

The complex conceptual analysis of concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” in Spanish

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ABSTRACT

The article dwells on the etymologic, syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” in Spanish language based on examples from Spanish fiction. 3 types of morphosyntax compatibility and the main lexical-semantic groups of researched concepts are revealed. Moreover, the synonymous line of concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” in Spanish is represented in this paper.

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Ispan tilidagi “erkaklik” va “ayollik” tushunchalarining kompleks konseptual tahlili

ANNOTATSIYA

Kalit so'zlar:

sintagmatika,
paradigma,
tushuncha,
erkaklik,
ayollik,
morfosintaksis,
sinonimlar.

Maqola ispan badiiy adabiyoti misolida ispan tilidagi “erkaklik” va “ayollik” tushunchalarining etimologik, sintagmatik va paradigmatic tahliliga bag'ishlangan. Morfosintaktik moslikning uch turi hamda o'rganilayotgan tushunchalarning asosiy leksik-semantik guruhlari ochib berilgan. Bundan tashqari, maqolada ispan tilidagi “erkaklik” va “ayollik” tushunchalarining sinonimik qatori keltirilgan.

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Комплексный концептуальный анализ понятий «мужественность» и «женственность» в испанском языке

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

синтагматика,
парадигма,
концепт,
маскулинность,
женственность,
морфосинтаксис,
синонимы.

Статья посвящена этимологическому, синтагматическому и парадигматическому анализу понятий «мужественность» и «женственность» в испанском языке на примере испанской художественной литературы. Выявлены 3 типа морфосинтаксической сочетаемости и основные лексико-семантические группы исследуемых концептов. Кроме того, в статье представлен синонимичный ряд понятий «мужественность» и «женственность» в испанском языке.

An anthropic-oriented approach to linguistic research and communication is closely connected with the cognitive scientific paradigm and allows to give a status of concepts to masculinity and femininity [Vitlitskaya, 2005], therefore the investigation of these concepts can be transferred into the sphere of cognitive linguistics. This article is dedicated to the complex analysis of lexical means with the help of which the researched concepts are represented in Spanish language space.

Nowadays researcher-linguists often apply a conceptual analysis that testifies about the “expansion of researching paradigm of language as well as the interdisciplinary character of modern linguistic researches” [Jusupov 2004:12]. The conceptual analysis of language units assumes the study of reality as the interconnection of language with the intellectual activity forming a consciousness [Safarov 2009:9]. So, we can affirm that the ideas about femininity and masculinity are not only reflected in language, but also constructed within it.

The concepts have a certain structure of associations, complementary signs, special collective, and individual knowledge and their interrelations [Kartushina 2003:15], therefore its description includes the research of lexical means in some aspects.

The etymological analysis

The review of the etymology of the concept’s lexeme shall be completed definitely by its study. The etymology reveals many associative connections consolidated in the human consciousness. It is connected with mythology because it reflects human ideas, manners, customs, and beliefs [Rusakova 2007: 74].

The concept “masculinity” in Spanish can be described through lexemes “*masculinidad*”, “*virilidad*”, “*hombría*”. The concept “femininity” is represented with lexemes “*feminidad*”, “*femineidad*”.

In according to the dates of Spanish etymologic electronic dictionaries [Diccionario etimológico de español. <http://www.etimologias.dechile.net>, Diccionario etimológico de la lengua española. <http://elcastellano.org>], the lexeme “*masculinidad*” proceeds from the Latin word *mas* – “masculine”. It is interesting that the Latin word “*mas*” is correlated with a word from the language of Avesta – “*mah*” – moon (symbol of death) [Makovsky 1996: 386].

The etymology of the word “hombría” dates back to the word “hombre” which originates from the Latin word “homo, hominis” – “man”. It is possible that this word proceeds from Latin “humus” – “land, ground” [Diccionario etimológico de español. <http://www.etimologias.dechile.net>]. This fact reminds us of the binary dichotomy of ancient mythology where masculinity was associated with land and ground. Moreover, the meaning of the word “hombre” can be correlated with the significance of “wet”, “spewing sperm”: Latin homo – man, but Latin umeo – be wet [Makovsky 1996: 386]. In other words, the physiological peculiarities of man’s organism are verbalized. Some researchers consider that the semantic of the word “hombre” overlaps with the cognate word “homenaje” – “oath of loyalty, honoring, homage” [Zykova 2009].

The etymological origin of the word “virilidad” starts from the Latin word “vir” – “man”. This lexeme correlates with the concept of primary elements of Universe (fire and water): Latin “vir” – “man”, but Indo-European “uer” – “fire”, and Tocharian “a war” – “water” or Tocharian “a wir” – “new, young”. These words testify about regular cosmogonic transformations [Makovsky 1996:386]. In our opinion, the correlation of masculinity with elements emphasizes the physical strength of men’s organism, as well as the fact that a man, like destructive elements, can dominate not only in everyday life but also in nature.

The etymology of lexeme “feminidad” traces back to the Latin word “femina” with the Indo-European root “dhe” – “to breastfeed”. Thus, the word “femina” etymologically means “the breastfeeding creature” [Diccionario etimológico de español. <http://www.etimologias.dechile.net>]. In other words, the biological nature of woman is emphasized. In according to the dictionary of M.Moliner [Moliner 1994:1292], the word “femina” is correlated with Spanish words “fecundo” – “fertile”, “feto” – “embryo”.

Therefore, the etymology of lexemes “feminidad”, “hombría”, “masculinidad”, “virilidad” emphasizes the biologic, physiologic as well as interior peculiarities of men’s and women’s worldview. The semes “mortality of humans”, “variability of humans during the period of whole their life”, “physical strength”, “superiority”.

The syntagmatic analysis

Being an organic union of linguistic elements, the syntagma can be considered as an indicator of lexical and semantical compatibility of lexemes. The scientists describe a syntagmatic analysis as a necessary base for a paradigmatic analysis. “The paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations of linguistic cultures are interconnected and interdependent. The proximity of paradigms implies the similarity of use of such units and vice versa” [Vorobyov 2008: 60].

In the process of analysis of language material, we reveal that the concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” in Spanish have a special syntagmatic possibility and appear in a literary text in a coherent manner. We can point out that the lexemes “feminidad”, “masculinidad”, “virilidad”, “hombría” can become part of substantive and verb constructions. The attributive combinations showing all the range of definitions and images of the concept are standing out among the substantive constructions.

In the process of investigation, we revealed 3 types of morphosyntax compatibility common for the concept “masculinity” and “femininity” in Spanish language:

1. **Adjective syntagma** has the following models connected with the position of adjective in relation to substantive: a) Adj + virilidad/ feminidad/masculinidad; b) virilidad/feminidad/masculinidad + Adj;

2. **Nominal syntagma:** S + virilidad/feminidad/masculinidad. The compatibility of words here occurs on the prepositional level, predominantly with the preposition “de” expressing the possession;

3. **Verbal syntagma:** V + virilidad/feminidad/masculinidad. Within this syntagma the researched lexemes can use not only as subjects of action but also as objects of action: virilidad/feminidad/masculinidad + V.

Now we examine the main lexical-semantic groups within which the compatibility of researched concepts occurs:

a) the group with common seme “pleasure” expresses the positive senses of visual, tactile and taste character caused by masculinity (*la embelesadora, seductora, atractiva, áspera masculinidad; sabor de masculinidad, aspereza de masculinidad; disfrutar de masculinidad*) and femininity (*la dulce, blanda, delicada, placentera, tentadora, suave, perfecta feminidad; miel de feminidad, suavidad de feminidad; gozar de feminidad*). We should point out that the masculinity in the conditions of context acts as an active element making concrete actions, but the femininity is a passive element perceiving these actions;

b) the group with common seme “heat” associated with emotional passion and impetuosity. Within this group the concept “femininity” has a big possibility of compatibility and correlates with the sphere of emotions (*la feminidad ardiente, caliente, cálida; calor de feminidad*) in contrast to the concept “masculinity” (*la masculinidad flagrante*);

c) the group with common seme “strength” inherent exclusively to the concept “masculinity” (*masculinidad feroz, hipnótica, poderosa, agresiva, arrogante, descarada, perturbadora, sobrecogedora, aterradora, desconcertante, abrumadora; poder de masculinidad, fuerza de masculinidad, firmeza de masculinidad, ataque de masculinidad, embestida de masculinidad; su masculinidad intimidaba*). Moreover, this strength is aggressive, destructive, overwhelming and fearful. The actions fulfilled by masculinity have a invasive character;

d) the group with a common seme “line dividing one side from other” is inherent to the concept “femininity”. This fact testifies that femininity is limited with some frontier reached in the determinate period of life, in difference with masculinity which is considered congenital characteristics (*umbral de feminidad, al borde de feminidad, la puerta de feminidad, la faceta de feminidad*);

e) the group with common seme “some mysterious, intricate, something that we need to discover” inherent for a concept “femininity” gives to the substantive “femininity” the meaning “mystery” (*secreto de feminidad, misterios de feminidad*).

Therefore, the syntagmatic relations as ontological peculiarities of language elements are considered as an integral part of component analysis, because each language element can be connected with other elements. For this reason, the research of compatibility of concept names with other lexemes allows us to reveal the complementary cognitive signs hidden in syntactical structure of language.

The paradigmatic analysis

The linguistic concept correlates with more than one lexical unit, thus the component analysis of lexical meaning “allows to model the paradigm not only of polysemous word but also the different and in the same time semantically closed words – synonyms” [Rusakova 2007:98]. The full semantic description of language concept

consists in introducing of this word “in some semantic line determining in particular the sets of synonyms” [Vorkachyov 2002: 73]. Such synonymic lines form certain groups in the system of language. These groups begin the paradigmatic relations according to their semantic organization [Bushuy, Safarov 2007: 149].

The synonymic line of the concept “femininity” in Spanish is represented by the following units [Diccionario de español <http://servicios.elpais.com/diccionarios>, Diccionario de sinónomos <http://sinonimos.org>]:

1) softness/*suavidad*. The use of this lexeme actualizes the signs of femininity connected with women’s appearance as well as with her interior world. The substantive “softness” is used in context in the meaning “the roundness of women’s body”: *Se hacía mujercita, se llenaban de suavidad sus contornos y sus hoyuelos, mientras sus miradas adquirían significados que Mauro sólo conocía a través de las fabulaciones infantiles* [J.Donosó, Casa de campo] and also “an interior characteristics peculiar to women”: *La suavidad era en ella como la fragancia en las flores, esencia misteriosa que se exhalaba de cada una de sus facciones como de cada una de sus palabras* [E.Castelar, Ricardo]. From the analysis of language material, we can make a conclusion that this lexeme is endowed with the following features: “attractive stoutness”, and “mystery”. The comparison of “softness” with the fragrance of flowers emphasizes the interior charm which entails and is programmed by nature.

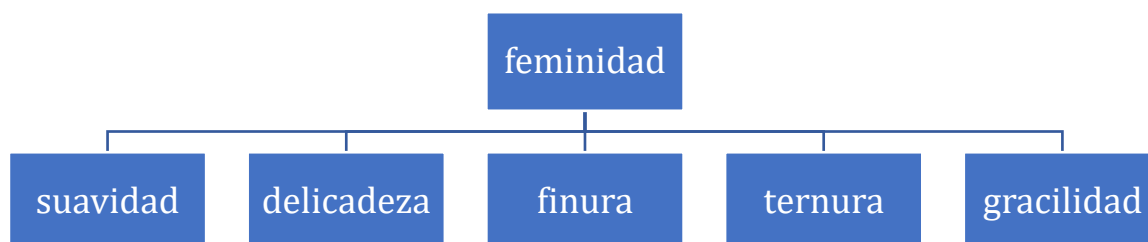
2) fineness, delicacy, exquisiteness/*delicadeza*. This lexeme is actualized in the meaning of “delicate, polite behavior” correlated with patience and consistence: *Dejó que todos dijeran todo, y en el espacio de silencio entre los interlocutores, se pasó con delicadeza de niña bien educada la servilleta de lino blanco por la boca...* [Ch.B.Burgos, Delirios y certezas] as well as “an interior feature of person”: *La belleza rubia había perdido su delicadeza virginal ... la Gabriela de antaño había muerto en la fuga del pasado irreparable* [L.O.Luco, Casa grande: escenas de la vida en Chile]. From the last example, we can deduce that this feature is peculiar only to young unmarried girls, because of it this lexeme includes the innocence and the lack of experience.

3) fineness, elegance/*finura*. This lexeme differs from the previous word because it is often used in context in the meaning “the property of women’s appearance, fragility, elegance” evaluated positively: *Era alta para sus trece años, y en la finura de su cintura se descubriría la herencia paraguaya* [M. Lebrón, Pancha]; *Pero “Reina del Nilo” era femenina, implacable y fríamente femenina; lo era desde luego en la finura con que estaba cincelada su pequeña cabeza afilada* [F.Savater, “Antonio y Cleopatra”]. Through this lexeme the author describes the peculiarities of structure of figure, the shape of the head finer than men’s figure and head.

4) tenderness, softness/*ternura*. Besides of the seme “the manifestation of emotions peculiar to women”: *La callada compasión de los hombres, la ternura efusiva de las mujeres y el halago candoroso de las criaturas, acabaron por calmar ... la desesperación del inválido* [T. Lamas de Rodríguez Alcalá, Tradiciones del hogar], in this word the signs “love, attachment” are actualized: *Sus padres murieron hacía ya muchos años y no le quedara otro amparo que el de Calí, vieja esclava criada en su casa que la amaba con ternura de madre* [T.Lamas de Rodríguez Alcalá, la misma obra]. The peculiar semantics of this word shows that such a tenderness demonstrates the exterior display of caress, therefore such signs as “passion”, “impetuosity”, “stormy feeling”.

5) fineness, fragility/*gracilidad*. This lexeme is used in context as “characteristics of women’s appearance”: *Tampoco los hombros se le abrían ya como alones de cóndor enfermo; vibraban con prestancia, y una manteleta que dejaba ella resbalar por su espalda, para recogerla con señorío sobre los antebrazos, suavizábale aún lo que ayer pareciera flacura y se lo hacía gracilidad* [<http://corpusdelespanol.org>]. Such fragility is correlated with the thinness bearing the shade of the weakness, exposure, vulnerability.

Reviewed synonymic line of femininity allows us to make a conclusion that femininity is characterized in the consciousness of Spanish speakers with the aim of signs connected with appearance, the interior world, and the emotions of the person. The synonymic net of the concept “femininity” in Spanish can be drawn in the following manner:



Scheme 1. Paradigmatic relations of the concept “femininity”

The synonymic line of the concept “masculinity” in Spanish is represented with the following lexemes [Diccionario de español <http://servicios.elpais.com/diccionarios>, Diccionario de sinónimos <http://sinonimos.org>]:

1) integrity, directness, determination, self-control/*entereza*. In other words, this is the ability to keep the self-mastery in difficult conditions of life during the long period of time, the ability to tolerate and not to show the state of physical pain publicly. *Este no deja de apreciar la entereza del hombre – pocos conservan esa arrogancia después de un tiempo de calabozo, hambre y grillos y ante la posibilidad del tormento* [Guido Rodríguez Alcalá, *Cuentos*]. *Conteniendo con viril entereza la sangre que escapa de la herida y apretando el paso* [J.Goytisoló, *La reivindicación del conde Don Julián*].

2) courage, bravery/*valor*, that is the prowess demonstrated publicly. Such courage is often exposed and is correlated with the bravado, desperation without common sense. *Entonces, por extraño fenómeno humano, aquel desesperado, hombre de valor a toda prueba, recordó que andaba sin armas y tuvo el vago temor de una sorpresa* [L.O.Luco, *Casa grande: escenas de la vida en Chile*].

3) strength, firmness, power, steadfastness/*fortaleza* or the ability to choose the own way of life, to advance forward to the aim continuously. This lexeme emphasizes that the men usually are the owner of their destiny and make decisions independently: *El hombre debe tener la fortaleza y la valentía para hacerse a sí mismo, sin esperar a que nada ni nadie programe y planifique su vida* [P. Chamizo, *Paredes, un campesino extremeño*].

4) integrity/*integridad*, the quality which includes the set of all positive features of men. The harmonious coexistence of these characteristics represents the ideal of masculinity. *En el primero, se forma el hombre, como hombre, en la integridad de sus varias fuerzas, para ser y vivir en la unidad de su actividad, destino y relaciones* [Francisco Giner de los Ríos, *Escritos sobre la Universidad española*].

5) honesty, good faith/*honradez* or the respect to the norms and principles existing in the society, the readiness to protect them. *Y esa lucha es un deber sagrado para nosotros, Sebastián, y para todo hombre que tenga un mínimo de honradez y decencia* [P.Chamizo, Paredes, un campesino extremeño]. This lexeme can be actualized as an exterior image of men and is endowed with such signs as seriousness, impressive, presentable look: *La honradez, el valor y la energía resaltaban en su fisonomía, cuya expresión sería y reflexiva se dulcificaba a intervalos por una sonrisa* [T.Arnoriz, El testamento de Don Juan].

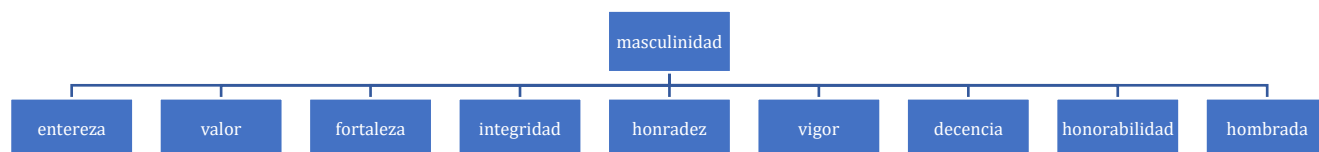
6) strength, power, firmness, energy, cheerfulness/*vigor*, in other words, the big physical power, endurance by fulfilling a difficult work. *Aquellos hombres conocieron con mejor instinto que en la dulzura y regalo de las campiñas se enervan pronto el vigor del cuerpo y la energía del espíritu* [F.Navarro Villoslada, La mujer de Navarra]. In spite of the fact that the lexeme “vigor” is used mostly in respect to men, this quality can be peculiar to women too. In this case the mentioned feature becomes a positive value: *Y la vieron alejarse, firme, a trancos iguales, con el vigor de un hombre* [E.Barrios, Gran señor y rajadiablos].

7) honesty, decency/*decencia* or the dignity in actions and in words, the performance of noble actions. *El oficial mexicano debe tomar más cultura de la Universidad, debe ir más a las escuelas, para que el día de mañana sean capaces de analizar la situación de México y con... con toda decencia, con toda caballerosidad, saber el plan que a él le corresponde* [Corpus del español de M. Davies <http://corpusdelespanol.org>]

8) honesty, decence/*honorabilidad* or having a good name and positive evaluation of man’s actions by people around. *Conspiraban inclusive desde la cárcel, donde no se amedrentaban y escribían con su propia sangre consignas que atentaban contra su honorabilidad* [N. López, Tántalo en el trópico].

9) noble, courageous act/*hombrada* which is performed with the aim to demonstrate or emphasize the presence of some positive qualities. The origin of this lexeme from the word “hombre” testifies that the implementation of such action was expected only from men. *El asunto podía ser de inmensa trascendencia, y el apocado marido no le veía “bastante claro” para decidirse a hacer, en honor de la justicia, una hombrada* [J.M.de Pereda, Oros son triunfos].

Reviewed synonymic line of masculinity allows us to make a conclusion that masculinity in the consciousness of Spanish speakers is characterized by the aim of the interior, emotional signs as well as connected with behavior. In contrast to femininity, the signs of masculinity connected with appearance were not objectified in synonymic lines. The synonymic net of the concept “masculinity” in Spanish can be drawn in the following manner:



Scheme 2. Paradigmatic relations of concept “masculinity”

Thus, the investigated language material shows that the researched concepts has a wide semantic space which is enriched and increased with the help of lexical synonyms. At the same time, the concept “masculinity” has more developed synonymic net (9 synonymic couples) than the concept “femininity” (6 synonymic couples).

Conclusions

The linguocognitive description of lexical and semantical level of objectivation of concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” on the material of contextual uses and dates taken from the etymological dictionaries and dictionaries of synonyms allows making the following generalizations:

1) Besides of biological, physiological, and interior peculiarities of women’s and men’s organisms, the etymological interpretation of the concept “masculinity” is complemented by the semes “mortality of humans”, “variability of humans in the period of whole their life”, “physical strength”, “superiority”, while the concept “femininity” in its etymology includes only the biologic predestination of woman.

2) The analysis of syntagmatic possibilities of the words representing the researched concepts showed their high compatibility with other parts of speech and allowed to reveal the universal signs for masculinity and femininity (“pleasure”, “heat”) as well as to complement the essence of concept “masculinity” with the semes “strength”, “certainty”. The concept “femininity” is enriched with semes “mystery”, “limit”.

3) In the process of study of synonymic paradigms, we revealed the verbalization of following signs of femininity in Spanish language consciousness: “mystery”, “patience”, “softness”, “innocence”, “fragility”, “emotionality”, “exposure”. The paradigmatic analysis showed that a desirable sign for the feminine look is considered the slender figure with attractive roundness creating the image of elegance, fragility associated with vulnerability. The character of woman endowed with agreeableness and obedience takes an important place in feminine image. The correlation of femininity with delicacy and tenderness testifies that the feminine behavior implies first of all the modesty and patience as well as the emotionality, caress. The masculinity possesses the following signs: integrity, courage, strength, honesty, firmness, decency, noble acts. One of the most important components of masculinity is the character of man endowed with the firmness, energy and determination. The masculine behavior implies nobility, heroism, courage.

4) The linguocognitive study of concepts “femininity” and “masculinity” allows us to make a conclusion that the forming and development of these categories is a result not only of natural factors. To a greater extent they are conditioned with cultural tradition. The Spanish linguistic picture of the world is not exception. The complexness and diversity of ideas about femininity and masculinity in Spanish consciousness predetermine the important role of these concepts in Spanish culture. In according to belonging to one of these categories the person is endowed with some characteristics, functions and roles in society. On this base the gender stereotypes surge and form during many years. Gender stereotypes serve as models of socialization and then become the base of masculine or feminine essence, aspects of femininity or masculinity.

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