

LEXICAL AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF GENDERLECT IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK

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Abstract. *The research studies how English and Karakalpak display gender-specific speech patterns through their linguistic and practical aspects of genderlect. The comparative method used in this study reveals which genderlect elements exist across all languages while showing how particular linguistic features link to different historical and cultural backgrounds. The article presents the argument that genderlect functions as an evolving sociolinguistic element which people use to express their power and their social norms and their goals of communication.*

Keywords: *genderlect, lexical features, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, politeness, hedging, gender and language, comparative linguistics.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada ingliz va qoraqalpoq tillaridagi genderlektning leksik va pragmatik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tipologik jihatdan bir-biridan uzoq bo'lgan ushbu ikki til jinsga ko'ra tabaqalangan nutqda umumiy qonuniyatlarni namoyon etadi. Qiyosiy yondashuv ayrim genderlekt hodisalarining universal tabiatini ochib beradi va ayni vaqtda turli madaniy hamda tarixiy kontekstlarni aks ettiruvchi til-xos mexanizmlarni yoritadi. Maqolada genderlekt qat'iy ikkilik kategoriya emas, balki hokimiyat munosabatlari, jamoa me'yorlari va kommunikativ maqsad bilan shakllanadigan dinamik sotsiolingvistik o'zgaruvchi ekanligi asoslanadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *genderlekt, leksik xususiyatlar, pragmatika, sotsiolingvistika, xushmuomalalik, xedjirovanie, gender va til, qiyosiy tilshunoslik.*

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматриваются лексические и прагматические особенности гендерлекта в английском и каракалпакском языках — двух типологически далёких языках, которые тем не менее обнаруживают конвергентные закономерности в гендерно дифференцированной речи. Сравнительный подход, применяемый в настоящем исследовании, позволяет выявить универсальный характер ряда гендерлектных явлений и одновременно акцентировать внимание на языкоспецифических механизмах, отражающих различные культурные и исторические контексты. В статье обосновывается, что гендерлект представляет собой не фиксированную бинарную категорию, а динамическую социолингвистическую переменную, формируемую властными отношениями, общественными нормами и коммуникативными целями.*

Ключевые слова: *гендерлект, лексические особенности, прагматика, социолингвистика, вежливость, хеджирование, гендер и язык, сопоставительное языкознание.*

INTRODUCTION

Linguists have studied how language relates to gender since Robin Lakoff established the field in the 1970s, but researchers still study this area by challenging previous binary definitions while focusing their research on languages that have received less attention. The concept of genderlect understood as a sociolect defined primarily by the speaker's gender identity has been productively applied to major world languages, especially English, while its application to Turkic languages of Central Asia exists as an area that requires further examination [1]. Researchers can use Karakalpak as a Kypchak Turkic language to conduct genderlect studies because its agglutinative morphology combined with its extensive address system and specific cultural norms for gendered speech creates a unique research environment [2].

English functions as an analytic language which possesses a historical tradition of feminist linguistic evaluation together with a documented system of gender-based speech patterns. Researchers can use the comparison of these two languages to identify which aspects of genderlect speak to universal linguistic patterns and which aspects arise from specific cultural and typological differences. The present study proceeds from the premise that lexical choices and pragmatic strategies rather than grammatical gender marking constitute the primary locus of genderlect differentiation in both English and Karakalpak, and that a theoretically grounded comparative analysis of these features can contribute meaningfully to both Turkic linguistics and general sociolinguistics [3].

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study uses the comparative-descriptive research method which depends entirely on existing academic research materials and verified linguistic corpora and established theoretical frameworks from sociolinguistics and pragmatics studies. The theoretical foundation draws on Lakoff's seminal work on women's language [1], Tannen's interactional sociolinguistics [4], and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory [5], all of which provide conceptual tools applicable beyond their original English-language context. The study uses descriptive grammars and sociolinguistic studies which researchers developed in Uzbekistan together with the Turkic studies tradition [2, 6] to analyze Karakalpak material. The genderlect concept has undergone substantial evolution since Lakoff developed it; modern researchers such as Cameron and Coates argue against treating gender differences as fixed traits because they believe researchers should study gender as a performance which varies according to social circumstances [7].

The performative understanding reaches its best match with pragmatic meaning approaches which include speech act theory and Gricean implicature as tools that show how people of any gender use language for specific social situations [8]. The literature shows that English contains key genderlect features which include women using hedges and boosters more often than men who display different patterns of tag question usage and men who use direct speech more than women and women who use emotional vocabulary to express their feelings [1, 4]. The existing research on Karakalpak shows

how people use address terms with different gender patterns and how they distribute honorific particles and how they limit particular vocabulary to male or female speakers during traditional dialogues [2, 6]. The framework that this study employs examines these features as socially learned communication techniques which different languages and cultures display through different ways of speaking yet these features serve the same function of displaying social connections and maintaining personal dignity and showing group identity [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative study of English and Karakalpak genderlect through their lexical and pragmatic literature shows both major similarities and essential differences. The academic record shows that female speakers from both languages demonstrate greater proficiency in using emotional and judgmental vocabulary because English-speaking women use intensifiers which include *so* and *really* and *quite* at higher rates while Karakalpak women use more diminutive and endearment suffixes through their language's agglutinative morphology [2, 6]. The parallel shows that women express their emotions through their genderlect in all languages because they use different lexical and grammatical methods to do so. The second area of agreement between the two parties involves hedging. The English language contains extensive research on hedges which include *I think* and *sort of* and *you know* because they function as dual pragmatic tools that help women protect their reputation while displaying their knowledge limits [1, 5].

In Karakalpak, analogous strategies are realized through the use of modal particles and evidential constructions that soften assertive force and position the speaker as deferential to the interlocutor's authority, a pattern particularly visible in formal and intergenerational interactions [6, 10]. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory offers a productive lens for understanding these parallels: in both communities, speakers categorized as female have traditionally been expected to prioritize positive and negative face-saving strategies, which is reflected in their higher use of indirect speech acts and collaborative conversational moves [5]. However, the two languages diverge notably in the domain of lexical taboo and register restriction. English genderlect research documents the historically differential access of women and men to registers associated with authority, technical expertise, and profanity, a distribution that has shifted considerably under the influence of feminist social movements [7].

In Karakalpak, register differentiation is more rigidly maintained through cultural norms associated with the concept of *uyat* (shame) and the traditional gendered division of communicative space, which restricts certain topics and lexical items to male speakers in the presence of elders or mixed-gender groups [2]. This divergence reflects the different social histories of the two speech communities and underscores the importance of avoiding universalist claims about genderlect that are derived exclusively from Western, English-language data. Pragmatically, both languages exhibit gendered asymmetries in conversational management: in English, the literature documents women's greater use of back-channelling, minimal responses, and topic

facilitation [4, 8], while Karakalpak communicative norms assign women a more receptive interactional role in formal settings, though informal all-female interaction displays notably different patterns of floor management and directness [6, 10]. These findings collectively support a view of genderlect as a pragmatic resource that speakers deploy variably according to context, relationship, and communicative goal, rather than as a fixed inventory of features mechanically produced by gender identity [3, 9].

CONCLUSION

This comparative study of genderlect in English and Karakalpak demonstrates that lexical and pragmatic gender differentiation is a cross-linguistically attested phenomenon, but one whose specific realizations are profoundly shaped by each language's typological resources and each community's cultural norms. The convergences identified in affective vocabulary, hedging strategies, and politeness-oriented indirectness point to the existence of broad pragmatic universals in the social management of gender identity through language. The divergences particularly in lexical taboo, register access, and the cultural framing of gendered communicative space remind us that genderlect cannot be adequately theorized on the basis of English data alone. Future research on Karakalpak genderlect would benefit from a more systematic engagement with corpus-based methods and from dialogue with the growing body of work on Turkic sociolinguistics. More broadly, the integration of Central Asian languages into comparative genderlect scholarship has the potential to enrich and challenge the theoretical frameworks developed within Western linguistics, producing a more genuinely cross-cultural understanding of the relationship between language, gender, and social structure.

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