



EXPRESSION OF LOVE AS LINGVOCULTURAL AND GENDER LINGUISTIC CONCEPT AND ITS REFLECTION IN DIFFERENT CULTURES

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ABSTRACT

Concept of Love expression has been studied by a number of scholars. The concept is of great interest to psycholinguists, researchers of gender linguistics and lingvoculture. The relation between gender roles, gender expectations and confessing love to the partner has been determined. Willingness to say I love you is directly connected with the culture. Different cultures' views and attitude towards verbal love expression have been researched and outlined. The interviews and surveys supported the interrelation and interconnection between love expression and culture. Asian and Muslim women tend to expect men to take initiative while Americans are more likely to be open-minded in this question. Asian families express their feelings by taking care of their family members while Americans say they love each other all the time. The mentality of different nations is effected by collectivism and individualism.

KEYWORDS:- Expression of love, concept, "I love you", gender, culture, lingvoculture

INTRODUCTION

Concept Love has been studied by various disciplines for many centuries. It has been of great interest to such disciplines as psychology, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, linguoculture and other branches of linguistics. Generally love is divided into the following types: Agape (God's love), eros (sexual or passionate love, philia (friendship), storge (love between parents and their children), Ludus (uncommitted love), Pragma (love founded on reason or duty), philautia (self-love). A lot of research has been done on eros because it can be found everywhere: books, movies, social media and people's relationships. The topic is popular and universal because it touched, is touching and will touch millions of people. It's hard to find

someone who has never experienced or at least wants to experience it.

Concept love expression shouldn't be confused with the concept of love. Having certain feelings and the way we express them, show them to the people we love is completely a different thing. Love without expression is useless, pointless and makes no sense.

People have been giving and receiving love all their life. It's something life can hardly be imagined. Psychologists have concluded that the need to feel loved is one of basic and fundamental needs. The author of "5 love languages" states that, "Inside every child is an 'emotional tank' waiting to be filled with love". Love tank – the metaphorical term was coined by him to describe the need for love in every human. So how do we fill it? One of the ways is



by saying directly: I love you. Simple words to express love. However, it's not that easy to admit it in reality. Love expression in heterosexual relationships has their peculiarities in terms of relation between gender and language. The study of this concept can reveal a great difference in perception and expression of love by opposite sexes which is a subject for research in gender linguistics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ackerman and Griskevicius conducted a research on communicating commitment in romantic relationships. The results published in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* showed that men tend to say I love you more often than women. Cross-cultural researchers proposed that extensive experience of romantic love should be more common in modern countries with their individualistic culture (Goode, 1959; Rosenblatt, 1967). It should be less valued in traditional collectivistic cultures with strong, extended family ties (Simmons, Vom Kolke, & Shimizu, 1986). Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. in "Individualism, collectivism, and the psychology of love" stated that individualism and collectivism lead to differences in how people conceptualize themselves, and this has a significant impact on how they love and what they experience in love. We have researched different cultures to support the above mentioned studies and to add more perspectives on understanding the relation between gender, culture and expression of love.

METHODS

Empirical analysis has been presented in the article. We used deductive approach to research the theory and support with data.

We have interviewed the first-year students who mostly come from Uzbek families. They answered the following questions: How often do you say I love you? How often do your parents

say the love you? If not often, what do you think the reason is.

We have interviewed a retired Korean University professor and asked him why Koreans don't often say I love you to each other. We also analyzed old Soviet Union movies to define the mentality and background of average Russian men and women.

RESULTS

Most respondents didn't say and hear I love you often in their family. Very few of them told that her family expressed their love verbally. The others agreed it was an exception rather than a rule. The majority of the students knew that their parents love them only by the way they took care of them, provided and leading them in their lives. Children in their turn express their love by respecting parents' opinion and decisions, obeying them and providing for them when they become unable to earn their living.

The same happens in Korean families. Especially elders as well as people of traditional views don't talk much about their feelings. I have had the same experience as I was born in a Korean family. I don't remember my parents saying they love me. However, I have always known they do. However, for the past ten, twenty years a new tendency have started evolving. Due to the great influence of American culture Koreans began saying I love you more often. We can hear it not only in our homes now but on national television as well. It's mostly easily said by younger people who are more open to globalization and change.

In our interview with a retired Korean University professor Yu Won Yol, I wondered why neither parents no spouses express their love to each other. The professor explained that "Korea has a tradition of Confucian culture. It is a culture that values respect for parents and adults. You should always respect and love your parents more than your spouse or children. It was a



shame to express love for a spouse or child in front of parents or adults. The love between the couple was not expressed in front of people, and the public expression was ashamed. The mind is more important than the words. If I only need a heart, should I express it in words?" This way of thinking seems to be one of the reasons. Silence was taught as a wonderful virtue to the extent that there is a saying, 'Silence is gold'. Thus, love is about actions not words.

An interesting fact is that Americans say I love you in different meanings and context. If Asians say I love you they mean "I have romantic feelings" or "I care for you", while people in the USA might also use this phrase in quite different situation. For example, if someone is happy about the help they got they might also say "I love you" which means I am so grateful and happy about what you did for me. It could be one way of saying thank you. Americans openly demonstrate their feelings while other nations are more reserved and show their love to very close people.

Russians, for instance, may find it weird to say I love you to people who are not a family member or they are not romantically involved with. Those three words are not easily said and heard. They are too precious so they are kept only for special occasions and for special people. Some explain this unwillingness to say I love you by reserved personality of nations living in cold areas. Some view it as an inheritance of past ideology where people were raised in strict atmosphere where anyone could be judged by speaking their piece of mind and expressing their individuality. In one of the most famous old Soviet movies "We will live till Monday" a young student wrote an essay on "My understanding of happiness". Her teacher got mad at her and embarrassed her in front of her classmates for writing the following: "If we speak about happiness, it must be sincere. Most of us are ashamed to write about love even though every girl is dreaming about it". People

were busy focusing on collective mind. No wonder they didn't use to speak about love to each other.

After Soviet Union collapsed the situation has changed. Even though Russians began saying I love you more often, they still are more reserved in verbal expression compared to people in the west.

DISCUSSION

Gender linguistics deals with expression of gender in language, studies the issues of representation of men and women in the act of communication, defines linguistic mechanisms functioning of gender relations and promotes understanding the essence of the phenomena that occur in the language and society. Intensive development of gender studies begins in the 60s and 70s. Today, the concept of "gender" and gender relations are the subject of research in many sciences: philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc.

There is a number of reasons of why people are unwilling to say they love each other. Some of them are determined by gender peculiarities some by cultural backgrounds, some by psychological issues. We all seem to have our reasons to hold our love words back. According to a study of 172 college students that appeared in *The Journal of Social Psychology*, men were more likely than women to confess love first. An interesting fact is that those same students expected the opposite result — that women would say it first. "We are constantly bombarded by this idea that love is about women," Ackerman told *The Washington Post*. "Women are the more emotional ones, and men hide their feelings. But that doesn't necessarily appear to be the case."



Psychologist Josh Ackerman found that 64% of people believe women are the quickest to say “I love you.” In reality, men were more likely to say it first and consider it earlier—a full six weeks before women think it’s time to talk about feelings. The reason might be in the meaning of these three words. When a man says “I love you” he means “I am attracted to you”, “I admire your looks and personality”, “You are always on my mind”, “You make me feel exhilarated”. When a woman confesses, she means “I am attracted to you so I want to marry you and I want you to be a father of my children, and I see my future with you. Men’s “I love you doesn’t not necessarily lead to commitment while women’s confession mostly does. Harrison found women are predisposed to waiting longer in order to correctly assess a potential partner, rather than just jumping in with both feet. Thus, to make this big decision it takes women much more time than men.

In most Muslim and non-Muslim Asian countries, however, men’s verbal expression eventually leads to marriage. Women expect men to take initiative in relationship so they wouldn’t usually admit to have feelings for their partner first. Sometimes there is no need to say anything at all because proposing speaks for itself with the exception for arranged marriages.

In new relationships, commitment, exclusivity, and degree of intimacy are not often spoken of right away, and initiating these conversations can place someone in a vulnerable space. Saying “I love you” could be an important turning point in the progress of a romantic relationship. It might create greater intimacy and bring to light a shared vision of a future together; it might also be a breaking point or stalling point for a relationship. If one person says “I love you” but the other is interested only in a casual connection, highlighting the discrepancy in feelings might trigger a conversation that ends the relationship altogether.

Although men might voice “I love you” first more often, cross-cultural research suggests that women are consistently more emotionally invested in their romantic relationships than men, especially in more gender-egalitarian societies like the U.S. (Schmitt et al., 2009).

Throughout decades of cross-cultural studies, Western views of the nature of emotions generally molded the terms for the descriptions and categorization of the emotional concepts, with which other cultures’ emotional notions are compared (Lutz, 1988). This, however, might be not quite adequate due to cultural differences in understanding the nature of feelings and emotions. The abundance of anthropological, psychological, and sociological studies, conducted in the 1980–1990s and 2000s, demonstrated that societies across the world define emotions in various ways, in a larger set of concepts, with different dimensions and divisions. The studies have discovered that people in different cultures may label and understand emotions differently (e.g., Ekman, 1972; Hochschild, 1979; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Shweder, 1993; Soto, Levenson, & Ebling, 2005). For example, in American culture, love is the appropriate emotional prerequisite for marriage; a marriage without love is regarded as an impoverished social relation. Then, when love has vanished and no longer exists, it is considered as a legitimate cultural reason to dissolve the marriage. Thus, emotional experience is taken as a legitimizing basis for social action (Potter, 1988, p. 182).

While the Western cultural value expects an individual “to support the social order by reference to inner feelings,” the Chinese cultural value supposes “the continuity of the social order to exist independently of inner feelings” (Potter, 1988, p. 194). For the Chinese, emotions are present in individuals, and the emotions may bear a relationship to social experience, but the emotions are concomitant phenomena in social



life, not fundamental ones. They are logically secondary (Potter, 1988, p. 186). Cross-cultural researchers proposed that extensive experience of romantic love should be more common in modern countries with their individualistic culture (Goode, 1959; Rosenblatt, 1967). It should be less valued in traditional collectivistic cultures with strong, extended family ties (Simmons, Vom Kolke, & Shimizu, 1986).

However, research showed more complex findings and interpretation. Individualism is characterized by a desire to be self-sufficient. People tend to experience any dependency, both of the person on other people and of other people on the person, with ambivalence. Yes, in individualistic cultures love-based marriage is perceived as an ideal. However, a person's motivation to be independent can conflict with the need for a romantic partner. It is reasonable to assume that individualism affects love for a partner in a negative way and individualism may interfere with a loving relationship. Karen and Kenneth Dion (1991) found that people who are more individualistic exhibit less likelihood of ever having been in love. Such people also more likely endorsed a ludic love style, which involves a less intimate perspective on love. Greater individualism was associated with a perception of their relationships as less rewarding and less deep. Generally, the more individualistic a person, the lower the quality of experience of love for his or her partner. In analysis of data from the General Social Survey for the year 1993, Dion (2005) found that people who are high in individualism tend to report less happiness in their marriages as well as lower satisfaction with their family life and friends. In collectivistic cultures, people experience the dependencies in their lives being embedded in multiple relationships with their family and close friends. Therefore, when people make decisions in their romantic relationships, they take into account both what they think is best for them as well as

how this affects their other relationships. Collectivism is related to the view of love as pragmatic, based on friendship, and having altruistic goals (Dion & Dion, 2005). Women in collectivistic cultures endorse an altruistic view of love more commonly than women in individualistic cultures; they consequently place greater emphasis on a broader network of close friendships (K. K. Dion & Dion, 1993; K. L. Dion & Dion, 1993).

Individualism and collectivism lead to differences in how people conceptualize themselves, and this has a significant impact on how they love and what they experience in love. From an individualistic view, each person is a separate entity; from a collectivistic view, the individual is a part of more extended relationships. When one perceives him/herself as an individual with boundaries and separate from other people, loving for someone else is the chance to break through those boundaries and escape the loneliness caused by being a separate individual. Love becomes the bridge that connects a person to another one. This connection, however, implies a person's freedom. If a relationship does not give him/her what they expect, it is their choice whether to leave the relationship. This is why people in individualistic cultures place a great emphasis on romantic love. From a collectivistic perspective, people emphasize the bonds that they already have. Since each person is a part of the relationships, people do not expect it as necessary to verbally confirm those bonds by asking if another loves them or by announcing their love to someone else. Their love is expressed more by what they do than by what they say (Dion & Dion, 2006).

A cross-cultural study Emotion expression and the locution "I love you" conducted by City university of New York showed the following results: the phrase is used most frequently in relationships with lovers (62%) followed by parents (40%), grandparents with their



grandchildren (38%). Only 34% of married couples said I love you which is no surprise taking into consideration the high divorce rate in the USA and all over the world. Another reason is that romantic love either disappears or evolves into different type of love.

People of different ethnic background express their feelings according to their mentality. Saying or not saying "I love you" directly depends on behavior accepted by certain cultures. Asian families who tend to keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves and show their love by actions rather than words raise their children in loving atmosphere where love is usually not spoken out loud. This concept of love has been passed on from one generation to the next. Thus, saying I love you is quite uncommon among these families.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to note that every nation has its reasons to say or not to say I love you depending on religion, cultural peculiarities, historical background and mentality. Asians and Muslims prefer expressing their love with actions rather than words. Romantic love is not as prioritized in Asia and Muslim countries as in the USA. Showing respect by caring and obeying their parents plays a more important role than verbal expression of love. Individualistic and collectivistic views on love resulted in different understanding of what love is and how it is expressed.

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