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RESEARCH ARTICLE

GENDER CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS.

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Abstract

The manuscript presents an investigation of the process of gender conceptualization, characterization of its layers and containing parts, finding out factors and parameters forming basic gender concepts taking into account their national-cultural, etymological and historical peculiarities. Not less important in the work becomes comparison of masculine and feminine stereotypes in the English phraseological world view, exposure and explanation of gender asymmetries and connotations, which will create ground for lexicographical description of gender marked phraseological units of the analyzed language and their adequate interpretation in the contexts of usage.

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Materials and methods:-

The basic in the sphere of gender studies became the work of R. Lakoff¹, which had proved androcentricity in the lingual world view. This work led to further development of gender linguistics including investigations of gender stereotypes. Among world investigations² in the aspect of gender linguistics the most important are issues by E. Baron Dennis, Biemans Monique, Cameron Deborah, Christie Christine, King Ruth, Lakoff George, O'Barr William and Atkins Bowman, S. Romaine, D. Tannen, Thorne Barrie.

¹ Lakoff Robin. Language and Woman's Place. – New York: Harper and Row, 1975. – 372 p.

² Baron Dennis E. Grammar and Gender. – New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. – 212 p.; Biemans Monique. Gender Variation in Voice Quality. – Utrecht: LOT, 2000. – 175 p.; Cameron Deborah. Gender, language and discourse: a review essay. // Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 1998. – № 23. – P.945-973; Christie Christine. Gender and Language: Towards a Feminist Pragmatics. – Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. – 386 p.; King Ruth (ed.) Talking Gender: A Guide to Nonsexist Communication. – Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991. – 324 p.; Lakoff George. Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. – 216 p.; O'Barr William M. and Atkins Bowman K. "Women's language" or "powerless language"? – In McConnell-Ginet, Borker and Furman, 1980. – P.93-110; Romaine S. Communicating Gender. – London: Oxford University Press, 1999. – 247 p.; Tannen D. You just don't understand. Women and men in conversation. – New York, 1990. – 212 p.

Gender factor in the language was investigated by Russian linguists – specialists in gender studies: O.A. Vaskova, M.D. Gorodnikov, E.I. Goroshko, D.O. Dobrovolski, I.V. Zikova, A.V. Kirilina, V.A. Nikolskiy, V.V. Potapov, V.N. Telia, I.I. Haleeva and others, in whose works gender was investigated as main concept of lingual culture, as factor of peculiar communication language function. E.I. Goroshko applied methodology of modeling and observation, analysis of written texts, free associative experiment, which demonstrated influence on speech behavior of examined people not only due to their sex and age but level of education and social activity too. Linguist V.B. Potapov worked out hierarchal strategy in linguistic genderology. Detailed and systematic analysis of problems of linguistic genderology led D.O. Dobrovolskiy and A.V. Kirilina in their issue to existence of five main directions, which can be differentiated both conceptually and from the view of character of investigated material. V.N. Telia includes into her monograph paragraph devoted to reflection of cultural concept “woman” in the Russian phraseology. Doctoral dissertation by A.V. Kirilina enlightens the problems of stereotypes in the Russian paremiology.

The problems of cognitive and gender linguistics were investigated in the following scientific issues of Uzbek linguists: D. Agzamova, G.Sh. Atahanova, D. Ashurova, M. Galieva, A. A. Morozova, N.N. Panjjeva, M. Rasulova, Sh. Safarov, K.D. Tuhtaeva, G.S. Hakimova, M.K. Halikova, G.I. Ergasheva, U.Yusupov and others. G.Sh. Atakhanova has demonstrated the concept “human’s age” and its national-cultural peculiarities on the material of English and Uzbek languages. N. N. Panjjeva has studied cognitive semantics of evaluative nominations of a person in comparison of the English and Uzbek languages. K. D. Tuhtaeva has studied compound words, structural organization of compound words in the semantics of phraseological units and their cognitive peculiarities. G. I. Ergasheva has compared gender concepts “man” and “woman” on the examples of phraseological and paremiological units of English and Uzbek languages, found out similarities and differences. A. A. Morozova has demonstrated formation and functioning of the concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” on the material of the Spanish language.

Methods of the research: descriptive method, method of interlingual comparison, method of overall choice, method of associative experiment, componential analysis, statistic analysis, cognitive-conceptual analysis, structural-semantic approach.

Results and Discussion:-

The basic notion of gender investigations is gender which is considered to be a special set of cultural characteristics, determining men’s and women’s social behavior, their interrelations which create, approve and reproduce imagination of masculinity and femininity as social categories. Gender is not a linguistic category, but its content can be revealed by the analysis of language structures explaining linguistic investigation of sex representation.

At present time due to increasing number of issues of linguists, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers we can speak about development of cognitive phraseology. For the first time the term “cognitive phraseology” was defined by Russian linguist³, demonstrating enough general methodological and linguistic proofs. In the frames of cognitive phraseology we can describe national phraseoconcepts, compare mental spaces of bearers of definite culture, investigate mechanisms of reproduction of sensitive and thoughtful categories in language structure and study mental essence of phraseologisms of this or that language. In this process cognitive phraseology not only finds out nomination of this or that phenomenon, subject, but also expresses attitude, reveals information, knowledge, forming the content of phraseological unit.

Social-moral sphere of knowledge contains such notions as social norms, social-moral relations, social role, etc. The following phraseological units belong to this group: *cut somebody off with a shilling* – deprive somebody of inheritance, *good wine needs no bush* – good wine needn’t a label, *rob Peter to pay Paul* – to supple one by damaging another, *sit above the salt* – to get higher position in society, *sit below the salt* – to get lower position in society.

In meaningful structure of phraseological unit there is a large store of religious knowledge: *cast the first stone at somebody* – (Bible) to throw a stone at somebody. Cognitive nature of phraseological unit proposes a rich potential of historical knowledge: *the three tailors of Tooley Street* – minor group of people considering themselves as

³ Babushkin A. Types of concepts in lexical-phraseological semantics of the language. – Voronej, 1996. – P.12.

representatives of all people (due to testimony of politician D. Kanning, 1770-1827, three tailors applied to the Parliament with petition starting with words: "We, the people of England...").

Language is metaphorical due to its nature. Metaphorization is located in the centre of axiological world view as «the most fundamental cultural treasures match to metaphorical structures of main notions of the culture»⁴. Metaphorization is investigated as one of the ways of forming emotive-evaluative phraseological meaning and reflection of connection with national-cultural specifics of cognitive activity of English native speakers. Metaphorical figurative sense of phrases is one of the most important sources of enriching of any language phraseology including English. Metaphors are based on various types of similarities: similarity of state: *babies (or children) in the wood* – naives, *a fish out of water* – a person out of his nature; similarity of age: *babies and sucklings* – inexperienced people, new employees; similarity of colour: *pea - soup fog* – yellowish London fog; similarity of taste: *a bitter pill to swallow* – hard necessity, etc. Most of metaphorical phrases possess euphemistical character, thus expressing veiled notions, among them there are many phraseological unit denoting death or devil: *the great (or the last) enemy* – about death; *one's last sleep* – about death; *the author of evil* – about devil; *the father of lies* – (Bible) about devil; *the prince of darkness* – about devil.

Metonymical transmissions are based on various types of contiguity: a part of body instead of its: *long ears* – curiosity; names instead of events connected with them: *Big Bertha* – far shooting gun from which Germans shot Paris during World War I; name of a street instead of organizations or people living there: *Downing Street* – English government; *Fleet Street* – English press. In Fleet Street there are located the largest newspapers publishing houses; *Harley Street* – doctors, medical world. Harley Street is London Street, where many famous doctors live. Another examples of using part instead of the whole: *beer and skittles* – holiday entertainments; *the butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker* – people of different professions.

There is a number of biological and social interpretations of role relations between men and women in society, they are called gender stereotypes. The term "stereotype" is interpreted as "imagination" of fragment of surrounding reality, fixed mental picture which is the result of reflection of "typical" fragment of reality world in human's consciousness, invariant of a definite part of world view. Gender stereotypes present cultural and social opinions about qualities, attributes and behavioral norm of both sexes and their reflections in a language. Little or much stereotypes influence on every person. Stereotypes let people form imagination of the whole world, go out of their narrow social, geographical and political world.

Gender marked phraseological units are investigated as the concepts of English national culture and reflect peculiarities of English society.

Gender stereotype of a woman in the English lingual culture consists of all nominations: *woman, girl, old woman, mother, daughter, wife, mother-in-law, grandmother, granddaughter, niece, aunt, etc.*

Gender stereotype of a man consists of the following nominations: *man, boy, old man, father, brother, husband, grandfather, uncle, father-in-law, comrade, friend, etc.*

In masculine and feminine lingual consciousness the concepts of beauty and ugliness have exact borders: beauty is women's attribute who try to possess it, for men this quality is not so important. This is proved by a number of phraseological units describing women's beautiful appearance: *(as) red as a cherry* – to have rosy skin; *have roses in one's cheeks* – to have rosy cheeks; *a slick chick* – an attractive girl; *hot stuff* – young sexy woman.

In the investigated complex of English phraseological units there are many, symbolizing a man as a faithful assistant, decent, good-natured person, his advantages: braveness, willfulness, high intellect: *square John* – honest man; *knight without Fear and without Reproach* – fearless, brave man; *a gentleman of fortune* – lucky men; *clever dog* – a smart boy. In English culture man's main activity deals with public outside sphere, belonging to him: *lord and master*; *men in grey suits, a made man* – a person who reached high position himself. There is a universal stereotype that money and power in society also belong to men: *a man of mark* – man of high position; *a man of*

⁴ Lakoff George. Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind. – Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. – P. 304.

business – businessman; *great lion* – powerful (about a man); *a man about town* – noble man; *the king of the castle* – leader, chef.

The key to stereotypes comprehension exists in language function, that is responsible for storage and conveying culture, traditions, social consciousness of a definite ethnic group from generation to generation, thus creating the process of storage and conveying a definite information, repeated in an unchangeable way.

The basis of investigation of phraseological meaning became the conception of idioms semantics proposed by V.N. Teliya as the hierarchal model expressed in the shape of macro components forming the semantic structure of idioms: 1) descriptive macro component or the content expressed in the meaning of phraseological unit; 2) evaluative macro component denoting idiom's value; 3) motivating macro component denoting image suiting the reality or not suiting and belonging to its imagination; 4) emotive macro component uniting information about emotive content of phraseological unit; 5) stylistic macro component; 6) grammatical macro component or information about morphological, syntactical and phonetic forms of idioms⁵.

I.V. Zikova proposes hypotheses of existence of one more component – gender macro component in the semantics of phraseologisms which interact with all pointed above. This macro component which covers idiom's description helps to reflect cultural notions masculine / feminine in adequate way⁶.

Markers pointing at the explicit character of expression of gender component in phraseological units are nouns, pronouns and proper names pointing at masculinity or femininity: *man, boy, girl, woman, lady, he, she, Jack, Tom, Mary*, etc. It's easy to create image, meant in the semantics of phraseological unit because the component itself points at gender belonging: *a man for all seasons* – helpful person; *a girl Friday* – reliable clerk (about girl-secretary); *brother in arms* – brothers in army. The largest is a group of phraseological units with explicit character of expression. The least is the group of implicit aspect of expression where gender component “veiled” in the structure of phraseological unit: *skirt chaser* – a man “chasing” women. In this phrase there interact two implicitly expressed components – *skirt*, i.e. a woman and *chaser*, i.e. a man. Age is differently expressed by implicit phraseological units: *a dolly bird* – young naïve girl; *old trout* – old woman; *a bit of fluff* – very young girlie. Among explicitly expressed phraseological units the most popular are those which have components pointing at professional activity of men and women: *a boy in buttons* – a boy working in hotel; *a Jack of all trades* – a man of various occupations; *a confidence man* – swindler, dishonest; *a hello girl* – girl-operator; *a woman of letters* – woman-writer.

Speaking about peculiarities of phraseological units having gender component in their structure, we can conclude that due to their representativeness they are able to be revealed on all levels of language system; gender reflects lingual reality, national culture of a language.

In the process of investigation there were found the following semantic groups, expressing subjective-objective marks:

1. phraseological units with component of femininity, characterizing a woman from negative side, contemptuously, disapprovingly, except phraseological unit relating to mother, sister, woman-heroine: a woman of the streets – a street woman, light-minded woman – negatively; Sister Ann – a faithful friend – positively.
2. phraseological units with component of masculinity, characterizing a man by various marks, but mostly dominate positive and neutral marks: a hen-pecked husband – a man who is managed by his wife – negatively; a man of letters – a man-writer – neutrally; square John – an honest, decent man – positively; a man of his word – a man who keeps his promise – positively.
3. phraseological units with component of femininity for characterizing a man, mostly negatively marked: old woman – a shy, coward man – negatively; a girl's blouse – a scandalous man – negatively.
4. phraseological units with component of masculinity for characterizing a woman, mostly negatively marked: a Tom-boy – hyperactive girl behaving like a boy – negatively; man-eater – a woman who uses men only for sexual relations – negatively.
5. phraseological units with component of femininity relating to both sexes, mostly dominates negative mark: mother's darling – mother's beloved son or daughter – negative; a weak sister – an unreliable person – negative.

⁵Telia V.N. Russian phraseology. – Moscow: Science, 1996. – P. 34.

⁶Zikova I.V. Gender component in the structure and semantics of phraseological units in the modern English language. – Moscow: MSU, 2002. – P.29.

Gender frame «masculinity» consists of such parts as career, power, success, strength, military service, liberty, defense, brevity, control, domination, resolution, family support, competition, possession of beautiful woman.

Gender frame «femininity» contains such notions as beauty, womanhood, family, maternity, housekeeping, reproductive function, love, cherish, passiveness, tenderness, fragility, need in defense.

For realization of its content gender component passes three levels of conceptualization:

1. Semantic level, revealing gender component in the semantics of phraseological unit. This component can be expressed explicitly and implicitly: “a back-room boy” – scientific researcher of secret laboratory; “a bachelor girl” – single, unmarried girl; “the old man of the sea” – annoying, sticking man; “the old lady in Thread needle Street” – English bank.
2. Associative level – the whole meaning of phraseological unit is actualized with the help of other components which together with gender component create some associative perception, connected with realization of meaning of gender component and its being added by meanings of other components in the structure of phraseological unit: a back-room (from phraseological unit “a back-room boy”) – laboratory, secret room; bachelor (from phraseological unit “a bachelor girl”) – single; phraseological unit “the old man of the sea” – from the tale «One thousand one night», which retells how Sinbad-sailor couldn't avoid the old man who sat on his shoulders; Thread needle Street (from phraseological unit “the old lady in Thread needle Street”) – the street, where there was caricature, the sign under this caricature announces: Political Ravishment, or the Old Lady of Thread needle Street in Danger!.
3. Conceptual level, where takes place formation of definite characteristics of men/women, new gender meanings, gender stereotypes and gender concepts «man» и «woman»: a back-room boy – a boy who works in laboratory, i.e. scientific researcher of secret laboratory, expert, specialist; a bachelor girl – a single girl, unmarried girl who lives lonely; a the old man of the sea – a man who is difficulty got rid of; the old lady in Thread needle Street – i.e. English bank.

For realization of whole gender meaning it's necessary to take into consideration each component in the structure of gender marked phraseological units, as each component transfers a definite meaningful shadow and brings peculiar brightness and expressive image to phraseological expressions.

The material of English phraseology shows masculine image which is formed from such points as appearance, character, marital status, social status, behavior, intellect of a man. The point «appearance» of a man in the English phraseological fund is presented by a large number of units both with positive and negative emotional mark: bald as a coot – totally bald; blue-eyed boy – women's beloved man. Phraseological units characterizing men's personal qualities: (as) gentle as a lamb – mild as a lamb; mamma's darling – a beloved son or daughter under mother's care; a heart of oak – brave, courageous man; a tough nut – firm, resolute; Jack among the maids – ladies' man. Social status interprets professional qualities: a back room boy – specialist; a man of rank – a man of high position; a broken man – robber. Characteristics of man's spiritual world includes, first of all, estimation of his intellectual abilities, willfulness: a sharp man, a man of wisdom, a clever Dick – a clever person and as opposite: a silly Billy, a Simple Simon, a proper Charley – foolish.

In the English phraseological system the concept «woman» is formed by such notions as appearance, character, marital status, social status, age, behavior, intellect.

1. Appearance: a glamour girl – a very beautiful girl; (as) red as a cherry = have roses in one's cheeks – to have red cheeks. As it is obvious in investigation, for English language bearers woman's beauty is associated with red rose or cherry.
2. Character: mamma's darling – a beloved son or daughter under mother's care; bitch kitty – an obstinate woman with heavy character.
3. Marital status: a grass widow – a woman whose husband is far away; born under the rose – born in illegal relations.
4. Social status: a woman of letters – a woman-writer; a girl Friday – a reliable secretary; principal boy – an actress who performed man's role; a golden girl – a very popular girl; between (maid) girl – a maid who assists a cook.
5. Age: an old girl – an old single girl; a bit of fluff – a young girl; a dolly bird – young and silly girl; old trout – old scolding woman.

6. Behavior – a bright level consists of phraseological units reflecting woman's behavior from moral point of view: a woman of the streets – a light-minded girl; scarlet lady – a light-minded wandering woman.
7. Intellect: a woman's reason – female logics.

In phraseological units of modern English there is a high estimation of a woman, positive attitude to a woman, importance of her appearance, high value of maternity and such qualities as love, selflessness, self-sacrifice. In nominations of feminine images there are dominating moral marks, interconnection of genders is weakly demonstrated, maternity is highly estimated. Negative mark is presented by phraseological units about women's behavior, wife's character (scolding, unsatisfied), women's emotional instability.

Conclusion:-

1. Phraseology is one of the richest levels of language, gender investigation of which reveals new undiscovered spheres of language, history and culture; gender is a large complex of social and psychological processes, cultural notions, created by society and influencing on behavior of a national lingual individuality.
2. Phraseological unit is a conveyer of social cultural information, means of which help to investigate the culture of any nation. Gender marked phraseological units are the concepts of English national culture, they reflect the trace of English society peculiarities, expressing social attitude to men and women and various marks.
3. Gender stereotypes, actualized in the English lingual world view, are distributed on personal characteristics of men and women and their social roles. Stereotypical set of personal gender characteristics, expressed in English, includes stereotypes of appearance, stereotypes of personal characteristics and intellectual abilities of men and women, their behavioral and age stereotypes.
4. Gender component in phraseological meaning can be expressed explicitly – in the aspects of expression and content of phraseological unit and implicitly, i.e. to be present in the aspect of content, but be absent in the aspect of expression.
5. There were outlined semantic groups, expressing subjective-objective marks: 1) phraseological units with component of femininity, negatively characterizing a woman except some phraseological units denoting mother, sister; 2) phraseological units with component of masculinity, variously characterizing a man with domination of positive or neutral mark; 3) phraseological units with component of femininity, characterizing a man, such phraseological units are always negatively marked; 4) phraseological units with component of masculinity, denoting a woman, are also negatively marked; 5) phraseological units with component of femininity, being used for both sexes, are mostly with negative connotation.
6. The concept «man» is formed by such notions as age, appearance, physical state, intellectual abilities, emotions, willfulness and personal qualities. As observations show, in the English phraseology the main activity of a man deals with outer sphere. The universal and unchangeable for a man is his stereotypical role of a supplier and bread-winner of a family, due to this fact man's laziness gets negative mark.
7. In the phraseological system of the English language the concept «woman» is formed by such notions as appearance, character, marital status, social status, age, behavior, intellect.