

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE FEMALE IMAGE THROUGH PROVERBIAL PHRASEOLOGISMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Annotation: *This article analyzes how the image of women is expressed through proverbial phraseologisms (i.e., proverbs and sayings) in English and Uzbek languages using a comparative linguistic approach. The study explores how women's social status, moral values, roles in family and society, as well as existing stereotypes and traditional views toward women are reflected in linguistic units within the oral folk traditions of both languages. Since phraseological units are closely connected with culture, historical context, and national mentality, it is crucial from both linguistic and cultural perspectives to examine how the female image is represented through language. The selected phraseologisms are categorized based on semantic analysis, and their evaluative functions—whether positive or negative—are identified. Furthermore, the educational, aesthetic, and social significance of these expressions is also discussed. The results of this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture and can be useful in the fields of translation theory, language teaching methodology, and linguoculturology.*

Keywords: *female image, phraseologism, proverb, saying, language and culture, stereotype, comparative analysis*

Phraseological units in a language not only represent its aesthetic features but also embody the customs, worldview, and values of a people. Proverbs and sayings (i.e., proverbial phraseologisms) are especially illustrative of social roles, including the depiction of women, as reflections of folk wisdom. In both English and Uzbek proverbs, portrayals of women often reveal the society's attitude toward gender roles. This article examines how the image of women is conveyed in the phraseological systems of the two languages through comparative analysis.

Proverbial Phraseologisms and Their Cultural Function

Phraseological units—particularly proverbial phraseologisms (proverbs and sayings)—are considered stable expressions in linguistics. Beyond their linguistic function, they serve as significant linguocultural elements that reflect a people's worldview, cultural values,

historical experience, and social consciousness¹⁶⁰. Proverbs encapsulate the life experience and wisdom of a nation in a condensed, generalized form. Through them, not only particular events or situations but also moral values, ethical standards, and social roles are conveyed. The term phraseologism generally refers to fixed, indivisible expressions with often figurative meanings in a given language. Proverbial phraseologisms are expressions that convey an idea related to real-life situations in a figurative, concise, and impactful manner. Proverbs and sayings fall into this category. Because they often contain a logical conclusion, a value judgment, and a social lesson, their function is not only communicative but also didactic, educational, and cultural¹⁶¹.

In the oral traditions of every nation, especially in proverbs, one can find reflections of societal attitudes toward particular social groups, particularly women, including the behaviors expected of them and their roles in society. The depiction of the female image through proverbial phraseologisms is an important source for studying the roles and social expectations imposed on women by society¹⁶².

Additionally, proverbial phraseological units simultaneously serve as a means of expressing the national character of a language and the unique features of a culture.

For example, in Uzbek, the proverb “A woman is the mirror of the home” describes the woman's role and status in the family environment. This saying portrays the woman as a symbol of beauty, cleanliness, order, and grace, reflecting the Uzbek people's warm and affectionate attitude toward women.

In English, there is a proverb “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”, which conveys the idea that a woman, though not directly, exercises power and influence through upbringing and care. Such phraseological expressions are products of national thinking, and their analysis offers insight not only into the language but also into a society's historical and cultural development, gender perspectives, and social relations. Therefore, it is appropriate to study proverbial phraseological units not only from a linguistic perspective but also within the framework of cross-cultural analysis¹⁶³.

In modern linguistics, this process is analyzed through a “linguocultural approach”. This approach requires examining not only the lexical or grammatical aspects of language

¹⁶⁰ Abduazizov, A. (2017). *The Harmony of Language and Thinking*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan National Encyclopedia Publishing House, p. 22.

¹⁶¹ Bobojonova, Z. (2020). “The Cultural Function and National Specificity of Phraseological Units.” *Issues of Philology*, No. 3, p. 44.

¹⁶² Saidova, G. (2021). “Gender Stereotypes and Their Expression in Phraseology.” *Scientific Journal of the National University of Uzbekistan*, No. 1, pp. 69–70.

¹⁶³ Karimova, D. (2019). *Fundamentals of Linguoculturology*. Tashkent: TSPU Publishing House, pp. 38–39.

units but also their mental, social, and ideological connotations. For this reason, analyzing the female images expressed through phraseological units reveals the collective worldview, traditional role distributions, and system of cultural values¹⁶⁴.

Proverbs Expressing the Image of Women in the Uzbek Language

Proverbs and sayings, which constitute one of the oldest layers of Uzbek oral folklore, occupy a special place as expressions of national thinking and moral-aesthetic views. Among them, proverbs depicting the image of women form a separate group. Through such proverbs, women's roles in social life, their duties in the family, their status in society, and the values associated with them are revealed. Uzbek proverbs that reflect the female image can be grouped thematically as follows:

Woman as Mother

In Uzbek proverbs, the woman is primarily depicted in the image of a mother — sacred, kind, and the source of life. These types of proverbs are positively evaluative, highlighting the woman's incomparable role in raising children and leading the household:

- “The mother is a school; a child without a mother is desolate.” – This proverb promotes the idea that the mother is the first teacher in life.
- “Where there is a mother, there is abundance.” – Emphasizes that the mother brings life, peace, and prosperity.
- “A mother's soul is her child's soul.” – Highlights the inseparable bond between a mother's and her child's lives¹⁶⁵.

Such proverbs reflect the Uzbek people's deep respect and gratitude towards women, especially mothers. Honoring the mother is an inseparable part of the cultural mindset.

Woman as a Pillar of the Household

In the Uzbek mentality, the woman is seen as the keeper of the home, a symbol of prosperity, a loyal supporter, and the husband's companion. Proverbs in this category reflect the significance of women in maintaining a harmonious and prosperous family life:

- “A good wife is the beauty of the home.” – The well-being of the home depends on the woman's character.
- “If the wife is honest, the husband cannot be dishonest.” – The woman's moral integrity is the foundation of the family's ethics.
- “The wife is the mistress, beauty, and grace of the home.” – Connects the woman to the home's aesthetic and orderly environment¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁴ Baker, M. (1992). In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. Routledge, p. 79.

¹⁶⁵ o'rayev, S. (2021). “The National Linguocultural Representation of the Female Image.” Journal of Language and Literature, No. 2, p. 47.

These proverbs recognize women as equal participants in marital relations and as key figures in household management.

Stereotypical Views toward Women

Some proverbs express societal stereotypes toward women, often reflecting patriarchal perspectives that depict women in a limited or negative light:

- “If a woman leads, the nation will sink.” – Implies a stereotype that female leadership brings negative consequences.
- “A woman has no seven bones.” – Suggests that women talk excessively and lack restraint.
- “A woman has half a man's wisdom.” – Depicts the woman as intellectually inferior to men¹⁶⁷.

Though these proverbs may contradict modern principles of gender equality, they reflect the historical and socio-cultural context in which women were assigned restricted roles.

Woman’s Intelligence and Influence

Some Uzbek proverbs recognize women’s intellect, wisdom, and positive influence on the social environment:

- “A man who consults with his wife becomes a king.” – Stresses the importance of the woman’s advice and acknowledges her insight.
- “A good woman brings prosperity to the home and joy to her husband.” – Highlights the woman’s beneficial impact on both domestic and marital life.
- “If the wife is a companion, the world is not narrow.” – Portrays the woman as a life partner and confidante.

These proverbs positively evaluate women’s intellectual and emotional strength, reflecting an elevated image of women in society.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the depiction of the female image in English and Uzbek proverbial phraseological units demonstrates that the phraseological wealth of both languages reflects the nations’ historical memory, moral values, and social perceptions. Expressions relating to women are not only linguistic elements but also carry deep cultural, psychological, and ethical meanings.

¹⁶⁶ Qurbonova, M. (2016). Family Values in Uzbek Folk Proverbs. Tashkent: National University of Uzbekistan, p. 33.

¹⁶⁷ Matniyazova, N. (2019). “Gender Stereotypes in Linguistics.” Bulletin of the Uzbek State University of World Languages, No. 3, p. 56.

In Uzbek, proverbs and sayings often idealize the woman as a mother, homemaker, and guardian of the family, while occasionally reflecting patriarchal stereotypes rooted in traditional views. In contrast, English phraseological expressions more frequently emphasize women's individual qualities, independence, and social activity. Nevertheless, in both linguistic traditions, qualities such as kindness, devotion, patience, and honesty remain universally appreciated attributes of women. This indicates that the image of women in phraseological units consistently carries significant semantic and cultural weight. These expressions are not merely linguistic constructions but embody the spirit, social norms, and moral standards of a people. Therefore, the analysis of proverbial phraseology allows us to better understand societal attitudes toward women, as well as the historical-cultural development and formation of gender roles.

In conclusion, when analyzed through a linguocultural approach, proverbial phraseological units reveal the worldview, cultural archetypes, and social roles attributed to women in a given society. Such studies are valuable not only for linguistic insight but also for advancing cross-cultural gender studies, opening new directions in linguistics, and fostering international cultural dialogue.

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