



The Expression Of Linguistic Gender Discrimination In Korean And Uzbek Proverbs

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Abstract: This article examines proverbs in the Korean and Uzbek languages that linguistically discriminate against women—proverbs that express negative attitudes toward women. These proverbs often criticize women’s behavior and reflect a certain societal ideology. The article analyzes similarities in the depiction of women in the proverbs of both cultures, including the use of certain traits in either a negative or positive sense, as well as the common and distinct aspects of the female image.

The differences between men and women are not solely derived from biological factors. The relationship between men and women, as well as the gender differences between them, are shaped through social and cultural processes, experiences, and mechanisms of discrimination within a specific social structure. Issues between men and women are not merely a matter of gender differences but are also tied to the socio-cultural factors that influence the differentiation of gender roles.

In fact, the dynamics between men and women are not confined to family relationships but are rooted in the fundamental social interactions that form the basis of family life and are linked to broader processes of socialization. From this perspective, studying the relationships and gender differences between men and women through proverbs—drawing on the rich treasury of Korean and Uzbek proverbs—reveals the deep connections between language, society, and culture.

Keywords: Woman, man, proverbs, negative, positive, character, behavior.

Introduction: The Korean and Uzbek peoples generally view individuals as integral parts of a whole, such as a

family or society. For both Koreans and Uzbeks, behavior is shaped by relationships with others, meaning that in both cultures, collective relationships take precedence over individualism.

Moreover, in both Korea and Uzbekistan, traditional gender roles in the past defined women's lives primarily around marriage, childbirth, child-rearing, and household duties. This has contributed to forming an image of women as inclined to submit to their families and dedicate themselves to family life.

When examining women's relationships, one of the most notable features is how women's status is reflected through family relationships. This is a key aspect of proverbs about women, where patriarchal family structures have served as the basis for evaluating a woman's actions. Patriarchal-centered family culture has historically restricted women's activities to the domestic sphere, limiting their interactions to within the household.

Overall, the traditional roles and lifestyles of women within the family have played a significant role in shaping proverbs about women in both cultures. Historically, most societies have demonstrated gender inequality, elevating men to higher status while devaluing women. In the earliest stages of human history, such as in primitive societies, it is difficult to identify a clear hierarchy between men and women, as they were relatively equal. However, with the advent of private property systems and the establishment of power structures tied to economic status, men began to dominate social power relations, marginalizing women.

In traditional societies, marriage and family building were considered fundamental duties for both men and women. In Korea, until the Goryeo period, a unique marriage system existed in which sons and daughters were treated equally. However, with the arrival of Confucianism during the Joseon Dynasty, arranged and early marriages became prevalent. These marriages were not based on the desires of the individuals involved but were arranged according to the wishes of parents or families. In other words, marriage was not seen as the union of a man and woman to form a new family but as the integration of the wife into the husband's family.

Traditional beliefs upheld that the relationship between husbands and wives was not one of equality. Since lineage was considered to pass through the male line, the head of the family was the man—the husband—while the wife was regarded merely as a tool for continuing the family line. From the late Goryeo period to the first half of the Joseon period, institutionalized gender discrimination and

mechanisms for suppressing women in male-female relationships became more rigid. While gender discrimination existed in earlier times, during the Goryeo period, women's status was relatively acknowledged, and there was a notable degree of freedom in relationships between men and women. However, during the Joseon period, a Confucian social order was established, leading to stricter regulation of women's roles and behavior. Consequently, many proverbs about women that have survived to the present day were shaped under the influence of Confucian ideology during the Joseon period.

In contrast, a comparative study of the position of women in the cultures of ancient Eastern peoples reveals that none accorded women the same level of attention and reverence as the Turkic peoples. In the culture of the ancient Turkic peoples, women played a prominent and respected role. In all Turkic states, women enjoyed substantial rights, complemented men, and were regarded as equals.

Among the Central Asian nations (Scythians, Huns, Blue Turks, and Uighurs), women enjoyed extensive liberties. In the Scythian state, for instance, nomadic women fought alongside their male counterparts. Even during the time of the Huns, men and women were not separated; women were seen as equals to men. No task was considered complete without a woman's contribution.

The Hakan's authority was also closely tied to his wife's participation. For example, if an order began with "The Hakan orders...", it held little weight without her involvement. Women participated in significant state ceremonies, including those welcoming foreign ambassadors. In some cases, the monarch's wife even received ambassadors herself. One notable instance is the first peace treaty between the Huns and the Chinese, which was signed through the efforts of Tanriqut Khan's wife.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The paremological foundation of a language can be likened to a treasure chest filled with the cultural gems of its people, deeply rooted in their traditions. Proverbs and sayings, long studied as a genre within folklore, are now beginning to receive more attention in linguistics, particularly in the emerging field of linguocultural studies.

Proverbs are short, concise, figurative, aphoristic, and metaphorical expressions that are logically complete, deeply meaningful, and didactic in nature. They encapsulate the life experiences of ancestors, their perspectives on society, history, emotional states,

ethical and aesthetic values, and positive virtues. Over centuries, proverbs have been refined by the people, adopting a compact and poetic form. As a result, they play a vital role in the socialization process of children, contributing significantly to the transmission of cultural and moral values.

A proverb (from the Arabic maqola, meaning "small work," "word," or "speech") is a concise, figurative, complete, and wise expression created by the people, based on life experience, and typically carrying advice or moral guidance.

Proverbs are closely tied to human thought. Passed down from generation to generation, they encapsulate the reflections, experiences, and knowledge of a people, making them a valuable cultural treasure. As Francis Bacon aptly stated, "In the proverbs of any people, you can find that people's talent, intellect, and spirit." Proverbs, being short, aphoristic, and often infused with wit and humor, are easily understood and remembered, making them accessible not only to the literate but also to those who cannot read or write. For this reason, to truly understand the spirituality and values of any nation, one must first explore the treasure trove of its proverbs.

Proverbs and sayings also reflect societal attitudes toward gender. They often highlight both the positive and negative aspects of women's behavior. Positive portrayals of women typically emphasize their roles as mothers and homemakers, celebrating qualities such as nurturing and devotion. However, negative depictions are predominantly tied to male-female relationships and focus on perceived flaws in women, such as being talkative, moody, deceitful, cunning, dangerous, foolish, or ignorant. Such proverbs often serve to perpetuate or reinforce the subordination of women, reflecting the patriarchal values embedded in many cultures.

In family relationships, the role of a woman and the relationship between husband and wife can be illustrated by the following proverbs:

- ① 여자는 땅이고, 남자는 하늘이다(11쪽).40
- ① The woman is the earth, the man is the sky (11-bet).40)
- ② 잔꾀는 여자가 많고, 큰꾀는 남자가 많다(88쪽).
- ② Women are good at small tricks, but men are good at big schemes (88-bet).
- ③ 남자는 배짱으로 살고, 여자는 절개로 산다(97쪽).
- ③ Men live with courage, and women live with integrity (97-bet).

④ 여자 삼십이면 꽃이 지고, 남자 삼십에 꽃이 핀다(71쪽).

④ A woman's flowers fade at thirty, but a man's flowers bloom at thirty (71-bet).

⑤ 여자가 밟은 풀은 안 죽어도, 남자가 밟은 풀은 죽는다(6쪽).

⑤ The fire stepped on by a woman may not die, but the fire stepped on by a man will die (6-bet).

The above proverbs contrast the characteristics of women and men, comparing their relationships and highlighting the differences between them. ① The proverb separates men and women according to the yin-yang philosophy. This proverb can be interpreted as men being as high as the sky, while women are as low as the earth. Thus, it emphasizes that women are inferior and insignificant compared to men. In Uzbek, the following equivalent proverbs can be noted:

Ersiz xotin – boshvoqsiz xotin

Xotinning chiroyi – erdan.

A wife without a husband is like a headless wife

A woman's beauty comes from her husband.

② proverb contains a hidden meaning that expresses the inferiority of women compared to men.

③ proverb conveys that a man should overcome any difficulty with bravery, while a woman must resist temptation and maintain order and discipline. In ancient times, based on the belief that it was very difficult for women to resist temptation, they were held accountable for men's infidelity. Accordingly, women were expected to preserve loyalty and chastity. In Uzbek linguoculture, a similar proverb exists: Erdan – xato, xotindan – uzr, Xotindan – xato, erdan – jazo (A mistake from the husband, an excuse from the wife; a mistake from the wife, punishment from the husband).

④ The proverb suggests that a woman's beauty begins to fade at the age of thirty, while a man's period of strength and vitality starts exactly at thirty. The reason for this belief that a woman's beauty is tied to age is because, in the past, women often married during adolescence and bore children before reaching twenty. By the age of thirty, many women were no longer able to have children, linking their perceived value and beauty to their reproductive age. Therefore, women were viewed as beings created primarily for childbearing. As a result, a woman's value was often seen as peaking at thirty. In Uzbek traditions, it can also be seen that a woman's value is determined by the age of 30: Ayolning o'ttizga kirgani – O'tin bo'lgani (A woman turning thirty is like wood that has aged). A similar meaning can be found in the proverb Xotin olsang,

yoshdan ol, Jilovini boshdan ol (If you take a wife, take her when she is young, take the reins from the start). Furthermore, the evaluation of a woman's virtues based solely on her ability to bear children is reflected in the following proverbs in Uzbek: Bolali xotin – gul xotin, Bolasiz xotin – tul xotin (A wife with children is like a flower, A wife without children is like a dry tree); Xotinni yaxshi ko'rsatgan qo'lidagi bolasi (A wife is judged by the child in her hands); Qo'y qo'zichog'i bilan chiroyli, Xotin – chaqalog'i bilan (A sheep is beautiful with its lamb, a woman is beautiful with her child); Ichi tor xotin bola tug'mas (A woman with a narrow heart will not bear children).

⑤ proverb, it is implied that women are more compassionate than men, and because of this, even if a woman steps on fire, she will not be harmed. In this way, women are considered weaker beings in comparison to men.

In the following proverbs, the superiority of men is clearly shown:

⑥ 여자는 남자를 위해서 화장한다(10쪽).

⑥ A woman puts on makeup for a man (10-bet).

⑦ 여자 팔자는 남자 만나기에 달렸다(45쪽).

⑦ A woman's fate is tied to meeting a man (45-bet).

⑧ 여자가 남자를 가로질러 가면 재수가 없다(5쪽)

⑧ If a woman walks across a man, it's bad luck (5-bet).

In the proverb ⑥ mentioned above, it is said that a woman wears makeup for herself, but she does it as a means to attract her husband's affection. Even wearing makeup is understood from the perspective of submission to men. Proverbs in Uzbek such as Onangni otangga beparдоз ko'rsatma (Don't show your mother unadorned to your father) or Xotinning chiroyi – erdan (A wife's beauty is like her husband's) are also used in a similar context, to some extent.

⑦ proverb suggests that a woman's fate is determined by whether or not she marries. In other words, women are dependent on men. In Uzbek traditions, a similar proverb can be found: Ayol degan palaxmon toshi, Qayerga otsa, shu yerga tushar (A woman is like a stone in a path, wherever it goes, it falls).

Through the proverb ⑧, it is indicated that in a feudal society, it is considered a breach of moral and ethical codes for a woman to cross in front of a man.

Overall, in proverbs ⑥~⑧, the concept of male superiority over women is evident. This perceived superiority is rooted in societal views of social status and rights, which position men as superior and women as inferior. In Confucian culture, this inequality was

explicitly articulated with the concept of "male superiority." In Confucian societies, such as during the Choson dynasty, terms like Namsu-yejong (men lead, women follow), Yeopiljongbu (wives should follow their husbands), and Samjongjido (women are subordinate to their husbands) reflected these patriarchal values.

Similarly, in Uzbek culture, the notion of male superiority and the idea that a woman should always be one step lower than a man are reflected in the following proverbs:

Er qayerda bo'lsa, xotin ham shu yerda

Wherever the husband is, the wife is also there.

Erdan – sadoqat, xotindan – itoat

The husband is loyalty, the wife is obedience.

Er – daladan, xotin – uydan

The husband comes from the field, the wife from the home.

To insult a woman means to degrade her:

Erli xotin kaltak yer; Qudali xotin quyruq yer, Erli xotin – kaltak

A wife with a husband is beaten; A wife with a father-in-law is whipped; A wife with a husband is beaten.

To undermine a woman's social status means to degrade her:

Axmoq ayol ham aqlli bola tug'ishi mumkin; Aqlli otini maqtar, Ahmoq – xotinini

A foolish woman may still give birth to a wise child; A wise man praises his horse, A foolish man praises his wife.

To tarnish a woman's reputation means to insult her:

Xotining oltinga o'ch bo'lsa, Zargarga o'ynash bo'lar.

If your wife craves gold, she will play the jeweler.

To speak ill of a woman, to exhaust her spirit, and shorten her life, is to treat her as an object, comparing her to a mere thing:

Xotinning yomoni – umrning egovi.

A bad wife is the master of your life.

Qamchi berma yaxshi bo'lsa otingga, Ishonmagin miltiq bilan xotinga.

Don't give a whip to your good horse, and don't trust a gun with your wife.

To depict a woman as a cunning, deceitful person:

Bir xotinning hiylasi qirq eshakka yuk bo'lar

Xotin so'zini qondirar, Er urug'idan tondirar.

A wife's cunning is like the burden of forty donkeys

A wife may satisfy her words, but she will drain the strength of her husband.

To belittle the wife's relatives and exalt the husband's relatives:

Xotin qarindoshi – ilon boshi, Er qarindoshi – savat boshi.

A wife's relative is like the head of a snake, a husband's relative is like the top of a basket.

Korean proverbs urge caution regarding women's loquacity. Let us pay attention to the following examples:

암탉이 울면 집안이 망한다 [amtagi ulmyeon jibanimanghanda]

If the hen crows, the house will be ruined.

계집의 입막기는 냇물 막기보다 어렵다 [gyejibui ibmaggineun naesmul maggiboda eolyeobda]

Shutting a woman's mouth is harder than blocking a stream.

여자가 말이 많으면 장맛이 쓰다 [yeojaga mali manheumyeon jangmas-i sseuda]

If a woman talks too much, the taste of the soy sauce becomes bitter.

Directly in Uzbek, the proverb Elakka kirgan ayolning ellik ogiz gapi bor/A woman who enters the sieve has fifty words to say is used for talkative women. In fact, through this proverb, the Uzbek woman's politeness, etiquette, and eloquence are demonstrated. Typically, a woman who goes to her neighbor to ask for a sieve doesn't immediately begin by saying 'Please give me your sieve.' Before addressing the main issue, she engages in a lengthy conversation, inquires about the well-being of the family, and shows interest in the condition of the household. According to Uzbek cultural norms, it is considered disrespectful to jump straight to the point without first asking about someone's well-being. Therefore, it would be quite relevant to present the following comments by Russian scholars V. Nalivkin and M. Nalivkina regarding the article A woman who enters the sieve has fifty words to say in this context: "Sart women, even when busy with work, cannot sit quietly in one place for several hours without talking to anyone. If no one visits a woman's house, she will go to her neighbor's place and, even if it's just for a moment, will chat about this and that. Their speech is rich with proverbs, expressions, puns, and sometimes playful, meaningful tales and jokes. They are masters at weaving these into their conversations. Finding the right words, responding appropriately to questions or remarks, and getting the conversation partner involved in the chat is something they take great pride in...".

There is an error in claiming that 'talkativeness is a

characteristic of women's speech activities.' In other words, one might ask: isn't talkativeness also a characteristic of men? Certainly, men are also talkative. However, men's conversations are not called 'talkativeness,' but rather 'debate' or 'discussion.' Women's talkativeness is more often observed in conversations within the family, with other women, or with friends. Men, on the other hand, are more talkative in mixed-gender conversations or in discussions related to their field.

In a number of studies, it has been observed that seminars, roundtable discussions, and meetings (Eakins & Eakins, 1979; Edelsky, 1981; Holmes, 1988), public debates on television, and courtroom discussions (Strodtbeck & Mann, 1956), as well as lessons conducted by various levels of teachers (Spender, 1982), are primarily led by men. It should also be noted that most of these studies were conducted in formal and public settings, where conducting a conversation is highly valued and, in turn, provides an opportunity for the speaker's status to be elevated. Therefore, in response to the question 'Are women really talkative?', a more important question would be 'Why do men perceive women as talkative?' As an answer to this, we can point to the English proverb (Silence is the best ornament of a woman) which illustrates how the image of a quiet woman is accepted as an ideal in society.

Thus, the word 'talkativeness' is understood and interpreted differently by men and women. Usually, a talkative woman can speak just like a man. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the negative stereotype of talkative women is a form of injustice. In reality, women's talkativeness is a linguistic gender discrimination phenomenon that arises from a male perspective.

The ideology in Korean society has been one that views men as superior and women as inferior, reflecting the belief that women must obey whatever their husbands say. Historically, the attempt by men to turn women into objects of dominance and submission can be clearly seen in the proverb 'If the chicken crows, the family is ruined.' In this proverb, the 'chicken' is a metaphor for the head of the household, the woman responsible for domestic duties.

The basis of the proverb 'If the chicken crows, the family is ruined' actually lies in the rooster (the man, the head of the family) crowing to announce the dawn. In reality, it is the rooster, not the hen, that loudly announces the arrival of morning. Here, 'crow' symbolizes the act of making a sound, which implies giving orders to the family members. It suggests that in order to maintain a well-functioning family, the head of the family must be a man, and if a woman were to lead the family, it would

inevitably lead to ruin. In this context, the notion of 'family' is not only meant literally, but also refers to society in a broader sense, and, on an even larger scale, to the country as a whole.

As we can see, the proverb 'If the chicken crows, the family is ruined' in Korean communication carries an underlying message of misogyny and, more generally, linguistic gender discrimination. The proverb, which compares the hen to a woman and warns women against stepping outside the domestic sphere, is not only observed in Korea but is a universal phenomenon found in the linguistic and cultural traditions of many societies.

The chicken is considered a quarrelsome bird in most linguistic and cultural traditions. For example, in Chinese, the word 'chicken' (野鸡) is used metaphorically to refer to promiscuous women. In Uzbek linguistic and cultural traditions, the metaphorical image of the chicken is also used in a derogatory sense, particularly to insult and belittle women. For example, the phrase 'chicken brain' is used to mean 'foolish' or 'short-sighted':

In both Korean and Uzbek proverbs, women are viewed as entirely dependent on men, evaluated as insignificant creatures belonging to them. For this reason, when describing the female image, animals and birds such as chickens, foxes, cows (particularly 'cow' as a derogatory term), and others are commonly used. For instance, the limited intellectual abilities of women are reflected in the aforementioned proverbs containing the 'chicken' component.

In most linguistic and cultural traditions, the image of the fox is widely used to describe a woman's character. The fox image primarily represents a woman's cunning and deceitfulness. For this reason, this image is actively employed in proverbs as well. For example, in Korean, the proverb 여자가 늙으면 여우가 된다 [yeojaga neulg-eumyeon yeouga doenda] – When a woman grows old, she becomes a fox, while in Uzbek, a similar expression is The tricks of one woman are a burden to forty donkey.

In the oral traditions of Uzbek folklore, women often appear as dangerous beings capable of leading people astray. This can be seen in expressions like Shaytonga dars beradi, ilonni inidan chiqaradi (She teaches the devil, brings the snake out of its hole), and the proverb G'unajin ko'zini suzmasa, buqa ipini uzmaydi (If the cow's eye isn't pierced, the bull won't break the rope). This can be observed in expressions like Shaytonga dars beradi, ilonni inidan chiqaradi (She teaches the devil, brings the snake out of its hole), and the proverb G'unajin ko'zini suzmasa, buqa ipini uzmaydi (If the

cow's eye isn't pierced, the bull won't break the rope). The proverb presented here is a clear example of viewing women as sexual objects and demeaning them as promiscuous. Additionally, distrust of women has become a common habit among men. Therefore, in Uzbek, the proverb It – vafo, xotin – jafo (The dog is loyal, the wife brings suffering) is used to express the infidelity of women.

The proverb Xotin erka bo'lsa, eriga serka bo'lar (If the wife is unruly, she will be a burden to her husband) is used to accuse women of being disrespectful and to imply that they will become a source of trouble for their husbands.

Women are considered foolish and of low intelligence compared to men. Therefore, the idea that 'women rush into many tasks and act thoughtlessly' is often conveyed through the proverb Sochi uzun, aqli kalta (long hair, short mind) and it is widely used to belittle women.

Women are not fond of work, and expressing a negative attitude by calling them lazy can be seen in the following proverbs:

여자 셋이 모이면 접시가 깨진다 [yeoja sesi moimyeon jeobsiga kkaejinda]

When three women gather, the plate breaks

In Uzbek language: To'rt xotin bir bo'lsa, kasbi o'lan aytis (If four wives are united, the husband's profession is ruined).

Examples of the wife's lack of value and the disrespectful attitude toward her can be seen in the following proverbs:

마누라와 말은 넓적다리 아래다 [manulawa mal-eun neolbjeogdali alaeda]

The wife and the horse should be below the thigh.

In Uzbek language: Xotin yo'lda, bola belda (The wife is on the road, the child is on the back).

Along with the aforementioned, proverbs that justify the use of force, beating, or actions like war against women are also widespread. For example, Korean proverbs 여자와 북어는 두드릴수록 맛이 난다 The more you beat a woman and dried pollack, the better they taste. 여자는 사흘을 안 때리면 여우가 된다 [yeojaneun saheuleul an ttaelimyeon yeouga doenda] – The use of proverbs like If a woman is not beaten for three days, she will turn into a fox or phrases in the speech of some Uzbek men who misunderstand the true essence of Islam, such as Xotinni urish musulmon erkak uchun ham farz, ham qarz (It is both an obligation and a duty for a Muslim man to beat his wife) or 'A man must beat his wife, or else the devil will possess him,' can be observed. These sayings promote the extreme

humiliation and degradation of women.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be observed that both Korean and Uzbek paremiological traditions contain numerous proverbs and sayings that negatively evaluate women. These cultural expressions reflect similar values in both societies. Women are often depicted as talkative, foolish, naive, cunning, frivolous, untrustworthy, irresponsible, lazy, and manipulative. The analysis of these proverbs reveals that, in both Korean and Uzbek worldviews, women are frequently regarded as objects, possessions, or property of men. Women are portrayed as inferior beings, reliant on men for status and purpose. As a result, comparisons of women to animals are common in both cultures, with women often likened to chickens, foxes, hens, and mice.

These prejudiced attitudes are deeply rooted in the patriarchal system, where men have dominated societal structures for centuries. According to patriarchal traditions, a woman's place is confined to the home—by the stove and among the cooking pots—while the man is seen as the breadwinner and provider. In Korean society, the lingering influence of androcentric Confucianism continues to perpetuate strong linguistic and cultural gender discrimination, even today.

Ultimately, the negative portrayal of women in proverbs and sayings reflects not only the expectations that men place on women but also the broader societal norms, shaped by male dominance, that dictate how women are expected to behave. Proverbs and sayings are invaluable treasures of linguistic and cultural knowledge, as they encapsulate the worldview and social attitudes of the communities that create and use them.

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