

GENDER METAPHORS IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH LINGUOCULTURES

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Abstract : This article discusses the comparison between gender oppositions in Russian and English cultures, focusing on the metaphors used to describe people. The study analyzes data from Russian and English dictionaries to identify common and culture-specific gender-marked characteristics. While gender differences are not the main focus in metaphorical nominations of a person, they are important when describing appearance. Russian has a higher prevalence of metaphors characterizing women compared to English.

Key Words : Gender metaphors, Gender market metaphor , Conceptual metaphor

Introduction: Recent linguistic theories of gender focus on the objectification of gender oppositions and stereotypes in language. These concepts are reflected in grammatical categories, such as gender, as well as in phraseological and lexical meanings. In particular, the use of metaphorical nominations plays a significant role in representing gendered characteristics. Metaphors are seen as cognitive processes that help us understand and interpret reality by comparing different conceptual fields. Conceptual metaphors are understood as cognitive structures that connect different domains through lexical metaphors. The theory also posits that metaphorical nominations reflect evaluation of the object being referred to. This article explores how metaphors are used in language to mark the interpretation and evaluation of human activities. It contrasts gender-marked metaphors, which highlight typically feminine or masculine qualities, with gender-unmarked metaphors. Gender metaphors are seen as lexical representations of men and women that embody specific gender stereotypes based on different conceptual categories.

Method and material: The study focused on figurative vocabulary that describes individuals, as found in Russian and English dictionaries. The vocabulary was selected through continuous sampling from dictionaries such as the Russian Language Dictionary (1999), Dictionary of Contemporary Russian Literary Language (1950), and Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2002). These dictionaries were chosen as they provide stable and widely accepted meanings. This allows for the evaluation of semantic oppositions that exist within the linguocultures being analyzed. A total of 409 gender metaphors were identified in the Russian dictionaries, along with 520 lexemes that characterize humans in the English dictionaries. The study involved analyzing dictionary definitions to determine the

denotation sphere of metaphors. Two types of nominations were identified: those with broad denotation, such as "a human being" exemplified by terms like "viper" for a malicious person, and those with narrow denotation specific to gender, like "a man" or "a woman" represented by words like "cuckoo" for a foolish man and "cow" as an insulting term for a woman. The analysis was conducted using a combination of structural semantic analysis of figurative lexical units and cognitive modeling techniques, focusing on identifying conceptual models represented by metaphorical lexemes. Initially, the data from English and Russian dictionaries were analyzed separately but with overlapping findings. Subsequently, the study compared the character and direction of figurative modeling of individuals in terms of gender in the Russian and English languages.

Discussion : The analysis revealed that in both Russian and English languages, a majority of metaphors related to human characteristics are gender-unmarked, accounting for 74% and 81% of the total respectively in Russian and English. In Russian, strictly gender-marked metaphors make up 25% of the total, with a notably higher number of metaphors representing women compared to men. Conversely, in English, the number of strictly gender-marked metaphors is equal for both men and women. The study considered metaphorical nominations as a way to convey gender stereotypes, with aspects such as appearance, character, behavior, intellectual ability, social role, talents, and physiological status reflecting these stereotypes through figurative comparison. The analysis categorized gender-unmarked and strictly gender-marked metaphors into groups based on common traits they portray figuratively. The comparative analysis explored the directions of figurative modeling in gender-marked and gender-unmarked metaphors, identifying similarities and differences between Russian and English linguocultures. Overall, there is a significant degree of similarity in the totality of gender-unmarked metaphors, reflecting common trends in both languages. In comparing the aspects that characterize men and women in English and Russian linguocultures, certain features stand out. In English, both men and women are often described in terms of character and behavior, with examples like "caveman" for men and "harpy" for women portraying specific traits. Appearance is also significant, with metaphors like "Samson" for men and "nymph" for women highlighting physical attributes. Intellectual ability is less emphasized, with a few metaphors for both genders, such as "gorilla" for men and "cow" for women. There are minor differences in the aspects used to characterize men and women in English. Women are more frequently evaluated metaphorically, with examples like "harpy" and "princess" depicting different qualities. Men, on the other hand, are often described in terms of their social status, as seen in metaphors like "nabob" and "empress." In Russian linguoculture, while metaphors characterizing women are more common, there is less

disparity in the correlation and proportion of characteristics between men and women in the total set of metaphors.

Conclusion : Gender is not a significant factor when characterizing a person metaphorically, as evaluations are not specifically tied to gender. The use of metaphorical characteristics for individuals, regardless of gender, shows a quantitative predominance and a wider range of specific aspects compared to gender-specific metaphors. These trends are not unique to any particular culture. In comparing gender-marked and gender-unmarked metaphors in both languages, two common aspects emerge. Firstly, metaphors emphasizing character and behavior are predominant in both groups, and these aspects are not strictly gender-specific. Secondly, there is a contrast in the importance of appearance between gender-unmarked and gender-marked metaphors. When gender differences are emphasized, appearance plays a more significant role than in descriptions of individuals without regard to gender. Furthermore, when comparing gender-marked nominations for men and women, common features in the aspects of characteristics and their proportions within the groups are prevalent. While there are significant distinctions in evaluative nominations, they are more prominent when referring to women, particularly in English. The most notable difference between the two linguocultures lies in the group of gender-marked metaphors.

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