the gender and religious components of proverbs in Russian, English and Uzbek languages. The study of Russian, English and Uzbek proverbs revealed seven groups with positive connotations and two groups with negative connotations. In the contrastive analyses of the proverbs related to the three nations it is found out that the female component prevails, which consists of the following lexical units “woman”, “mother”, “mother-in-law”, “daughter”, “daughter-in-law” and “bride”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the particular attention has been paid to the study of paremiological units in linguistics. In several countries, such as Great Britain, the USA and Russia, the study of proverbs as a linguistic object began in the mid-20th century. Collections of works by renowned scholars devoted to the study of English proverbs began to appear. Early studies of proverbs were characterized by a historical approach, in other words, the attention was paid to the etymology of proverbial units. While the early 20th century saw the emergence of an etymological approach to proverb research, by the mid-20th century, scholars began to be interested in the description and functions of proverbs in speech. Researchers pay attention to the social, psychological, national and cognitive aspects of proverbs use in speech. The development of cognitive linguistics has given impetus to the publication of a number of scholarly works on the range of figurative meanings of proverbs, as well as on issues of meaning and content. It is worth noting the study of proverbs by W.Mieder and the introduction of the term “proverbial stereotype”. At the end of the 20th century, scientists began to pay attention to the gender-specific nature of proverbs, which was reflected in the book “American Proverbs about Women: A Reference Guide”, which explored the character traits, social status and responsibilities of women in the family and society. Since then a number of scientific studies has been dedicated to the issue of gender-marked proverbial units. In contemporary linguistics the works of O.B.Abakumova[1] and Ye.V.Nichiporchik[2] have dedicated their research papers to the cognitive and aksiological issues of proverbs in contrastive aspect. In Uzbek linguistics Z.R.Jurayeva’s work is worth attention [6].

Along with it, it is essential to note that religion-specifics paremiological units were also in the centre of scientific discussions. In the world linguistics, the studies of such scholars as B.Kochman[7] and W.Mieder[8] serve as an important source in the study of religious proverbs.

The aim of the article is to analyze the proverbial units where the religion and gender issues are intertwined.

The comparative-contrastive and descriptive methods along with the componential analyses have been used in the present paper to reveal the differences and similarities of gender-specific religious proverbs in English, Russian and Uzbek languages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In all religions, the gender aspect emphasizes patriarchal hierarchy. Russian, English, and Uzbek languages contain a significant number of proverbs that reflect the religious world of their native speakers and, at the same time, gender roles in society and religion. The gender-specific religious proverbs depict the role of male and female in the society, along with it the family relations, the place and role of women and men in the family are vividly seen in the proverbs through their components as “mother”, “father”, “son”, “bride”, “daughter” and “daughter-in-law”, thereby demonstrating gender-related concepts.

We considered it necessary to thematically classify gender-specific religious proverbs. This classification included not only gender-marked proverbs with religious content, but also proverbs from religious books and collections, although religious aspects were not evident in their components.

Based on this, the following groups emerged, with positive and negative connotations:

Groups of proverbs with a positive connotation	Groups of proverbs with a negative connotation
1. Patriarchal hierarchy	1. Female vice
2. Woman as the keeper of virtue, faith and the family hearth	2. Disrespect for religious authorities
3. A woman's wisdom	
4. The exaltation of the maternal role	
5. The norm of a good attitude toward a wife	
6. The idea of a divinely established harmony of roles, the traditional division of responsibilities	
7. Man as a leader and religious-social figure	

1. Patriarchal hierarchy:

Russian language: *Муж – глава семьи; Муж – глава жены, как Христос глава церкви.*

English language: *Man is the head, woman is the neck; The wife is the key of the house.*

Uzbek language: *Er – uy boshi; Er bosh – uy qo'sh; Otang ishga buyursa, namozingni buzib ayt.*

The proverbs in Russian, English and Uzbek languages similarly describe the roles of a husband and a wife in the family. Though the husband is the head of the family, the woman has an influencing position, but does not occupy a leadership position. The source of Russian and English proverbs is the Holy Book. In the proverb *Муж – глава жены, как Христос глава церкви* (*The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church*) the biblical basis shows the patriarchal model of the society. It should be said that there is a full equivalent to these proverbs in Uzbek language, thus, patriarchal hierarchy can be seen in all the nations. In Uzbek proverb *Otang ishga buyursa, namozingni buzib ayt* (*If the father calls you to work, stop worshipping and do what the father tells you*), it is depicted that the father in Uzbek society is equal to the God. There are a range of Uzbek proverbs, which illustrate the superior position of a father in the family, however, they do not concern religion and are not taken from religious sources, and therefore they are not included into the gender-specific proverbs of religious content. In Russian, Uzbek and English proverbs the man has dominating position, that is why it should be claimed that the three societies are patriarchal, regardless the feminism bringing the ideas of gender equality. But regarding the past times the English, Russian and Uzbek were patriarchal societies, which is reflected even in the present time. The proverbs are the mirror of the folk, they reflect the traditions, rites, mentality, everyday life of the nation; therefore the significance cannot be decreased, if even the proverbs became obsolete and went out of use.

The second group of gender-specific religious proverbs was dedicated to the role of a woman.

2. Woman is the keeper of virtue, faith and the family hearth:

Russian language: *Женица – хранительница добродетели, веры, семейного очага: Добрая жена – венец мужу; Голова мужа мудра, если за спиной стоит богобоязненная жена; Хорошая жена – благословение Бога; Где жена – там и церковь; Жена добродетельная дорожке жемчугов; Жена – половины веры мужа; Женица – источник добра или беды; Женица – свеча перед Богом, а мужчина – лампадное масло; Жена должна быть как в храме, так и дома;*

English language: *A virtuous woman is crown to her husband; A good wife makes a good husband; A woman is the gate of heaven.*

Uzbek language: *Ayolning sarishtasi – ro'zg'orning farishtasi; O'g'illi uy farishta, qizli uy sarishta; Xotinning sarishtasi-odamning farishtasi; Sarishtali uy – farishtali uy; Yaxshi xotin – jannati, yomon xotin – do'zaxi; Yaxshi bo'lsa xotining – ikki dunyo jannati, yomon bo'lsa xotining – ikki dunyo do'zaxi; Kelining yaxshi bo'lsa, berdi xudo, kelining yomon bo'lsa, urdi xudo; Moling xo'ra bo'lsa, berdi xudo, xotining xo'ra bo'lsa, urdi xudo; Yaxshi xotin – shavkat, yomon xotin – ofat; xotin imonli bo'lsa, uy fayli bo'ladi; Ayol sabri – Allohning ne'mati.*

Russian, English and Uzbek proverbs share similar aspects concerning the impact of female behavior on the family's fate. While Russian and English proverbs emphasize that a kind and virtuous wife, being the God's blessing, supports her husband; Uzbek proverbs compare a thrifty wife to an angel: "*Ayolning sarishtasi – ro'zg'orning farishtasi*" (*Natty woman is an angel of household*). In Uzbek language there are also proverbs that directly associate a good and bad wife with heaven and hell, fully embodied in religion. A good wife can create heaven in the house, while a bad one turns family relationships into hell: "*Yaxshi xotin – jannati, yomon xotin – do'zaxi*" (*A good wife is a paradise, a bad wife is a hell*); "*Yaxshi bo'lsa xotining – ikki dunyo jannati, yomon bo'lsa xotining – ikki dunyo do'zaxi*" (*If your wife is good, she is a paradise of two worlds, if your wife is bad, she is a hell of two worlds*). We can also cite similar proverbs about daughters-in-law, where a good daughter-in-law is a gift from God, and a bad one is God's punishment. Furthermore, woman is shown as a carrier of faith, patience and family morality. It should be paid attention to the Russian proverb: *Женщина – свеча перед Богом, а мужчина – лампадное масло* (*A woman is a candle before God, and a man is lamp oil*), which emphasizes the female role as a keeper of faith, but dependent on the man who supports her. A call to modesty and piety can be observed in Russian proverb: *Жена должна быть как в храме, так и дома* (*A wife should be both in the temple and at home*).

3. A woman's wisdom:

Russian language: *Жена мудрая от Господа; Дом мудрой жены строится, а глупая разрушит его своими руками.*

Uzbek language: *It qarisa, tozi bo'lar, qiz qarisa, qozi bo'lar.*

Proverbs with the meaning "a woman's wisdom" are particularly significant, though there are not many proverbs with this meaning. In Russian, a woman's wisdom is associated with the household and home. Since ancient times, a woman has been considered a symbol of the family hearth, the guardian of virtue and faith, which is reflected in the proverbs of the second group. It is worth noting that in Russian proverbs, a virtuous and faithful wife personifies wisdom. This

suggests that a woman's intelligence and wisdom are directly related to her family responsibilities, and that a woman's wisdom is a gift from God.

Proverbs of every nation are connected to their daily life. Since ancient times, all kinds of contentious issues and legal cases were resolved by “kozi” – Muslim judges. Therefore, the Uzbek people, considering the kozi wise, gave rise to the proverb: *It qarisa, tozi bo'lar, qiz qarisa, qozi bo'lar* (If the dog is getting old, it becomes swift; if the girl is getting older, she becomes a kozi). The wisdom of a woman is compared to the wisdom of a people's judge.

Mother's role in the society and family is enormous, which can be observed in some of the proverbs. Therefore, the fourth group of gender-marked proverbs of religious content covers the topic of glorifying the maternal role.

4. The exaltation of the maternal role:

Russian: *Мать – представитель Божьей заботы.*

English: *An ounce of mother is worth a ton of priest; God could not be everywhere, so He created mothers; The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.*

Jannat – ona oyog ‘ ostida; Onasining duosi – farzandning baxti.

The Uzbek proverb reflects a strict Islamic canon, while English and Russian proverbs are less dogmatic, yet at the same time, divine care and maternal tutelage can be identified.

5. The norm of a good attitude toward a wife:

Russian: *Женищина создана из ребра – не будь с ней строг, чтобы она не сломалась.*

Uzbek: *Sizlardan yaxshilaringiz – xotinlaringizga yaxshi bo 'lganlar.*

In these cultures it is shown that the man should be good towards his wife, as it is the God's wish. The woman as a part of the Man was created from his rib bone.

6. The idea of a divinely established harmony of roles, the traditional division of responsibilities:

Russian: *Женищина – свет дома, мужчина – стена дома.*

Uzbek: *Erkak – ustun, ayol – uyning nuri; Qiz – Allohning rahmati; O'g'il – tayanch, qiz – inoyat.*

The woman creates comfort at home, while the man defends the woman and his children, which is illustrated in the proverb: *Женищина – свет дома, мужчина – стена дома* (The woman is the light of the house, the man is the wall of the house). The roles of the man and woman are associated with the light and the wall. In Uzbek language there is an analogue of this proverb, but instead of the wall there is a counterpart column. In old times girls are less wanted in the families than the boys. The Islam religion defends the women's rights in the society, which is seen in the

following proverbs: *Qiz – Allohning rahmati (The daughter is the God's mercy); O'g'il – tayanch, qiz – inoyat (The son is the supports, the daughter is the gift).*

A separate group consists of proverbs with a component denoting a man. A man is associated with leadership, responsibility and public religiosity.

7. Man as a leader and religious-social figure:

English: *As the priest goes, so goes people; A man's word is the bond; God helps those who help themselves.*

Uzbek: *Er imoni – el imoni; Erkak Alloh oldida javobgar.*

The gender-oriented religious proverbs have also a negative connotation, which is observed in the following thematic groups:

1. Female vice:

Russian: *Женский ум – короток, но Бог терпелив.*

English: *Even the devil's grandmother was a nice girl when she was young; Where there is a woman, there is temptation; Women are the devil's net; Hell hath no fury like a woman corned.*

Uzbek: *Xotin azobi do'zax azobidan yomon; Kelinning-tili yo'q, qaynonaning – imoni; Xotinning makri shaytonga dars bo'lur; Ayol shaytonning yaqin yori; Qo'zal ayol – imon sinovi.*

The world consists of contradictions and is based on the law of opposites. Where there is wisdom, kindness and decency, there will also be hypocrisy, stupidity and ill-naturedness. Therefore, the paremiological fund of each nation reflects not only good character but also the vices of women. Female vices include hypocrisy, stupidity, unbelief and recklessness. Proverbs of each nation reflect female vices in their own way. For example, in the Russian proverb *Женский ум – короток, но Бог терпелив. (A woman's mind is short, but God is patient)*, female stupidity is not considered such a great vice, for which it can be forgiven. An English proverb notes that female vices come with age, while in youth, girls are innocent. Female cunning is most viciously described in Uzbek proverbs: *Xotinning makri shaytonga dars bo'lur (Woman's craftiness is a lesson to the devil); Xotin azobi do'zax azobidan yomon (A woman's torment is worse than the torment of hell).* The double-faced woman in English and Uzbek societies is associated with the devil.

The Uzbek proverb *Kelinning – tili yo'q, qaynonaning – imoni (The daughter-in-law has a tongue without bones, while the mother-in-law has not faith)* shows the malicious relations between them.

2. Disrespect for religious authorities: *Ikki mulla bir kishi, bir mulla-xotin kishi (Two priests are one man, one priest is a woman).*

The proverbs of this thematic grouping exist only in Uzbek language, illustrating the Islamic dogma, where a woman is accepted as half a man, which shows impossibility to trust in priest's words.

In Uzbek proverbs, one can observe the close intertwining of religion and gender, and norms of behavior are always justified by religion, i.e., the norms of behavior for men and women in society are determined by religion. Meanwhile, in English and Russian societies, religiosity is often weakened, and proverbs are closer to secular norms. Thus, in the Muslim world, norms are determined by religion, while in the Christian world, they are determined by society itself.

Through analyses of gender and religion components of the proverbs, it should be considered that they carry a figurative meaning. Figurative meaning is conveyed through stylistic figures such as metaphor and metonymy. For example, the religious aspect of gender-related proverbs in English and Russian is rooted in the Christian canon. The Russian proverb "*A good wife is a crown to her husband*" is linked to Christian notions of piety, where "crown" is used metonymically and represents "a man's honor". The majority of Uzbek proverbs express the idea of evil and good, paradise and hell by means of stylistic contraposition – antithesis, though it is also met in English and Russian proverbial units, but not in major cases, as in Uzbek language. In the Russian proverb *Женщина – свет дома, мужчина – стена дома* (*The woman is the light of the house, the man is the wall of the house*), the woman is metaphorically depicted as the *light* of the house, while the man, as a defender, is shown by the metaphor *wall*. The metaphor is often used in the proverbs, e.g. in Russian proverb the woman is associatively compared to the gates of heaven, while in Uzbek proverbs to Paradise or Hell, a wise woman to a Kozi (moslem judge). In English proverb the woman is associated with the devil's net, while in Uzbek proverbs with the devil's lover. The process of metaphorization in proverbs occurs due to the peoples' thinking and worldview. It should be mentioned that the metaphorical depiction of a woman and a man in the three societies are almost similar, differentiating only in some details.

Conclusion

Uzbek proverbs represent a religiously charged patriarchal model. English and Russian proverbs, while containing Christian motifs, have a secular and ethical character. The metaphorization in proverbs is due to cognitive process and peoples' thought, which awoke particular associations. Male and female roles in society are closely intertwined with religious worldviews, which gives impetus to the creation of proverbs that reflect traditions, family life and the culture of peoples.

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