Verbalization of the concept “Woman” in English Phraseological Units

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ABSTRACT

The phraseological structure of the language represents special interest for researchers in the sphere of gender linguistic, as it contain all «cultural-national visions» of each nation. The attention to the given problem is caused by an inexhaustible opportunity of phraseological fund “to keep and transfer information matrixes”, to express features and attitude of native speakers and to reveal a national originality of communicative behavior of people. Studies of language and gender asymmetries in it are based on hypothesis of Sepir-Uorf: "the language is not only a product of a society, but also means of formation of its intellection and mentality". As a gender stereotypes we understand «cultural and socially caused opinions about qualities, attributes and rates of behavior of representatives of both genders and their reflection in the language). Asymmetries are treated as a various sort of discrepancy (associative, connotative and other plans) in semantic volume formally and lexically similar units.

Keywords: phraseological units, idioms, asymmetry, Anthropometrical lexemes, semantic accents.

Introduction

Gender stereotypes underlie formation of the certain social expectations in relation to genders, encouraging one and negatively estimating other features and qualities of people depending on their biological sex. In this connection use of a word "girl" in a phraseological unit "girl boy" for giving to an idiom a negative shade of value is indicative, for example. Also the word "mum/mummy" can has negative connotation, unusual for equivalent concept dad. The idiom "mummy's boy" has obviously expressed pejorative painting just because its structure includes a word "mummy's" (the affinity of the boy to mother is regarded as something unacceptable, inappropriate to the standard canons of courage). Similar connotations have idioms "old woman" and "play the woman". Tearfulness, softness, etc. are considered as attributes of female behavior and are considered as inadmissible for the man. It is remarkable, that if the word "woman" can be used for the characteristic of the man the word "man" is not used for the characteristic of the woman. So, the pair of phraseological units "play the woman" and "play the man" are used only for the characteristic of the men, the first in negative, the second in positive sense («to behave as it is necessary to the man»).

Main Part

Semantic accents in the phraseological units describing various qualities of men and women are asymmetric also. Practically all phraseological units of lexical set «external shape», concerning the woman, estimate are marked ("a bit of jam", "perfect picture", "a work of art", etc.), the developed stereotypes compare the woman with an animal (chick, bird, fox) or with a toy (doll, cuddly, babe), often woman - sexual object (woman of pleasure, lady of easy virtue, white slave). Certainly, it is possible to say about the man, that he is attractive, but it is never accented.

Phraseological units of lexical sets "character" and "mental abilities" show typical in
representation of English language community female behavior. Negative qualities prevail here:

- Talkative and irritable (*old cat, common scold*)
- Fussiness and impulsiveness (*meddling duchess*)
- Whims (*pretty Fanny’s way*)

Positively painted idioms prevailing in a quantitative sense accent first of all such "male’s" qualities, as:

- Honesty and reliability (*a man of honor*)
- Boldness and endurance (a man of courage, a man of decision, a man of character)
- Will (master of situation, to play the master, a man of his word).

In English idioms we can observe rather scornful attitude to mental abilities of the woman is fixed also: the phraseological unit *woman’s reason* acts as a pseudo-image of irrational thinking.

Among the phraseological units describing the status of the man and the woman, the tendency to accent predominating position of the man in the house (*lord and master, master of the house*) is appreciable. To be the wife, the mistress and mother consider natural applicability of the woman, therefore phraseological units, describing her as neutral. For the man to be the good family man - separate virtue and a corresponding idiom (*family man*) possesses a positive shade of value. Absence in English phraseology of an idiom *family woman* is an indirect parameter that women are not acceptable as member of society: as the family is thought as natural sphere of realization of the woman, this fact does not require an additional verbal explication.

Generally, asymmetry doesn’t consist in estimation but in:

1. The quantity of the idioms describing the social status of men, almost four times surpasses amount of the idioms describing the status of women;
2. "Man's" phraseological units status are characterized by great thematic variety.

The presentation of the gender factor of English phraseological units is specific enough, as cannot be established on precise patrimonial distinctions in connection with absence in English language of a grammatical category of gender. Thus, gender marked, i.e «fixing or registration of a gender component in English idioms», - the phenomenon exclusively lexicon-semantic, as markers of a gender can act first of all the lexemes designating the person man’s or a female, or semantic components in semantics of phraseological units. Accordingly gender marked can be both the plan of expression, and the plan of the maintenance.

The repertoire of lexemes which are gender markers of the plan of expression of idioms, can be presented by three basic groups:

1. **Anthropometrical lexemes** (words which semantic dominant is the attribute of a sex);
2. **Terms of relationship**;
3. **Anthroponomy lexemes** (proper names).

First two groups represent the closed systems of gender oppositions as the quantity of pairs lexemes entering into them is regulated.

*For example,*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl</th>
<th>boy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lady</td>
<td>gentleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss</td>
<td>Mrs. — Mr. etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But similar oppositions are allocated without taking into account process of phraseologies, i.e. without taking into account that role which is played with this or that lexeme in value of an idiom.
If consider what attributes in semantics of a lexeme participated in formation of semantics of a corresponding idiom, classification of opposition can be another. So, for example, if conceptual the center of a phraseological nomination there is an attribute "appearance" in one group of gender markers it is possible to unite such pair lexemes as boy - girl, man - woman, and also unpaired words lady, queen:

A glamour girl - a beauty
A toy-boy - a handsome young man who is chosen as a lover by a much older but wealthy woman
A man-eater - a woman who attracts very easily
Lady-killer - a handsome man who believes that women cannot resist and want him desperately
A media queen - a beautiful woman who is the favorite subject of journalists and TV reporters.

Following criteria can carry out classification of gender markers of the second group:

1. Close-not close relationship;
2. Relationship on a direct or lateral line.

For example,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{aunt} & \rightarrow \text{uncle} \\
\text{widow} & \rightarrow \text{widower} \\
\text{mother} & \rightarrow \text{father} \\
\text{wife} & \rightarrow \text{husband} \\
\text{daughter} & \rightarrow \text{son} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Phraseological units in English language abounds with gender markers of the second group:

The son of the soil - the native
Aunt Sally - a target for attacks and insults
Old wives' tales - grandmother's fairy tales, etc.

The gender markers concerning to anthroponomy, represent the open system of gender oppositions, as:

1. Suppose replacement of this or that name, caused and justified by a communicative situation;

For example, Tom, Dick and Harry (the first comer, everyone) can turn in Tom, Dick and Sheila to include women in this concept;

2. The repertoire can be expanded in connection with occurrence of new persons in various spheres of a public life, whose activity has historical value,

For example, to do a Thatcher - to remain in a post of the prime minister three terms successively (Margaret Thatcher - the former prime minister of the Great Britain), or according to Hoyle - duly (Hoyle - the author of the known book «Manual to game in whist»).

Andocentric character of the plan expression gender marked English idioms of all three groups proves to be true the fact, that the lexemes specifying the person of a male, possess greater phraseological activity, than the words designating the person of a female.

Definition of gender markers of the plan of maintenance of phraseological units assumes an output in qualitatively new and more complex level of the analysis of idioms.

It is important to pay attention also that specificity of definition of gender markers of the plan
of the contents in many respects depends on sphere of a subject designation of idioms, i.e. whether they belong to sphere animated or inanimate.

Gender markers of the plan of maintenance of phraseological units, nominating people, concerning sphere animated, can act as:

1) The words designating male or a female;

For example, *A Jack the Lad* - self-confident and not so serious the young man who behaves as he wants, not paying attention to opinion of associates;

2) The words designating the person in general without taking into account his sexual characteristic. Basically it is such lexemes, as *person, someone, everyone, everybody, you,*

For example, *every mother's son* - everyone, everyone.

In semantics of the phraseological units designating inanimate objects, gender markers as those are absent, for example, *King's/Queen's weather* - wonderful weather.

However it does not exclude implicate expression of a gender component in their semantics.

Summing up to the aforesaid, it is possible to draw a conclusion that the phraseological fund of English language can have various gender markers and gender marked can be both the plan of expression, and the plan of maintenance of phraseological units.

Gender marked English idioms serves as the important proof of that phraseological units are cultural marked signs which studying will help to open deep structures of a gender paradigm.

The greatest layer of comparative phraseological units is made with steady with adjectives. Comparative and adjective phraseological units are defined in work as nominative two-topmost phraseological units of idiomatic character which components are incorporated by comparative communication (Terentev A.V). In basis of comparative and adjective phraseological units the figurative comparison defining comp^entiat Structure of comparative lays. The phraseological unit possesses complete value as it is not deduced from values of components and is based on the internal form.

Expressivities of comparative and adjective phraseological units are provided with simultaneous vision in a phraseological unit of direct and portable values, their syncretism, by collision synchronic and diachronic plans.

There is a statement that overweight of "female" phraseological units above "male" reflects that fact, that phraseology, being verbalized in language a naive picture of the world, is presented through recognition of the man that is once again the proof andocentric of the language.

All know, that another the brightest fixing agents of cultural-national standards and cultural significant concepts that transmitted from generation to generation are proverbs. To number such concepts we can carry «masculinity» and «femininity». It means that proverbs of English language should be informative in studying gender relations.

It is a fact that in proverbs wisdom and spirit of nation is shown, but in the given research we will accept for a proverb the short statement used among ordinary people and as a certain aphorism in a society. Truthfulness and wisdom as characteristics of a proverb thus are excluded as associate antifeminine statements with reason and the truth would mean to accept for the truth - misogyny, and intellect - chauvinism.

Our purpose becomes studying how women implicitly or explicitly are compared to inanimate objects in English proverbs.
1. The woman and animals.
   ❖ When an ass climbs a ladder, we may find wisdom in a woman.
   In the given proverb the donkey is compared with the woman who cannot find wisdom, as donkey cannot stay in a vertical position. In other words, a donkey that could climb up on a ladder find as difficultly, as the wise woman. Use in a proverb of a verb may which means is remarkable, that even if the first part of the statement will be executed, it will not be a guarantee of realization of the second action.

I ❖ Women in state affairs are like monkeys in glass-houses.
   This proverb shows that the woman in politics looks ridiculously and makes as much destructions and harms as the monkey in a greenhouse.

   ❖ Two women in a house,
     Two cats and a mouse,
     Two dogs and a bone
     Will never accord in one.
   In this proverb the women are compared with cats and dogs, with their tendency to jealousy and biliousness. Also the proverb correlates the man to the mouse or a bone, transforming him as a "victim" of the spiteful nature of the woman.

   ❖ A woman, a dog and a walnut tree,
     The more you beat them the better they be.
   The meaning of the given statement is the more to beat women, dogs and a nut tree, the better they will become for husbands, owners and users.

2. The woman and meal.
   ❖ All meats to be eaten, and all maidens to be wed.
   ❖ No meat is as sweet as chicken, except the meat of "Leave me alone".

3. The woman and property.
   ❖ A little house well filled, a little field well tilled, and a little wife well willed is a great riches.
   In other words, the woman is a treasure if she is as profitable as a field and the house and on the contrary.
     ❖ He that gets a ship or a wife will always have trouble.
     ❖ A fair wife and frontier castle breed quarrels.
     ❖ Three things breed jealousy: a mighty state, a rich treasury and a fair wife.
     ❖ The nice wife and back door rob the house.
   In all these proverbs the woman is the property, which brings only troubles and cares to the owner.

   In the majority the stereotypes discriminating the woman and speaking about her extraordinariness, testify to numerous female defects:
Their talkative
Woman hair is long, her tongue is longer.

Their Impulsiveness
There was never a conflict without a woman.
Three things drive a man out of his house: smoke, rain and a scolding wife.

Their Squandering
A woman can throw out the window more than a man can bring at the door.

Their Insidiousness
There are two kinds of women: those who take what you are and those who take what you have.

Their Danger
There is no devil so bad as a she-devil.

Their Capriciousness
A woman’s mind and a winter wind change often. Women are as wavering as the wind.

Their Dissimulation
Women are saints in church, angels in street, and devils at home.
Women naturally deceive, weep and spin.

• Their Reason
"Because" is a woman's reason.
Find a woman without an excuse, and find a hare without a meuse.

• Their Tongue
A woman’s strength is in her tongue.
Three women, three geese and three frogs make a market.

• Their Needs
A ship and a woman are ever repairing.
Women, priest and poultry, have never enough.

To the man the national idea is turned as to the representative—of a sort human. Many proverbs even warn men against the every possible vital disorders connected with the woman:

Many wives, multiple penury.

Woman is a woe to man.
Women are necessary evils.
Woman's answer is never to seek.

Having covered the given question, it is possible to conclude, that the shown proverbs humiliate all and offend the woman as the person, depersonalization of the female beginning is accepted in language as by itself understood, that reflects and confirms our assumption about andocentric of the language.

It is enough to open the dictionary of proverbs and there is obvious a fact, that almost all the gender boards mentioning the woman, contain denying her role in a society, it is possible to illustrate it easily with such examples, as:

A woman is a weaker vessel.
A woman's tongue wags like a lamb's tail.
Women naturally deceive, weep and spin.

These proverbs show, that in language tradition the tendency to belittle the woman, as full
member of a society has taken roots. Anti-feminine headings of articles and advertisements in mass media can serve as a proof.

For example, for one advertisement was taken well known proverb "Four things drive a man out of his house too much smoke, a dripping roof, filthy air and a scolding wife ":

Four things a woman should know,
How to look like a girl,
How to act like a lady,
How to think like a man,
And how to work like a dog.

The given leaflet compares the woman with a dog and emphasizes her function: to be attractive object and to serve the man.

The majority of the companies continue to use in the slogans and appeals a word man (sometimes simply subconsciously), and it confirms that the world remains in hands of the man, as before.

Mc Donald's Corporation, for example, used as advertising by bible proverb Man does not live by bread alone, and on a publicity board of company Japan Air Lines two men (and any woman have been represented!), above them inscription One man's sushi is another man's steak (from ancient proverb One man's meat is another man's poison) was seen.

Corporation PPG Industries has thought up an advertising question: If man believed in leaving well enough alone, where would we be? But why to not tell: If people believed in leaving well enough alone, where would we be?

The Boeing Air Craft Company used double interpretation of the same proverb Man does not live by bread alone, advertising travel on affairs and for pleasure.

Man wasn't meant to fly alone
Woman wasn't meant to stay at home

Differently, there is an indication on a place of the woman, her habitual condition - to be at home, while the man - the businessman.

The woman in advertising is internally not free. She has the role of "catalyst" of needs of the buyer (man) and stimulus of sale of the goods and services is removed, (if the woman in advertising block goes by the car it is meant that is a gift of the man.)

Keeping basic structures of proverbs, such advertising are characterized by brevity, quickly memorizing and some kind of authority that becomes the mortgage of efficiency of the advertising text.

American scientist Wolfgang Mider is engaged in a problem of chauvinism in proverbs, the heading of one such article is "A proverb a day keeps no chauvinism away" (from An apple a day keeps a doctor away) is very indicative in this plan.

Simultaneously with development of feminism and various women's movements advertising of some companies becomes not such discriminating. For example, The First National Bank of Boston has chosen to itself such advertising:

If you are disappointed with your pension plan's performance... how do you think Tom, Dick and Mary feel?

Familiar phraseological unit Tom, Dick and Harry is reconstructed to mention and include women.

The example of a choice as heading We do not separate women from the men in the newspaper with announcements of work will be suitable also. Expression to separate the men from
the boys was transformed in a new slogan.
Advertising of perfume of Pierre Carden shows necessity to loosen foundations of the antifeminist world: *Behind every great woman there's a man (Behind every great man there's a woman).*

It is possible to illustrate also how it is primary a shownen proverb gets new value owing to a context:

**A Woman's Place**

**Is In the House**

(*Picture of the White House and Congress*)

Junior House Fashions thus emphasizes necessity of female politicians, playing with words Home and House, referring to the House of Representatives and the White House.

At the same time it is possible to see and buy T-shirts with inscription *A woman's Place is in the House... And the Senate!* 

Such advertising and its effect on us make people more and more possible disposal of prejudices that has imposed to a society andocentric.

Modern mass media abound with one-sided sights about women, though the companies can achieve greater popularity and to be in a greater degree modern, keeping up to date and destroying the stereotypes that are not putting a sign equally between men and women.

I suppose it will take much time until people realize, that proverb **All men are created equal** requires transformation **All people are created equal.**

Based on the results of our research we have designed a cognitive map (Graph 1) for the concept "Woman" in English based on its dictionary meanings, phraseological derivatives, associated collocations, etc. Having analysed the gathered phraseological units we have divided the map into three categories, namely phraseological units reflecting:

1. the role of a woman at home;
2. marital status and marriage;
3. characteristics of a woman;

**Graph 1. Cognitive map of the concept “Woman”**.
The less they look to their house

Two women in a house,
Two cats and a mouse,
Two dogs and a bone,
Will never accord in one.

Women must have the last word

Many wives, multiple penury.

Ask for a lady’s hand
Bachelor’s wife
Shall I be mother
There is one good wife in the country and every man thinks he has her

Woman hair is long,
Her tongue is longer

Woman must have the last word

He that gets a ship or a wife will always have trouble

The nice wife and back door rob the house

To agree like cats and dogs

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