

# The Constitutive Nature of Gender Mainstreaming Discourse: Uzbekistan Context

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**Abstract:** The emergence of the anthropocentric paradigm and theory responds to the necessity of reevaluating evolving realities, where traditional methods for investigating social phenomena diminish in significance. This signifies a profound shift in science, introducing innovative research approaches. This study aims to view gender terminology and methodology as cognitive structures facilitating effective communication within human rights discourse. Contemporary Gender Studies demand a societal dynamic transformation, notably through Gender Mainstreaming (GM), which predominantly addresses marginalized groups. The study posits that gender language warrants careful examination. Analyzing gender terminology within GM reveals intricate, intriguing, and occasionally contentious aspects. Notably, the USA and UK have transitioned from importing to exporting GM discourse, impacting translation and terminology industries, especially in non-English-speaking nations. This article delves into the context of Gender Mainstreaming in Uzbekistan through the lens of "Own and Alien culture," providing insights into its localization within the country's cultural framework. The study emphasizes the importance of scrutinizing gender terminology within GM discourse, highlighting its evolving dynamics across diverse cultural settings.

**Keywords:** Gender, Cognitive Structures, Gender and Language, Gender Mainstreaming Discourse, Uzbekistan.

## Introduction

Gender relations, as a phenomenon of infinite description, serve as an index of the ideological and cultural level of society. The approach toward discourse omnipresence rightly concerns gender discourse in language [Sunderland, 2006], as men and women, as the core of any culture, represent this dynamic discourse.

The academic sources of discourse theory we deal with trace back to the conceptual models of the French school of discourse analysis of the 1960s and the theoretical concepts of its representatives - Michel Foucault and Michel Pesche [Foucault, 1977, 2006; Pecheux, 1969; Bakhronova & Abduraimov, 2022]. Michel Pesche's thesis on "integration of language and social processes" introduces a new approach toward critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis, two concepts intersecting in the same scope [Van Dijk & Walter, 1983].

From the late 1970s, linguists from M. Halliday's school at the University of East Anglia began using the term Critical Linguistics. Halliday introduces "Instrumental Linguistics...the study of language for understanding something else" [Caidas, 1996]. Critical linguistics is "an attempt to see the interrelation of things in essence" [Fairclough, 1985], focusing on the intersection of language and ideology, analyzing how ideology materializes in language.

In this context, discourse serves as a major instrument of power and control; Critical Discourse Analysis reveals and clarifies how power and discriminatory value are described through a linguistic system. Since "Critical Discourse Analysis is essentially political in intent, with its practitioners acting upon the world to transform it and thereby help create a world where people are not discriminated against

because of sex, color, creed, age, or social class" [Caidas, 1996]. Thus, language, broadly speaking, is a means of dominance and social power.

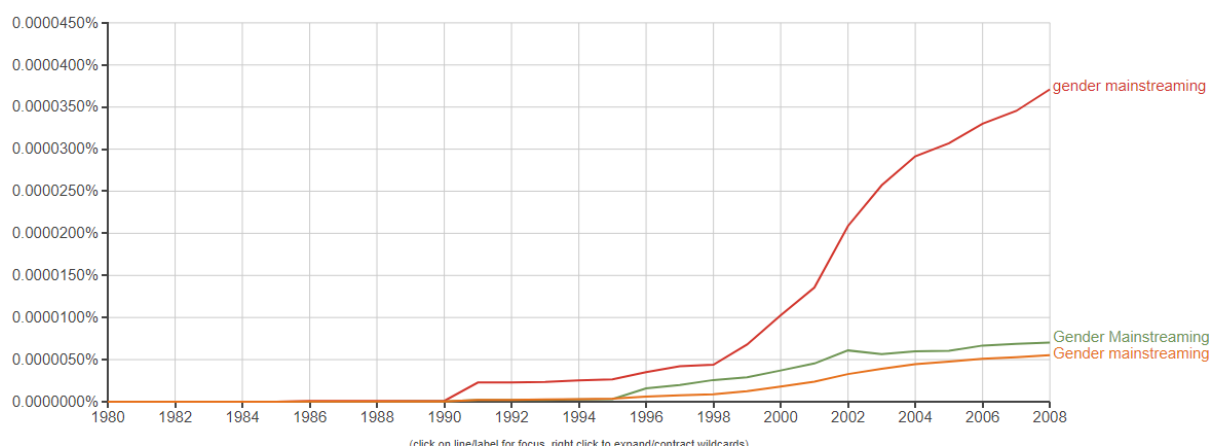
Yu.V. Klyuev defines discourse as the result of socialization - the comprehension of the surrounding world by an individual, their involvement in reality. Primary socialization (family, education) and secondary socialization (information received by an individual from messages of mass media) represent a single mechanism of personality formation in the information society. "It is discourse which serves as the main tool for the socialization of a person, their involvement in public and political life" [Klyuev, 2013].

According to Van Dijk T.A. and Walter K., making an "individual understand a discourse strategically as an action in an ongoing social interaction sequence means that the hearer makes assumptions about the intentions, purposes, wishes, preferences, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, ideology, emotions, and personality of the speaker," etc. [Van Dijk & Walter, 1983]. We assume that language, essentially in line with its terminology system, has the potential to create a particular discourse and convey it to the audience based on a specific strategy on behalf of the official agency, entity, etc.

### Scope of the Work

The scope of the following work deals with a gender mainstreaming discourse. "Gender mainstreaming is the chosen approach of the United Nations system and international community towards realizing progress on women's and girl's rights, as a sub-set of human rights to which the United Nations dedicates itself. It is not a goal or objective on its own. It is a strategy for implementing greater equality for women and girls in relation to men and boys. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, *in all areas and at all levels*" [UN Women Glossary].

The following graph shows the introduction of the GM term in general use since 1990 and its pick in the first decade of 2000 (<https://books.google.com/ngrams>).



GM discourse covers the following fields in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. The bibliography of glossaries of gender related terms and concepts shows the extended scope of a terminology apparatus by which GM discourse operates. The following spheres in which GM operates have been identified:

Sphere	APPROACH
Education	Social
Politics	Cultural
Emergency	Political
Peace & Security	Psychological
Sexual and Reproductive Health	
Sexual orientation and gender identity	
Human Rights	
Violence against Women	

Interdisciplinary character is an integral feature of gender studies, which, however, does not allow neglecting a linguistic analysis. The study of gender aspects of the language involves the definition and description of the concept "GM discourse," as well as its linguistic reflection at different levels of the language. This suggests the relevance of the theoretical interpretation of the category gender. At the present stage of the development of linguistics, the most explicit task formulated by W. Humboldt is to "investigate the functioning of the language in its broadest scope – not just in its relation to speech and its immediate product – a set of lexical documents, but its attitude towards thinking activity and sensory perception" (Humboldt, 1984). The language is only a small part of that integral phenomenon that we aspire to cognize, which necessarily involves not only the memory, physiological, psychological, psycho-physiological properties of the person, but also the knowledge of the world, the social context of utterances, the ways of interaction and organization of all types of knowledge, as well as all human activities (Kodirova, 2020).

As human behavior is determined by his/her knowledge, the linguistic behavior of people is conditioned by the self-organizing and self-regulating, mobile and changing system based on new data, forming the knowledge base necessary for communication. This knowledge base includes linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge. Modern linguistics emphasizes the paramount and fundamental importance of the language as a system fundamental for the acquisition, storage, and development of our knowledge of the world as "a way of consolidating the entire reflective activity of thinking – the activity which is inextricably linked to the practical (physical) activity of the person" (Kolshanskiy, 1990).

The basic features of a complex system are as follows: 1) it interacts with the environment and other systems as a single whole, 2) consists of a hierarchy of subsystems of a lower level, 3) is a subsystem for higher-order systems, 4) preserves the general structure of interaction of elements with changes in external conditions and internal state (Kogan, Naumov, & all, 1977). The most important characteristic of the system is not aimless but purposeful interaction of the components of the system organized by the result of its activity (Anoxin, 1968). In doing so, it acts as a "self-adjusting system that adapts to the conditions of its functioning, not only by enriching its composition, but also by changing its very structure" (Arnol'd, 1991). Adaptation and self-regulation are characteristics of biological systems, as well as social ones, which can function in constantly changing conditions and self-adjust depending on changes in the impact of external factors. The main difference of social systems from natural ones is that their self-organization is supplemented by an extra-organization, since people are consciously active in society, who set specific goals, guided by the motives of their behavior and the spiritual values they are surrounded by. In this connection, the interaction of self-organization and extra-organization forms become the basis for the development of a social gender discourse.

The modern stage of linguistic research is characterized by the fact that as an object of analysis, the attention of scholars is increasingly attracted not by isolated speech acts, but interrelated sequences of complex speech acts – discourse. It is the analysis of discourse that has significantly broadened the horizons of pragmatics as one of the most effective and fruitful approaches to the study of verbal communication.

All interpretations of a discourse simultaneously include two components:

- 1) the dynamic process of the speech activity carried out in a social context;
- 2) the result of this activity, mainly in the form of a text.

Thus, in all scientific definitions the constant signs of a discourse are:

- 1) understanding it as a speech;
- 2) the relationship with the subject;
- 3) a compulsory inclusion in communicative activities in line with the forms of knowledge of the world and its pragmatic component.

### **Conceptual Framework- Discourse**

Based on experience and knowledge, discourse may be conceptualized as follows: any professional discourse may be defined as an intellectual ghetto with its own term system and methodology. As the present work claims, it is within the power of linguists, terminologists, and translators to introduce a specific discourse by elaborating, translating, and standardizing special terms, which will constitute this discourse after all.

The changes of globalization have affected all spheres of social life, moving towards unification and enriching national culture with elements of Western mass culture. The spiritual values and cultural characteristics of Western and Eastern civilizations have long been considered unique and even incompatible with each other. Today, due to the development of globalization processes, East-West culture has almost joined their bonds in an array of aspects. The spread of mass culture entails the system of values of Eastern societies to be changed; however, Western mass culture is capable of rejecting the specifics of Eastern civilization. Western mass culture, which supports the simplification and standardization of the way of life, always tends to preserve the unique elements of the cultural core of civilization. At the same time, the preservation of the "pure" traditional way of life can lead to "delay" in many areas. Therefore, it is reasonable to create an integral socio-cultural space that would include elements of Western mass culture, on the one hand, and specific values that make up the cultural core of civilization, on the other - a case which leads to further civilization hand in hand with the world community.

In what context the problem of preserving the cultural core of Uzbekistan – the country with a unique civilization – is situated now. Responding to the global challenges, the country is transforming its cultural values, preserving their integrity and continuity in line with past experiences and traditions of spiritual life. Uzbekistan is presented on the world arena not only as an object that accepts external cultural influences but as a subject of cultural globalization. It is worth noting that during the years of independence, Uzbekistan is open to practicing the borrowing of other cultural elements that correspond to the internal needs of Uzbek society. Hence, it is obvious that the assimilation of particular values of Western culture by mass consciousness is important for successful modernization. The internal transformations of Uzbek society were based on borrowings of Western systems and technologies, such as "European models" in the field of administrative management, the army, education, industry, urban infrastructure, etc. The system of gender relations in this respect is no exception.

### **Gender and Economics**

Transformation of gender relations based on Western values is not solely driven by external influences. It is underpinned by economic shifts, such as changes in employment structures; political changes involving integration into international processes aimed at democratization and equality; and social changes, including addressing domestic violence, altering fertility patterns, and managing an aging population. Additionally, the dissemination of Western ideals, values, and norms facilitated by globalization significantly contributes to these ongoing changes.

### **Government Policies in Gender**

Government initiatives in enhancing gender relations are primarily directed at eradicating discrimination against women. However, these efforts extend beyond rectifying gender disparities; they encompass regulating the integration and development of Western concepts and values, thereby fostering the formulation of a national vision for gender equality.

### **Hypothesis of this study**

We posit the hypothesis that imported gender ideas and values, despite external semblance, undergo adaptation upon entering Uzbekistan's social and cultural sphere. The synthesis of «Own» and «Alien» cultural elements [Kazakova 2014] enables Uzbek society to evolve its distinct values rooted in fundamental spiritual principles.

The gender discourse functions as an open system, giving rise to multiple fields within Uzbekistan's socio-cultural and political worldview: *education, politics, emergency response, peace and*

*security, sexual and reproductive health, sexual and gender diversity, human rights, violence against women, women's economic empowerment, macroeconomics, and more.*

Through engagement with the academic community, the government aims to implement Gender Mainstreaming (GM) across public and private domains as part of broader political and social globalization efforts. This collaborative approach, involving governmental and non-governmental organizations, fosters the integration of gender theoretical discourse into Uzbek social life. It lays the foundation for women's extensive participation across societal spheres, serving as a crucial precursor to the establishment of a democratic and secular society.

It's noteworthy that Uzbekistan, an early adopter in Central Asia, ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1995. The widespread dissemination of gender discourse throughout mass consciousness coincides with the development of a robust theoretical research base. The increasing number of defended PhD and DSc dissertations on gender topics underscores the significance of this issue. The scope of research covers a diverse array of problems, necessitating the identification of priority areas for GM discourse development. The emergence of new theoretical discourses invigorates the terminological apparatus of social gender discourse, integrating borrowed terms with fresh content.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the transformation of gender relations in Uzbekistan is a multifaceted process influenced by economic, political, social, and global factors. The assimilation and adaptation of Western ideas and values into Uzbek society occur through the synthesis of cultural elements, fostering a unique national perspective on gender. The government's efforts, supported by academia and civil society, play a pivotal role in nurturing gender equality and inclusivity. The integration of gender discourse into society aligns with Uzbekistan's commitment to international conventions and marks a step toward a more democratic and egalitarian future.

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