



Comparative analysis of gender mechanisms in Russian and Uzbek: universal and specific features

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the universal and specific linguistic mechanisms of expressing gender in the Russian and Uzbek languages. By applying a comparative methodology, the study analyzes grammatical gender, lexical markers, semantic structures, and socio-pragmatic contexts. While Russian exhibits a strong grammatical gender system, Uzbek relies on contextual, pragmatic, and lexical means to mark gender. The study identifies both converging and diverging strategies in gender representation, revealing how linguistic and cultural systems shape gender identities and roles.

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Rus va o'zbek tillaridagi gender mexanizmlarining qiyosiy tahlili: umumiy va o'ziga xos jihatlar

ANNOTATSIYA

Kalit so'zlar:

gender lingvistikasi,
grammatik jins,
jinsiy markerlar,
o'zbek tili,
rus tili,
tipologik qiyoslash.

Ushbu maqolada rus va o'zbek tillarida gender ifodalanishining umumiy va o'ziga xos lingvistik mexanizmlari qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Unda grammatik jins, leksik ko'rsatkichlar, semantik struktura hamda ijtimoiy-pragmatik kontekstlar tahlil etiladi. Rus tilida jins grammatik jihatdan qat'iy belgilansa, o'zbek tilida u kontekst va leksik vositalar orqali ifodalanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari ikki til o'rtasida genderni ifodalashdagi umumiylik va farqlarni ko'rsatib beradi.

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Сравнительный анализ гендерных механизмов в русском и узбекском языках: универсальные и специфические черты

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

гендерная лингвистика,
грамматический род,
маркеры пола,
узбекский язык,
русский язык,
типологическое
сопоставление.

Статья посвящена сопоставительному анализу гендерных механизмов в русском и узбекском языках. Рассматриваются грамматический род, лексические и семантические маркеры, а также прагматические особенности выражения гендера. Русский язык обладает чётко выраженной системой грамматического рода, тогда как в узбекском гендер выражается через контекст и лексику. Работа выявляет как универсальные, так и специфические черты, обусловленные типологией и культурными традициями.

Gender as a linguistic and sociocultural category occupies a central position in contemporary linguistic research. This paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of gender mechanisms in the Russian and Uzbek languages, highlighting both their universal and specific features. While Russian belongs to the Indo-European family and has a rich grammatical gender system, Uzbek, as a Turkic language, lacks formal grammatical gender, making the comparison of these systems especially revealing in terms of how different languages encode gender in grammar, vocabulary, and discourse. In recent years, the study of gender in language has gained significant traction, as researchers strive to understand not just grammatical distinctions, but also the broader sociocultural influences that shape language use and identity.

The Russian language, for example, classifies nouns, adjectives, and pronouns according to masculine, feminine, and neuter genders, with concord observed throughout the sentence structure. This has a profound impact on how individuals and groups are represented linguistically, reflecting deeper societal norms and values. In contrast, Uzbek does not impose grammatical gender, and instead relies on context, lexical items, or pragmatic cues to signal or reference gender when necessary. Such differences lead to interesting questions regarding the effects of linguistic structure on the perception and communication of gender roles in everyday interactions.

Through a systematic comparative approach, this paper seeks to illustrate not only the structural divergences between Russian and Uzbek but also to explore how these linguistic choices reflect and reinforce cultural attitudes toward gender identity and relationships in each society. By examining specific examples from both languages, insights will be drawn as to how the presence or absence of grammatical gender shapes discourse patterns, narrative styles, and even the formation of social expectations around gender.

This research employs a comparative-typological approach using both descriptive and analytical methods. The methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive analysis by integrating qualitative and quantitative perspectives. Sources include linguistic corpora, which provide a broad and diverse range of language data; grammar manuals, offering standardized descriptions and theoretical frameworks; spoken language samples collected from a variety of speakers to ensure dialectal and contextual diversity; and

sociolinguistic surveys that provide insight into language usage patterns within different social groups and communities. Analytical categories include the examination of phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic features, as well as pragmatic functions and sociolinguistic variables, to facilitate a holistic understanding of language structures and their use in real communicative contexts.

1. Grammatical gender presence in language systems, including how certain nouns, pronouns, and adjectives are inflected or categorized based on gender distinctions within grammatical structures;

2. Lexical gender markers that appear in vocabulary items, such as specific prefixes, suffixes, or word forms that signal masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, and how these forms may differ across languages;

3. Semantic gender implications, referring to how gender influences the meaning, interpretation, and roles assigned to words and expressions, including anthropomorphization and default gender assignments;

4. Pragmatic and cultural discourse features that involve the use of gendered language in social contexts, examining how gender impacts communication styles, politeness strategies, address terms, and cultural attitudes toward gender expression in both spoken and written discourse

Examples are drawn from literature, mass media, and everyday communication, encompassing a wide range of genres, contexts, and platforms to ensure comprehensive representation. Through careful selection, these examples illustrate both common usages and unique instances that shed light on the subject. The study uses both qualitative and quantitative analysis to explore patterns and exceptions, employing methods such as in-depth content analysis, coding, statistical evaluation, and comparative assessment. This multifaceted approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the underlying trends as well as the outliers, providing a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation.

Grammatical Gender. Russian: masculine, feminine, and neuter genders are morphologically expressed in nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs in the past tense (e.g., учитель – учительница, он – она). In Russian, the grammatical gender of a noun determines the form not only of adjectives and pronouns, but also of numerals and verbs (in the past tense and in participles), making it a pervasive feature of the language. For example, the word "учитель" (teacher) is masculine, while its feminine counterpart is "учительница." Similarly, the third-person pronouns reflect gender: "он" (he) is masculine, "она" (she) is feminine, and "оно" (it) is neuter. Adjectives and past-tense verb forms must agree in gender with the nouns they modify. For example, "он был доволен" (he was satisfied) uses the masculine form, while "она была довольна" (she was satisfied) uses the feminine. This system of grammatical gender assignment and agreement is fundamental in Russian and affects most parts of speech in a sentence.

Uzbek: no grammatical gender exists. Words such as "u" (he/she) are gender-neutral, meaning that they do not convey any information about the person's gender. Instead, gender is deduced from context or additional lexical cues, such as words like "o'g'il bola" (boy) and "qiz bola" (girl), which specifically indicate the gender of the subject. This lack of grammatical gender applies to all pronouns and nouns in the Uzbek language, emphasizing that, unlike some other languages that mark masculine or feminine through grammatical forms, Uzbek relies solely on context or explicit lexical indicators to express gender when necessary.

Lexical and Derivational Mechanisms. Russian has overt morphological markers that are used extensively to indicate various grammatical categories. These markers serve not only to denote tense, number, gender, and case in nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, but also to express aspect and mood in verbs. Through intricate derivational processes, Russian forms a rich array of words and meanings from root morphemes, employing prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and endings. This explicit signaling through morphology is a defining feature of the Russian language, distinguishing it from languages with more analytic structures.

In Uzbek, compound and descriptive forms express gender: *erkak shifokor*, *ayol sportchi*. These structures are commonly used in everyday speech and official contexts to indicate the gender of the person being referred to, especially in professions and social roles. Additionally, there are some rare suffixal forms (“-a” in “*aktrisa*”), borrowed from Russian. These suffixal forms, while not as frequently used, are most commonly found in particular professional or artistic contexts, such as “*aktrisa*” (actress) or “*sekretarka*” (female secretary), reflecting linguistic influence from Russian during the Soviet era. Overall, Uzbek expresses gender through both traditional native constructions and certain borrowed suffixes.

Semantic Genderization. Semantic fields differ in gender stereotyping: Some semantic fields are strongly associated with specific gender stereotypes, reflecting cultural expectations and societal roles attributed to men and women. For example, fields related to caregiving, emotions, and domestic tasks are often linked more closely to women, while fields related to leadership, technical skills, and physical strength tend to be associated with men. These associations can vary across cultures and periods, demonstrating that the genderization of semantic fields is not fixed, but rather dynamic and influenced by changing social norms and values. Understanding these differences is important for analyzing how language both reflects and perpetuates gender stereotypes.

In Russian, professions like *врач*, *инженер* are now seen as gender-neutral, though societal biases remain. These words, which have traditionally been used in the masculine form, are increasingly accepted when referring to any gender, especially in official documents and everyday conversation. However, some members of society may still associate these professions with men, and stereotypes about gender roles can persist, affecting how people perceive those in such occupations. Over time, the Russian language continues to adapt, and more people become accustomed to using these titles in a gender-neutral way, reflecting broader changes in attitudes toward gender equality.

In Uzbek, traditional roles persist in vocabulary, with clear gender associations for terms like *oilaboshlig'i* (head of the family) and *uy bekasi* (housewife). These terms not only reflect the enduring presence of gendered expectations within Uzbek society but also highlight how language itself reinforces these roles. For example, *oilaboshlig'i* is most commonly used to refer to men, emphasizing masculinity and authority, while *uy bekasi* is associated specifically with women, underlining femininity and domestic responsibilities. Such linguistic patterns contribute to the preservation of conventional gender roles by continuously linking certain words and social positions with either a male or female identity.

Sociopragmatic Features. Uzbek relies heavily on contextual clues, social hierarchy, and politeness strategies, often avoiding direct gendered pronouns in formal settings.

This reliance means that speakers frequently interpret meaning based on the relationships between speakers, the setting, and subtle cues rather than explicit statements, which demonstrates a deep respect for social norms. In addition, Uzbek communication patterns are shaped by age, status, and familiarity between individuals, often guiding the choice of vocabulary and forms of address. The absence of direct gendered pronouns also reflects an emphasis on inclusivity and a tendency to avoid unnecessary specification, making the language more adaptable and reflective of varying social values and expectations.

Russian displays more explicit gender distinctions, often influencing stylistic and rhetorical choices. In the Russian language, grammatical gender is embedded in almost every aspect of communication, affecting not only nouns and pronouns but also adjectives, verbs, and sentence structure. This deep-rooted gender differentiation guides writers and speakers, shaping the way ideas are expressed and understood. As a result, the choice of gender can impact the emotional tone, level of formality, and even the persuasiveness of speech or writing in Russian, making gender distinctions a significant stylistic tool in the language.

The comparative analysis shows that while Russian grammatically encodes gender at multiple levels, Uzbek reflects gender more subtly through context and pragmatics.

In the Russian language, gender distinctions are explicitly marked in nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and even verbs, making it a highly visible aspect of its grammar. This extensive use of gender marking means that speakers must consistently be aware of gender distinctions in virtually every sentence they construct or interpret. Uzbek, on the other hand, operates without grammatical gender; instead, distinctions of gender are inferred from broader contextual clues, professions, or the meaning provided by surrounding words. This means that when speaking or writing in Uzbek, speakers enjoy a certain degree of flexibility, as their sentences are not bound by the constraints of grammatical gender. However, this same flexibility can also result in ambiguity, especially in cases where the gender of the referent is not immediately clear from the context.

Conversely, the Russian structured system offers clarity at the expense of inclusivity in some contexts. While the Russian grammatical gender system can help to avoid ambiguity by signaling the gender of the subject or object more directly, it may also limit expressions of gender inclusivity or neutrality, particularly as societal perspectives on gender become more diverse. As such, the approach each language takes towards gender conveys both linguistic and cultural implications, shaping not only grammar but also social interaction and interpretation.

Universal Features. Both languages utilize metaphoric and symbolic gender representation (e.g., nature, homeland as feminine). These personifications extend beyond simple grammatical assignment, influencing literary traditions, proverbs, and everyday idiomatic expressions. Gender roles are deeply embedded in both culture and language use, shaping communication styles, expectations, and societal values. This intertwining of linguistic practice and cultural worldview means gender often becomes

a key framework through which identity, relationships, and even abstract concepts are understood and discussed in both linguistic communities.

Specific Features.

| Feature | Russian | Uzbek |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Grammatical gender | Obligatory (morphological) | Absent |
| Gendered pronouns | он, она | u (gender-neutral) |
| Professional terminology | Feminine forms exist, but are declining | Uses gender-neutral or descriptive |
| Cultural discourse on gender | Actively debated, feminist discourse | Influenced by tradition and religion |

The study confirms that gender as a linguistic category manifests differently across languages, shaped by typological, cultural, and pragmatic forces. Russian offers a more rigid yet historically developed system for marking gender, deeply embedded within its grammatical framework, affecting nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and even verbs. This system reflects both the linguistic evolution of the language and the cultural conceptualization of gender roles over time.

Conversely, Uzbek pragmatic strategy for addressing gender in language is influenced by its agglutinative structure, which relies on affixation and context to convey meaning rather than fixed gender markers. This reflects the cultural ethos of Uzbek society, emphasizing practicality and flexibility in communication rather than strict adherence to gender distinctions. Recognizing and understanding these differences not only enhances cross-cultural communication by fostering greater linguistic empathy and awareness but also supports the implementation of gender-sensitive language policies that are responsive to the unique dynamics present in each linguistic context. By appreciating these contrasting approaches, language users and policymakers can better navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise when addressing gender in multilingual and multicultural environments.

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