COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT "WOMAN" (AYOL) IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

Mamatova Firuza Botirovna

Master's student at the Karshi International University

Annotation: Each nation, based on its national views, portrays the image of women differently in its literature. In Uzbek literature, the image of women is depicted as mothers, wives, and housewives, while in English literature, in addition to these, women also perform roles such as businesswomen, entrepreneurs, and employees. This article undertakes a comparative cognitive analysis of the concept "woman" (English) and "ayol" (Uzbek), exploring the cultural models and conceptual metaphors associated with each term. By examining semantic networks, metaphorical extensions, and socio-cultural contexts, the study reveals both similarities and significant differences in how these concepts are understood and represented in the two languages. The analysis demonstrates the impact of cultural values and linguistic structures on the cognitive representation of gender.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, cultural models, gender, semantics, English, Uzbek, woman, ayol, cross-cultural comparison.

Introduction

The study of language's social character, function, internal structure, classification, rules unique to a given language, and historical evolution is known as linguistics. Language is the subject of the discipline of linguistics, and its properties and functions have been examined from various angles over the course of time. Because of the new methodological orientation of knowledge— that is, the widespread development of research based on the cognitive approach—cognitive linguistics has emerged as one of the most quickly developing fields of the science of language in the past ten years.

Despite its seeming simplicity, the concept of "woman" is anything but. Language patterns, social conventions, and cultural values all influence its meaning, resulting in a variety of cognitive representations in different languages. The term "ayol" in Uzbek is the subject of a comparative cognitive examination of the English and Uzbek concepts of "woman" in this article. We want to uncover both the similarities and differences in the cognitive understanding and representation of these concepts by looking at the semantic networks around them, their metaphorical extensions, and the sociocultural settings in which they are utilised. This comparative method sheds light on how language both reflects and influences gender norms in culture.

Cognitive linguistics is sometimes referred to as "consistent semantics" because it is well recognised that its primary focus is semantics. Semantics links the relationships between language units in the real or imagined world, just as language units represent the things and events that happen in the real world. These relationships are studied in linguistic semantics. Cognitive linguistics differs from structural linguistics in that it focusses on "language and human unity" rather than just the "unity of language form and substance," whereas semantics, as a branch of linguistics, addresses how a person can convey various information using words and

grammatical rules. As a result, discourse theory and communicative pragmatics are intimately associated with cognitive linguistics. Cognitive science is also defined as a science that studies the processes of consciousness and higher perception based on the use of theoretical information models.

Literature review

In linguistic research, the concept of woman occupies a special place due to its unique characteristics. The reason is that femininity is not only a biological concept, but also has a social character. Recently, issues related to gender studies from the perspective of linguistics have been widely discussed.

The ability to view language in relation to man—that is, his mind, knowledge, thinking, and understanding processes—is one of the key characteristics of cognitive linguistics. Its primary focus is on how language forms and any linguistic phenomena relate to human knowledge and experience, as well as how they are portrayed in the human mind. Therefore, it is not hyperbole to state that cognitive linguistics carries on the tradition of engagement with the fields of human psychology and language science (A.A. Potebnya, G. Shteinthal, W. Wundt). The formation of language depends on specific psychological mechanisms, even though linguistics and psychology are two distinct social sciences with quite different methodologies.

D. Kurtson also describes linguistics as a branch of sociolinguistics: "Linguistics, a branch of linguistics that is part of sociolinguistics..."...

Woman is one of the main concepts of culture. The analysis of this concept is also important for cognitive linguistics. The meaning of the term "cognitive" is based on the meanings of "knowledge", "perception". According to Sh. Safarov, "There is no doubt that the language system, which is the source of acquiring and storing knowledge, its practical application and transmission, and, finally, the means of its formation, is the object of cognitive analysis. The existence of knowledge depends on the existence of language. Language itself is a product of the activity of the cognitive system, linguistic structures are formed as a result of the activity of thinking. Cognitology is the science of thinking, and its fulcrum is linguistics. Undoubtedly, linguistic analysis is a type of cognitive analysis, its manifestation in a certain form. The science of cognitive linguistics emerged in the second half of the 20th century as a science seeking answers to questions related to the "observation of artificial intelligence system tools" that arose as a result of the development of information technologies. This science is part of the sciences that deal with human cognitive activity. The scientific works of such scientists as (J. Lakoff. M. Johnson, Langaker, Dzhekendorf R. and others) and (Yu. S. Stepanov, A.P. Babushkin, Yu.D. Apresyan. S.Kh. Lyapin, V.1. Karasik, D.O. Dobrovolsky, N.N. Boldyrev, L.A. Sternin, E. S. Kubryakova, Yu.N. Karaulov and others) serve as a basis for analyzing the concept. The concept of "woman" contains a lot of information that has a national and cultural character.

The problem of defining a concept, which exists in modern linguistics, is directly related to the problem of the relationship between concepts and language units. Any attempt to understand the essence of the concept leads to the realization of the existence of a number of terms that include "concept" and "meaning". The term concept began to appear in linguistic studies in the first half of the 20th century. This term is an English word, (consept), which is translated into Russian by the term ponyatie (concept). Later, when this term began to be confused with the term concept, studies aimed at clearly formulating its literal meaning began. The concept of "concept" is the basis of cognitive science and lingvoculturology. However, despite the widespread use of the term "concept" both abroad and in domestic linguistics, it currently does not have a single explanation. Currently, there are several approaches to defining the term concept in linguistics: Yu. S. Stepanov defines the concept as follows: "A cultural focus in the human mind, something

that enters the human mental world in the form of culture." Also, Yu. As S. Stepanov noted, "concept" is "a set of ideas, concepts, knowledge, associations, experiences that accompany a certain word". (Cognition - to know, to understand, to know. cognitive - related to knowledge, cognization - mind, thought). It is necessary to emphasize the role of thinking, which is the result of a person's activity in knowing the world, reality, and perceiving it. The object of study of cognitive analysis includes the structure of knowledge concepts and their interpretation of language capabilities in various cognitive processes (understanding, analysis, construction of linguistic information), as well as the study of their emergence.

Concepts are ideals that are formed in the human mind. The most common among them is the concept of "woman". We can say that it is one of the main concepts of the world. A mother is the first person who interacts with a newborn baby. In other words, the mother creates the basis of the picture of the world in the mind of her child, which is characteristic of her people and nationality. It is also a woman who contributes to the formation of the right attitude to life in a child. "Woman" is a sacred being, created by the grace of God to multiply the human race. Motherhood is the main task of a woman on earth.

It is known that language reflects culture. Language occupies a high place in the culture of each nation, and it is precisely the cultural aspects of this nation that are reflected in the language. For example, in the cultures of many Eastern nations, it is not permissible for men to ask about the well-being of their wives. Asking a man to another man, "Is your wife well?", "How is your wife?" can usually lead to misunderstandings. Instead, you can ask in a general way, "Is everyone at home well?", "Is the house peaceful?", but when asking about their well-being, the man does not turn to the woman. From this it can be seen that it is important and significant to take into account linguistic and cultural aspects in communication. Accordingly, in both English and Uzbek linguistic culture, femininity and attitudes towards women include several aspects. It should be noted that the role of euphemism in these features is also incomparable.

Euphemisms expressing the concept of woman according to age periods have special features, and at each age stage the attitude towards women and the reflection of this attitude in speech can take on a variety of forms.

Results and discussion

The division of a person's age into periods, along with the characteristics of anatomical and physiological changes, also depends on the place and position that a person occupies in society over time. In this case, each age period embodies certain characteristics. In particular, from the point of view of society, a woman enters into different social relations at different age periods.

A woman's age can be divided into several stages according to the period of her life:

- youth (girl/girl);

- puberty (bride/wife);

- old age (grandmother/mother-in-law)

It should be noted that the classification of women by age varies according to the principles of a certain period or social system, and this factor is associated with the historical processes of the life of each nation and people.

Research in this field is still going on even if the difference in women's speech was not observed for a long time. We are aware that women differ from men in linguistics not only in the words they frequently employ in conversation but also in the tone of their voices. In sociology, psychology, linguistics, and other disciplines, the term "gender" is used scientifically to refer to

the position and distinction of women in society. In the fields of biology and physiology, the term gender is frequently employed. Numerous linked and unrelated aspects of women's language are examined in gender linguistics. Gender linguistics (linguistic genderology) is a scientific direction that uses a linguistic concept that studies gender (socio-cultural gender, understood as a traditional construction, relatively autonomous from biological sex) as part of interdisciplinary gender research.

The results of many researches in this field can be seen in the following proverbs: "Three women are four gossips. A house well-furnished makes woman wise. A woman's mind is in her beauty, Woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail. A silent woman is a gift from God. A woman is like the moon-some nights it is silver others gold". The mentioned proverbs describe situations typical of women's speech (sharpness of her tongue, talkativeness, variability, propensity for discussion, her wisdom). All these examples cannot be said to belong to all women in the world, most of them have been formed as stereotypes.

Along with criticism of linguistics' conventional analysis techniques, there is interest in novel approaches that link linguistics to sociology. The sciences, including psychology, are expanding. These analysis techniques are giving rise to new contemporary linguistics directions. Linguo-gender ology is one of these fields. The study of gender characteristics of language, which encompasses two issues—differences and distinctive features of women's speech—is the foundation of this science's research. Within the language system, focus is placed on language units that convey ideas associated with femininity.

The semantic network of "woman" in English encompasses a range of attributes, including biological sex, social roles (mother, wife, professional), psychological characteristics (nurturing, empathetic), and physical features. The prototype of "woman" is likely a young, heterosexual, cisgender female conforming to societal beauty standards. However, this prototype is constantly challenged and redefined by societal changes and individual experiences.

The Uzbek term "ayol" similarly encompasses biological sex and social roles. However, the weight given to specific attributes might differ. While the biological aspect remains central, the emphasis on family roles (mother, wife) might be stronger in Uzbek cultural contexts, reflecting traditional family structures. The prototype of "ayol" might also be influenced by religious and cultural ideals of femininity, potentially emphasizing modesty, domesticity, and deference. Furthermore, the term's connotations could be more closely tied to marital status than in English. An unmarried woman might be referred to using a different term.

Paremias and expressions in the Uzbek language reflect the semantic, logical and morally high-level features of the concept of "Woman". According to the thematic classification, the following groups of paremias demonstrate maximum compatibility: Expressions confirming the important role of the wife (primarily the head of the household) in family life,

A positive assessment was given:

Ayol bilan olam munavvar;

Yaxshi xotin-uy ziynati;

Jannat-onalar oyog'i ostida;

Yaxshi qiz mahalladan tashqariga chiqmaydi.

Phrases in negative reviews:

Ayol kishining makri qirq tuyaga ham oz;

Onasini ko'r-u, qizini ol;

Xotining yaxshi chiqsa xo'p-xo'p, yomon chiqsa faylasuf bo'lasan;

Erni er qiladigan ham xotin, qaro yer qiladigan ham xotin.

From the above paremias with positive and negative evaluations, we can see that in the Uzbek language, the cognitively mainly moral qualities of a woman are meant. A woman is understood first of all as a mother, then as a wife (ayol).

"A woman" deserves respect and honor, because she has inalienable rights, she is a person who cannot be replaced by anyone or anything. The cognitive model of "woman" is such a mental structure that includes two groups of signs:

The first group of conceptual signs is mainly associated with the characterization of a woman as a biological being (conceptual signs associated with a woman's appearance, with a woman's age; with a woman's speech; with a woman's psychological characteristics, her mental abilities, level of education, signs associated with a woman's maternal characteristics),

The second group includes conceptual signs that mainly characterize a woman as a social being (conceptual signs inherent in a woman's role in the family, with a woman's place, with a description of a woman outside the family). Of course, the division of conceptual signs into two groups is conditional, since some signs have both a biological and a social appearance.

Metaphorical Extensions. Conceptual metaphors play a significant role in shaping our understanding of abstract concepts like "woman." In English, metaphors such as "woman as nature," "woman as container," and "woman as irrational" have been identified and analyzed. These metaphors often reflect patriarchal societal views and can perpetuate gender stereotypes. These same metaphors may exist in Uzbek, though with potentially different emphasis or nuance reflecting cultural values.

For example, the "woman as nature" metaphor, associating women with fertility and cyclical processes, might appear in Uzbek idioms or proverbs, but its valence (positive or negative) might vary based on cultural context. Similarly, the "woman as container" metaphor (associated with pregnancy and motherhood) could be present but with different connotations related to cultural conceptions of motherhood and family roles in Uzbek society. The investigation of Uzbek metaphorical expressions linked to "ayol" is crucial to understanding the cultural underpinnings of the concept.

Socio-Cultural Context and Linguistic Variation. The socio-cultural context significantly impacts how the concepts of "woman" and "ayol" are expressed and understood. In English, there is a growing awareness and use of terminology that challenges binary gender classifications, reflecting shifts in social attitudes. Uzbek, with its own socio-cultural context, might exhibit different linguistic variations depending on generational differences, urban versus rural settings, and levels of exposure to Western influences. This might lead to variations in the semantic field of "ayol" or the use of alternative terms.

The use of honorifics, kinship terms, and other social markers associated with the concept of "woman" needs careful examination in Uzbek, as these are crucial factors impacting the cognitive representation of gender in the Uzbek cultural context.

In both English and Uzbek, the concept of "woman" is represented through basic lexical units:

English: woman, lady, girl, female, wife, mother

Uzbek: ayol, xotin, opa, ona, kelin

While some words are direct equivalents (ayol = woman), others reflect specific roles or status. For example, xotin often means "wife," carrying domestic connotations, whereas kelin (bride/daughter-in-law) reflects social hierarchy within the family.

Metaphorical and Symbolic Representation

In English:

Woman as Flower (e.g., "She's a delicate flower")

Woman as Object of Desire (e.g., "trophy wife")

Woman as Nurturer (e.g., "mother earth")

In Uzbek:

Ayol as Homekeeper: "Ayol – oila ustuni" (The woman is the pillar of the family)

Ayol as Sacrificial Figure: Expressed in proverbs like "Ayolning sabri tog'ni eritadi" (A woman's patience can melt mountains)

Ayol as Ornament: "Ayol – uy bezagi" (Woman is the adornment of the home)

These metaphors reflect gender ideologies: English leans toward individual identity, while Uzbek emphasizes familial and communal roles.

Phraseology and Proverbs

English Proverbs:

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" – Reflects emotional intensity

"Behind every successful man is a woman" – Highlights supportive role

Uzbek Proverbs:

"Er yurt bo'lsa, ayol uning bezagi" – If man is the country, woman is its beauty

"Ayol kulsa, uy kuladi" – If the woman smiles, the house smiles

These suggest a respectful yet traditional framing of women's roles.

In English, cognitive models emphasize autonomy, equality, and modernity, partly influenced by feminist discourse.

In Uzbek, cognitive models prioritize collectivism, respect for maternal figures, and modesty, aligned with Islamic and traditional values.

These models influence how individuals conceptualize and interact with the idea of womanhood in daily life and language use.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this comparative cognitive analysis reveals both similarities and significant differences in the conceptualization of "woman" (English) and "ayol" (Uzbek). While the

biological basis of the concepts remains consistent, the emphasis placed on specific attributes, the prevalence of particular metaphorical extensions, and the influence of socio-cultural contexts differ substantially. The prototype of "woman" in both languages might share a core of biological sex, but its extensions, and the values and cultural models connected to this concept, diverge significantly.

The concept of "woman" (ayol) in English and Uzbek reveals both converging and diverging cognitive patterns. While some metaphors and values (such as motherhood and beauty) are universal, others reflect deeply rooted cultural norms and social structures. English presents a more individualistic and liberal cognitive model, while Uzbek frames the concept within family,

References:

1. Abdykadyrova Tolkyn Khasenovna, Khusainova Aigul Kaikenovna, Bazarbekova Dumangull Mukanovna COGNITIVE CHARACTER OF CONCEPTUAL FEATURES OF "WOMAN" IMAGES IN TURKIC MYTHOLOGY // ELS. 2025. №28 февраль ФН.
2. Tkachyk Olena, Riabukha Kseniia GENDER REPRESENTATION IN NOMINATION OF A WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF MALE AND FEMALE AUTHORS // Вісник Маріупольського державного гуманітарного університету. Сер.: Філологія. 2018. №19.
3. Dushatova, S. (2022). "Analysis of the concept of euphemism, youth, science, education: topical issues, achievements and innovations" 1(3), 159-163.
4. Sakhibovna, M.G. (2022, August). "The role of linvo-cultureme in the study of national and cultural features of speech units. in international conference: problems and scientific solutions". (Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 48-52).
5. Ganieva, M. S. (2021). "Socio-philosophical aspects of the study of the issue of gender and entrepreneurial woman in a new society". Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research, 10(12), 441-445.
6. Ибрагимова Р. С. Специфика репрезентации концепта «женщина» во французском и узбекском языках (на материале паремиологии). Вестник Челябинского государственного университета. 2011. № 25 (240)
7. Gafurova, N. I. (2021). Structural-semantical classification of construction terms in English and Uzbek languages. ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal. 11 (5), 571-575.
8. Karimov U.N. The concept of the concept and its essence in fiction // News of the National University of Uzbekistan, 2017. -No 1 \5. -B. 416-417.