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## Influence of Gender-Marked Kazakh Proverbs on the Content of Cultural Stereotypes

Gulnara Mustagaliyeva <sup>1</sup> , Akhmaral Khairzhanova <sup>1</sup> , Rita Bissenbayeva <sup>1</sup> , Laura Muratova <sup>1</sup> ,  
Assel Maratova <sup>1</sup> , Kulpash Koptleuova <sup>2\*</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Translation Studies and Foreign Languages, Kh. Dosmukhamedov Atyrau University, Atyrau 060000, Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup>School of Arts and Sciences, Baishev University, Aktobe 030000, Kazakhstan

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to analyze the content of the concept of “man” - “woman” based on Kazakh proverbs. The study of the concepts “man” and “woman” allows us to approach the study of gender as a cultural representation and reveal all its many-sided content, namely social, psychological, and cultural aspects. The analysis of proverbs in the research material is quite justified. Proverbs, reflecting folk wisdom, appear as a product of the people’s creativity. They do not only reproduce the national-specific vision of the world, but also participate in its formation, and play a significant role in enriching the language with cultural concepts. They demonstrate the Kazakhs’ idea of men and women as part of their linguistic worldview. Thus, to get the most complete picture of how gender manifests itself in the stereotypes fixed by the language, we consider it appropriate to describe the proverbial units of the Kazakh language, which reflect gender stereotypes. A comprehensive literature review was conducted to select appropriate material for analysis. A total of 30 Kazakh proverbs were selected from different sources. The data were analyzed using qualitative analysis to identify common patterns related to gender stereotypes.

**Keywords:** Gender; Proverbs; Kazakh Language; Gender Stereotype

#### \*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Kulpash Koptleuova, School of Arts and Sciences, Baishev University, Aktobe 030000, Kazakhstan; Email: [koptleuovak@mail.ru](mailto:koptleuovak@mail.ru)

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## 1. Introduction

Gender is a complex socio-cultural construct: differences in roles, behavior, and mental and emotional characteristics between men and women, created (constructed) by society<sup>[1, 2]</sup>.

Gender, therefore, is interpreted as one of the basic dimensions of the social structure of society, which, together with other socio-demographic and cultural characteristics (race, class, age), organizes the social system<sup>[3-5]</sup>. Social reproduction of gender consciousness at the individual level supports a gender-based social structure.

Gender is constructed through a certain system of socialization, division of labor, and cultural norms, roles, and stereotypes accepted in society. Gender norms and stereotypes accepted in society to a certain extent determine the psychological qualities (encouraging some and negatively evaluating others), abilities, activities, and professions of people depending on their biological gender<sup>[6, 7]</sup>. At the same time, gender roles and norms do not have a universal content and vary significantly in different societies. In this sense, being a man or a woman means not having certain natural qualities at all, but performing a particular role<sup>[8-11]</sup>.

A system of norms of behavior appears in society that prescribes the performance of certain sexual roles; accordingly, there is a rigid set of ideas about what is “male” and “female” in a given society, gender is a set of social representations, and not a fixed given by nature. Gender is the cultural mask of gender, what we think about gender within the boundaries of our sociocultural representations<sup>[12]</sup>.

Gender stereotypes imply the expectations that society places on men and women. That women are interested in their appearance, they are dependent, dreamy, and emotional<sup>[13]</sup>. He describes the psychophysiological characteristics of women, such as dependence, timidity, dreaminess, empathy, anxiety, and emotionality. There are also mentions of stereotypes that concern the distribution of family roles: women are assigned the private sphere and the role of mother and housewife. In the professional sphere, women are associated, first of all, with executive and service activities (education, health care, trade, social and domestic sphere). The female image includes social and communication skills, warmth, and emotional support. In general, women are attributed fewer positive qualities than men<sup>[13]</sup>.

The peculiarity of stereotypes is that they penetrate

deep into the subconscious. Stereotypes are divided into individuals or masses. Stereotypes of mass consciousness are the most influential. Reflected in the consciousness of a person, they are embodied in the behavior of people, filling the gender space of society with unique structures (constructs). Possessing great stability in the public consciousness and, as a result, in social practice, they manifest themselves in many areas of life. However, over time, transformations occur in society. The development trends of modern society allow not only to deviate from such stereotypes but also to consolidate the exact opposite.

The traditional system of gender stereotypes of the Kazakhs is built on strict normativity. The performance of women’s duties by men causes a negative attitude and condemnation from others; following the gender roles set by society, men and women must strictly adhere to them. Gender stereotypes are especially clearly manifested in ritualized etiquette, where a man and a woman must strictly follow the prescribed scenario. Note that, compared to Russia and European countries, gender stereotypes are quite firmly present in the traditional culture of the Kazakhs<sup>[14]</sup>. In general, there are grounds to talk about the category of explicitness-implicitness, regulating the admissibility-inadmissibility of open expression of emotion. T. Toktarova emphasizes that “... excessive emotionality is not characteristic of Kazakhs, for example, love and affection should not be expressed openly, even between husband and wife, in the presence of a third party”<sup>[14]</sup>. In general, the non-verbal communication of Kazakhs has a pronounced gender differentiation. The non-verbal component of communication of Kazakhs is due to the actualization of gender stereotypes that exist in society and are associated with the traditions and customs of the Kazakh people and are characterized by a high degree of ritualization. Women’s non-verbal behavior has many taboos and prohibitions. Men’s non-verbal behavior is freer, it is aimed at demonstrating superiority and leadership. The age factor is also superimposed on the gender factor, which is manifested in the following: the older a person is, the more he strives to conform to the gender stereotypes that exist in society. Gender relations cover almost all spheres of human activity, they are reflected in cultural concepts of language and influence behavior, speech characteristics, and socialization of the language of the individual<sup>[15]</sup>.

Each society, ethnocultural, religious, cultural, social

groups, and classes have various gender roles. In primitive communal systems men and women, girls, and youth have their group language. Division of labor depended on their biological differences. Both of sex have their vocabulary. Men formed the vocabulary of hunting and building, and women composed household vocabulary<sup>[16]</sup>.

The linguistic units (words, sentences, proverbs, phraseology, etc) that are related to social sex: man and woman in one language are called genderlect. In social linguistic terms vocabulary, genderlect is man and woman's languages' emotional, expressional, grammatical, stylistic, and other characteristics in one ethnic language, the national language, sociolect<sup>[17]</sup>. Women and men living in various cultural-linguistic spaces, excepting social, and economic changes obtain linguistic characteristics. In Kazakh society, men's and women's gender linguistic characteristics depend on their functions. These professions were very actual between men: hunter, saddler, jeweler, etc. Women sewed clothes. It is very important to research labor division, men, and women's gender roles, the formation of gender vocabulary, and using of genderlects in gender linguistic research.

Religion is the main mechanism of sociocultural control of gender relations, it determines man and woman's role and place in social environment. The religion is very important in keeping traditions. From the point of view of gender, the principles of Islam religion for men and women are very clear. Man's Muslim greeting is one of the gender characteristics. From the woman's speech, we can see religious signs. These words "Алла", "жаратқан ием", "құдай-ау", "құдай үшін" (Allah, My God, My Lord, for the God's sake, For the Heaven) are not only religious, but they also became women's gender style of speaking in everyday relations to show mood, various emotions<sup>[15]</sup>.

Gender is undoubtedly reflected in language, and the most colorful and expressive means are paremic sayings that carry gender restrictions, which contain information about the ethnocultural specifics, traditional culture, and history of a particular people. A proverb is a small form of folk poetry that carries a semantic load, a certain conclusion based on a person's life experience. Being a vivid figurative expression that carries the immutable truth and folk wisdom in a capacious and accessible form, the proverb has a high reproducibility in speech. Proverbs are the most important material for studying historical events, ethnography, every-

day life, and the worldview of the people. Having withstood the evaluation of time, they have organically merged with speech; they will always adorn it with wit, the ability to accurately and accurately characterize all the diverse manifestations of life.

The article is devoted to the analysis of Kazakh proverbs containing a gender component, which allows us to identify the most frequent stereotypes of representatives of both sexes, fixed in the language.

## 2. Methodology

Our research aimed to trace the reflection of gender in language, namely, the manifestation of gender stereotypes. The object of the study was the proverbs that form the concepts of "man" and "woman" in the linguistic picture of the world of the Kazakh language.

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore gender roles and stereotypes in proverbs. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for an in-depth examination of the texts and provides a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding gender portrayals.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis of gender roles and stereotypes, a diverse range of contemporary literature was examined. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select Kazakh proverbs for analysis. The sample consists of 32 proverbs reflecting gender stereotypes and the social behavior of men and women.

After the data collection stage was completed, the data was interpreted to gain a holistic understanding of gender roles and stereotypes.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

During our research, we have established the following pattern: in the studied picture of the world around the concept of "woman", a more positive picture is created. However, the described reality is defined through an evaluation scale with the concepts of good and bad.

1. *Jaqsı äyel jaman erkekti tüzetedi* (A good wife will turn a bad husband into a good man);
2. *Jaqsı äyel jamanın jasırar jaqsının asırar* (A good wife will hide her husband's shortcomings and exaggerate his

strengths);

At the same time, we found evidence of women's desire for power over men. But the examples found carry a negative connotation.

3. *Xañ jarlıǵıman qatın jarlıǵı küşti* (The wife's order is scarier than the khan's order);
4. *Bayın bilegen äyel awıldı bileymın dep şärhäkim boladı* (The wife who controls her husband will imagine herself as a *şärhäkim* and want to lead the village);

An increasing number of proverbs indicate that the unshakable value of life is a woman's mother, represented as a wet nurse, guardian, and educator. Respect and love for the mother are brought up from childhood.

5. *Aǵayın - altau, ana – bireu* (There are many relatives, but only one mother);
6. *Ana sütin aqtamaǵandı eşkim maqtamaydı* (No one will praise someone who fails to justify his mother's milk);

The value of female representatives lies in the fact that they are potential mothers of future descendants.

7. *Sürdi jaqsı körsetken artındaǵı tanası, äyeldi jaqsı körsekten qasındaǵı balası* (It is pleasant to look at a cow with a calf, at a woman - with a child);
8. *Bala tappaǵan qatınnan laqtaǵan eşki arıtıq* (A goat that gives birth is more valuable than a wife who does not give birth);

As a result of the analysis, it was found that the most numerous semantic fields are "Behavior" and "Upbringing", in which gender characteristics are traced. The language material allowed us to conclude the equal status of both sexes and their equal responsibility for the upbringing of the younger generation.

9. *Ata-anañ bar bolsın, bala kezde jar bolsın* (Both father and mother are a support for the child);
10. *Atasız ul aqılǵa jarımas, anasız qız jasawǵa jarımas* (A son without a father will not gain intelligence, a daughter without a mother will not gain skills).

The main content of proverbs is focused on imitating older ones: the generation of daughters-in-law is a model for unmarried relatives, older brothers - for younger ones, mothers for daughters, and fathers - for sons.

11. *Äkeni körip ul öser, ananı körip qız öser* (A son grows up taking after father, a daughter grows up taking after mother);
12. *Aǵasına qaray iñisi, apasına qaray siñlisi* (Older brothers act as role models for their youngsters, sisters - for the younger sisters);

The fact that it is the son in the Kazakh family who is the heir, and the daughter has absolutely no right to inheritance even in the event of the death of her parents, determined the low social status of the girl/woman.

13. *Atadan ul qalsa, özi qalǵanı, qız qalsa, izi qalǵanı* (If the son remained after his father, then he remained; if the daughter was left behind by the father, it means that he left a trace behind himself);
14. *Ul tuǵanǵa - kün twar* (A mother who gives birth to a son is happy);

The analysis of proverbs in the Kazakh language revealed the main dominant characteristics of men. This is determination, courage, superiority, straightforwardness.

15. *Erdi namıs öltirer, qoyandı qamıs öltirer* (Pride kills a man, a reed kills a rabbit);
16. *Er jigit eliniñ ulı, namısınıñ qulı* (A man is a son of his people and a slave to his honor);

Proverbs from the Kazakh language reflect the desire of the male sex to find his life path and achieve success.

17. *Talaptı erge nur jawar* (Happiness goes towards a persistent man);
18. *Er jigittiñ özi şıǵar bügi bar* (Every man has his own peak);

Possible mistakes in the life of men are rather acceptable accidents, from which there is always a real way out.

19. *Ildisız ör bolmaydı, qanısın tappas er bolmaydı* (There is no ascent without descent, there is no man who cannot correct a mistake);
20. *At aynalıp qazıǵın tabar, er aynalıp elin tabar* (No matter how much the horse circles, it will return to its hitching post, no matter how much the man wanders, he will return to his native land);

In the studied picture of the world, in contrast to internal characteristics, women occupy a leading position in

terms of external characteristics.

21. *Astıñ dämin tuz keltirer, awıldıñ sänin qız keltirer* (Salt adds flavor to food, and girls create the beauty of the village);
22. *Gül össe jerdiñ körki, qız össe eldiñ körki* (A flower is the beauty of the earth, a girl is the beauty of the nation);

But appearance is not put at the forefront, this is not the most important condition for a woman to be considered beautiful. It is much more important that she was a good housewife, kind, caring, and understanding. Any woman, if she is loved and desired, will be perceived as attractive.

23. *Sulu sulu emes, süygen sulu!* (It's not the beauty that's beautiful, it's the beloved that's beautiful);
24. *Qız qılığımın jağadı* (A girl can be liked by her behavior);

At the same time, in the language of the analyzed culture, there is a stereotypical opinion about the low intellectual abilities of women. The mental attribute "mind" does not include a woman's tendency to analytical or rational thinking, on the contrary, the "male" mind is naturally endowed with such a gift.

25. *Äyeldiñ aqlı - körkinde, erkektiñ körki - aqlında* (A woman's mind is in her beauty, a man's beauty is in his mind);
26. *Äyeldiñ şaşı uzın, aqlı qısqa* (A woman has long hair and a short mind);

The older generation is mostly intelligent.

27. *Aqıldı käreiya - ağıp jatqan däreiya* (A wise old man is a flowing river);
28. *Käri - käreiniñ sözi däri* (The elder's word is medicine);

An important component of male and female images is a pair of signs "deceitfulness" - "honesty". In the Kazakh language consciousness, falsehood is inherent in both women and men equally.

29. *Qatın ötirik aytpaydı, qağıs estidi* (The woman is not lying, she misheard and misinterprets);
30. *Er ötirik aytpaydı. El ötirik aytadı* (It's not the man who lies, but the need that compels);

At the same time, this characteristic more often refers to such a category of men as *khan, mullah, bai*.

31. *Moldanıñ säldesi aq bolğanmen nieti qara* (The mullah's turban is white, but the intention is black);
32. *Molda özin bir aldaydı, özgeni eki aldaydı* (A mullah deceives himself once, and deceives others twice)

The analysis of proverbs and sayings related to gender stereotypes allowed us to obtain the following results: In the stereotypical image of a man, there are qualities that, firstly, correlate with activity and activity: enterprise, striving to achieve a goal, determination, perseverance, courage, and self-confidence. A woman is denied the possession of these qualities - on the contrary, passivity, indecision, caution, and concern for compliance with norms are attributed to her.

Secondly, "masculine" characteristics are usually correlated with positions of power and management-responsibility, strength, and intelligence. Characteristics such as submissiveness, dependence, and weakness are described as "feminine."

The qualities that characterize a person's cognitive sphere are also polar in both content and evaluation. A tendency to think, a faster mind, and resourcefulness are attributed to a man; a lesser ability to reason is attributed to a woman.

Characteristics associated with the interpersonal interaction process also correlate with gender stereotypes; the image of a woman is also very diverse and contains ratings with different signs. Usually, such "feminine" qualities as caring, tact, tenderness, and love for children are evaluated as positive. Among the negative characteristics - are cunning, and talkativeness. There is a directness in the male stereotype.

Finally, men and women are assigned different social roles. Masculinity is traditionally associated with the public sphere, with participation in the life of society, and femininity - with the private (family, home, parenting). A man is perceived primarily as an employee and citizen, and a woman as a wife and mother.

So, gender stereotypes are normative and, therefore, take part in the creation of a system of social relations, or rather in the construction of a gender order.

## 4. Conclusions

Proverbs and sayings store grains of folk wisdom in the language. They reflect the history and worldview of the people who created them, their traditions, customs, and customs. There are hundreds of proverbs and sayings in the Kazakh language. They were created by many generations of people, developed, and improved over the centuries. The study showed that proverbs and sayings are effective and imaginative means of expressing the worldview of native Kazakh speakers. They demonstrate the Kazakhs' idea of men and women as part of their linguistic worldview. The national and cultural features identified during the analysis of proverbs dedicated to men and women have a pronounced differentiation by gender. In the proverbs of the Kazakh people, gender stereotypes that exist in society related to the traditions and customs of the Kazakh people are being updated. According to the findings, although men are considered superior in Kazakh society, women still have an important place. It is also emphasized that the mother's personality has a greater influence on children than the father's and that not only physical but also psychological needs are met by the mother. Gender perception varies between societies. Therefore, to understand a nation's culture and way of life, it is necessary to draw on its oral culture. In this context, the gender perception, roles assigned to genders, and attitudes toward genders found in anonymous cultural memory, namely proverbs, must be examined. Proverbs and sayings have passed from century to century, from generation to generation, and, undoubtedly, they will still be useful: they have not lost their vital and literary importance. National linguistic self-awareness has entered a new stage of its development. Gender studies, as well as gender education in general, contribute to the improvement of gender political culture. Linguists, writers, and representatives of the media have begun to search for and use various linguistic resources to designate new realities of life, including in terms of gender relations. Based on this, it can be assumed that with the change in socio-political views, linguistic asymmetry will be compensated, which, in turn, will lead to equal linguistic representation of men and women.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, G.M.; methodology, A.K. and R.B.; writing—original draft preparation, G.M. and L.M.; writing—review and editing, K.K. and A.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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