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VERBALIZATION OF FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER STEREOTYPES IN FIXED EXPRESSIONS OF GERMAN AND UZBEK

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Abstract: This article examines the verbalization of family relations and gender stereotypes in fixed expressions of German and Uzbek. Phraseological units, idioms, and proverbs represent important linguistic resources through which cultural values, family traditions, and social expectations are transmitted from one generation to another. The study focuses on the linguistic representation of husbands, wives, parents, children, and other family members, paying particular attention to the traditional roles assigned to men and women. A comparative linguocultural approach is employed to identify similarities and differences between German and Uzbek expressions. The analysis demonstrates that fixed expressions may represent men as responsible for family protection, authority, and material provision, while women are frequently associated with care, domestic responsibilities, and emotional support. However, these representations are not universal or unchanging; their interpretation depends on historical, social, and communicative contexts. The study highlights the importance of critically examining gender-related expressions in intercultural communication and language education.

Key words: German language, Uzbek language, phraseological units, fixed expressions, family relations, gender stereotypes, linguocultural analysis, proverbs, verbalization, cultural values.

Introduction

Language is not merely a means of communication; it is also a repository of collective experience, cultural values, and social norms. Through idioms, proverbs, and other fixed expressions, communities preserve their understanding of family, marriage, parenthood, and relationships between men and women. These linguistic structures often contain information about traditional social roles and expectations that may not be explicitly stated in everyday communication. The study of phraseological units is particularly important in comparative linguistics because their meanings frequently extend beyond the literal meanings of individual words. A fixed expression can communicate approval, criticism, respect, irony, or social expectations through figurative language. Consequently, the analysis of German and Uzbek phraseology provides an opportunity to examine how two linguistically and culturally different communities represent family relations. German and Uzbek belong to different language families and have developed within distinct historical and cultural environments. German is

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a West Germanic language, whereas Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family. Despite these differences, both languages possess rich collections of idioms and proverbs concerning marriage, family responsibilities, parental authority, and interpersonal relationships. Research on German and Uzbek phraseological units has demonstrated the importance of cultural context in interpreting figurative expressions and interpersonal meanings (Nurullayev, 2023).

Gender stereotypes constitute another important dimension of phraseological analysis. They can be understood as socially established assumptions about the characteristics, responsibilities, and expected behaviour of men and women. Such stereotypes may be reflected in proverbs that associate masculinity with strength and authority or femininity with modesty, patience, and household responsibilities. Nevertheless, the existence of these patterns in traditional expressions does not mean that all speakers accept them or that they accurately describe contemporary family life. The purpose of this article is to identify how family relations and gender stereotypes are verbalized in German and Uzbek fixed expressions, compare their semantic and cultural characteristics, and explain their significance for intercultural communication.

Materials and methods

The research is based on a qualitative comparative analysis of German and Uzbek fixed expressions, idioms, and proverbs related to family relationships and gender roles. The material is examined through the principles of phraseology, linguocultural studies, and gender linguistics. Particular attention is paid to expressions referring to marriage, husbands and wives, parents and children, household responsibilities, and the moral evaluation of male and female behaviour. The descriptive method is used to explain the meanings and communicative functions of selected expressions. The comparative method identifies similarities and differences between German and Uzbek linguistic representations of family life. The semantic method examines figurative meanings, evaluative connotations, and the relationship between literal and implied meanings. The linguocultural approach considers how expressions reflect historically established traditions, values, and social expectations.

The analysis also draws on relevant studies published between 2017 and 2024. Ergasheva (2021) examines gender-marked phraseological units and proverbs in Uzbek, while Komilova (2021) investigates the linguocultural representation of gender in Uzbek and English. Abdullayeva (2021, 2022) analyses gender relations in proverbs, and Satimova (2023) explores gender-marked phraseology and proverbs. Khakberdieva (2024) considers the representation of family values in Russian and Uzbek proverbs. These studies provide a useful theoretical and comparative foundation for the present research. The examples discussed below are illustrative linguistic examples rather than the results of a newly compiled statistical corpus. Their English translations are intended to explain their meanings and cultural implications. Where an expression has no direct equivalent in the other language, its semantic function is considered instead of assuming complete equivalence.

Results and discussions

Family is one of the central concepts represented in the phraseological systems of both German and Uzbek. Expressions concerning marriage, parental responsibility, respect for elders, and relations between spouses reflect the significance of family as a social institution. However, the linguistic representation of family can vary according to cultural conventions, historical circumstances, and communicative purposes. In Uzbek, family-related proverbs frequently emphasize respect for parents, the importance of children, cooperation between spouses, and the preservation of family harmony. The

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expressions “Ota rozi — Xudo rozi” (“When the father is pleased, God is pleased”) and “Onaning ko‘ngli bolada, bolaning ko‘ngli dalada” (“A mother’s thoughts are with her child, while the child’s thoughts are elsewhere”) illustrate how parental authority and maternal concern are represented through figurative language. These expressions convey cultural expectations concerning family loyalty, parental care, and intergenerational relationships. German also contains numerous proverbs and fixed expressions concerning family and marriage. For example, “Wie die Eltern, so die Kinder” can be translated as “Like parents, like children.” It emphasizes the perceived relationship between parental behaviour and children’s development. Another expression, “Blut ist dicker als Wasser” (“Blood is thicker than water”), highlights the symbolic importance of kinship and family bonds.

Although these expressions differ in structure and cultural associations, they share a common communicative function: they present family relationships as meaningful sources of identity, responsibility, and social belonging. Nevertheless, their meanings are not restricted to one interpretation. Depending on the context, they may express affection, solidarity, obligation, or expectations concerning appropriate behaviour.

Gender stereotypes are reflected in fixed expressions through the characteristics and responsibilities traditionally associated with men and women. Phraseological units can reinforce these expectations by repeatedly connecting particular behaviours with a specific gender. They may also preserve historical attitudes that are increasingly questioned in contemporary society. In traditional Uzbek expressions, women are often represented in connection with motherhood, household management, modesty, patience, and family honour. Men, meanwhile, may be associated with responsibility, protection, authority, and the material well-being of the household. Such representations reflect particular cultural expectations rather than universal characteristics of Uzbek men and women. For example, the Uzbek expression “Uy — ayol bilan obod” (“A home flourishes through a woman”) symbolically connects women with domestic harmony and family well-being. Although it may express appreciation for women’s contribution to family life, it can also imply that maintaining the household is primarily a woman’s responsibility. The interpretation therefore depends on whether the expression is used to acknowledge women’s work or to impose a restrictive social expectation. In German, expressions such as “Mutterliebe kennt keine Grenzen” (“A mother’s love knows no limits”) associate motherhood with enduring affection and emotional commitment. The expression highlights the cultural importance of maternal care, but it may also contribute to the expectation that women should possess unlimited patience and devote themselves entirely to their children.

The comparison suggests that both languages contain expressions associating women with caregiving and family stability. However, such similarities should not be taken as evidence that the two cultures have identical gender systems. The social meanings of individual expressions differ according to context, and the same proverb may be understood differently by different generations or communities. Research by Ergasheva (2021), Komilova (2021), and Satimova (2023) supports the importance of examining gender-marked phraseology as a means of understanding culturally shaped representations of masculinity and femininity.

Marriage-related expressions provide another important source of information about gender expectations. They can describe cooperation, affection, conflict, responsibility, and the distribution of authority within the family. In Uzbek cultural discourse, marital relationships are frequently associated with mutual respect, family unity, and the preservation of social harmony. Expressions concerning the

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husband's responsibility and the wife's contribution to household well-being may reflect traditional expectations about the division of family duties. At the same time, many expressions emphasize the importance of agreement and cooperation between spouses. In German, the expression "Eine Hand wäscht die andere" ("One hand washes the other") can be used more broadly to describe reciprocity and mutual assistance. Although it is not exclusively related to marriage, it illustrates a principle that is relevant to family relationships: stable relationships often depend on cooperation and reciprocal support. The comparison indicates that family-related phraseology can express both hierarchical and cooperative models of marriage. Hierarchical expressions may portray one spouse as the principal decision-maker, whereas cooperative expressions emphasize mutual responsibility. These models may coexist within the same linguistic culture.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the traditional meanings of an expression and the attitudes of contemporary speakers. A proverb may survive in everyday language even when the social practices associated with its original meaning have changed. Furthermore, the use of a traditional expression does not necessarily indicate that a speaker personally supports every social assumption embedded in it.

Khakberdieva's (2024) study of family values in Russian and Uzbek proverbs provides a relevant comparative perspective on how proverbs preserve cultural understandings of parents, children, love, and family responsibilities. The comparative analysis reveals several important similarities between German and Uzbek fixed expressions. First, both languages use figurative language to represent family solidarity, parental influence, and the importance of relationships between generations. Second, both linguistic traditions contain expressions that associate particular moral qualities and responsibilities with men or women. Third, proverbs and idioms frequently communicate social expectations indirectly, making them effective instruments for transmitting cultural knowledge.

However, differences emerge in the cultural emphasis and pragmatic interpretation of particular expressions. Uzbek family-related phraseology may foreground respect for elders, kinship obligations, family reputation, and collective responsibility. German expressions may, in some contexts, place greater emphasis on individual conduct, reciprocal assistance, or the consequences of personal decisions. These are tendencies for further investigation rather than absolute distinctions between the two cultures. The structural differences between the languages also influence translation. A German idiom may have no exact Uzbek equivalent, while an Uzbek proverb may contain cultural or religious associations that cannot be fully reproduced through literal translation. In such cases, translators should identify the communicative meaning of the expression and select an appropriate functional equivalent or explanatory translation.

Nurullayev (2023) demonstrates the value of semantic and thematic comparison when studying German and Uzbek phraseological units. Although that research focuses on speech activity and interpersonal relations, its comparative approach is also relevant to family-related expressions.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of German and Uzbek fixed expressions demonstrates that phraseology provides valuable evidence of how family relationships and gender expectations are represented in language. Idioms and proverbs communicate cultural ideas concerning marriage, parenthood, household responsibilities, respect for elders, and the relationships between men and women. The findings indicate that both languages contain expressions that associate women with motherhood, caregiving, and family harmony, while men may be linked with authority, protection, and

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responsibility. However, these representations are culturally and historically conditioned and should not be interpreted as universal descriptions of either gender. The study also identifies similarities in the ways German and Uzbek expressions communicate family solidarity, mutual support, and intergenerational responsibility. Differences in cultural emphasis, figurative meaning, and pragmatic use demonstrate the importance of context in comparative phraseology and translation. Finally, the study highlights the relevance of gender-sensitive phraseological analysis for language teaching and intercultural communication. A critical approach to fixed expressions enables learners to understand cultural traditions without automatically reproducing the stereotypes that some expressions may contain. Further research based on a systematically collected corpus of German and Uzbek family-related idioms and proverbs could provide a more detailed account of their frequency, semantic patterns, and changing social interpretations.

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