W I S D O M

3(19), 2021

YEREVAN – 2021

Iryna HUMENIUK

GENDER MARKERS IN THE ENGLISH PICTURE OF THE WORLD

Abstract

Gender is determined as an ideological frame that assembles the idea of what it means to be a man or a woman in a certain culture, a non-linguistic category with linguistic ways of actualization. The article substantiates the key theoretical problems concerning gender-marking based on English phraseology and their influence on the formation of the gender picture of the world.

The objective of the current paper is to analyze gender-marked phraseological units of the English language, which are the basic matrices of the phraseological picture of the world of a given cultural community, and to identify the frequency and impact of gender stereotypes on the development of the national picture of the English-speaking community, such as word, phraseology, paremia, text, which contain background knowledge and ways to reflect these meanings in the national picture of the world.

The paper's main conclusion is that the semantic basis of gender markers on the material of English phraseological units predominantly consists of stereotypical-associative units, which are perceived as social activity and characteristics of the images of both sexes with certain asymmetry for male denotata. The connotations of words can illustrate this inequality and the double standards between men and women.

Keywords: gender, gender marking, phraseology, idiom, picture of the world, colour name.

Introduction

The study of the linguistic picture of the world dictates problems related to the issues of the relationship between language and culture, as most scientists believe that language is a part of the culture. From the currently relevant anthropocentric approach, a person, the inner world, environment, sphere of existence, gender are studied.

The term "gender" means a set of norms of behaviour and attitudes that are usually associated with females or males in a given society. Gender is based on the idea that what matters is not the biological or physical differences between men and women but the cultural and social significance that society attaches to these differences.

Particular emphasis is placed at the present stage of development of gender research on the fact that gender is determined not only and not so much biologically but also socially and through culture. Gender is culturally and historically relative: its meaning, interpretation, and expression can be different both within one particular culture and in separate cultures, acting as a cause of historical changes in the language system (Zykova, 2003).

Gender is interpreted as a technology of self-representation through various social institutions: family, education system, media, politics, law, language, art, science, fashion. Thus, gender results from self-presentation in a wide range: from normative gender displays to complete blurring of gender boundaries. Representation is a game of the psyche and external manifestation, which is governed by discourse and norms.

Gender issues are an innovative scientific and philosophical discourse corresponding to the processes of modernization and postmodernization in a globalized world. Gender discourse emerged as a critique of classical theories of gender, as a

denial of tradition in the relationship between man and woman, and the assertion of new approaches characteristic of the modern and postmodern eras. The transformation trend of traditional gender values is global and extends to societies and states with different national, cultural, and geographical features. The global vector of gender transformation does not mean the erasure of differences between men and women but the rejection of the gender hierarchy and the existing relations of power and subordination.

A characteristic feature of modern gender studies, actively developing primarily in Western and American societies, is their interdisciplinary nature.

It is worth noting that the classical tradition of gender interpretation is based on recognising the determining role of biological factors. The modernist approach is characterized by a dualistic interpretation of gender as a biological phenomenon, on the one hand, and socio-cultural – on the other. The postmodernist point of view departs from the dual interpretation of human sex, denies any criteria for correlating the socio-cultural construct of sex and its actual prototype (Milton, 2002).

While one of the controversial points in defining the concept of gender is whether to consider it a social or psychological concept, the fact that the diversity of this concept includes both social and psychological components seems more pronounced.

As our research has shown, gender markers can be either structural elements – words-components of phraseological units denoting a male or female person, or semantic components in the semantics of idioms. According to gender marking in English phraseological units, there can be both a plan of expression and a plan of content.

Thus, the gender approach opens new opportunities for the study of the phraseological fund of any language and provides an extension of the study of the semantics of idioms through detailed processing of data obtained by considering such basic concepts of culture as man and woman.

However, special attention should be paid to the difficulties that may arise when studying the peculiarities of the implementation of the gender factor in phraseology. This is due to the following reasons:

1) the semantic complexity of idioms. Idioms are the product of a special kind of secondary nomination, in the processes of which two systems of signs interact – signs of nominative design and signs that belong to the metaphorical means of its embodiment (Telia, 1996);
2) neutralization of the grammatical category of the gender in phraseological units, due to their complex semantic structure;
3) features of coordination of a syntagmatic chain in the speech act manifested in different languages differently;
4) the lack of clear criteria for selecting phraseological material for the study of gender (Zykova, 2003).

Different approaches to the selection of phraseological material to consider the specifics of expression and implementation of gender reveal the peculiarities of interaction and correlation between gender markers of the plan of expression and the plan of idioms, as well as the need to differentiate concepts such as structural gender labelling, semantic gender labelling and gender reference of phraseology.

Note that the existence of a correlation between the gender labelling of the structure of the idiom and the gender labelling of its semantics raises the question of the relevance of two problems:

1) What is the semantic nature of the gender component, and how it is formed in the process of phraseologizing?
2) What is the place of the gender component in the semantics of the idiom?

This study *aims* to analyze gender-labelled phraseological units of the English language, which are the basic matrices of the phraseological picture of the world of a given cultural community, and to identify the frequency and impact

of gender stereotypes on the development of the national picture of the English-speaking community, such as word, phraseology, paremia, text, which contain background knowledge and ways to reflect these meanings in the national picture of the world.

The principal *methods* of research are specified by the aim, objectives, and research content. The vocabulary definition method was used to determine the semantics of the analyzed units. The descriptive method was applied for the classification of the analyzed units and the interpretation of the results. The dialectical approach served as the methodological basis of the research due to the exploration of English phraseology as a systemic phenomenon possessing certain inherent models, also the anthropocentric approach concerning the direction of language towards a person. The study of the structure of the sememe consists in identifying a set of semantic components that form it and describing the relationships between them. In linguistics, a number of methods have been developed to distinguish components in the sememe structure. The component analysis method, predominantly applied in the current research, belongs to the intralingual group of methods. It was formed in linguistics as an independent method in the late 1950s and is associated with the works of W. Goodenough and F. Lounsbury. The purpose of the component analysis is to identify the components (sememes) in the meanings of words that make up their content. The component analysis is carried out based on the data of explanatory dictionaries. In modern linguistics, component analysis is considered both as a method for studying the meanings of words in lexicology and as a means of adequately formulating the interpretations of words in a general literary dictionary of an explanatory type.

By component analysis, scientists understand the procedure for splitting a meaning into its component parts, the allocation of which is due both to the ratio of elements within a particular value (the presence of more general and more separate elements, that is, the hierarchy of organization) and the ratio of this value to the meaning of other neutralization of the elements of the upper levels and the coincidence of the differential features of the lower levels). In the presence of the listed conditions for applying component analysis, the value corresponds to the actual organization (Lukach, 2014, p. 153).

Stages of Gender Development in
Scientific Thought

Since the end of the 60s of the XX century, a tendency to distinguish between the concepts of biological sex and social sex has begun to be traced in works on sociology and philosophy (Stoller, 1968; Okaley, 1972; Rubin, 1975, etc.). The term "gender" is taken to denote the concept of "social gender" (from the dictionary *gender* – clan, family, clan tradition, a connection between generations).

In the languages of the world, gender systems are very different. They have a diverse number of classes, the basic distribution rules, and the way and place of the gender being indicated. Since the agreement is a definitional property, gender is usually absent in isolated languages, as well as in young languages with limited morphology, including sign languages. That is why the presence of a gender category in the language is considered to be a mature phenomenon (Audring, 2016).

The agreement makes gender a morphosyntactic trait, together with number and person, and distinguishes it from the inflectional class and classes of derived words. G. Corbett (2012) analyzed 257 languages from different geographic regions and linguistic families and proved that 112 of them have a gender system.

Thus, for instance, in Greek, Latin, or Spanish, gender is a grammatical category supported by certain morphosyntactic realizations (for example, declension of nouns, adjectives, etc.).

Something similar is found in Old English. There was a clear coherence, so gender was

completely grammatical, and therefore extralinguistic information such as gender did not matter at all. However, by the eleventh century, grammatical gender differences had disappeared; anaphoric pronouns are now chosen according to the gender of the referent.

In the late 70s - early 80s of the last century, several works dedicated to gender issues appeared – "Linguistik und Frauensprache" ("Linguistics and Women's Speech", 1978) by S. Triomel Pllotz, "Das Deutsche als Mannersprache" ("German as the Language of Men", 1984) by Louise Push and others. Special attention should be paid to the attempts of gender studies by W. von Humboldt, made in the late 18th – early 19th centuries. So, the male was defined by the researcher as "strength, that produces", and the female – as "strength, that perceives" (Humboldt, 1984, p. 152).

Since the time of W. von Humboldt, gender research has taken a different direction, and now we can say that the scientist adhered to the position of biodeterminism in the study of gender relations in society. Currently, biodeterminism in this area is not relevant, although there is no denying the existence of differences between men and women in physiological, genetic, and biological development. Significant changes in the field of gender linguistic research took place in the early 1990s after the publication of D. Tannen's work: "You just don't understand me. Women and Men in Dialogue" (1990), where the author analyzes the reasons for misunderstanding of dialogue participants through different patterns of language behaviour, formed under the influence of the demands made in society to men and women.

D. Tannen's work gave impetus to developing the concept of gender, i.e., the existence of a stable set of features of the male and female language. This concept was not widely supported in scientific linguistic discourse but still arouses the scientific interest of modern linguists (O. Goroshko, M. Magamedova, O. Perekhvalska, etc.). In the late 80s – early 90s of the last century,

gender studies are actively developing in foreign linguistics (N. Arutyunova, O. Goroshko, M. Yatsymirska, I. Khaleeva, A. Zalevskaya, L. Synelnikova, Y. Apresyan, O Kholod, I. Levontina, O. Kamenska, G. Abreimova, A. Kirilina, I. Olshansky, etc.), and later in the national one (V. Slinchuk, A. Arkhangelska, O. Bondarenko, J. Puzyrenko, L. Stavytska, S. Semeniuk, O. Taranenko, etc.).

Thus, one of the most radical areas of gender linguistics is feminist linguistics, which was initiated by the New Women's Movement in the United States and Germany, which began in the late 60s – early 70s of the XX century. The basis for this direction was R. Lakoff's "Language and place of women" (2004), which founded the androcentric language and limited image of women in the linguistic picture of the world. R. Lakoff believes that a woman is seen as a specific object (sexual or any other), but not as a significant person who has one's own opinion.

Gender research today is a field of science developing rapidly and is the centre of a wide range of diverse disciplinary knowledge – sociology, psychology, philosophy, culturology, anthropology, intercultural and nonverbal communication, linguistics, and more. So far, some important conclusions have been drawn, and the question of the legitimacy of the gender approach to the analysis of human history is no longer questioned but is considered obvious and justified.

The Linguistic Aspect of Gender

The classification of gender research approaches in linguistics is somewhat conditional, as they have much in common. All groups have similar issues and the object of study, namely – the relationship between language and gender. The primary purpose of such scientific research is to describe and explain the manifestations of males and females in language, the explication of assessments attributed in language to men and women, and the semantic areas in which they are

most common.

Linguistic gender studies are still in the process of formation. This applies equally to the terminological apparatus and research methods based on the principles of "traditional" scientific paradigms, cognitive linguistics, and psycholinguistics. Due to Hrabiichuk and Lazebna (2020), modern linguistics is experiencing a kind of "gender boom", and therefore we can and should discuss the accumulated ideas, directions of research and experiments, bearing in mind the formation of linguistic genderology, because gender is like no other sociolinguistic concept (p. 369), rooted in living conditions, realities, norms, and traditions of a certain culture (Stavytska, 2003, p. 30).

The study of the peculiarities of the implementation of the gender factor in the framework of linguistic, in particular, phraseological research, is, in our opinion, extremely interesting. Attention to this problem is due to the inexhaustible ability of the phraseological fund of both English and any other language to store and transmit information matrices that reveal the national and cultural value picture of the world, reflect and in some way adapt the linguistic and cultural means of a national community to sociocultural changes that occur during a certain period of development of society. Phraseological language tools can concentrate on the peculiarities of language and worldview of its speakers to identify the national specifics of communicative behaviour of the nation.

Speaking about the peculiarities of the phraseological potential of language, first of all, it is necessary to pay attention to its most characteristic and universal feature - long-term preservation of culturally significant information, on the one hand, and a quick response to the latest and current socio-cultural trends, on the other. The timely and rapid response of the phraseological sphere of language to the most relevant problems of modern culture is manifested in the linguistic objectification or verbalization of new concepts and conceptual areas with the help of phraseological means.

The phraseological dimension of language as a cultural segment of a nation can more fully reveal the features of the concepts of "masculinity/femininity", which reflect the social experience characteristic of different communities. It should be noted that the national-cultural specificity as a linguistic reality is quite clearly traced when considering the specifics of the representation of the concepts of "male" and "female" in English phraseology.

Despite its importance, phraseological funds of languages are the least studied in gender studies.

According to A. V. Kirilina, in the most general terms, the study of gender in linguistics concerns two groups of problems:

1. Language and the reflection of gender. The purpose of this approach is to describe and explain how the presence of people of different sex is manifested in the language (the nominative system, lexicon, syntax, gender category, etc. are examined first of all), which assessments are attributed to men and women, and in which semantic areas they are most conspicuous / expressed.

2. Linguistic and generally communicative behaviour of men and women, where typical strategies and tactics, gender-specific choice of lexicon units, ways of achieving success in communication, preferences in the choice of vocabulary, syntactic structures, etc. are distinguished, etc., that is, the specificity of male and female speech.

All linguistic studies of gender are interdependent and complementary, but there are several main areas of development of linguistic gender studies in linguistics: socio-psycholinguistic, lingo-cultural, communicative-discursive (Kirilina, 1999, p. 3).

Among researchers studying the gender concept, it is worth noting the paper by Veronica Telia (1996), which contains a section that reflects the cultural concept of "woman" in Russian phraseology. The author analyzes several views

on a woman characteristic of the daily Russian mentality, most of which are associated with her physiological and intellectual abilities since they seem to have programmed the characterological foundations of the cultural and national interpretation for other parametric features of this concept. In the process of research, V. M. Telia (1996) formulates the following conclusions:

1) the perception of a woman as the weaker sex and opposing her to the stronger sex is not typical for the Russian everyday self-awareness;

2) the gastronomic metaphor "woman is a tidbit" is basic for all phraseological units characterizing a woman as a sexual partner;

3) in Christianized Russian culture, there is a stereotype of a homebody woman;

4) the topic of a woman's morality acquires special significance, the consideration of which shows that phraseology reflects features that are traditional for a woman's daily behaviour – this is a shameless violation of moral canons, according to which she is assigned the role of an honest girl, and then a faithful wife;

5) the contradictoriness of the concept of a woman not to her counterparty – the concept of a person, but in many conceptual foundations to a person as such, is most clearly manifested in cultural and national connotations characteristic of the figurative foundations of phraseological means of designating the intellectual abilities of a woman. In everyday consciousness, the female mind is opposed to the male one and is considered as "subhuman" (p. 278).

D. Ch. Malyshevskaya draws attention to an exciting pattern observed during the language material on gender issues. Thus, for women, almost any comparison with a man is positive in nature and, as a rule, has a positive assessment. On the contrary, any comparison with a woman has an obvious negative assessment (Malyshevskaya, 1999).

N. M. Morozova believes that the gender stratification of society creates a certain social an-

tagonism between men and women. In almost all epochs, women have been pushed out of the system of male social production into the female domestic sphere. For men, family relationships remain partial, they do not have to sacrifice their social life. Thus, it turns out that the metaphor of sex plays the role of cultural and formative factors (Morozova, 2002).

A. V. Kirilina researched gender stereotypes in Russian and German phraseological funds. In many respects, as the author notes, the reflection of gender stereotypes in two languages has certain common features: the first in terms of importance should be noted androcentric (the orientation of the language towards definitions and assessments that are made from the point of view of men), a woman's assessment is lower in both in German; in both languages, a woman appears as an object of action, a commodity; positive characteristics of women mainly relate to areas where they are useful for men. However, the comparison of relevant images gives reason to talk about certain differences in the pictures of the world of the German and Russian languages (Kirilina, 1999).

A. P. Martyniuk refers to phraseological means (PM) of constructing gender as phraseological words obtained by the associated meaning of one of the components and idiomatic phraseological phrases. The value of PM is interpreted as an inferential meaning denoted by PM, that is, the prototypes of a male or female being, as well as the conceptual content of the category of masculinity and femininity, is metaphorically associated with the defined PM in the collective consciousness of the English-speaking society. Inferential knowledge about the designated structure is not only based on the linguistic component - knowledge of linguistic conventions, but also non-linguistic - scientific, religious, historical, mythological, sociocultural, etc., knowledge about the properties of the signified (Martyniuk, 2004, p. 16).

In addition, researchers of gender issues in linguistics are increasingly pointing to the pres-

ence of such a characteristic feature as anthropocentrism. This is evidenced by the scientific developments of N. Arutyunova, O. Goroshko, M. Yatsymirska, I. Khaleeva, A. Zalevska, L. Synelnykova, Y. Apresyan, O. Kholod, I. Levontina, O. Kamenska, and others. In particular, M. Yatsymirska (2002) calls anthropocentrism in modern linguistics a "human-oriented" approach to the study of linguistic phenomena, which brings this science closer to many other fields of knowledge, where man is considered a "deep centre" of the research program (p. 49). This scientific direction correlates with journalism in general because it is the person who is at the centre of attention of information about the society, its development, and prospects. Scholars argue that language is thoroughly anthropocentric, being both a means and a result of the transmission of accepted guidelines in society.

Gender Markers in English Phraseological
Picture of the World

One of the first attempts to determine the ways of registration of the gender component in English idioms was made by O. V. Kunin, who believed that certain grammatical semes - microelements and microelements of grammatical meaning could be distinguished in the semantic structure of phraseology. The microelements of grammatical meaning include the categorical semes of the most generalized grammatical meaning, for example, the semes, which indicate action, objectivity, state. Microelements include, for example, semes denoting number, gender, case, indicative and non-indicative moods (Kunin, 2005).

From the point of view of gender studies, the most interesting microsemes denoting a gender trait. Gender semes, as noted by O. V. Kunin (2005), are of three types: male, female and middle and can be expressed both explicitly and implicitly (p. 204).

However, this approach, firstly, introduces a gender category into English language material, which in English grammar is not based on clear gender differences, and, secondly, it leaves the unclear question of belonging of the English idioms gender marking either to the idiom's structure or to its semantics.

In this paper, we follow the concept of idiom semantics, which was developed by V. M. Telia (1996). The researcher proposes to consider the meaning of idioms in the form of a hierarchically built model, represented in the form of macro components formed by semantic primitives – semantically extreme components (p. 14). The following main macro components of the semantic structure of an idiom are distinguished:

1) a descriptive component responsible for the correlation of the idiom denotation with the denotation of the reality it defines, i.e., for the objective meaning, which is reflected in the meaning of phraseology. The descriptive macro component describes only the logical-conceptual aspect of reality and reflects the scope of the lexical concept;

2) evaluative macro component, which reflects information about the value of the denoted in idiom, which is determined from the standpoint of some average linguistic personality per the value-oriented scale of stereotypes adopted in the world picture of this national-cultural community;

3) motivational macro component, which denotes the image, adequate to the possible state of affairs in the real world or inadequate reality, which belongs to its unreal representation. The motivational macro component is correlated with the phenomenon, which is called the motive for rethinking the meaning of the phrase or its image-motivating basis;

4) the emotional macro component of meaning, which combines information that contains data about the emotional traits of the idiom meaning. Remarkably, that emotionality means the ability of linguistic entities to semantically reflect the emotional in its basis and socially conscious feeling-attitude to the signified, which is expressed in the range of

106

approval or disapproval. Due to Veronika Te-lia (1996), the emotional macro component of phraseological meaning is a kind of culmination of the actual semantic information. It is the emotional component, says Veronika Te-lia, which has the form of a modal framework that doubles the subjective factor that is added to the denotation in the form of an evaluative and emotional relationship. This duality enhances the expressiveness of the meaning of idioms, gives it an expressive colour (Telia, 1996, p. 122);

5) stylistic macro component of meaning plays a dual role: it regulates the choice of phraseology and, at the same time, contributes to the strengthening (or dissonance) of emotional modality;

6) The macro-grammatical component of meaning is a set of all information about phonetic, morphological and syntactic forms of phraseological units and the content of these forms.

Using this model, I. V. Zykova (2001) hypothesizes the possibility of distinguishing another gender macro component in the semantics of phraseology, which is superimposed on the description and helps to adequately reflect the idioms of cultural concepts of femininity and masculinity, in particular their linguistic expression, as well as their non-disclosure conceptualization of gender in the minds of native speakers. The gender component interacts with the rest of the macro components in the semantics of the idiom. It can be present in the description, manifesting itself based on emotional and evaluative macro components knowledge. The complexity of the analysis is that it can be "scattered" on other macro components of phraseological meaning in the absence of an explicit seme in the description, which indicates a male or female denotation. We believe that even in such circumstances, the role of the gender component in the formation of idiom semantics can be established by analyzing evaluative, figurative-motivational, emotional, and other macro components of phraseological meaning, i.e., by revealing various

mechanisms of implicit gender realization in the meaning of phraseology.

The current study was conducted by mapping the phraseological field to establish how the gender factor is reflected in English phraseology. We have narrowed the object of study by analyzing only those idioms of the English language that include a colour name.

In various fields of science, scientists distinguish the physiological and psychological components of the effect of colour. These two components are close to emotions - the bodily manifestations of our soul, that is, our intellect. Even ancient scholars have noticed a close connection between colour, paint and emotions. Today, a certain relationship of colour to emotions is confirmed in stable verbal combinations. All this brings us to the definition of colour as ideal (mental), which is associated with the material (physical or physiological) through emotions, feelings as their information-energy ratio. This approach allows combining different languages of different branches of science, including art and religion, to "reproduce" the Image of Man[1].

The factual material of the research has shown that the repertoire of lexemes, which are gender markers of the idiom expression plan, can be represented by three main groups:

1. Anthropometric lexemes (the semantic dominant of which is the gender attribute).
2. Terms of kinship.
3. Anthroponomic lexemes (names) (Zykova, 2001, p. 152).

The first group can be considered as a closed system of gender oppositions *girl – boy, woman – man, lady – gentleman*, and the like. In each gender-oppositional pair of markers, in addition to the dominant sex feature, several micro-signs can be defined, which, on the one hand, distinguish one or another opposition from the rest, and on the other hand, can unite gender-opposite tokens into subgroups. For example, in contrast, due to age signs, one subgroup can include the following paired lexemes: *boy – girl, man – wo-*

---

[1] See: https://www.koloristika.in.ua/t_pvk.php

man; for a noble birth: a lady – a gentleman and the like. Also, among the lexemes of the first group, we found unmatched lexemes, designating men or women: *miss, mare, whore, witch* or *male: knight, prince, dad, priest, monk, admiral.* As can be seen from the examples above, the lexemes for the male sex are neutral or positive, unlike the lexemes for the female, which are predominantly negative: *a mare – a female horse, a whore – a prostitute.*

Among the tokens that denote the terms of kinship, we found only two, both to denote females: *mamma, mother.* Admittedly, even such an "innocent" token as mamma has a negative connotation: *red hot mamma – sex bomb.* Thus, we can agree with D. Malyshevskaya's (1999) thesis regarding the international idea of female imperfection (p. 183).

Regarding gender markers related to anthroponyms, we fixed the following ones: *Jack, Peter, Sam, Jones, Robinson; Maria, Mary, Betty, Bess, Gretna.*

Gender markers related to anthroponyms are an open system of gender oppositions because, firstly, they allow the replacement of a name due to and justified by the communicative situation. Secondly, the repertoire of proper names can be expanded and supplemented in connection with the emergence of new prominent personalities in various spheres of social activity (Malyshevskaya, 1999, p. 184).

The basis for our analysis was the dictionaries *Longman Dictionary of English Idioms* (1996), *Longman American Idioms Dictionary* (1999), *Large English-Russian phraseological dictionary* (1998), *English-Ukrainian phraseological dictionary* (1969), which contain more than 4500, 4000, 20 000 and 35 000 idioms, respectively, and are made taking into account the norms of political correctness.

A continuous sample of gender-relevant phraseology obtained phraseological material for our study based on the following criteria: formal – selected phraseological units that contained a noun, pronoun, or proper name of a male or female person; semantic – selected phraseology, the internal form of which indicated the identity of a particular sex; stylistic note indicating: to the person of which sex are phraseological units.

Thus, we have selected 67 phraseological units (see *Table 1*), of which 44 denote men and only 23 - women. Moreover, this also allows us to conclude that the representation of male and female names in the phraseological fund of the English language is disproportionate and the presence in the language system of "anti-feminine" asymmetry, which reflects and reproduces gender stereotypes characteristic of a given culture. It is known that the number of concept nominations in a language is directly proportional to its cultural significance for a given nation.

Table 1.

Gender Representation of Color Names in English Phraseology

Colour name		Male marker			Female marker			Total	
		+[1]	-[2]	*[3]	+	-	*		
Black		0	3	9	0	0	1	13	
Blue		1	0	7	0	2	0	10	
Red	Red	0	1	7	1	1	1	16	11
	Scarlet	0	0	0	0	1	0		1
	Blushing	0	0	0	2	0	0		2
	Bloody	0	0	0	0	0	1		1
	Milk and roses	0	0	0	1	0	0		1

[1]   Positive characteristic
[2]   Negative characteristic
[3]   Neutral characteristic

White	3	0	1	1	1	1	7
Blonde	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Green	0	2	2	0	0	1	5
Yellow	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Golden	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Brown	0	0	2	0	0	3	5
Bright	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Grey	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Pearl	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	5	7	32	6	6	11	67
Total	*44*			*23*			*67*

From the point of view of evaluation attributed to males and females, the so-called "male" and "female" groups have (almost the same number!) both positive and negative connotative expressions. For example, concerning women, we fixed the following idioms: *a golden girl – idol, mother of pearl – pearl* (positive connotations); *blue stocking – educated, but mean woman, scarlet whore – slut, white slave – prostitute* (negative connotations), etc. Groups with male referents also have positive and negative values: *white-headed boy – pet, bright boy – well done, white man – decent man, green men – legendary forest dwellers* (positive connotations); *admiral of the red – a drunkard with a red face, an old gentleman in black – devil, a green goods man – a counterfeiter, knights of the green – a carter* (negative connotations), etc.

Thus, the most common "male" colour is *black* (12 cases of use), "female" – *red* (8 cases of use); the most positive "male" colour is *white*, and 'female' – *red*, the most negative for men was – *black*, and for women – *blue*. Admittedly, the symbolism of red colour concerning women has changed nowadays. Thus, red means not only sexuality, but also power, glory. *Red carpet* was used to name a hospitable welcome for important dignitaries historically, while now in Hollywood, red carpet is rolled out for celebrities, possibly modern-day gods and goddesses[1]. Old *red hot mamma* is opposed now to *lady in red*. The negative connotation of the blue colour

concerning females can be traced not only in English phraseology but Russian and Ukrainian ones as well. The phrase *blue stocking* (English)/ *синий чулок* (Russian) /*синя панчоха* (Ukrainian). Admittedly, the amazing features of blue were highly revered in the East, and it was *blue* there that was considered the colour of knowledge, protection at the astral level and the intercession of higher powers. Speaking about the analyzed idiom, *blue* really means knowledge, but the connotation is negative as it is related to women's knowledge.

Etymologically *black* appeared in Proto-Germanic, while *red* and *white* came from Proto-Indo-European. *White* derived from *kweydos*, which meant "to shine", *black* from *blakaz* with the meaning "burnt", *red* – from *reudh,* which named blood.

Symbolic aspects of the semantics of colour concepts have their roots in colour symbols from previous strata of culture. Thus, the studies of W. Terner (1987) showed that primitive communities were dominated by colour representations, built on a kind of dichotomy of colour perception, which, according to the author, is a three-member classification and is its special case (p. 77). In the imagination of the bearers of primitive cultures, the main colours were black, white, and red, and together they symbolized the ritual of initiation. In essence, the colour triad is a human archetype as a process of experiencing pleasure and pain, and its symbolism is thus derived from physiological experience. As we can see, the semantics of colour, in this sense, serves

---

[1] See: https://www.shutterstock.com/blog/color-symbolism-and-meanings-around-the-world

as proof of the anthropometric nature of the conceptual and, accordingly, linguistic picture of the world. Both the symbolic and emotional-evaluative components of the semantics of polar white and black colours were in most cases unambiguous, and modern traditional symbolism and emotional-evaluative semantics of white and black colours are "inherited" from past cultures almost unchanged.

Fascinating is the fact that it is in the white-black-red scale made the oldest known to archaeologists rock paintings belonging to the Upper Paleolithic era (230-40 thousand years BC).

Also, we find the white-black-red triad in medieval Europe – in Dante's "Divine Comedy". The work presents the same magical colour triad but extrapolated to the colour ideas from Christian symbolism (Humeniuk, 2020, p. 192). The man overcomes three-colour steps at the gates of Purgatory: white, symbolizing the innocence of the baby; red: originally crimson/red with a tinge of black / a symbol of a sinful life; then actually red, which symbolizes the blood that "whitens", cleanses from sin; white, which acquires a shade of radiance – a harmonious fusion of all other colours.

Our study does not contradict the generally accepted negative characteristics of *black*. Among the 14 cases of using this colour – no positive connotations for either men or women. *Black* means evil, suffering, misery, death, disease, witchcraft. Compare *black man – evil spirit, satan, gentleman in black – devil, black shirt – fascist*, etc.

Speaking about *white*, we can state mostly positive connotations of the colour both for men and women. Admittedly there is an interesting idiom *Dead White European Male/Dead White Male – a man whose importance and talents may have been exaggerated concerning his belonging to historically dominant gender and ethnic group.* The term was firstly used in 1992 by Bernard Knox as the title for his lecture and the book, where he insisted on the crucial meaningfulness of classical Greek culture for modern society.

The term is often used in a derogatory manner, in the context of particular regret that the contribution of modern, non-white, or women rarely receives the same attention in academic references.

As can be seen from Table 1, the most characteristic "feminine" colour in English phraseology is *red* (27 cases), which is represented by some shades or synonymous tokens that are not typical for men (*scarlet lady – prostitute, bloody Mary – hard drink, blushing is virtue's colour – shyness – a sign of girlish modesty, milk, and roses – blood with milk* (about the colour of a girl's face). According to I. Cardigos, the medieval image of red on a white background, embodies absolute beauty, and crimson has long symbolized desperate self-forgetfulness, passion, love. As a result, there was little virginity and innocence about it – red dresses were usually worn by courtesans, respectively, in the phraseology – *a red hot mamma – a sex bomb*. Thus, red colour was ambivalent: on the one hand, it was directed to life, on the other – to death, but in both cases correlated with blood (Terner, 1987, p. 82).

Red is considered the colour of gods, kings, military commanders and is the colour of strength, energy, hunting. Historically *red* was the colour of the British army, and the British Armed Forces usually fought dressed in red. In phraseology with a referent man: *red coat – an English soldier, red hat – a cardinal, red man's fire – a bonfire in Indian*, etc.

Not surprisingly, the characteristic "female" negative colour name is *blue*. J. V. Goethe (1964) pointed out that blue was the closest colour to darkness. Tracing the origin of the names of the colours *black* and *blue*, the sound similarity of these words of the Old English language is striking: *black* – with AS blæk (blac); *blue* – with OS blæw. Also, some psychological interpretations of these colours are common. Both black and blue can mean night, gloom.

It should be noted that a significant number of idioms with a colour element characteristic of men has a historical and/or religious basis: *black Friar – a Dominican friar,* black Monk – a Ben-

edictine monk, *black Prince – Prince of Wales (Edward), men in black (later black suits) – FBI, CIA, Erik the Red – Norse navigator: discovered and colonized Greenland, shirt – a fascist, blue coat – a soldier of the Northern Army in the war of 1861-1865, Knights of the White Camelia – the nickname of Ku Klus clans, the black Pope is the nickname of the head of the Jesuit order*, etc. Phraseological units that carry a similar connotation with a female referent are not typical of the English language (only 2 units): *black Maria – a police van to transport prisoners; a German smoke projectile, scarlet woman – a Roman Catholic church*. Concerning denotation of household items, the frequency of male and female counterparts is about the same: *black-eyed Susan – an African tropical plant, white lady – a cocktail consisting of gin, Cointreau, and lemon juice, brown Betty – bread pudding, the Miss white – women's toilet; black Jack – a tall mug for beer, yellow Jack – quarantine flag, yellow boy – a gold coin, yellow man – a yellow silk handkerchief.*

Conclusion

Phraseology is one of the most complex linguistic disciplines, which is of interest to philologists and all those who provide research in the history and culture of a particular ethnic group.

It is evident, phraseological units and idioms of any language carry the full breadth of popular thought, the experience of generations, accumulated over the centuries. This material, like nothing else, vividly represents the stereotypes of gender embedded in the internal form of phraseological units. After all, the gender aspect in the expression of phraseological units (in this case equivalent to a word or phrase) of the intellectual qualities of women is a widespread linguistic and speech phenomenon.

The phraseological fund provides excellent opportunities for the study of gender, which brings new aspects to the study of this fund. New knowledge is possible due to the active applica-

tion of linguistic and cultural approaches and methods of cognitive linguistics. Set expressions containing a gender aspect constitute a very interesting and important layer of the paremiological and phraseological fund of any language. This fund is currently a relevant subject of study in linguistics and allows tracing the degree of male or female dominance, identify the remnants of patriarchal stereotypes, and more.

Gender marking has been the focal point of scientific research since the 1960s, predominantly since the 1970s.

The article interprets gender as an ideological frame composing a concept of men or women living in a particular culture, a non-linguistic category with linguistic ways of actualization.

It is essential to distinguish between grammatical and natural gender. Natural gender is defined as the biological sex of a person, animal, or character. Grammatical gender is characterized as a means of classifying nouns. However, this does not always coincide with the "natural sex" of the person or object being described. The grammatical category of gender is an inflectional category closely related to gender labelling in the sense that we have adopted and sometimes even replaces truly derivational means, as in the case of gender conversion.

Thus, the gender marking of English phraseology is a purely lexical-semantic phenomenon, i.e., tokens denoting a male or female being or semantic components in the semantics of phraseology can act as gender markers.

Gender-labelled and unlabeled idioms are rather informative in analyzing the representation of gender in texts, as labelled words are those which are given less prestige than the standard form of the word. Gender inequality can be explored from a sociological point of view, but the connotations of words can illustrate this inequality and the double standards between men and women.

Our study of gender components on the material of phraseological units gives grounds to assert that their semantic basis consists of stereo-

typical-associative units, which are presented in mind as social activity and characteristics of the images of both sexes.

Although our study indicates a certain asymmetry in the phraseology of the English language, it does not give a complete picture of the reflection of gender relations, as the number of gender-significant units within the studied material is insignificant.

The study of gender-labelled phraseological units of the English language with an element of colour designation helps identify cultural constants, shared ideas and evaluations behind them, and nuclear and peripheral areas, the definition of which is an aid to a complete and comprehensive reflection of the world.

We see future research perspectives in a comparative analysis of gender marking concerning different languages and language families and comprising sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic issues.

References

Audring, J. (2016). *Gender. Linguistics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199384655.013.43

Corbett, G. G. (2012). Number of genders. *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. Retrieved from https://wals.info/chapter/30

Goethe, J. W. (1964). *Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniya* (Selected philosophical works, in Russian). Moscow: Nauka.

Hrabiichuk, M. V., & Lazebna, O. A. (2020). The concept of "gender" in the modern scientific paradigm. *Young Scientist, 6*(82), 369-372. Retrieved from http://molodyvcheny.in.ua/files/journal/2020/6/73.pdf

Humboldt, W. von. (1984). *Izbrannye trudy po yazykoznaniyu* (Selected works on linguistics, in Russian). Moscow: Progress.

Humeniuk, I. (2020). Philosophy of red color: Linguistic and extralinguistic aspects. *Wisdom*, *15*(2), 188-198.

Kirilina, A. V. (1999). *Gender: lingvisticheskie aspekty* (Gender: Linguistic aspects, in Russian). Moscow: Institut sotsiologii RAN.

Kunin, A. V. (2005). *Kurs frazeologii sovremennogo ruskogo yazyka* (Modern English phraseology course, in Russian). Dubna: Feniks+.

Lakoff, R. T. (2004). *Language and women's place: Text and commentaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lukach, M. (2014). *Komponentnyi analiz yak metod doslidzhennia semantyky diiesliv ukrainskoi movy* (Component analysis as a research method for semantics of verbs in the Ukrainian language, in Ukrainian). *Studia Methodologica, 38*, 150-155. Retrieved from http://dspace.tnpu.edu.ua/bitstream/123456789/6301/1/Lukach.pdf

Malyshevskaya, D. Ch. (1999). *Bazovye kontsepty kul'tury v svete gendernogo podkhoda (na primere opozitsii "Muzhchina/Zhenschina"* (Basic concepts of culture in the light of a gender approach (on the example of the opposition "Man/Woman"). In *Frazeologiya v kontekste kul'tury* (Phraseology in the context of culture, in Russian) (pp. 180-184). Moscow: Shkola "Yazyki russkoi kultury".

Martyniuk, A. P. (2004). *Konstruiuvannia gender v anhlomovnomu dyskursi* (Constructing gender in English discourse, in Ukrainian). Kharkiv: Konstanta.

Milton, D. (2002). Sex and gender are different: Sexual identity and gender identity are different. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *7*, 320-335.

Morozova, N. N. (2002). *Gendernye problemy*

vo frazeologii. Frazeologiya i miroponimanie naroda. Frazeologicheskaya kartina mira (Gender problems in phraseology. Phraseology and world outlook of the people. Phraseological picture of the world, in Russian). Tula: Tula State Tolstoy University.

Okaley, A. (1972). *Sex, Gender and Society*. London: Temple Smith.

Rubin, G. (1975). The traffic in women: Notes on the "political economy" of sex. In R. R. Reiter (Ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (pp. 157-210). New York: Monthly Review Press.

Stavytska, L. O. (2003). *Mova i stat* (Language and gender, in Ukrainian). *Krytyka* (Critics, in Ukrainian), *6*, 29-34.

Stoller, R. J. (1968). *Sex and gender; on the development of masculinity and femininity*. New York: Science House.

Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand. Women and men in conversation*. New York: William Morrow & Co.

Telia, V. N. (1996). *Russkaya frazeologiya v zerkale natsional'nogo mentaliteta* (Russian phraseology in the mirror of the national mentality, in Russian). Moscow: Shkola "Yazyki russkoi kul'tury".

Terner, V. (1987). *Simvol i ritual* (Symbol and ritual, in Russian). Moscow: Nauka.

Yatsymirska, M. (2002). *Mova suchasnoi ukrainskoi presy: stan i tendentsii rozvytku* (The language of the modern Ukrainian press: The state and trends of development, in Ukrainian). *Visnyk lvivskoho natsionalnoho universytetu* (Bulletin of Lviv National University, in Ukrainian), *22*, 48-54.

Zykova, I. V. (2001). *Spetsifika gendernoi markirovanosti angliiskikh idiom* (Specificity of gender marking of English idioms). *Gender: yazyuk, kul'tura, kommunikatsiya* (Gender: Language, culture, communication, in Russian), *1*, 150-159.

Zykova, I. V. (2003). *Sposoby konstruirovaniya gendera v angliiskoi frazeologii* (Methods for constructing gender in English phraseology, in Russian). Moscow: Editorial URSS.