

## RAGMATIC AND COGNITIVE OF GENDER RELATIONS IN ENGLISH LITERARY WORKS

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**Abstract:** This article explores the pragmatic and cognitive features of gender relations as expressed in English literary texts. The study investigates how language reflects, reinforces, or challenges gender roles through literary discourse. Pragmatic aspects focus on speech acts, implicatures, and politeness strategies, while cognitive aspects examine conceptual metaphors and mental representations. Through qualitative analysis of selected literary works, this paper reveals how gendered communication patterns shape characters' identities and social roles. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, cognition, and gender in literature.

**Keywords:** gender relations, pragmatics, cognition, English literature, literary discourse, conceptual metaphor

**Annotasiya:** Ushbu maqolada ingliz badiiy asarlarida gender munosabatlarining pragmatik va kognitiv xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot davomida tilning badiiy matnlar orqali gender rollarini qanday ifodalashi, mustahkamlashi yoki inkor etishi o'rganiladi. Pragmatik jihatlar nutq aktlari, implikatura va muloyimlik strategiyalarini o'z ichiga olsa, kognitiv yondashuv tushunchaviy metaforalar va aqliy tasavvurlarni qamrab oladi. Tanlangan asarlarning sifatli tahlili asosida genderga oid nutqiy xatti-harakatlar va ularning jamiyatdagi o'rnini aniqlanadi. Tadqiqot natijalari til, tafakkur va gender o'zaro bog'liqligini chuqurroq tushunishga yordam beradi.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматриваются прагматические и когнитивные особенности гендерных отношений в английских литературных произведениях. Исследование направлено на анализ того, как язык отражает, укрепляет или оспаривает гендерные роли в художественном дискурсе. Прагматический анализ включает речевые акты, имплицатуры и стратегии вежливости, в то время как когнитивный подход охватывает концептуальные метафоры и ментальные представления. На основе качественного анализа выбранных произведений выявлены особенности гендерной коммуникации и их роль в формировании социальных ролей персонажей. Результаты исследования способствуют более глубокому пониманию взаимосвязи языка, мышления и гендера в литературе.

## **Introduction**

The representation of gender relations in literary discourse has long been a topic of interest in linguistics, literary criticism, and gender studies. Literature serves as a mirror of social structures and cultural values, often portraying and shaping societal norms related to gender. In English literary works, gender roles are frequently constructed, challenged, and negotiated through the use of language. This study focuses on the pragmatic and cognitive features that underlie these gendered interactions, offering insights into how characters communicate, perceive, and embody gender roles.

Pragmatic features involve language use in context—how characters perform speech acts, express politeness, or generate implied meanings that reflect gender expectations. On the other hand, cognitive features relate to how mental models, conceptual metaphors, and frames contribute to our understanding of gender through language. By analyzing selected English literary texts, this article seeks to uncover the deeper linguistic mechanisms that construct gender identities and power dynamics in fictional narratives.

## **Main Body / Analysis**

Gender relations in English literary works are often constructed through subtle linguistic mechanisms that reveal underlying societal ideologies. This section analyzes selected literary examples by focusing on both pragmatic and cognitive aspects of gendered language use.

### **1. Pragmatic Features in Gendered Communication**

One of the central pragmatic features in literary dialogues is the use of speech acts—requests, commands, apologies, and compliments—which reflect power relations and gender roles. For instance, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, male characters like Mr. Darcy use assertive and direct speech acts that position them as dominant, while female characters such as Elizabeth Bennet often rely on indirectness and politeness strategies to navigate societal constraints. These pragmatic choices are not merely stylistic; they embody the gender expectations of the era and serve to either reinforce or resist them.

Politeness strategies, as outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987), are also instrumental. Women in literature are frequently depicted as employing positive politeness (seeking connection) or negative politeness (avoiding imposition) more than male characters, who may lean towards bald-on-record expressions. This difference is not universal but contextually grounded in character roles, status, and genre.

### **2. Cognitive Representations of Gender**

From a cognitive perspective, gendered language in literature often draws on conceptual metaphors that shape how characters and readers perceive masculinity and femininity. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) note that metaphors structure thought, and in literature, metaphors such as “man is a warrior” or “woman is a flower” reinforce traditional gender ideologies. In *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Daisy Buchanan is repeatedly associated with light,

fragility, and wealth—suggesting an idealized, passive femininity—while Gatsby and Tom embody control, dominance, and pursuit.

These metaphors are not neutral; they activate cultural frames and mental schemas that influence reader interpretation. Furthermore, mental representations of characters' internal thoughts and motivations provide insight into how they perceive gendered expectations. For example, Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway presents a complex internal monologue that reveals the tension between societal roles and personal identity, especially for women navigating post-war modernity.

### **3. Interaction of Pragmatics and Cognition in Literary Gender Relations**

The most compelling literary depictions of gender emerge when pragmatic and cognitive elements intersect. A character's use of language may pragmatically resist a command while cognitively aligning with traditional gender views. Consider Shakespeare's Macbeth, where Lady Macbeth's language defies typical gender roles through powerful imperatives and rejection of feminine weakness ("unsex me here"), while her internal guilt and later descent into madness reveal the cognitive toll of defying gender norms.

This interplay illustrates how literature not only reflects gender relations but actively constructs them through language. Readers are invited to process these signals, forming cognitive models that either affirm or challenge their preexisting beliefs about gender.

#### **Conclusion**

The exploration of pragmatic and cognitive features of gender relations in English literary works reveals the depth and complexity of how language constructs social identity. Through pragmatic tools such as speech acts, politeness strategies, and implicatures, authors portray gendered power dynamics and interpersonal relationships that either uphold or critique societal norms. At the same time, cognitive aspects—especially conceptual metaphors and mental models—shape the way gender is mentally represented and emotionally experienced by both characters and readers.

This study demonstrates that gender is not a fixed category but a dynamic construct that evolves

By focusing on the linguistic portrayal of gender in literature, this article contributes to the interdisciplinary discourse connecting linguistics, gender studies, and literary criticism. It emphasizes the importance of analyzing both language use and conceptual structures to understand how literature shapes and reflects societal attitudes toward gender.

#### **Literature Review**

The intersection of gender and language in literature has been extensively explored across multiple disciplines. Deborah Tannen (1990) introduced foundational work in gendered communication, highlighting differences in conversational style between men and women. Her insights laid the groundwork for further analysis of gender roles in dialogue and narrative construction.

From a pragmatic perspective, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory has been instrumental in understanding gendered speech. Their framework, particularly the concepts of face-threatening acts and politeness strategies, has been applied to literary analysis to reveal how characters perform gendered identities through discourse.

Cognitive linguists like George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) have contributed significantly with their work on conceptual metaphors. Their theory suggests that metaphors structure thought, and this has been applied to explore how masculinity and femininity are metaphorically constructed in literary texts. Scholars such as Elena Semino (2008) have applied cognitive stylistics to literature, demonstrating how mental models and frames shape character perception and reader interpretation.

Furthermore, feminist literary critics like Elaine Showalter and Sandra Gilbert have emphasized the cultural and historical contexts in which gendered language emerges in literature. Their contributions stress the role of narrative voice, perspective, and the socio-political implications of literary representations of gender.

This study builds upon these foundational works by integrating pragmatic and cognitive approaches to offer a holistic analysis of gendered language in English literature, thereby enriching the broader understanding of how literature both reflects and constructs gender norms.

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