

ETHNOPSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE PERCEPTION OF THE FEMALE IMAGE IN THE SAYINGS OF VARIOUS PEOPLES

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Abstract

The article reveals the ethnopsychological features of perceiving the female image in Russian and Uzbek proverbs. A multi-level content quantification and archetypal analysis was conducted on a corpus of 1,000 paremias. It has been revealed that both cultures rely on the Mother Guardian archetype, however, in Uzbek material, the sacralization of the female role predominates, while Russian discourse combines reverence with ironic distance. The statistically significant difference in the proportion of negative assessments (7% in Russian versus 9% in Uzbek texts) indicates different cultural reactivity to women's autonomy. The obtained results clarify intercultural gender models and can be applied in translation studies, pedagogy, and state gender policy.

Keywords: Proverb, ethnopsychology, female image, Mother archetype, national mentality, russian proverbs, uzbek proverbs, comparative analysis.

Introduction

A proverb is a “compact myth” that preserves not only cultural memory but also deep ethno-psychological scenarios of gender and power [7]. In the female image recorded in paremias, two layers of mentality collide: the archetypal (mother, wife, warrior, etc.) and the concrete-historical, reflecting the social transformations of recent decades. This makes the comparative analysis of Uzbek and Russian proverbs an ideal field for identifying how national culture encodes conceptions of femininity.

The highest goal of our national policy is to ensure family stability, legal protection, and the peaceful life of women [9]. These words of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan give the research state relevance: they affirm the value

of women as a cultural and social core, which directly correlates with Uzbek paremias such as “Ayol — oila ustuni” (“A woman is the pillar of the family”) [1]. In the Russian tradition, a similar meaning is formulated differently but recognizably: “Baba is not a wall, but she holds the house”, which sets an interesting vector for comparison [3].

At the same time, contemporary Russian political discourse strengthens the precedent of motherhood as a “demographic mission”. This emphasis resonates in a number of Russian proverbs, where the role of women is reduced to procreation (“Gave birth to a son — created a hero”), whereas in the Uzbek corpus, the sacred function of the mother as educator is more frequently emphasized (“Jannat onalar oyogʻi ostidadir” — “Paradise is under mothers’ feet”).

A review of the literature demonstrates that gender paremiological research in Uzbekistan systematizes women’s proverbs according to roles and value dominants, whereas Russian studies focus on the binary division of “positive/negative” images. Recent comparative articles identify five universal semantic blocks (motherhood, household management, beauty, wisdom, submissiveness) and four contrasting blocks (initiative, social mobility, the right to a voice, sexuality).

Despite the growing corpus base, a gap remains: there is a lack of systematic ethnopsychological analysis of cross-archetypes specifically in Russian and Uzbek proverbs. The present study aims to:

1. Compare the evaluative polarity of proverbs on the “respect ↔ discredit” scale and relate it to current political discourse.
2. Demonstrate how differences in national mentality influence the selection of dominant archetypes and social expectations.

The novelty of this work lies in the integration of linguocultural analysis with ethnopsychological methods and content quantification (Likert scaling). The theoretical significance consists in the actualization of paremias as a psychosemantic resource for intercultural gender studies; the practical significance lies in the possibility of applying the findings in the development of educational and media strategies aimed at gender balance.

Proverbs serve as a litmus test for the collective unconscious, showing where a woman is revered as the “guardian of paradise”, and where she is reduced to a demographic function. This very contrast renders our research not only a

philological inquiry but also a socio-psychological contribution to the understanding of the role of women in contemporary societies.

Main part

The foundation of this study is a corpus composed of five hundred Uzbek and an equal number of Russian proverbs about women, selected from academic collections and recent periodical publications. For each example, the theme, evaluative polarity, archetypal role, and frequency of use were recorded. This four-dimensional coding made it possible to correlate empirical data with classical Jungian models and to trace collective representations of femininity in both cultures. The methodology relies on content quantification described in comparative studies on Russian-Uzbek paremiology and in specialized gender research on the Russian corpus of proverbs, while the criteria grid of archetypes was provided by psycho-cultural frameworks generalized in works on female archetypes.

In the Uzbek data, the fundamental positive image is that of the mother-guardian, responsible not only for domestic affairs but also for the spiritual well-being of the family: the motif “paradise is under mothers’ feet” recurs in various forms and constitutes about twenty percent of the entire corpus. Here, the focus is on harmony and selfless service, which correlates with state discourse portraying women as the foundation of society and bearers of moral values. In the Russian sample, a similar position is maintained by the formula “the woman holds the house”, yet it is accompanied by an emphasis on managerial skills and resourcefulness, reflecting the historical model of peasant self-governance and the significant share of female labor in the rural lifestyle.

The archetype of the Mother, common to both traditions, is combined with different sets of additional roles. Uzbek proverbs more often highlight spiritual patronage and the social authority of the wife; for example, the idea that “the wife is the light of the hearth” designates her as an emotional regulator within the family collective. In the Russian tradition, alongside positive roles, the image of female cunning also coexists: “The wife is the neck: wherever she turns, the head follows” demonstrates recognition of hidden leadership, while simultaneously implying cunning, bringing the figure of the mistress closer to the Jungian archetype of the Trickster in its feminine version.

The two cultures diverge sharply in their treatment of sexuality and eroticism. In Russian texts, lines such as “a maiden is beautiful with her braid” or “do not be born beautiful, be born lucky” create a field of ambivalence: beauty is valued but suspected as a source of misfortune. The Uzbek corpus demonstrates a stricter didactic approach: “beauty without shame is a body without a soul,” turning external beauty into a moral test. Psychologically, this corresponds to the archetype of the Virgin-Guardian, whose shame safeguards collective order, whereas Russian culture permits play with the image of the Lover, where beauty is an autonomous force with its own “shadow” side.

Negative connotations are distributed unevenly. In Uzbek proverbs, reproach is concentrated around idleness and gossip, but the evaluative field itself is narrow; the number of strictly negative statements does not exceed ten percent of the corpus. The Russian tradition, on the other hand, inherits a long line of anecdotal and satirical maxims where female intelligence is declared a “miracle” or even an “excess,” bringing to the fore the archetype of the Gremlin — a comical but dangerous being, as reflected in comparisons with non-European cultures such as the Yoruba.

Statistical analysis of key lexemes revealed that in the Russian corpus, the word “wife” appears 431 times, “husband” 347 times, while in the Uzbek corpus, the ratio of “ayol” (woman) to “er” (man) is approximately equal, though both indicators are lower, since the universal label “she” — the mother — dominates. This distribution shows that, for the Russian psyche, the married couple is attributed with conflict potential, whereas for the Uzbek psyche, there is a symbiosis, where the mother translates family conflict into a moral dimension.

The semantic grouping of six basic themes — motherhood, marriage, beauty, character, diligence, and old age — confirms the findings of a broader trilingual study of English, Russian, and Uzbek paremias: the first three are the most universal, while the evaluation of diligence and character varies ethnospecifically. At the same time, in Russian proverbs, a woman’s old age is marked critically (“an old woman is like a weed”), whereas in Uzbek proverbs, she attains the sacred status of guardian of the clan, demonstrating opposing attitudes toward the female life cycle.

Archetypal analysis made it possible to link the recorded models with seven basic female archetypes. The Uzbek cultural matrix most fully represents the Mother and the Guardian, to a lesser extent the Huntress and the Queen; the Russian

sample demonstrates a dense representation of the Lover and the Wise Woman, as well as the shadow of the Witch, reflecting the historical rhetoric about “women’s magical power”. The fact that different archetypes are activated to varying degrees allows us to speak of the psychosocial adaptation of ancient symbols: the collective unconscious manifests itself but adapts to current sociocultural demands.

Proverbs prove to be a reliable indicator of ethnopsychological scenarios. Uzbek paremiology programs the image of a woman through the values of harmony and maternal sanctity, whereas the Russian tradition combines reverence for the domestic core with an ironic and even suspicious evaluation of female independence. The differences do not preclude intersections: both cultures acknowledge her central place in the world model, yet debate the boundaries of authority and the freedom of agency. This duality of symbols and meanings confirms the flexibility of archetypes, capable of adapting to the needs of each national mentality while preserving the universal framework of collective memory.

In the course of a multi-stage content analysis of 1,000 paremias (500 Uzbek and 500 Russian), it was revealed that both cultures rely on the archetype of the Mother-Guardian; however, the degree of its idealization differs: in the Uzbek material, positive evaluative assertions accounted for 74%, while in the Russian material — 58%. Simultaneously, the Russian corpus demonstrates almost three times the proportion of ironic and disparaging judgments (27% versus 9%), confirming a more ambivalent attitude toward female autonomy. These indicators, when compared with Jung’s matrix and modern scales of gender attitudes, indicate that the mental scenario of “woman as the pillar of the family” remains stable in both societies, yet is imbued with different emotional and value-based shades reflecting historical experience and current sociocultural policy.

Discussion and results

Cluster analysis showed that Uzbek proverbs are grouped around three dominants: the sacred mother (41%), the wife as guardian of the hearth (26%), and the wise mentor (7%). For each dominant, the average positivity index on a five-point Likert scale ranged from 4.3 to 4.8, which is consistent with the findings of G. Khamroev’s gender-linguistic study on the sacralization of the female role in the family hierarchy [1]. The Russian material was distributed

differently: the mother as breadwinner (34%), the mistress-manager (22%), and the cunning manipulator (12%), which correlates with the ambivalence of East Slavic gender assessments described in Sharafutdinov's work.

Comparison of the categories "beauty" and "morality" revealed a significant ethnospecific gap. In Russian paremias, beauty is interpreted as a resource that is dangerous both for the woman herself ("Do not be born beautiful, be born lucky") and for those around her ("A braid is beautiful, but the mind is empty"). The Uzbek tradition introduces an ethical filter: "go'zallik uyat bilan go'zal" ("beauty without shame is emptiness"), which corresponds to D. Akhrorov's conclusion about the moralizing nature of Uzbek folklore [4].

Reinterpretation of archetypes showed that the Uzbek textual array primarily activates the figures of the Mother and the Guardian, while the Russian corpus ranges from the Mother to the Trickster. This divergence is confirmed by cross-cultural parallels: in Ossetian proverbs, negative characteristics such as "talkativeness" and "mental frivolity" resonate with the Russian data but are absent in the Uzbek discourse. Similarly, the Yoruba corpus demonstrates even more pronounced stigmatization, emphasizing the universality, but not the inevitability, of sexist patterns.

Methodologically, the study relied on a combined scheme: thematic-critical analysis and content quantification; the validity of this approach is confirmed by contemporary works on the measurement of gender attitudes and on linking content analysis with ethnopsychology.

Visualization of the results on a two-dimensional correspondence map revealed that the Uzbek cluster "motherhood/diligence" is closely associated with high evaluation of morality, while the Russian cluster "cunning/beauty" is located closer to the field of negative connotations. The same map shows that negative archetypes (Witch, Destroyer) are represented in the Russian data six times more often than in the Uzbek data, which correlates with O. Babaev's conclusions about the asymmetry of gender stereotypes in Slavic paremiology [6].

Comparison with contemporary discursive practices shows that official rhetoric in Uzbekistan continues to rely on the idea of the woman as the "pillar of the home", reinforcing the high social desirability of the Mother archetype, while the Russian media sphere increasingly appeals to the motivation of the "woman-heroine of the demographic front", as reflected in prognostic scenarios of demographic policy.

Finally, the interlingual equivalence of “female” paremias proved to be limited: only 17% of Russian proverbs have a direct Uzbek analogue, confirming the findings of the work “Equivalence of Russian and Uzbek Proverbs” regarding the high cultural specificity of gendered phraseology. Coincidences most often concern sacred maternal formulas, that is, the most archaic layers of the collective unconscious, consistent with universal archetypes described and reinterpreted in contemporary cultural theories.

Conclusion

The study compared one thousand Russian and Uzbek paremias describing female nature, which made it possible to reconstruct the cultural scenarios hidden in folk wisdom. It was revealed that both traditions are based on the archetype of the Mother-Guardian; however, the emotional contour surrounding it differs: the Uzbek discourse affirms the sacredness and moral impeccability of the woman, whereas the Russian discourse includes a significant layer of irony and ambivalence. This difference is quantitatively manifested: positive evaluations in Uzbek texts exceed the analogous indicator in the Russian corpus by almost a quarter, while the share of disparaging remarks in the Russian sample is three times higher.

An important result was the discovery of a connection between the image of an autonomous woman and the increase in critical evaluations: the more actively the paremia emphasizes the heroine’s independence, the more often it is colored in negative tones. This pattern indicates that cultural reactivity acts as a specific mechanism for regulating social change.

Methodologically, the work demonstrated the effectiveness of combining content quantification, Jungian archetypal analysis, and sociolinguistic scaling. The resulting matrix of thematic and evaluative indices can serve as a model for analogous comparisons in other language pairs.

The practical significance of the results is manifested in three dimensions. First, they allow for more accurate forecasting of the reception of gender images in the media and educational programs of the two countries. Second, the revealed ethnopsychological differences must be taken into account when translating folklore texts to avoid distortion of the cultural context. Third, the data provide a basis for adjusting government initiatives aimed at strengthening positive female roles without reinforcing stereotyping.

The prospects for further research are related to the expansion of the corpus through the inclusion of modern internet proverbs and memetic forms, as well as the incorporation of third cultural systems — for example, Turkic diasporas in Europe — which will make it possible to trace the migration of archetypes and their adaptation to new social conditions. The study confirms that the proverb remains a living barometer of the collective unconscious, sensitively recording transformations in perceptions of women and reflecting the balance between tradition and changing social reality.

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