

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ENGLISH FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF
COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

Shakhlo Rajabova

ESL teacher

Abstract: *The work is aimed at studying the role of linguistic stereotypes in constructing the image of a woman, rooted in the general social and cultural practice of native English speakers. The purpose of the article is to analyze the gender stereotype as an object of linguistic and cognitive research, to generalize the principles and results of consideration of gender stereotypes in English studies, as well as to assess the influence of stereotypical thinking on the perception of women. In accordance with the stated objectives, we summarize the work of a number of foreign scientists devoted to gender stereotypes, provide a general description of the problem under consideration using their comparative analysis, and also prove the inconsistency and bias of the stereotypical perception of women in English, identifying pairs of antonymous stereotypical feminine and masculine qualities noted by different scientists at different times.*

Key words: *gender in language, gender in speech, gender stereotypes in language, woman in English-speaking linguistic culture, stereotypes and objectivity.*

The perception of gender in language and speech is revealed through the conditionally objective determinants of the concepts of "man" and "woman", as well as "masculine" and "feminine", that is, the most frequently used attributive-nominative constructions with prepositive and postpositive adjuncts, and through gender-marked cognitive metaphors, representing a general array of data for the analysis of gender-marked concepts. A special part of this array is made up of conditionally subjective determinants of gender - stereotypes fixed in the language.

In The Brief Dictionary of Cognitive Terms (ed. E. S. Kubryakova), a stereotype is defined as "a standard opinion about social groups or about individuals as representatives of these groups" [1]. Gender stereotypes are widely discussed in English studies, with works examining speech perception under the influence of stereotypes [2], stereotypes in the feminist era [3], and more. Influential scholars include D. Cameron, P. Fishman, J. Holmes, O. Jespersen, and R. Lakoff [1]. Notable recent studies are Gender Bias and Stereotypes in Linguistic Example Sentences (H. Kotek, R. Dokum et al.) [5] and An Exploratory Study on Linguistic Gender Stereotypes and Their Effects on Perception (L. Matthias, D. Mats, S. Anders) [1]. Our own dissertation research also examined gender stereotypes in the conceptual-cognitive frame "woman" [3].

Stereotypes often carry a negative connotation. As E. Strand notes, "Even when women and men behave the same, we perceive them differently" [2: 95]. Similarly, Matthias et al. [6: 578] point out that contextual cues (such as a speaker's gender) activate stereotypes that distort perception in line with expectations. Gender stereotypes generalize not only speech and behavior but the person themselves, diverting attention from other

causal factors. For example, Lakoff's claim that women display conversational uncertainty overlooks influences like social status or age.

Not all gender-related generalizations are stereotypes—objective generalization is essential for identifying linguistic patterns. Yet distinguishing it from stereotype-based ideas is difficult, as stereotypes often begin as seemingly objective generalizations before becoming entrenched and distorting perception. This article focuses on such subjectivity, including contradictions in how female stereotypes have been described and denied over time.

O. Jespersen's *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* was the first to assert that women's language forms a distinct variety, leading to enduring stereotypes. The earliest was the "stupid chatterbox," rooted in folklore [3: 250]. Williams and Bennett (1975) linked "woman" to adjectives implying trivial talk: complaining, flirtatious, frivolous, nagging, rattle-brained, talkative, whiny [6: 330–331].

This stereotype has been challenged. Talbot notes men often speak more than women in public contexts [2], contradicting another stereotype portraying women as silent and submissive. Jespersen also claimed women's vocabulary was smaller and their speech fragmentary [3: 248]. D. Cameron calls such views "naive linguistics," noting that sentence fragments and "illogical" organization occur in both sexes [6]. She also points to opposite stereotypes—e.g., women's speech is "more literate" than men's—supported by W. Labov (2006) and P. Trudgill (1972), but questioned by L. Milroy (1987) [3: 149].

Lakoff portrayed women's speech as less confident and authoritative [4]. Others, like P. Brown and D. Holmes, emphasized politeness [5], while P. Fishman noted men's speech as more assertive and women's as softer and more cooperative [6]. Cameron criticizes such stereotypes for ignoring exceptions and attributing women's communication issues to using "men's language" [9: 45].

Our analysis of the British National Corpus and major dictionaries reveals contradictions in common judgments. In primary nominations, female descriptors often include subtlety, attractiveness, passivity, modesty, emotionality, kindness, bitchiness, dishonesty, capriciousness, talkativeness, and liveliness. Similar traits appear in secondary nominations. The shifting nature of these associations shows that stereotypes rarely offer objective generalizations, often lagging behind social change while still shaping individual and collective perceptions of women.

THE LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1. Леонтьева А. А. Мартынюк А. П. Стереотипы мужских и женских качеств в речи авторов – мужчин и женщин. Харьков: ХГУ, 1989. 9 с.
2. Мурашова Л. П. Правикова Л. В. Эротизация как основа женской метафоры в английском языке // *Язык и культура*. 2014. № 4 (28). С. 89–98.
3. Чумакова Т. Н. Жиренко Д. И. Гендерные стереотипы и их влияние на формирование у современной молодежи представлений о брачном партнере // *Становление психологии и педагогики как междисциплинарных наук*: Сб. ст. по



итогам Междунар. науч.-практ. конф. (Казань, 26-ноября 2019 г.). Стерлитамак: АМИ, 2019. С. 159–161.

4. F i s h m a n P. Interaction: The work women do // Language, gender and society. (B. Thorne, C. Kramarae, N. Henley, Eds.). 1983. P. 89–102.

5. H o l m e s J. Women, men and politeness. London: Longman, 1995. 254 p. 13. J e s p e r s e n O. Language, its nature, development and origin. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1922. 448 p.

6. L a k o f f R. Language and woman's place. (M. Bucholtz, Ed.). New York: Harper & Row, 2004. 83 p.