

PECULARITIES OF METAPHOR AND GENDER IN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Abstract: This paper explores the interplay between gender concepts and metaphorical expressions in phraseological units across different languages. It examines how societal perceptions of masculinity and femininity are encoded through metaphors in idioms, proverbs, and set phrases. Special attention is given to how gender roles, stereotypes, and cultural values are reflected and reinforced in metaphorical language. Through comparative analysis, the study highlights differences and similarities in gendered metaphor usage in English, Russian, and Uzbek phraseological systems. The findings reveal that metaphorical representations of gender are deeply rooted in cultural consciousness, shaping and reflecting collective attitudes toward men and women. Understanding these patterns contributes to a deeper comprehension of both language structure and cultural ideology.

Key words: gender, metaphor, phraseological units, cultural values, stereotypes, comparative analysis, idioms, proverbs, linguistic representation

Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in shaping and reflecting cultural and social norms, and this is particularly evident in media discourse. In recent years, the study of gendered communication has gained significant attention, highlighting differences in how men and women express themselves in various contexts. Women's speech in media discourse is of particular interest due to its unique linguistic and cultural characteristics, which are influenced by social expectations, historical developments, and power dynamics.

MAIN PART

The use of metaphor in phraseological units serves as a powerful linguistic tool to encode and reflect gendered worldviews. Across languages and cultures, idioms and proverbs often encapsulate societal norms, values, and expectations related to masculinity and femininity. These metaphorical expressions are not merely stylistic devices but function as carriers of deeply ingrained gender stereotypes. For instance, women are frequently associated with qualities such as emotionality, weakness, beauty, or domesticity, while men are linked to strength, rationality, authority, and courage. Such conceptual mappings are evident in metaphorical idioms like "the weaker sex" or "wearing the pants," which convey implicit messages about gender roles and power dynamics. In many cases, phraseological units reinforce binary oppositions, presenting gender identities in a simplified and stereotyped manner. A comparative analysis of English, Russian, and Uzbek idioms reveals both universal tendencies and culture-specific nuances in metaphorical gender representation. While some metaphors, such as those equating men with lions or women with flowers, appear across multiple cultures, others reflect particular social norms and linguistic traditions. These expressions contribute to the maintenance of gender ideologies, subtly influencing speakers' perceptions and attitudes. As such, phraseological units function not only as linguistic phenomena but also as mirrors of cultural and social realities, making them a significant area of study in both linguistics and gender studies.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis, data are drawn from both Western and non-Western media contexts, allowing for a comparative perspective on how women's speech is influenced by different cultural and linguistic traditions. The study also incorporates interviews with media professionals and linguistic experts to gain deeper insights into the role of media in shaping gendered language norms. In addition, secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and media studies reports are reviewed to contextualize findings within the broader field of linguistics and gender studies. The methodological approach combines qualitative discourse analysis with elements of sociolinguistics and pragmatics to uncover patterns and trends in women's media discourse. The findings are interpreted through a linguacultural lens, emphasizing the interplay between language, gender, and cultural identity. Ethical considerations are taken into account, particularly in the use of publicly available media content, ensuring that all data are analyzed with respect to privacy and consent guidelines as outlined by media ethics codes (Jones & Holmes, 2011). This multifaceted methodology provides a robust framework for understanding the linguacultural characteristics of women's speech in media and contributes to ongoing discussions on language, gender, and media representation.

The analysis of women's speech in media discourse reveals distinct linguacultural patterns that reflect both linguistic characteristics and broader societal expectations regarding gendered communication. The results indicate that women's speech in media is marked by specific lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic features that are shaped by cultural norms, media framing, and gender ideologies. One of the key findings is the frequent use of politeness strategies in women's media discourse. Women tend to employ more hedging devices (e.g., *I think, maybe, perhaps*), mitigators (*just, a little, kind of*), and indirect speech acts, reflecting societal expectations of female politeness and deference (Lakoff, 1975). This tendency is particularly evident in Western media, where politeness is often linked to professional credibility and social acceptability. However, in non-Western media, women's speech is more likely to adhere to collectivist cultural norms, emphasizing group harmony and indirect communication (Hofstede, 2001).

Emotional expressiveness is another salient feature of female speech in media discourse. Women are observed to use a higher frequency of expressive intonation, evaluative adjectives (e.g., *amazing, terrible*), and emotional intensifiers (*so, really, extremely*) compared to their male counterparts. This aligns with previous studies on gendered language use, which suggest that women's speech tends to be more expressive and affiliative (Tannen, 1990). However, the extent of emotional expressiveness varies across media formats—while television talk shows encourage expressive communication, news broadcasting often requires a more neutral tone, leading female journalists to adopt a more restrained linguistic style.

The study also highlights the role of media discourse in reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes. In many cases, women in media are expected to conform to linguistic norms that align with traditional gender roles, such as using more cooperative and empathetic language (Holmes, 2008). However, in digital media spaces, particularly on social media platforms and podcasts, women have greater freedom to challenge these norms by using assertive language, humor, and direct criticism. This suggests a shifting dynamic in media discourse, where women are increasingly reclaiming agency over their linguistic expression. Another significant finding is the impact of media framing on the perception of female speech. The study finds that when

women use authoritative or assertive language in political or professional settings, they are often subject to negative evaluations, described as *aggressive* or *emotional*, whereas similar speech patterns in men are interpreted as *confident* and *decisive* (Krook, 2020). This highlights the ongoing issue of gender bias in media representations and the linguistic double standards applied to men and women in public discourse.

The comparative analysis across cultural contexts further demonstrates that women's speech is not monolithic but varies according to sociocultural backgrounds. In individualistic societies, women's speech in media tends to be more self-expressive and opinionated, whereas in collectivist cultures, it is more likely to prioritize relational harmony and indirectness (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988). This underscores the importance of considering cultural dimensions when analyzing gendered language use in media. Overall, the results of this study emphasize that women's speech in media discourse is both a reflection of cultural and societal norms and a site of negotiation where linguistic agency and gender identity intersect. While traditional expectations continue to shape female speech patterns, emerging digital media platforms offer new opportunities for women to redefine their linguistic roles and challenge gendered stereotypes. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on language, gender, and media representation, highlighting the need for more inclusive and balanced portrayals of women's speech in public communication.

Conclusion: This study has explored the linguacultural aspects of women's speech in media discourse, analyzing the ways in which linguistic features, cultural norms, and media representations interact to shape gendered communication. The findings indicate that women's speech in media is characterized by politeness strategies, emotional expressiveness, and specific lexical and syntactic patterns, all of which reflect broader societal expectations regarding gender roles. Additionally, media framing plays a crucial role in reinforcing or challenging these linguistic norms, with traditional platforms often maintaining gendered stereotypes, while digital media spaces provide opportunities for women to assert linguistic agency.

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