

**GENDER-SPECIFIC FEATURES OF METAPHORICAL USAGE IN
ENGLISH AND UZBEK****Khayitova Madina Baxtiyorovna**

Master student

Asia International University, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Email: madinabaxtiyorovna88@gmail.com

Abstract. The present article deals with a comparative study of the metaphorical usage in the English and Uzbek languages focusing on gender characteristics. The purpose of the research is to examine the role of gender in metaphor choice, creation, and understanding within two language systems, based on the theoretical frameworks developed in cognitive linguistics and gender studies. The research not only brings insights to cognitive linguistics, gender studies, and contrastive analysis but also reveals the intricate interaction of language, thought, gender, and culture.

Keywords: metaphor, gender linguistics, comparative linguistics, linguoculturology, conceptual metaphor theory, gender discourse.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillari o'rtasida metaforik qo'llanilishdagi genderga xos xususiyatlarning qiyosiy tahlili keltirilgan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi kognitiv tilshunoslik va gender tadqiqotlaridagi o'rnatilgan nazariy asoslarga tayanib, genderning ikkala til tizimida ham metafora tanlash, ishlab chiqarish va talqin qilishga qanday ta'sir qilishini aniqlashdir. Tadqiqot til, tafakkur, gender va madaniyat o'rtasidagi murakkab o'zaro ta'sirni yoritib berish orqali kognitiv tilshunoslik, gender tadqiqotlari va kontrastli tahlil sohalariga hissa qo'shadi.

Kalit so'zlar: metafora, gender tilshunosligi, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, lingvokulturologiya, konseptual metafora nazariyasi, gender diskursi.

Аннотация. В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ гендерных особенностей метафорического использования в английском и узбекском языках. Цель исследования — выявить, как гендер влияет на выбор, создание и интерпретацию метафор в обеих языковых системах, опираясь на устоявшиеся теоретические концепции когнитивной лингвистики и гендерных исследований. Исследование вносит вклад в

области когнитивной лингвистики, гендерных исследований и контрастивного анализа, освещаая сложное взаимодействие между языком, мышлением, гендером и культурой.

Ключевые слова: метафора, гендерная лингвистика, сравнительная лингвистика, лингвокультурология, теория концептуальной метафоры, гендерный дискурс.

INTRODUCTION

One of the great issues in linguistics is to study metaphorical language through the gender lens, which has emerged as the connecting point between cognitive theories of figurative language and sociolinguistic theories of language variation. It has been revealed that the metaphor, which is not merely a rhetorical device but a cognitive mechanism that enables human beings to think about abstract domains in terms of concrete experiential knowledge, also reflects and reinforces social structures, including gender ones. The foundational studies of Lakoff and Johnson not only advocated for the recognition of metaphors as basic cognitive processes rather than mere linguistic decorations but also indicated that the use of metaphors might point to the presence of cognitive and social distinctions in the case of systematic differences in usage among the genders [1]. This backing of theory offers a possibility to study the metaphorical language employed by different genders in different linguistic communities for meaning making, identity expressing, and social relationship navigating purposes.

Considering the significant typological, cultural, and historical differences between English and Uzbek, the comparative study of their metaphorical systems is definitely of considerable theoretical value [2]. The language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, being of the Germanic family, and having an overwhelming global dominance, as well as having undergone extensive linguistic reform due to the feminist movement, is just one model of gendered language use that might be seen as extensively transformed over the last decades [3]. On the other hand, Uzbek, coming from the Turkic language family, has remained quite undisputed in the Central Asian ethnocultural traditions, with Islamic heritage being the main aspect, and thus being able to present a case still where the traditional gender roles heavily influence the linguistic practices. So, the case of metaphorical usage in these two languages would eventually reveal the universality of gendered language and the very specific cultural aspects concerning the use of metaphors influenced by gender in each of the two languages.

The limits of this research deal not only with the academic ground but also include the areas of translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication. The fact that gender influences metaphor selection and interpretation in various languages, thereby affecting

translation practices, language teaching methodologies, and intercultural communications, has been acknowledged [4]. Besides, the study of gendered metaphors has implications in the areas of language and thought connection, the social construction of gender, and culture's role in cognition [5]. In this light, gender-specific features in metaphorical usage across English and Uzbek are studied from both the perspective of commonalities that might imply universal patterns and of differences that signify cultural specificity, thus answering the research query.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study's methodological approach is mainly based on detailed analytical review of scholarly literature and a theoretical analysis of conceptual metaphor theory and gender linguistics. The approach uses the established frameworks developed by cognitive linguistics researchers, especially for the foundational work on metaphorical systems, and also the scholarship that investigates the relationship between language and gender [6]. The analytical framework acquires the insights from cross-cultural metaphor research and couples it with gender-focused linguistic analysis, thus allowing for systematic comparison of metaphorical patterns across two target languages. Primary and secondary sources in English, Uzbek, and Russian have been consulted to ensure comprehensive coverage of the relevant scholarship, with a certain focus on studies that have been looking at metaphorical usage in real discourse situations as well as those that have been delving into gender variations in the use of figurative language.

The study's understanding of metaphor is based on the conceptual metaphor theory, which was put forward by Lakoff and Johnson. They proved that the metaphorical connections between different conceptual domains represent not only a linguistic phenomenon but a basic element of human cognition [1]. This theory proposes that abstract ideas can be easily understood if one refers to more concrete areas of experience, and these mappings signify both universal traits of human embodiment and knowledge structures that are specific to certain cultures. Kövecses took this further and looked at metaphor systems across different cultures by showing that, while some metaphors are almost universal, because they are the results of shared human experiences, others are largely different depending on the physical environment, social practices, and cultural values [2]. Such a theoretical viewpoint offers crucial means for close studying gender, as a biological and social category, coacts with metaphorical cognition in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

The analysis of gender and language has undergone significant transformation since the watershed study of Lakoff which unveiled the features of women's language, such as the use of

hedging, politeness, and certain lexical choices [5]. Cameron gradually introduced frameworks for understanding gender more thoroughly, as an aspect performed through linguistic practices and not merely reflected in them, thus pointing at the active role of the speakers in constructing their gender identity by the use of language. Sunderland took the analysis of gendered discourse one step further, studying the language that not only mirrors but also reinforces gender in not only one but all social contexts [4]. These approaches are of great help to the current investigation as they point out that the metaphors of different sexes not only need to be examined but also the metaphorical speech in the construction and negotiation of gender identity [7]. The new Uzbek linguistic research has opened a new window for Central Asian and Turkish language metaphor studies by providing a new perspective on metaphorical usage. Mamatov studied the interrelation of language and culture through a linguoculturological approach and showed how the Uzbek metaphorical denotations communicate cultural knowledge and values [8]. Xudoyberganova handled gender linguistic matters in Uzbek language studies, examining the gender categories at different linguistic levels [9].

The current research does not perform any new corpus analysis but instead relies on the results of corpus-based investigations to back the claims made about the metaphorical patterns of usage. Gibbs was the one who opened up vital views on the cognitive processing of figurative language and showed that understanding metaphors is akin to accessing conceptual mappings rather than merely interpreting linguistic expressions. The combination of these different theoretical and methodological approaches allows for a thorough but still coherent analysis of gendered metaphorical traits in the two target languages since the research maintains its unity by using conceptual metaphor theory as the primary interpretive framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A detailed and methodical analysis of the gender-specific metaphorical characteristics in English and Uzbek shows not only the presence of cross-linguistic commonalities that are indicative of universal tendencies but also the existence of language-specific patterns that mirror the cultural particularity of the respective languages. In the case of English, the researchers found it consistently and widely accepted metaphors among the different genders speaking, women being the most often metaphorically associated with the domestic, relational, and emotional areas while men coming from the competitive, mechanical, and spatial domains. These patterns mimic the broader sociolinguistic findings regarding the differences in the use of language between genders, which leads to the assumption that metaphorical selection not only reflects but also reinforces gendered social roles and expectations. Nonetheless, the current

use of English is witnessing a gradual melting of these patterns, especially among the young and in the professional spheres where the traditional gender lines have become less stark and more blended.

Lakoff and Johnson spotlighted the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, a basic metaphor, and it not only met with other languages but also showed differences in its using and explaining according to gender [1]. In the case of English male speakers, they represent the metaphor with its meanings most close to the war, using words related to attack, defense, and victory, while female speakers more often do the opposite or even try to negotiate the metaphor, using alternative mappings like ARGUMENT IS JOURNEY or ARGUMENT IS BUILDING that draw attention to the peaceful rather than hostile sides of disagreement [10]. This situation indicates that the process of gender socialization influences the choices of metaphors in the case of the speakers not only but also in the way they develop and extend metaphorical mappings in discourse. The impact on the communication between cultures is considerable, since these gender-differentiated patterns might cause misunderstandings in interactions of speakers from different cultural backgrounds.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Conceptual Metaphor Domains by Gender in English and Uzbek

| Conceptual Domain | English Male Usage | English Female Usage | Uzbek Male Usage | Uzbek Female Usage |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| WAR/CONFLICT | High frequency | Moderate frequency | High frequency | Low frequency |
| NATURE/GARDEN | Moderate frequency | High frequency | Moderate frequency | High frequency |
| BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION | High frequency | Moderate frequency | High frequency | Low frequency |
| FAMILY/KINSHIP | Moderate frequency | High frequency | High frequency | Very high frequency |
| JOURNEY/PATH | Moderate frequency | High frequency | Moderate frequency | Moderate frequency |

| | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| ANIMAL METAPHORS | High frequency | Moderate frequency | Very high frequency | High frequency |
|------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|

Metaphorical patterns in Uzbek that are gender-specific are in closer proximity to traditional cultural norms and social structures than their counterparts in contemporary English. The investigation done by Xudoyberganova reveals that the Uzbek language maintains separate gendered metaphorical registers that signify the classical division of social roles typical of Central Asian societies [9]. Women's use of metaphor in the Uzbek language, for instance, is mainly domestic and draws from cooking, textile production, and child-rearing domains, whereas man's metaphorical usage focuses on agricultural labor, trade, and public affairs. These patterns are further strengthened by proverbs and folk sayings which, as a major part of Uzbek linguistic heritage, convey traditional gender ideologies to the coming generations through the use of figurative language.

The metaphorical representation of feelings shows a particularly great gender divergence in both languages, however, the exact patterns are culturally significant and of different nature. The literature on metaphors of emotion suggests that gender differences in the use of metaphor are present in English, with women using more elaborate and diverse metaphorical expressions of emotional experience while men being more confined to metaphorical expressions of feelings. Similar trends are observed in the case of Uzbek regarding the usage of emotional metaphor, but the limitations on male emotional expression are more pronounced, denoting a cultural setting that discourages men's open showing of emotions. The conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT, which is recognized as nearly universal by Kövecses, even though in the case of both languages, the metaphors for the eruption and the turbulent release are of the male speakers in both English and Uzbek who use them more frequently than the female speakers who express the same emotions by metaphors stressing the containment and gradual dissipation [2].

Table 2. Gender Distribution of Emotional Metaphor Categories

| Emotion Category | English Male Preference | English Female Preference | Uzbek Male Preference | Uzbek Female Preference |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Anger | Fire, explosion | Heat, pressure | Fire, storm | Smoke, simmer |
| Love | Journey, possession | Garden, nurture | Flame, treasure | Flower, devotion |
| Sadness | Weight, darkness | Water, emptiness | Stone, silence | Tears, wilting |
| Happiness | Achievement, victory | Light, warmth | Feast, celebration | Bloom, sunshine |
| Fear | Combat, threat | Cold, fragility | Beast, enemy | Shadow, trembling |

The examination of metaphors related to professional and public life shows the existence of major differences between English and Uzbek that are indicative of the gender relations in the respective cultures. In English, the feminist movement in linguistics has brought to light the issue of treating professions and the related concepts in a sexist way. This has resulted in conscious and systematic attempts at using non-sexist figurative language in the areas of business, politics, and academia. For example, the metaphor CAREER IS CLIMBING A LADDER has been criticized for conveying notions of individuality and hierarchy. Thus, lesser-used metaphors such as CAREER IS A WEB or CAREER IS A JOURNEY, especially those favored by female speakers and contexts influenced by feminist discourse, are beginning to be heard. On the other hand, the metaphors of career in the Uzbek language are still rooted in the conservative traditional view of their society, where women are expected to do household chores and men are the breadwinners. This is the reason why metaphors suggesting power, leadership, and public recognition are more easily accessible and used by men.

The comparison across languages reveals the impact of culture on the use and acceptance of specific metaphorical expressions by people of different genders. Kövecses contends that the diversity of metaphorical systems in different cultures corresponds to the differences in cultural models, which are the shared knowledge structures that enable the members of a culture to interpret experiences [2]. Gender is one of the key factors that influence the cultural models, and it determines which metaphorical mappings are regarded as natural, appropriate, or even intelligible for speakers of different gendered positions. In the case of Uzbek culture, where traditional gender roles have a strong influence on the behavior of people, the metaphorical

resources of women and men are quite different in contrast to the English-speaking contexts where feminist movements have fought against language use being restricted to specific genders. This observation corresponds to Mamatov's linguoculturological analysis that shows the cultural values deeply rooted in the Uzbek figurative language.

When scrutinizing the metaphors individuals use to convey their gender, one discovers the same asymmetries that prevail in both languages; however, the ways they present themselves are different. In the English language, it has already been shown that women tend to be described mostly by means of metaphors related to food, plants, and small animals, while men's characteristics are more often expressed through metaphors for large animals, tools, and natural forces [5]. The major implications of these patterns in terms of gender are that they attribute to women the qualities of passivity, consumption, and beauty, while to men the qualities of being active, useful, and powerful. The situation is not quite the same in Uzbek but still shows cultural-specific patterns, as women are most commonly metaphorized by flowers, the moon, and precious objects, and men by lions, mountains, and pillars [9]. Jo'rayev's comparative study claims that these metaphorical patterns in Uzbek are traceable to the Persian and Arabic literary traditions which have profoundly influenced the Central Asian linguistic practices [10].

The implications of these findings for language teaching and translation open a new field that is not only of theoretical interest but also has practical applications in gender-sensitive metaphor analysis. The students of the second language English or Uzbek should not only be provided with the necessary grammar and vocabulary but also with the proper training in recognizing the gender-related metaphorical usage. Neglecting to acknowledge the gender biases in the metaphor choice may lead to the occurrence of pragmatic mistakes that, although grammatically correct, characterize the speakers as not familiar with or not suitable for the respective culture. When translating between English and Uzbek, the use of gendered metaphors in the source that have no corresponding expressions in the target language or the vast dissimilarity of the gender aspects highlighted in metaphors across the two cultural contexts are among the main sources of difficulties for the translator. The translator is forced to make these differences in terms of both linguistic correctness and cultural sensitivity, hence the choice will always imply a certain assumption of gender meanings.

CONCLUSION

This investigation into the metaphorical usage norms of both English and Uzbek according to gender has uncovered important trends that reveal the intricate interactions of

language, thought, gender, and culture. Specifically, the results show that gender plays a decisive role not only in the selection, production, and interpretation of metaphors in both languages but also that the representations of gendered metaphorical usage are different across cultures to a large extent. In the case of English, the differences in metaphorical usage by gender are quite flexible and have in fact changed along with societal transformations and feminist language reforms, whereas, in the case of Uzbek, the differences in gendered metaphorical usage are still largely based on traditional definitions and reflect the past and present influence of culture and social structure on language. These patterns align with the view that a metaphor is not merely a linguistic flourish but rather a primary cognitive and social phenomenon that enables the speakers to create and communicate meaning, identity, and relationships to each other.

The theoretical implications of this study go beyond the current areas of linguistics. The findings for cognitive linguistics lead to the deliberation of the conceptual metaphor theory to be more expansive in terms of social variation in metaphorical systems, which will include variation based on gender. The universal aspects of metaphorical cognition brought out by Lakoff and Johnson and further by Kövecses offer a vital base, however, the current analysis reveals that the universal capacities are considerably influenced by cultural and social factors in terms of the actual language use. For gender linguistics, this study claims that the exploration of figurative language as a realm where gender is both performed and contested is valid, thus bringing earlier studies on gender and discourse to the area of metaphorical expression. For Uzbek linguistics, this analysis adds its part to the expanding scholarship in the field, which is being examined through various approaches, including comparative and sociolinguistic perspectives. It is not only an extension but also a new opening of avenues for research based on the seminal work.

This research's practical applications can be found in language teaching, translation, and communication between cultures. The teachers of English or Uzbek as a foreign language should introduce the students to the gendered metaphorical patterns, which would help the students to acquire both the grammatical and the pragmatic competence. The translators between these languages should be very careful about the gender differences in the metaphorical expressions and be in a position to make educated decisions on how to convey the meanings that are related to gender through the cultural barriers. The professionals who are involved in intercultural communication between the speakers of English and those of Uzbek should be aware of the fact that gender has an impact on the use of figurative language thus

avoiding the misunderstandings that may result from the different expectations as to the gender-appropriate expression. The future research should develop this analysis by doing empirical investigation of the actual language use through the application of the corpus methods and discourse analysis to test and refine the patterns identified through the present literature-based study.

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