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# Gender Stereotypes in Semantics of Spanish Proverbs

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**Abstract**---This article is dedicated to the investigation of gender stereotypes expressed in the Spanish language picture of the world on the material of Spanish proverbs about women and men. In the course of the investigation, we classified gender stereotypes to 6 types: age-related, descriptive, psychological, social, functional and sexual and gave examples for each type.

**Keywords**---concept, femininity, gender, language picture, masculinity, paremiologia, proverbs, stereotype.

## Introduction

The concept as universal mental construct can be reflected in all spheres of language and discourse. We choose proverbs for the description of basic cultural concepts “masculinity” and “femininity” because it is possible to reveal the investigated concepts profoundly with the aid of proverbs. The proverbs as custodians of cultural information accumulated in the course of thousand years reflect the world outlook of certain nations. In other words, each nation has its linguistic picture of the world, and correspondingly the vision of the world by native speakers occurs considering the language peculiarities showed in proverbs (Kark et al., 2012; Meier-Pesti & Penz, 2008).

## Method

Furthermore, the lingvocognitive peculiarities of stereotypes become apparent ideally on the base of proverbs, because the most of proverbs are prescriptions or stereotypes of national consciousness giving the vast expanse for choice with the

purpose of self-identification (Teliya, 1996). The text of proverbs is characterized by steadiness and gives an opportunity to establish the national-cultural originality of investigated concepts as well as analyze them in ontological and functional aspects. Besides of it, the paremiology is significant from the point of view of cultural stereotypes fixed in language since the new comprehension of proverb on the plane of its cognitive and culturological characteristics is the methodologic base for research of gender stereotypes (Kirilina, 1999).

Both concepts of “femininity” and “masculinity” are reflected in the proverb text of Spanish. However, it is significant that the proverbs including the component “man” in term of numbers are less than the proverbs including the component “woman”. Moreover, we had some difficulties with the differentiation of meanings “man” and “person” in the word “hombre”. This word is used in the most of proverbs as “person”, and respectively they can be adjusted with respect to woman and man. The fewness of proverbs with the component “man” confirms the androcentric orientation of proverbs, because the most of proverbs reflect the masculine view of things (Saifnazarov et al., 2021; Nyandra & Suryasa, 2018).

## Discussion

The analysis of Spanish paremiologic corpus (about 2000 proverbs) allowed us to make classification of gender stereotypes into age-related, descriptive, personal (psychological), social, functional and sexual stereotypes. Their language actualization shows the peculiarities of world outlook of Spanish speakers and interpretation of entourage from the position of representative of male and female sex. The conceptions of masculinity and femininity in Spanish society and the criteria of correspondence to them are forming from the position of above-mentioned types of gender stereotypes (Spence, 1984; Lippa, 2001; Kumar, 2021; Dorn, 1986).

In the quantitative relation the distribution of proverbs including gender stereotypes explicitly or implicitly has a following appearance:

Table 1

The quantitative relation of the actualization of gender stereotypes in Spanish

	Gender stereotypes	Masculinity	Femininity
1	Age-related	124	53
2	Descriptive	81	192
3	Psychological	124	195
4	Social	168	264
5	Functional	74	116
6	Sexual	42	60
	Total:	613	880

The age-related gender stereotypes of masculinity were registered in 124 proverbs, and of femininity – in 53 proverbs (8,3 and 3,5 percent of the total number). The proverbs including age-related gender stereotypes describe the different time intervals of human life, mainly the youth and the old age (Suacana, 2016; Nasution, 2016). The proverbs with the age characteristics of men in semantics

consist of prescriptions about the qualities they shall have depending on their age or include the qualities of men for concrete age: *El que a los 20 no es valiente, a los 30 no es casado y a los 40 no es rico, es gallo que clavó el pico*. According to the widespread gender stereotype, the wisdom, the proficiency and the financial well-being come to men with the age: *Libros y años hacen al hombre sabio*.

The women depending on their age are also endowed with certain norms of behavior. In particular, the emotionality is more inherent to the young women, and the humility, the hope upon God characterize the old women: *Mujer moza o canta, o llora, mujer vieja o riñe o reza*. Moreover, we can see the gender stereotype about the change of values and attitude in women's mind with age: *La alegría de la mujer joven es la tristeza de la mujer vieja*. The teenagers and young people are characterized in proverbs with the unskillfulness, lack of experience, incapacity to difficult work: *Chico catorceño come como grande y trabaja como pequeño*. The stereotypical quality of young people is their dreaminess, insubstantial perception of the world: *Cuando joven, de ilusiones, cuando viejo, de recuerdos*; as well as their impatience: *La paciencia no está entre los jóvenes*.

In the mature age the masculinity is characterized with such stereotypical signs as interior energy overflowing the men: *El hombre a los 30 o viva o revienta*. This phase of men's life is the period of active actions necessary for the self-affirmation and the guarantee of life of dignity. The femininity on the phase of ripeness is characterized from the point of view of biological predestination of woman: *La que de 30 no tiene novio, tiene el humor como el demonio*. The age-related gender stereotypes of femininity reflect first of all the influence of this parameter on the women's appearance and is evaluated negatively: *No hay joven fea ni vieja hermosa*. The women lose their beauty after a number of years and provoke the compassion in Spanish language picture of the world: *Rubias o morenas cuando pierden el tinte, dan pena*.

The old women and men in Spanish family are respected as the source of wise admonitions, love and common sense (Ember & Ember, 2003): *Casa en que no hay viejo, no vale un arvejo*. In Spanish language picture of the world we can often see the proverbs reflected the exterior, physical and psychic changes of men and women in old age. The inclination of old person (especially men) to different sicknesses for example insomnia, the constant sensation of hunger, the lack of teeth not allowing to eat the wishful food is emphasized in proverbs (Courtenay, 2000; Rietveld & Hormelen, 2019).

The descriptive gender stereotypes of masculinity were registered in 81 proverbs and of femininity – in 192 proverbs (5,4 and 12,9 percent of total number). As we may judge from the physical characteristics, the ideal of female attractivity in the conception of Spanish speakers is developed from the following features of appearance: the woman must be swarthy (*La mujer y la tierra, morena*), dark-haired, in flesh (*No hay hermosura sin gordura, Más vale estar gorda y hermosa que flaca y asquerosa*), medium-sized (*Mujer y sardina, ni la mayor, ni la pequeña*) and with resilient forms (*La moza y la ciruela han de ser tiesas*). From the point of view of Spanish speaker, pretty woman shall provoke an interest by men with beautiful face and seductive forms as well as can give pleasure (Med, 2008). Women with other appearance are endowed with different negative

qualities. For example, the blond women are characterized in Spanish proverbs negatively. Their appearance is confessed as dim and colorless: *La morena es cariñosa y la blanca es desdeñosa. Dámela morena y graciosa y no blanca y sosa*. The red-haired women receive the most negative attitude in Spanish language picture of the world: *Mujer de pelo bermejo, mala carne y peor pellejo*.

The beauty is the main aspect according to which she is evaluated in society: *El hombre que espante y la mujer que encante*. Nevertheless, sometimes an ugly woman having positive qualities or good luck in life is evaluated better than beautiful woman: *Fea con gracia mejor que necia y guapa*. The homely woman's appearance represents the negative characteristic (*Melindres de mujer fea, ningún cristiano los crea*) because usually such a woman is evaluated by men negatively and is perceived by them as a wife. However, the appearance of very beautiful woman in language material is connotated negatively and is endowed with many negative features such as haughtiness, vanity, grubbiness. In according to widespread gender stereotype, the beautiful woman is living a dissolute life: *La mujer peripuesta arrima los hombres a su puerta*.

The exterior characteristics of men are represented with the smaller number of proverbs, because the appearance for the masculinity is not determinant factor. Among the stereotypical sample features of men's appearance on the material of Spanish proverbs we can mention the robust figure and the presence of the big physical strength: *El hombre fuerte se ríe de la muerte*. The small height and the excess weight as well as the leanness are considered as deficiencies in men's appearance. According to the Spanish proverbs, the man shall necessarily have a beard as sign of honor, solidity, respect in society and masculinity: *Quien barbilampiño es, tiene cara de mujer*. The man's clothes are not so significant factor, but the first impression about man in society forms by judging his clothes and well-groomed appearance.

The personal (psychological) gender stereotypes of masculinity were registered in 124 proverbs and of femininity – in 195 proverbs (8,3 and 13 percent of total number). This type of gender stereotypes is the most widespread because each person in spite of his sex has an aggregate of qualities forming the psychological mentality of personality (Dzahene-Quarshie & Omari, 2021; Lomotey & Chachu, 2020). The individual psychological characteristics are unique for each person, but the analysis of Spanish proverbs showed that the certain stereotypical qualities are peculiar for the men and the women. Spanish paremiologic fund showed the following main stereotypical personal qualities of femininity:

- falsity and pretense. According to the proverbs, the tears form an integral part of woman's type (*Lloro de hembra no te mueva, que lloro y risa pronto la engendra*) and are revealed as a sign of falsity and the method for goal attainment, as an instrument in critical situations and relationship;
- foolishness, narrow-mindedness, slow-wittedness, the lack of logic are prototypical features for women in Spanish language picture of the world: *Largo el pelo, corto el seso*. The erudition of woman in proverbs is untypical and undesirable, therefore is considered as a negative quality;

- inconstancy connected with the often changes of women's opinion. That is why the women's behavior is characterized with frivolity and light-mindedness: *Febrero y las mujeres tienen en un día diez pareceres*;
- garrulity, love to gossips, unreliability because the women can not keep a secret: *Secreto que quieres guardar ni a tu mujer lo has de confiar*. The excessive talkativeness of women is transmitted through the steady comparison with market and objectivize the women's loud voice making a noise.
- gluttony: *A la galga y a la mujer no le des carne a ver*. Spanish language picture of the world has a stereotype that the woman tries to leave her husband hungry and eat the best piece herself: *Mi mujer la de los buenos hechos, comióse la carne y dejome los huesos*; *Mujer que no come en la mesa con el marido, es porque lo mejor de la olla se ha comido*.

Moreover, the women are endowed with the quarrelsome and unpredictable character, anger, wastefulness, cunning, resourcefulness, craft, perfidy, inclination to adultery, greediness.

During the analyze of paremiological corpus of Spanish we revealed the main personal stereotypes of masculinity:

- reliability, responsibility. According to stereotype actualized in Spanish language picture of the world, men's words and promises said aloud must be accomplished without fail, because the men's nature is the concrete acts, not the empty words: *Agarra al toro por las cuernas, al hombre por la palabra*;
- conciseness is the stereotyped characteristic of masculinity, in contrast to femininity: *El hombre, de pocas palabras, y ésas, sabias*. The garrulity is strictly condemned, because, in accordance with gender stereotypes, the men with this quality cannot fulfil their promises;
- intellect. The presence of intellect in the men is approved in Spanish proverbs more as the presence of physical power: *Mejor es el varón prudente que el fuerte*. The intellect anticipates the superior position and influence in society;
- good name, self-respect is very important for Spanish men and they are ready to defend it at all costs: *Hombre honrado, primero muerto que injuriado*;
- bravery as a gateway to fortune in Spanish language picture of the world: *Hombre osado, afortunado*. On the other hand, the bravery is associated with the danger, risk for life: *Hombre valiente no muere de viejo*. The bravery is also connected with the self-respect, self-appraisal: *Hombre valiente no muere pordiosero*. However, the thoughtless acts with ostentatious bravery are evaluated in Spanish proverbs negatively and are associated with foolishness: *Arrimarse a la boca del lobo es del hombre bobo*.

Moreover, the men in Spanish language picture of the world is endowed with honesty, modesty, calmness, self-control, patience, kindness, politeness.

Social gender stereotypes of masculinity are represented in 271 proverbs, and of femininity – in 201 proverbs (18,2 and 13,5 percent from the total number). The woman has different social roles – wife, mother, sister, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, widow. From the female point of view, the marriage is obligatory and inevitable aspect in woman's life (*Bien o mal te casarás, sea con Pedro o sea con Juan*), and she aspires to the marriage during all her conscious life, because the marriage raises women's status in society (*Antes de casarse, solterona, después de casarse, señora*) and creates the feeling of protection which doesn't have single woman (*A la mujer sola, todos le dan con pie. Haya marido, aunque sea de grano mijo*). The marriage stereotypically consists of many disappointments, because the relation of husband to wife is turning to the worse after wedding-party. The wife often becomes the victim of assault and battery: *A la mujer y a la burra, cada día una zurra*. However, Spanish proverbs include the gender stereotypes about the lack of conjugal relations affecting perniciously to her health and appearance.

The prompt and successful marriage is the best wish for a girl: *A la aguja, buen hilo, y a la mujer, buen marido*. In according to gender stereotype widespread in Spanish language picture of the world, the marriage shall be once and forever, therefore the woman married several times is not approved in society (*Berza vuelta a calentar y mujer vuelta a casar, al diablo se le pueden dar*). Many proverbs are dedicated to mother-in-law which is evaluated in Spanish language picture of the world only negatively (*Suegra ni aun de azúcar es buena*). The connection of mother-in-law with evil forces is emphasized in proverbs. The figure of daughter-in-law is also connotated negatively, she is endowed with awkwardness, laziness. According to Spanish proverbs, the daughter is undesirable member of the family (*Hija primera, ni nazca ni muera*). The families which have daughters aspire to give her in marriage advantageously, therefore it is considered necessary to protect her morality. The mother in Spanish proverbs is a symbol of positiveness, she is endowed with spiritual beauty, and is the source of cordiality, care and love: *¿Qué grande será la madre que hasta Dios quiso tener una?*

The man in Spanish proverbs plays such social roles as husband, father, brother, father-in-law, son, son-in-law, widower. The figure of father in Spanish proverbs is connotated positively. This person is very estimated and is the incarnation of authority in family (*Al padre, si fuere bueno, sírvele, y si malo, súfrele*). It is more desirably in Spanish family to have sons than daughters (*Nazca mi hijo varón, aunque sea ladrón*). In general, the strict style of education is stereotyped. The corporal punishments are stimulated.

Spanish language picture of the world has a gender stereotype about the unwillingness of men to marry, because the marriage influences negatively on his health and financial position: *El primer año que el hombre se casa, o enferma o se adeuda*. The changes of usual way of life are inevitable. However, the proverbs include a stereotype about the obligatory marriage for a man, because he can achieve the traditional life ideals only with the aid of marriage (power, career): *Detrás de cada hombre que triunfa, hay una mujer*. The functional gender stereotypes of masculinity are registered in 74 proverbs (5 percent) and of femininity – in 116 proverbs (7,8 percent). These proverbs describe the abilities and physical capacities the men and women should have in according to

prescriptions and norms formed in society (Buckingham et al., 2006; Galdas et al., 2010).

The top priority for a woman is a child-bearing, and this stereotype determines her necessity for a man: *Vaca, oveja y mujer que no paren, para el labrador no valen*. The relation to women and their evaluation in society depends on number of children and the quality of their education: *Lo que valga una mujer, en sus hijos se ha de ver*. The ability to make necessary home work is an obligatory skill for each woman (*La mujer en el hogar, su limpieza, su cocina y su labrar. Caballo que llene las piernas, gallo que llene las manos y mujer que llene los brazos*). The thrift and economy are most evaluated qualities for Spanish women. These characteristics are more important and essential than the wealth and beauty: *Entre una mujer hacendosa y hacendada la primera más me agrada*. The thrift implies first of all the ability of cooking as a main duty of women: *No compres casa en esquina ni tengas mujer que no sepa cocina*. The main function of woman including the creation of comfortable conditions for a man is also connected with it. The cooking is also the important element of love: *El amor entra por la cocina*.

The woman's space is represented bordered with the house and the family (*La mujer y la gallina a casa de día*). This stereotype is based on the anxiety for the woman's moral easy to discredit. The life way of a man is a phased progress to forward, dynamic development and formation (Ismagulova et al., 2016). In this connection, each man in Spanish proverbs shall get an education and become proficient in professional skills (*A tu hijo dale oficio, que el ocio es padre del vicio*) because, in according to gender stereotypes formed in Spanish language picture of the world, a man is a main bread-winner of family: *El hombre está hecho para el trabajo, y el ave para volar*. The labor has also educational effect because provides the acquisition of life experience: *Trabajos hacen al hombre sabio*. The basic stereotyped function of man as husband is the management and control of his family and home (*En tres cosas se conoce la cordura de un hombre: gobernar la casa, refrenar la ira y en guardar el nombre*). Other duty of Spanish men consists of the protection of family honor, and the women shall reflect this honor with their modesty and decent behavior (Ember & Ember, 2003).

In contrast to femininity, the gender stereotypes of masculinity imply the great role of education for the future life of men inconceivable without knowledge and experience: *El que no aprende a sus años, sufre amargos desengaños; Hombre de poco conocimiento, hogar sin cimiento*. The study is peculiar to the young age: *Quien no estudia cuando joven lamentará cuando sea viejo el tiempo perdido*. The sexual behavior is universal for all the cultures, and this aspect of human being was also reflected in proverbs. Sexual gender stereotypes of masculinity were represented in 68 proverbs, and of femininity – in 42 proverbs (2,8 and 4,6 percent from the total number). The consideration of women as sexual objects satisfying the men's sexual pleasure is determined as one of the aspects for women's suppression (Hussein, 2005). We can observe this situation also in Spanish language, where the women are often described as an object for violent acts: *Las leyes y las mujeres han sido hechas para violarlas*. Spanish language picture of the world has a widespread stereotype that the woman can achieve much success with the aid of her sexual attractiveness.

The men's sexual activity and aggressivity during the courting is emphasized and evaluated positively in Spanish proverbs, in according to which it is possible to conquer each woman (*A las mujeres y a los charcos hay que violarlos*). The active sexual behavior is a norm for a man because of his natural polygamy and is an integral part of masculinity: *Quién con hembras no formica o es cocorro o es marica*. The fact that each man has a lover is acceptable in Spanish society, however the faithfulness to his wife is approved and is considered as a positive quality: *El que no tiene con quien, con su mujer se acuesta. No es macho quien tiene muchas mujeres, macho es el que se aguanta con una sola*.

## Conclusion

Now we will make some conclusions on the base of made lingvocognitive research and interpretation of Spanish paremiological fund reflecting the peculiarities of mental perception of surrounding reality by Spanish speakers. Being formed in the consciousness of person, gender stereotypes imply the subconscious attitude verbally showed as paremias. Because of the presence of socioeconomical, cultural and physiological aspects in human life we subdivide the gender stereotypes on age-related, descriptive, psychological, social, functional and sexual. The big quantity of proverbs actualizing the gender stereotypes of masculinity and femininity testifies the importance of these concepts in Spanish society.

The analysis of paremiological material of Spanish with representation of concepts "masculinity" and "femininity" allows to consider them through the lens of gender stereotypes connected with the morals and manners of Spanish speakers/ We detected in the course of our investigation that the women in comparison with men are evaluated more negatively from the point of view of gender stereotypes. Spanish paremiological fund represents the stable figure of man a woman with detailed actualization of their age, appearance, psychological features, norms of behavior, social status, occupation, intimate relations. Afterwards the investigation can be continued for determination of the influence of gender specifics on communicative-pragmatic peculiarities of Spanish text with the attraction of semantic actualization of concepts "femininity" and "masculinity".

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