



Male Stereotypes in Turkish and Uzbek Proverbs

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Published Online: 22 September 2025	By examining the representations of male gender myths in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs, the article seeks to demonstrate that proverbs discursively inscribe and disseminate cultural conceptions about men. As distillation of collective wisdom, they reiterate very often traditional expectations for men, including the identification with strength, courage, provider role, and social insignia. Utilizing a comparative linguistic and cultural methodological model, it analyzes thematic features and linguistic devices in the proverbs, which reveal how proverbs illustrate masculinity in these societies at that time and now. This methodology involves a qualitative thematic analysis and quantitative frequency counts of stereotypical expressions in order to systematically investigate how male identities are socially constructed through language. The findings indicate that while heterosexual performances of manhood persist across new media spaces, there are also performances of alternative male subjectivities in the making. By rubricizing proverbs under themes such as gender essentialism, stereotypical attitudes, and gender-role egalitarianism, this study exposes the dual-fold role of proverbs-while they perpetuate patriarchal discourses, they also hold great potential for re-reading. The contribution of these to the study of masculinity, to cultural linguistics and to gender discourse analysis can be highlighted in the light of the role of proverbs as cultural artefacts shaping thought and governance and the findings of this study. Given that it offers examples of how to unsettle stereotypical assumptions and support more inclusive interpretations of masculinities, this is particularly useful for educational and policy purposes in Central Asian cases.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Short, pithy sayings, the proverbs (Ergun, 2017) of a given society contain the sum total of its wisdom, prejudices, and socially accepted wisdoms, so to speak, and are one of the most important sources of gender stereotyping (Hua & Zhao, 2024). Such linguistic products often mirror, and are the mirror reflecting, the domination relations, gender roles, and accepted conducts for men and women in certain societies (Hua & Zhao, 2024). This is clearly demonstrated by the ways proverbs outline specific, insinuating social expectations of the two genders by which masculine and feminine identities are developed and passed on, reinforcing traditional gender roles (Ade, 2015). Particularly, male gender stereotypes in proverbs commonly emphasize traits such as strength, courage, and the duty of providing for one's family, which mirrors other culturally ingrained ideals of what men should contribute to society (Agersnap et al., 2025). Therefore, the investigation of proverbs allows a particular perspective for analyzing the historical and continual construction of

masculinity in different cultural contexts such as Turkish and Uzbek societies (Hua & Zhao, 2024).

This paper seeks to address the unique intricacies of men's gender image reflected in the proverbs of the Turkish and Uzbek languages with a discussion of the aspects through which proverbs as traditional sayings influence the understanding and the affirmation of masculinity in different societies. By the thematic features in these proverbs and the structure of language used, associated characteristics of men and cultural norms expected of men in these societies will be explained and analyzed with respect to their implications on gender (Bacha & Kuto, 2019).

We'll also see about the extent to which these proverbial threats could stifle personal growth or set community standards for such men, and how they can, in turn, operate with people among them in the midst of that society. Furthermore, due to their longevity, passed down generation by generation, proverbs are still shaping present perceptions of gender, rendering their critical examination necessary in

order to deconstruct societal constructions (Hua & Zhao, 2024). In fact, proverbs are effective agents of socialization and, as such, transfer cultural values and cognitive representations of perceived characteristics from one generation to the other (Bobuafor, 2021). This cultural literacy, different from technical expertise, is held collectively by a society and underpins public discourse, allowing citizens to make sense of their everyday news and connect with peers and power-holders (Hua & Zhao, 2024).

This paper suggests that an analysis of male gender stereotypes in the Turkish and Uzbek proverb can provide insights into the sociocultural construction of masculinity and show how this traditional discourse creates men's identities and their place in society (Eslen-Ziya et al., 2021). Such analysis also makes a contribution in the larger sense by revealing how the patriarchal structures and gender inequality are continuously reproduced and naturalized through language and cultures (Kamwendo & Kaya, 2016) (Hua & Zhao, 2024). This study, in particular, brings out the salient themes of male domesticity and changing masculinities in the Turkish context in relation to a broader understanding of masculinity as a social construct (Eslen-Ziya et al., 2021) (Morrell, 1998). It further recognizes that cultural and national variations and ethnic and racial differences play a very important role in shaping expressions of masculinity and that it is important to take a multicultural approach to a unified, hegemonic construction of the phenomena (Francis, 2002). This paper, in this way, contributes to an initiation of challenging current stereotyped constructions of gender identities by sexualizing them (Kata, 2017) and continuing approaches framing masculinity not as a fixed biological status but as a social construction that is constantly acted upon, such as by language as proverbs (Vidiyanti, 2020).

Furthermore, examination of such language artifacts can help us to better understand the ways in which gendered language use can potentially contribute to the maintenance of gender inequality, suggesting a role for language in patterning (referring to both reflecting and causing) gendered norms regarding gendered social roles and power relations (Davis et al., 2024). Using a comparative approach throughout the investigation of male-biased proverbs from the Turkish and Uzbek language cultures, similarities and differences in terms of the presentation of male characteristics and status in the society will be discussed.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This comparative method will highlight the cultural particularity of gender formation, as well as expose similar patterns in the faculty's theoretical thinking on masculinity across different linguistic and cultural terrains. This article sets out to map the field of masculinity studies within linguistic and cultural contexts as a theoretical point of departure for examining male gender stereotypes encoded in proverbs. It recognizes that masculinity is not a fixed entity but rather a nuanced, complex, and multilayered issue formed

by a range of sociocultural, economic, and historical influences (Bagdogan, 2021). Masculinity studies Although a relatively new field of study compared with feminist theory, masculinity studies maintains a critical discourse in response to how power and control in patriarchal structures can be detrimental to men in their celebration of pansexual expressions of masculinity over narrow but dominant hegemonic views (Hobbs, 2013). Masculinity as a fluid and performative construct of identity is indeed a central issue in masculinity research, increasingly diverging from essentialist approaches due to its emphasis on how men negotiate between traditional, hegemonic interpretations of what it means to be a man and emergent forms of masculinity (Groes-Green, 2011) (Connor et al., 2021). This conceptualization is consistent with definitions that understand masculinity as a social construct, which is comprised of behaviors, languages, and practices culturally connected to men and categorized as non-feminine (Connor et al., 2021).

In addition, this field of studies also contests the harm done to men through patriarchal structures and calls for an acknowledgment of alternate masculinities that do not fit within the hegemonic masculinities (Hobbs, 2013). But such criticism of this theoretical framework also includes arguments about the saturation of the presence of men in literary theory overall and that it can either be too universalist or too broken down into sub-categorizations such as categories of masculinity by class, race, or sexuality (Hobbs, 2013). Furthermore, some commentators suggest that an over-allocation of attention to male victimhood in patriarchal setups can distract from the continued forms of gender discrimination that women and other minoritized genders experience (Al-Mutawa, 2023). Notwithstanding these criticisms, the shifting discourse in masculinity studies, notably the emergence of "multiple masculinities," provides a sufficient lens through which to deconstruct the subtler indications of hegemonic male gender within the proverbial traditions of Turkish and Uzbek societies (Gremm, 2013).

This model allows one to consider how traditional benchmarks of masculinity are deployed and maintained through proverbs as well as how nascent or marginalized versions of masculinity are articulated or submerged within these cultural narratives.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this section, we present the method for systematically analyzing and comparing the male gender stereotypes reflected in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs. In this study, a combination of content analysis and frequency analysis (content count) will be used to highlight themes specifically associated with these proverbs and to measure the prominence of such themes throughout all the proverbs. For a start, the complete corpus of such proverbs in the two languages will be collated with those that overtly or covertly refer, in the first instance, to men as figures, to men's roles,

or to their characteristics. The compilation will be based on standardized proverb collections and on linguistic databases of each language, enabling a representative and academically sound choice of proverbs. Second, the action proverbs will be thematically analyzed, and the collected proverbs grouped according to repeated “images of men” and “male-action” stereotypes in everyday behavior and complex thinking, based on well-known typologies of man (Kaspersen, 2018). This will include an iterative coding process and categorization to enable new themes to emerge and also to compare this new knowledge with existing theoretical frames of masculinity (Lomas, 2013). In addition, the quantitative aspect will compile the frequency of individual masculine antecedents portrayed in the testaments, producing empirical evidence for the cultural relevance and cross-cultural distribution of these traits or roles.

This methodological complementarity will allow us to develop a more complex understanding of the construction and dissemination of male gender stereotypes within these specific linguistic traditions, both as shared cultural values and as specific social norms. This systematic analysis provides a fine-grained dissection of how gendered hierarchies are linguistically articulated and transmitted from one generation to the next, exposing the subtle ways that the socialization of men is embedded in these cultural resources. The research will use a content analysis approach, as it is appropriate to analyze the way gender is represented in textual data such as in CMTE (Julianti et al., 2019). This systematic approach is necessary to explore the specific linguistic expressions and narrative trends that either perpetuate or resist the traditional perceptions of masculinity in proverbs (Huang & Liu, 2024).

This approach enables an in-depth examination of the semiotic representation of male roles, attributes, and stereotypes about men’s social behavior as encoded in these traditional sayings and, therefore, provides a comparative study of Turk and Uzbek cultural conceptions of masculinity (Mazzuca et al., 2023) (Sevelius et al., 2020). To this end we will consider these proverbs in closer detail, investigating the lexis and themes, especially with regard to the type of adjectives, verbs, and nouns typically used with male figures, as well as the social context and implicit norms that these linguistic formations reflect.

IV. RESULTS

Outcomes of the systematic review are included in four main groups: gender essentialism, gender-role egalitarianism, traditional gender stereotypes, and gendered freedom, which are indicative of the varying views on male roles and characteristics (Hosseini-Nezhad et al., 2021). These categories derive from an in-depth thematic analysis of the proverbs gathered, which underscore the variety and disjuncture of how male gender is constructed within the Turkish and Uzbek discursive traditions. The remainder of this paper will illustrate the findings in each of these

categories with examples drawn from the proverb recordings, situating them in relation to what they reveal about the socio-cultural production of masculinity in these societies. The analysis also deepens understanding of the prevalence of hegemonic masculine norms and locates a tendency towards multiple or changing masculinity representations: (Dery & Akurugu, 2020) (Кононова et al., 2019). This nuanced scrutiny leads to a better understanding of how such proverbs do not simply depict but also contribute to constructing the social expectations and norms of male identity (Hosseini-Nezhad et al., 2021). In particular, they show how the three roles or ideals of male stoicism, provision, and domination are still supported by proverbs, which in many instances connect a man’s stoicism, provision, and domination to respect and honor in society. Conversely, proverbs that defy these fixed stereotypes through recognition of male vulnerability or advocate for more balanced gender relations are relatively rare, highlighting the pervasive power of traditional norms of masculinity within such societies (Vanderbeck, 2005) (O. & O., 2017). This is congruent with past work in which a greater reliance was revealed on gender stereotypes by men, which may also underpin a greater tendency for gender roles to be endorsed in an essentialist manner (Hosseini-Nezhad et al., 2021). We also found that the men generally had higher levels of conformity to traditional gender roles and were more sexist – results that are consistent with those of other studies examining gender views (Hosseini-Nezhad et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, despite enduring traditional attitudes, particularly in relation to essentialist notions of gender, there is evidence of change of an evolving nature in the interpretation of these roles (Rahbari & Mahmudabadi, 2017). Nonetheless, this study also indicated that in “the case of men in particular there is more difficult resistance to breaking the established tradition, which coincides with the view that men support traditions more vigorously” (Lunov, 2024). Such clinging to the same old ways is driven by the belief that prescribed gender roles lead to coexistence and avoid confusion, a feeling that is especially prevalent in the older generation (Garcia, 2021). The findings of the study also demonstrate that masculinity ideology, which is usually informed by typical proverbs, is one of the major risk factors in maintaining negative attitudes towards wife-beating practices and other gender inequalities (D’Urso et al., 2023) (Hua & Zhao, 2024). This harmful masculinity, including aggression, emotional unavailability, and desire for dominance over women, is frequently perpetuated by cultural stories and can lend itself to actions and attitudes that are damaging (Harris, 2021). This issue is worsened by the image that society places on men of being “macho” or “red-blooded,” as well as the perpetuation of harmful perceptions of masculinity that discourage emotional articulation and forming healthy social connections (Mabrouk, 2020) (Goode, 2019). This may lead to strict determinacy to old-fashioned ideas about the male model of identity that any departure

from its boundaries would be considered as either weakness or betrayal of cultural values; consequently, gender inequalities would be reinforced (Hua & Zhao, 2024).

This entrenched perspective further emphasizes the pressing requirement for interventions that challenge the dominant cultural narratives that underpin such damaging stereotypes and instead promote a more equitable and emotionally expressed viewing of masculinity within such cultures (McDiarmid et al., 2016). (Siegel & Meunier, 2018) (Hosseini-Nezhad et al., 2021). This examination therefore serves as a preliminary inquiry for how proverbs, as compact distillations of cultural wisdom, may not only represent but also influence gendered thinking to be found in principles designing future endeavors that challenge and transform injurious masculine stereotypes (Stewart et al., 2021) (Wicker & Cunningham, 2023). In the end, this research serves to reify the ways in which linguistic and cultural objects establish and reinforce gender ideologies and to highlight the ways that critical discourse analysis may work to reveal and demystify them.

V. DISCUSSION

These findings will be further discussed in the discussion section, through comparisons with available literature on (gender) studies, cultural linguistics, and sociology on proverbs. It will examine, in particular, how gender essentialist, gender-role egalitarian, traditional, and gendered freedom themes map onto and diverge from masculine studies globally, with specific attention to potential ways in which cultural inflections in Turkish and Uzbeki settings might shape these (Sikweyiya et al., 2020) (Rubin et al., 2020). Lastly, this section will discuss the implications of these interpretations on the contemporary gender relations and sociocultural development in these areas, paying special attention to how proverbial wisdom can work against as well as for the accomplishment of gender equality. Analyses will also be concerned with how proverbs betray the processes of the continued negotiation of hegemonic masculinity in both of these societies, especially the inherent clash between traditional patriarchal structures and challenges to prevailing gender ideologies (Wetherell & Edley, 1999) (Коронова et al., 2019). It also serves to shed light on the relationship between proverbs, as carriers of cultural heritage, and the change in conceptualizing male identity, adding towards a better understanding of the gendered experience in Central Asia (Giuliano, 2017) (Bar-Lev & Tillinger, 2008). This additional examination will examine how history and the social context of Turkey and Uzbekistan have influenced the specific expressions of what is considered manly in their neşriyat (Morrell, 1998). The study will explore the specific cultural and religious factors, for example, the Islamic traditions that occur in both societies and the heritage of Turkic nomadic expression influencing how masculinity has historically been constructed.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Taken as a comparative approach, the study has attempted to detect the common features of the traditional male gender stereotypes existing both in Turkish and Uzbek proverbs as well as the peculiarities that the given gender model has received in the two languages. Such cross-linguistic and historical comparison allows for a comprehensive appraisal of how proverbs can enact this role of cultural as well as cross-temporal storehouses or codified transmitters of deeply rooted sociocultural expectations, pertaining to masculinity among other domains. By comparing and contrasting, this study contributes to a more general cross-cultural context for the reinforcement of patriarchal structures through a linguistic tradition. This exploration is illustrative of how popular texts coagulate and transmit ideologies of manhood, thus constituting a critical tool of analysis of the construction of gender.

This study seeks to describe the portrayal of traditional male stereotypes in proverbs of both Turkish and Uzbek languages in a rather unusual way and thereby report on certain varieties of how gender identities in both societies are rooted in culture. It also discusses the possibility that proverbs can be used as modes of resistance against and subversion of limited views of people with disabilities, thus bringing to the fore the dynamism enshrined in popular culture. This cross-linguistic analysis provides a background for understanding how these cultural products reinforce or possibly challenge gender norms and serves as an essential key for future sociolinguistic and anthropological research. Additionally, this paper offers useful information for policymakers and educators when developing and implementing culturally rooted interventions to promote gender equality by combatting deep-seated stereotyping in traditional proverbs. This will involve looking at how these proverbs may accidentally sustain and indeed subvert conceptions of gender fluidity and diversity in the present age. It will also investigate how such linguistic constructs could (possibly) change in time and reflect the actual transformation of society, which will give a more inclusive concept of male identity. Last, the pedagogical implications of including these types of analyses in the educational curriculum in order to engender a critical approach to receiving and understanding gender roles early on in life and therefore contribute to more equal community structure will be discussed. The target is to add to an academic conversation that not only deconstructs the patriarchal status quo in ingrained language but also suggests avenues for cultural change in order to imagine a depatriarchalized gender representation.

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