

SEMANTIC-ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE IMAGES IN FOLK PROVERBS

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Abstract: *This article provides a comparative analysis of the linguistic, cultural, gender, and semantic features of male and female images in Uzbek folk proverbs. The study reveals how the concepts of masculinity and femininity are expressed in folk proverbs, their place in the folk mindset, and their connection with the patriarchal value system. The male image is interpreted mainly as a symbol of strength, responsibility, protection, and leadership, while the female image is interpreted as a symbol of love, loyalty, blessing, and patience. Also, the idea of gender balance in the folk consciousness, that is, the complementary social and spiritual roles of men and women, is highlighted through the language of proverbs.*

Keywords: *Uzbek folk proverbs, gender, male image, female image, linguoculturology.*

Proverbs reflect the spiritual richness, perspectives, and life experiences of a community. They serve as a medium for people to convey their moral principles, social values, and perspectives on gender issues. In Uzbek folk proverbs, the portrayals of men and women are uniquely shaped, primarily depicting concepts associated with family dynamics, labor, ethics, and societal standing. 1. The image of a man

In Uzbek proverbs, a man is usually depicted as a symbol of strength, protection, intelligence and leadership. This indicates the patriarchal worldview of the people. In Uzbek folk proverbs, the concept of “man” or “young man” not only denotes biological sex, but also embodies a complex of socio-moral, spiritual and cultural values. This image has been formed in the national consciousness as a symbol of strength, responsibility, protection, intelligence, courage and leadership. In linguistics, this phenomenon is considered as a linguocultural concept, that is, the main conceptual network in the thinking of a certain people is expressed through linguistic units (based on the works of A. Wierzbicka, Yu.S. Stepanov, N. Karimov). From this point of view, the image of “man” is one of the central components of the patriarchal value system of the Uzbek people.

For example:

- “A man is the support of the people.”
- “A man is the pillar of the house.”
- “A man’s word is death.”
- “If you are a man, may your country benefit.”

Such proverbs promote a man’s social responsibility, courage, and leadership position in the family. At the same time, some proverbs also emphasize the expectation of patriotism, loyalty, and determination from a man:

“A man who loves his people will rise in the people.”

From the analysis it is known that the image of a man is imagined not only as a bearer of physical strength, but also as a bearer of moral and social responsibility. Thus, masculinity is represented not as a biological, but as a social construct (i.e., a model formed by culture).

2. The image of a woman

In Uzbek folk proverbs, the image of a woman is formed as a reflection of the spiritual values, worldview and social structure of the people. By analyzing the image of a woman in proverbs, it is possible to determine not only her place in the family and society, but also the gender model in the thinking of the people. The expression of the image of a woman through linguistic means is closely related to the patriarchal values in Uzbek culture. In proverbs, a woman is usually depicted as a symbol of love, loyalty, purity, patience, devotion and family stability. However, through some proverbs, it is also possible to see the limitation of the social status of a woman in the historical context, and a lower social role compared to a man.

For example:

- “A woman is the decoration of the house.”
- “A mother’s heart is a sea of love.”
- “If a woman leaves, it is a blessing, if a woman goes, it is a mess.”
- “A mother makes the country prosperous.”

However, in some proverbs, the social position of women is limited, subordinate to men:

“A woman’s place is at home.” “A woman’s mind is on her knees.”

Such proverbs express gender stereotypes formed under the influence of the ancient social system. Nevertheless, in modern views, these proverbs are seen more as a historical and cultural heritage than as an object of critical approach. In linguistics, the “concept of woman” is considered a linguistic and cultural phenomenon. That is, the word “woman” in Uzbek culture is not only a gender symbol, but also a set of spiritual and social values. Therefore, the image of “woman” is manifested in proverbs at two levels:

1. Positive-axiological (positively valued) image - through the image of love, loyalty, blessing, mother;
2. Normative-patriarchal image - through obedience, subordination, limitation.

This dualism reflects the traditional gender worldview of the Uzbek people.

Thus, a woman is seen as a stabilizer - a preserver of family peace and spirituality, as a “decoration of the house” or a “source of love”. This shows that in the folk mentality the social function of a woman is to ensure harmony.

3. Comparative analysis of the images of men and women.

In Uzbek proverbs, the images of men and women are expressed as opposing but complementary concepts. A man represents strength and will, and a woman represents love and peace. Therefore, in folk wisdom, proverbs such as: “A husband and a wife are two wings of a bird” put forward the idea of a balance between the sexes. From the point of view of gender linguistics, the images of men and women in Uzbek proverbs are built on the basis of the “principle of asymmetry”: a man is shown as an active subject, and a woman is shown as a passive object. But at the same time, in folk thinking there is a spiritual



superiority of femininity. Although these two views are contradictory, they maintain gender balance in society.

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