

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Linguocultural Features Of The “Woman” Sememe In Uzbek And English Paremiological Units

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## Abstract

Proverbs constitute an essential part of a nation’s linguistic worldview, reflecting cultural values, social norms, and collective perceptions (Kramsch, 1998). This article examines the linguocultural features of the sememe “woman” as represented in Uzbek and English paremiological units. The study aims to identify similarities and differences in the conceptualization of women in the two linguistic cultures. Using a qualitative comparative method, proverbs containing references to women were analyzed from both languages. The findings reveal that while Uzbek proverbs predominantly emphasize women’s roles within the family, morality, and patience, English proverbs tend to present a more ambivalent portrayal, highlighting both domestic roles and individual traits such as independence and intellect. The study contributes to cross-cultural linguistics by demonstrating how gender-related concepts are culturally encoded in proverbs.

## KEY WORDS

Linguoculture, paremiology, sememe, woman, Uzbek proverbs, English proverbs, comparative analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

Gender linguistics is a relatively recent but rapidly developing field within linguistics that focuses on understanding how gender differences manifest in language. This area of study is grounded in the belief that language is not only a tool for communication but also a mechanism that reflects and perpetuates the cultural and social constructs surrounding gender. The relationship between language and gender has been explored in various languages and cultures, but in Uzbek linguistics, this field is still in its nascent stages (Ruzieva, 2025). The interrelation between language and culture has long been a central issue in linguistics. Scholars emphasize that language functions not only as a communication tool but also as a repository of cultural knowledge and social values (Sapir, 1921; Kramsch, 1998). Proverbs, as part of

paremiology, represent collective wisdom and reflect culturally embedded norms and stereotypes (Mieder, 2004).

Gender concepts, particularly the concept of “woman”, are among the most culturally marked notions in language. They are shaped by historical, social, and ideological factors and are often expressed metaphorically in proverbs (Lakoff, 1975). In Uzbek and English cultures, women’s social roles and moral qualities are linguistically conceptualized in different ways, which makes a comparative linguocultural analysis especially relevant.

The aim of this study is to analyze the linguocultural features of the “woman” sememe in Uzbek and English paremiological units and to identify universal and culture-specific patterns in

their representation.

## **METHODS**

The research material consists of Uzbek and English proverbs containing lexical units that denote or imply the concept of woman (ayol, xotin, ona, qiz in Uzbek; woman, wife, mother, girl in English). The data were selected from established proverb collections and linguistic studies (Mieder, 2004; Karimov, 2017).

The study employs:

Descriptive analysis used to identify and interpret the literal and figurative meanings of proverbs and to classify them according to dominant semantic features;

Comparative analysis applied to reveal similarities and differences in the conceptualization of women across Uzbek and English paremiological systems;

Linguocultural analysis aimed at uncovering culturally embedded values, social norms, and traditional gender roles reflected in proverb semantics;

Semantic and connotative analysis utilized to determine evaluative attitudes toward women, including positive, neutral, and negative connotations encoded in the proverbs.

Additionally, elements of conceptual analysis were employed to reconstruct the structure of the “woman” concept as manifested in paremiological discourse. The methodological framework of the study aligns with established approaches in linguocultural theory and gender linguistics, particularly those proposed by Vezhbitskaya (1996) and Holmes (2013), which view language as a reflection of culturally conditioned worldviews and social relations.

This integrative methodological design allows for a systematic and culturally sensitive interpretation of gender representation in Uzbek and English proverbs.

## **RESULTS**

### **Representation of Women in Uzbek Proverbs**

Uzbek paremiological units predominantly conceptualize women through family-centered, moral, and nurturing roles, reflecting the traditional patriarchal and collectivist structure of Uzbek society. Women are most frequently represented as mothers, wives, and moral educators, whose primary responsibility is the preservation of family harmony and the upbringing of future generations.

For instance, proverbs such as “Onaning bir qo’li beshikda, bir qo’li dunyoda” emphasize the woman’s dual role as both caregiver and moral pillar of society. Similarly, “Yaxshi xotin — uy fayzi” portrays women as the source of domestic peace and prosperity, attributing positive social value to their presence within the household. Motherhood is especially sacralized in Uzbek culture, as reflected in sayings like “Ona — muqaddas zot” and “Ona duosi — farishtalar panohi”, where women are associated with blessing, patience, and moral authority.

These examples illustrate that the “woman” sememe in Uzbek paremiology carries a predominantly positive evaluative load, closely tied to concepts of continuity, social stability, and ethical upbringing. Even when women are portrayed within restrictive gender roles, the tone remains didactic and respectful, reinforcing idealized moral norms rather than explicit criticism (Karimov, 2017). Thus, Uzbek proverbs function as cultural instruments that preserve and transmit traditional gender expectations grounded in communal values.

### **Representation of Women in English Proverbs**

In contrast, English paremiological units present a more heterogeneous and ambivalent image of women. While certain proverbs maintain traditional domestic associations, a significant number focus on individual traits, such as speech, intellect, emotionality, and independence, often expressed through irony or overt criticism. For example, proverbs like “A woman’s place is in the home” reflect historically dominant domestic expectations, whereas “Women are wiser than men because they know less and understand more” suggests an ironic acknowledgment of emotional intelligence. At the same time, negatively connoted proverbs such as “A woman’s tongue wags like a lamb’s tail” or “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned” portray women as overly emotional or verbally excessive, reinforcing gender stereotypes.

This evaluative diversity reflects historical shifts in women’s social roles and the influence of individualism in English-speaking cultures. As Lakoff (1975) notes, language often mirrors social power relations and gender asymmetries, which is evident in English proverbs that openly express judgment or humor at women’s expense. Unlike Uzbek proverbs, English paremiological units do not consistently idealize women’s roles but rather depict them through varied, sometimes contradictory lenses (Mieder, 2004).

### **Comparative Analysis**

From a comparative perspective, both Uzbek and English

cultures acknowledge the central role of women in family life; however, the semantic and pragmatic realization of this role differs significantly. Uzbek proverbs emphasize women's moral responsibility and social function within a collective framework, portraying them as stabilizing agents of family and society. The evaluative tone is largely positive and normative, aiming to instruct rather than criticize.

Conversely, English proverbs more frequently foreground individual behavior and personal characteristics, allowing for explicit negative or ironic evaluations. While Uzbek paremiology prioritizes respect and moral idealization, English paremiology demonstrates greater openness to social critique and humor, reflecting broader cultural acceptance of individual expression and gender discourse.

Overall, the "woman" sememe in Uzbek and English paremiological systems reveals distinct linguocultural value orientations: collectivism and moral didacticism in Uzbek culture versus individualism and evaluative plurality in English culture. These findings confirm that proverbs function not merely as linguistic units, but as cultural mirrors that encode gender ideology and social norms.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings support the view that proverbs function as linguocultural markers encoding social ideology and gender norms (Vezhbitskaya, 1996). The Uzbek representation of women reflects a value system prioritizing family cohesion and moral duty, whereas the English representation demonstrates ideological plurality shaped by socio-historical change.

These results align with broader gender linguistics research, which argues that linguistic images of women are culturally constructed rather than universal (Holmes, 2013). The shared features observed in both languages suggest common human values, while the differences highlight culturally specific conceptualizations of femininity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that the "woman" sememe in Uzbek and English paremiological units embodies rich linguocultural content. Despite shared universal elements related to family and morality, the two languages differ in evaluative focus and cultural emphasis. Uzbek proverbs emphasize collective and moral values, whereas English proverbs reflect individualism and social critique.

This research contributes to linguocultural studies,

paremiology, and gender linguistics. Further studies may apply quantitative analysis, expand the corpus, or explore diachronic changes in gender representation across cultures.

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