

The Representation of Women in English and Russian Paroemiological Pictures of the World

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ABSTRACT

The article touches upon culturological study of concepts which is connected with the analysis of texts (proverbs) where these concepts are fixed and verbalized as a reflection of national culture and consciousness. The objects of the research are English and Russian proverbs and sayings which reflect the gender stereotypes of the compared ethnic groups. During the analysis of the factual material the authors try to identify the model of the female image represented in English and Russian gender-marked proverbs. The article reveals the semantic groups characterizing the portrait of a woman/wife: inner world, behavior, husband (man) - wife (woman) relationships, appearance, age, well-being, generally accepted rules; it turns out that in the both paroemiological pictures of the world a woman / wife has a lower social status than a man. The article proves the existence of an explicit andocentric phenomenon (the reflection of male perspective) that causes negative perception of the female image in English and Russian gender-marked paroemiological units.

KEYWORDS

Cultural linguistics approach, paroemiological picture of the world, cultural stereotypes, concept

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Introduction

The basis of modern civilization is multiculturalism, where the cultures are in constant interaction and cooperation. However each culture has its own language system with the help of which native speakers are able to communicate with each other.

Cultural linguistics approach to the study of proverbs based on cultural linguistics that is the science dealing with the study of historical and contemporary linguistic facts through the spiritual culture. The approach in

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question appeared in connection with the new ideas of language as a cultural phenomenon.

Cultural linguistics is a field of science that studies concepts. Culturological study of concepts is connected with the study of texts (proverbs) where these concepts are fixed and verbalized as a reflection of national culture and consciousness. Study of concept was carried out by R. Langacker (1991) and R.S. Jackendoff (1992).

In the proverbs, which are the subject of the research, the elements of ancient culture and national traditions of the people are personalized on the linguistic level in a very original way. Proverbs act as "a certain kind of information storage about people's lives, a certain mirror reflecting not only the life, but also the history of beliefs, customs, ceremonies ... of the nation" (Savenkova, 2002, p.8). Paroemies also contribute to "forming of native specific evaluative attitude to things and processes and phenomena of real world which goes on in the process of reflection of objective reality by ordinary consciousness" (Kulkova & Shaimardanova, 2014).

Relevance of comparative studying of the gender marked proverbs in this work is explained by the keen scientists' interest in the anthropocentric factor in language. Representing intensively developing direction in native and world linguistics, the gender linguistics focuses researchers' attention on social and cultural interaction of the sexes, features of male and female behavior, speech, and way of thinking, social position caused by sexual stereotypes (Shucard, 1987; Kirilina, 1999).

Comparative character of a research increases its relevance. Detection of national and specific features of ways of a categorization and conceptualization of extra language reality in the course of comparison of two remotely related languages promotes identification of an ethnocultural originality of a language picture of the world, establishes national and cultural features, either specific or similar for each language.

The representatives of the linguistic and cultural approach to the study of proverbs are G. Palmer (1996) and O.G. Dubrovskaya (2000). The Russian scientist attributes a proverb to the cultural linguistics units in the internal form of which (or figurative basis) the world of the linguistic and cultural community is represented. Understanding of the world, expressed in the imaginative basis of proverbs, introduces contemporaries to the collective representations, which were established in the processes of cultural knowledge of the world by this or that ethnic group. The system of images in the proverbs serves as an "niche for the accumulation of cultural and national experience of the described linguistic and cultural societies" (Dubrovskaya, 2000).

The great Russian scientist V.I. Dal' (1995) in the "Explanatory Dictionary" gives the following definition of a proverb: "A proverb is a short sayings, teachings, in the form of a parable, allegory or as worldly judgment; saying is the salt of the language or national speech, it is not composed but appears by itself; it is the moving mind of the people" (Dal', 1955).

Another definition of the proverb was given by W. Mieder (1993): "Proverb is a short, well-known sentence, that represents folk's wisdom, traditional views and moral standards; it's a metaphorical, set phrase, passing from generation to generation» (Mieder, 1993).

“Proverbs represent particularly important linguistic elements in the gender research that help to identify the gender stereotypes of different nations” (Shaimardanova & Akhmetova, 2015). V.N. Telia (1996) treats paroemiological language fund as the most valuable source of interpretation, as most proverbs and sayings - "are prescriptive stereotypes of national consciousness, which give a sufficiently wide choice for self-identification" (Telia, 1996). According to the scientist, paroemias are "the language being transmitted from generation to generation for centuries which is formed of everyday culture where all the categories and principles of the national philosophy of life (of the native speaker) are represented in a sententious form" (Telia, 1996).

G.Sh. Hakimova (2003) considers proverbs "the material particularly informative for the interpretation of any concept, because they contain fixed understandings which were developed over a long time ... they give an "averaged" stereotypical picture of the world and expresses the assessment in an explicit form" (Hakimova, 2003).

A.V. Kirilina (1999) emphasizes that "paroemiology is demonstrative in terms of cultural stereotypes set in the language" (Kirilina, 1999). The scientist does not deny the existence of variant possibilities for self-identification, "but the analysis of a large number of units allows to make a conclusion of the dominant trends and assessments" (Kirilina, 1999). Therefore it is considered possible to identify the model of the female image represented in English and Russian gender-marked proverbs. This research issue was afflicted in the works of many scientists (Kirilina, 1999; Nikishina, 2002; Hakimova, 2003).

Methodology and Research Design

The object of research involves the English and Russian proverbs, sayings reflecting gender stereotypes of the compared ethnoses.

The purpose of work consists in carrying out a comparative research of the gender marked proverbs, sayings from the point of view of the general and specific characteristics in their semantics and features of functioning.

The problem of the paper is: to construct models of an image of the woman in the compared national paroemiological pictures of the world with the subsequent identification of the common and peculiar features on the basis of the empirical frame of a research.

Material of the research was made up by the English and Russian proverbs, sayings collected by method of special selection from 12 paroemiological collection dictionaries.

In the research we have discovered the basic characteristic features of the female portrait in paroemiological funds of the languages under study.

The empirical basis of the study are the gender-marked English and Russian proverbs, containing direct nomination of sex as a keywords *женщина*, *баба*, *жена*, woman, wife.

Results and Discussion

The analyzed material allows distinguishing the following semantic groups, characterizing the portrait of a woman / wife:

- 1) inner world;
- 2) behavior;

- 3) husband (man) - wife (woman) relationship;
- 4) appearance;
- 5) age;
- 6) well-being;
- 7) generally accepted rules.

Following A.V. Kirilina (1999), one should mention the problem of ambiguous classification of proverbs due to their semantic versatility. Thus, the "specific semantic area can be determined quite well only at a high level of communication: female vision of the world - male vision of the world. Different semantic groups are viewed within each of these areas, but they cannot be considered as completely defined" (Kirilina, 1999).

The semantic group **inner world** among negative female characteristics, presented in English and in Russian paroemiological pictures of the world, one can list the following qualities:

foolishness:

When an ass climbs with a ladder, you may find wisdom in women (Stevenson, 1948, p. 2100). A woman conceals what she knows not (Stevenson, 1948), Women have long hair and short brains (Fergusson, 1995); Баба дура (Snegirev, 2010), Бабий ум – бабье коромысло: и криво, и зубристо, и на оба конца (Dal', 1984), У бабы волос долог, да ум короткий (Zhukov, 1991);

cunning:

There is nothing sooner dry than a woman's tears (Anikin, 1988), The greatest water power known to man is a woman's tears (Murray, 2008); Баба и черта перехитрит (Anikin, 1988), Лукавой бабы и в ступе не истолчешь (Dal', 1984), Нет в лесу столько поверток, сколько у бабы уверток (Dal', 1984);

anger:

A wicked woman and an evil is three half pence (Stevenson, 1948), Women are like adder's eggs (Bryan & Mieder, 2005), Women are like wasps in their anger (Stevenson, 1948); Всех злее злых злая жена (Dahl', 1984), Всех злыдней злее жена злая (Dal', 1984), Ест червь древо, а зла жена чрево (Snegirev, 2010);

willfulness:

He that has a wife, has a strife (Murray, 2008), God hath endued women with this property, to be wedded to their wills (Stevenson, 1948), Woman will have both her word and her way (Stevenson, 1948); Бабе хоть кол на голове теши (Dal', 1984), Еще тот не родился, кто бабий норю узнал (Dal', 1984), За бабой покидай последнее словцо (Dal', 1984);

inconstancy

A distant journey can change a woman's heart (Stevenson, 1948), A woman is a weathercock (Murray, 2008), A woman's mind and winter wind change oft (Murray, 2008); Перекати-поле – бабий ум (Dal', 1984), У бабы семь пятниц на неделе (Dal', 1984);

duplicity:

God save us from all wives who are angels in the street, saints in the church and devils at home (Stevenson, 1948); В людях – ангел, не жена: дома с мужем – сатана (Murray, 2008);

laziness:

The more women look in their glass, the less they look at their house (Murray, 2008); Баба вертится задом, передом, а дело идет чередом (Snegirev, 2010), Где бабы гладки, там нет воды в кадке (Murray, 2008).

In the English PPW except the listed qualities the following negative characteristics are attributed to the woman: *callousness* Women have no souls (Murray, 2008), *greed* Women, priests and poultry, have never enough (Murray, 2008), *self-admiration* A vain woman is like an empty egg-shell (Bryan & Mieder, 2005).

The negative portrait of the Russian woman / wife is added with such quality as *falsity*: Баба бредит, кто ей верит (Snegirev, 2010), Бабы враки – девичьи присухи; бабы врут, девкам присуху дают (Dal', 1984).

The positive portrait of inner world of the English and Russian women in the considered PPW consists of the following characteristics:

diligence:

One hair of a woman draws more than a team of horses (Bryan & Mieder, 2005), Choose a wife on a Saturday rather than on a Sunday (Murray, 2008); Возвышает жену не наряд, а домоустройство (Snegirev, 2010), Выбирай жену не в хороводе, а в огороде (Murray, 2008), Жена хороша не телом, а делом (Snegirev, 2010);

kindness:

In the husband wisdom, in the wife gentleness (Murray, 2008), С доброй женой горе – полгоря, а радость вдвойне (Dal', 1984), С доброй женой сполгоря и горе (Dal', 1984);

mind:

A wise woman is one who has a great deal to say, and remains silent (Anikin, 1988), A woman's counsel is sometimes good (Stevenson, 1948); Умная жена, как нищему сума (Dal', 1984), Пока баба с печи летит, семьдесят семь дум передумает (Dal', 1984).

The general negative-connotative characteristics of semantic group for **behavior** for the considered languages are the following:

garrulity:

A woman's tongue is the last thing about her that dies (Stevenson, 1948), A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail (Stevenson, 1948); Бабий кадык не заткнешь ни пирогом, ни рукавицей (Dal', 1984), Бабий язык, куда ни завались, достанет (Dal', 1984), Бабу не переговоришь (Dal', 1984);

tearfulness:

The greatest water power known to man is a woman's tears (Anikin, 1988), There is nothing sooner dry than a woman's tears (Anikin, 1988); Баба слезами беде помогает (Dal', 1984), Без плачу у бабы дело не спорится (Dal', 1984);

fussiness (inspiration):

A woman can do more than the Devil (Stevenson, 1948), Three women and a goose make a market (Stevenson, 1948), Three women make a market (Murray, 2008); Где две бабы, там сует, а где три, там содом (Dal', 1984), Где сатана не сможет, туда бабу пошлет (Dal', 1984);

lasciviousness:

Three things to stay away from: a snake, a man with an oily tongue, and a loose woman (Bryan & Mieder, 2005); Баба блудит, а деду грех (Dal', 1984), Баба грешит, а деду грехи (Snegirev, 2010);

peevishness:

Happy is the deaf man, that has a scolding wife (Stevenson, 1948), It is a good horse that never stumbles and a good wife that never grumbles (Stevenson, 1948); Жена бранчива – мужу позор (Anikin, 1988), Жена злословна мучит мужа своего (Snegirev, 2010);

coquetry (panache):

A woman that loves to be at the window, is like a bunch of grapes on the highway (Stevenson, 1948), A woman that paints puts up a bill, that she is to be let (Stevenson, 1948); Наряжается, что баба на Юрья (Dal', 1984), Баба вертится задом, передом, а дело идет чередом (Snegirev, 2010);

low-quality performance of work:

A woman's work is never done (Speake, 2008); Бабий огород не долголетен (Snegirev, 2010), Бабий промысел, что неправый помысел (Snegirev, 2010).

In addition to all this, the woman in the English PPW acts as *fragile, morally weak* being: A woman and a ship ever want mending (Speake, 2008), A woman and a glass are over in danger (Mieder, 2008), Frailty, thy name is woman (Stevenson, 1948). However, this quality isn't characteristic for the Russian woman. On the contrary, in the Russian paremiological fund she is *strong in spirit*: Баба – не квашня: встала да и пошла (Dal', 1984). Moreover, the Russian woman *is compared to the man*: Этой бабе только бы штаны надеть (Dal', 1984), Я думал идут двое, ан мужик с бабой (Dal', 1984). Woman's *love for alcoholism* is attributed as equal and even sometimes greater than the man's one: В лесу птицы, в тереме девицы, а у бражки старые бабы (Dal', 1984), Баба пьяна, а суд свой помнит (Snegirev, 2010), Муж – за рюмочку, а жена – за стаканчик (Anikin, 1988).

Thrift acts as the positive characteristic of the female's behavior: A woman can throw out on a spoon more than a man can bring on a shovel (Stevenson, 1948), Men get wealth, and women kept it (Stevenson, 1948), Men make houses, women make homes (Bertram, 1993); Баба с кашкой, а дед с ложкой (Anikin, 1988), Баба с кромою, а дед с сумою (Dal', 1984), Баба, что мешок: что положишь, то и несет (Dal', 1984), Пусти бабу в рай: она и корову за собой приведет (Dal', 1984).

In the semantic group *appearance* the female beauty in the English and Russian PPW is considered, generally as negative quality which shouldn't betray special attention at the choice of the spouse: A wife is not be chosen by the eye only (Stevenson, 1948), Choose a wife rather by your ear than your eye (Murray, 2008), He that hath a white horse and a fair wife never wants trouble (Stevenson, 1948), Who has a fair wife, needs more than two eyes (Murray, 2008); Возвышает жену не наряд, а домостройство (Snegirev, 2010), Глупому мужу красная жена дороже красного яйца (Dal', 1984), Жена красавица – безочному (слепому) радость (Dal', 1984), Выбирай жену не в хороводе, а в огороде (Murray, 2008), Где бабы гладки, там нет воды в кадке (Murray, 2008).

However, in some few English and Russian paremias also the positive attitude towards female beauty is traced: A woman is as old as she looks (Bryan

& Mieder, 2005), Never choose your women or your linen by candle light (Speake, 2008), Всего милее, у кого жена всех белее (Dal', 1984).

The semantic group **age** in English and Russian PPW expresses a negative attitude toward the age difference between spouses: Old men, when they marry young women, make much of death (Murray, 2008); Видима беда, что у старого жена молода (Dal', 1984), Муж молод, жена стара – беда не мала (Anikin, 1988), Муж стар, а жена молода – дожидайся детей; муж молод, а жена стара – дожидайся плетей (Dal', 1984).

The difference in the social status of spouses is described as a negative characteristic in the group of **well-being**. This semantic group can be identified only in the Russian paremiological fund: Жена богатая гордится и с мужем часто бранится (Snigirev, 2010), Женино добро колом в глотке стоит (Murray, 2008), Жениным богатством века не проживешь (Dahl', 1984).

It is possible to name the following characteristics of negative features of the relations between the representatives of men and female entering into group of **relationship** in the English and Russian PPW:

the woman holds the subordinated position in a family:

A whistling woman and a crowing hen are neither fit for God nor men (Speake, 2008), The woman always pays (Bryan & Mieder, 2005); Баба прядет – не по две рубахи носит, а мужик не прядет – да не наг ходит (Anikin, 1988), Бабам праздник хуже казни (Anikin, 1988), Знай, баба, гребень да кривое веретено (Snegirev, 2010);

a woman is physically abused by men:

A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be (Speake, 2008); Бабий быт – за все бит (Dal', 1984), Не рада баба повою, рада б покою (Dal', 1984), Бей жену к обеду, а к ужину опять (без боя за стол не сядь) (Dal', 1984);

a woman is considered to be worse than a man:

A bad woman is much worse than a bad man (Stevenson, 1948), Men have many faults, poor women have but two, there's nothing right they say, and nothing right they do (Stevenson, 1948); Муж задурит, половина двора горит; а жена задурит, и весь сгорит (Dal', 1984), Муж запьет – полдома пропьет, а жена запьет – весь дом пропьет (Anikin, 1988);

a woman is considered to be a burden:

He that has a wife, has a strife (Murray, 2008); Баба с возу – кобыле легче (Anikin, 1988), Взял жену – забудь тишину (Murray, 2008);

the woman is deprived of a will:

He that lets his wife go to every feast and his horse drink at every water, shall neither have good wife nor good horse (Murray, 2008); Воля и добрую жену портит (Snegirev, 2010), Дал муж жене волю – не быть добру (Dal', 1984);

a woman is the evil, danger:

A woman is wo to the man (wo = woe – archaic) (Stevenson, 1948), Gaming, women, and wine, while they laugh, they make men pine (Murray, 2008), Poison is a woman's weapon (Bryan & Mieder, 2005); С бабами водится – в крапиву садится (Snegirev, 2010), Кто с бабой свяжется – сам баба будет (Dal', 1984).

Besides, the Russian paremias show the belief that a woman is not a person: Кобыла не лошадь, баба не человек (Dal', 1984), Курица не птица, баба не человек (Dal', 1984), Курице не быть петухом, а бабе мужиком (Dal', 1984).

However, there are single proverbs, where a woman is presented in the better position in comparison with men: A woman can throw out on a spoon more than a man can bring on a shovel (Stevenson, 1948); Утро вечера мудренее, жена мужа удалее (Dal', 1984).

The English paremiological fund contains proverbs and sayings in which a woman is presented predominating in a family: He that has a wife has a master (Mieder, 2008), He that will thrive must first ask his wife (Speake, 2008). Proverbs with this kind of semantics have only a negative connotation in the Russian paremiological picture of the world. Не скот в скоте – коза, не зверь в зверях – еж, не рыба в рыбах – рак, не птица в птицах – нетопырь, не муж в мужьях, кем жена владеет (Dal', 1984). Moreover, in the Russian paremiological picture of the world the wife herself subjects the husband to physical abuse: Бил жену денечек, сам плакал годочек (Dal', 1984), Бранит жена мужа, а бить его не нужна (Snegirev, 2010), В старые годы бывало – мужья жен бивали, а ныне живет, что жена мужа бьет (Dal', 1984).

The proverbs relating to the following **generally accepted rules** supplement the portrait of a woman/wife in the English and Russian paremiological picture of the world:

a man has to own a wife:

Next to no wife, a good wife is best (Mieder, 2008), The wife is the key of the house (Murray, 2008), Wives must be had, be they good or bad (Fergusson, 1995); Без жены как без шапки (Dal', 1984), Без жены, что без кошки, а без мужа, что без собаки (Dal', 1984), Без мужа, что без головы; без жены, что без ума (Dal', 1984);

a wife has to be at home:

A good wife and a good cat are best at home (Murray, 2008), A woman's place is in the home (Mieder, 2008); Баба да кошка в избе, мужик да собака на дворе (Dal', 1984), Бабе дорога – от печи до порога (Dal', 1984);

a wife has to be hardworking:

Choose a wife on a Saturday rather than on a Sunday (Murray, 2008); Выбирай жену не в хороводе, а в огороде (Murray, 2008);

a wife has to be chaste:

The price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies (Bryan & Mieder, 2005); Дом купи крытый, кафтан шитый, а жену непочатую (Dal', 1984).

The following instructions are added to the listed rules of the Russian paremiological picture of the world:

a wife has to be with her husband:

Где муж, там и жена (Dal', 1984);

a wife has to be healthy:

Больна жена мужу на всякую нужу (Snegirev, 2010), Больная жена мужу не мила (Dal', 1984);

a wife has to esteem the husband:

Жена мужа почитай, как крест на главе; муж жену береги, как трубу на бане (Dal', 1984);

a wife has to know her place:

Знай баба свое кривое веретено (Dal', 1984), Знай, баба, гребень да кривое веретено (Snegirev, 2010);

a wife has to have a good temper:

Красна пава пером, а жена нравом (Dal', 1984), Молода годами жена, да стара норовом (Dal', 1984).

Generally accepted rules for the woman/wife, are characteristic only of the English paremiological picture of the world:

a wife has to be out of suspicions:

Caesar's wife must be above suspicion (Speake, 2008);

a woman has to be silent:

A wise woman is one who has a great deal to say, and remains silent (Anikin, 1988), Silence is a woman's best garment (Speake, 2008).

The warning that the women can't be trusted is traced both in English, and in the Russian paremias: Catch a snake by the tail, but never trust a woman (Bryan & Mieder, 2005), Trust not a woman when she weeps (Murray, 2008); Не верь ветру в море, а жене в доме (Dal', 1984), Не верь жене в подворье, а коню в дороге (Dal', 1984), Не верь коню в поле, а жене в воле (Dal', 1984).

As a systematization of the research results here is a table which clearly shows the percentage of the total number of proverbs belonging to one or another semantic group.

Table 1. The percentage of the total number of proverbs belonging to one or another semantic group

№	semantic groups	English proverbs			Russian proverbs		
		total	positive characteristics	negative characteristics	total	positive characteristics	negative characteristics
1	inner world	32 %	8%	26,5%	35%	4%	31%
2	behavior	23%	5,5%	17,5%	21%	4%	17%
3	relation-ship	20%	6%	14%	26%	3%	23%
4	appearance	13,5%	4%	9,5%	3,5%	0,5%	3%
5	standard rules	11%	9,5%	1,5%	10%	7,5%	2,5%
6	age	0,5%	-	0,5%	2%	-	2%
7	well-being	-	-	-	2,5%	-	2,5%

As can be seen from Table 1 the portrait of a woman/wife represented in both languages paroemiological funds in most cases has a negative connotation.

Conclusion

Detection of national and specific features of ways of categorization and conceptualization of extra language reality in the course of comparison of two

remotely related languages promotes identification of an ethnocultural originality of a language picture of the world, establishes national and cultural features, various and similar for each language.

The paroemiological picture of the world in each language represents the generalized point of view which is based on the standard stereotypes of representatives of specific ethnocultural society about the organization of life activity.

Gender paroemiological picture of the world is reflection of gender stereotypes, "behind which there is a logic of practical reasonings and notion of axiological character concerning a social sex" (Hakimova, 2003).

The analysis showed that the portrait of a woman/wife in the English and Russian paroemiological pictures of the world mainly is characterized negatively and is "close to the semantic field of" evil, danger" (Kirilina, 1999). However, the percent of positive characteristics is a little higher in the English paroemias. In both considered paroemiological pictures of the world the woman/wife is regarded as a representative of the lower class, which has no voting rights, is subjected to moral and physical violence. The basic rules applicable to the woman/wife are the same in each of the languages, but the Russian paroemiological fund shows bigger exactingness to the considered image.

During the research of a portrait of the woman/wife we have faced the pronounced phenomenon of an androcentric (reflection of male prospect), that causes negatively connoted female image in the English and Russian gender-marked paroemias.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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