

GENDER RELATIONS IN
ENGLISH AND ARMENIAN PROVERBS

by

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Introduction

(English proverb) “Man, woman, and devil, are the three degrees of comparison.”

(Armenian proverb) “Մի քուռ տղեն յոթը աղջիկ արժե (A blind man is worth seven women.)”

Many aspects of culture are depicted in literature and other artistic forms of life representations. While poems, novels, and other forms of literature have a more subjective and a more representative role, proverbs can be seen as more condensed forms of cultural representation through more realistic images. As proverbs can be seen as best representatives of habits in a certain culture, they are more likely to show not only the traditions but also the taboos and the anchored stereotypes within the culture. Trying to concentrate on the gender relations and the sexist ideologies in Armenian and English (specifically American and British) cultures it would be important to review the proverbs representing both languages and cultures accordingly which can be seen in the examples provided in the beginning. As observed in scholarly works studying similar questions related to gender discrimination in different cultures, there is a tangible overlap within the initial hypothesis suggesting sexism in Armenian and English cultures which we will try to prove with our analysis.

With the development of technologies of discussing sociolinguistic analysis, it has become important to look at the different aspects that the earlier works failed to consider. Not only the differences of scholarly concentrations but also cultural perceptions and mentality creation was much different from the one delivered today. There are various time periods we can divide the research method development timeline but there is one social aspect that was highly avoided before early 1900s. The movement, known as Feminism, is an important aspect of the research question we want to study which is considered to be the period that was a hallmark in the process of questioning the anchored taboos about masculine and feminine roles in the society.

While it is important to look at the linguistic representations of gender discrimination while looking at the sample proverbs, it is also important to concentrate on the specific cultural representations the proverbs contain. When doing a close reading we can see specific types of discriminatory phrases that can be categorized to different levels of sexism. With the analysis of proverbs taken from both languages we will make assumptions based on the proverbs and the meanings they convey and contain. What this discussion may lead to is the uncovering of the misogynistic tendency in the cultures of both languages. While the two languages will presumably have similar contexts in describing genders, we will also concentrate on the differences they have in terms of attitude and cultural representation.

Literature Review

For understanding the fundamental reasons of gender biases in the language in general terms we firstly need to discuss the linguistic and the social structure of the language and the second-hand influences. As we take a look at Jenifer Coates's article, discussing the sociolinguistic aspects of language, we can see differences in the two-way communication between the two genders. As part of her research, Coates mentions the importance of the language used by male and female audiences which are the basis of creating sexist context in the language generally. As she mentions, the first and the most important aspect of sexism in language is caused by a gendered language. In this case neither the metaphors, nor the other artistic and cultural representations are creating the gendered context but rather the simple structure of gender reference in the specific language. Gendered language presupposes refereeing the two genders differently. While this may have been considered to be an ordinary distinction between the "naturally different" genders, in the modern era has become something to question. An important emphasis in her research is the social interaction between the two genders. And it is important for our research question to discuss is the social impact on the language in addition to the linguistic approach. Though there are different

subcategories within the social impacts such as Family relations, hierarchical relations as discussed in workplace or other social infrastructures, in this research question it will be enough to look at the influences of social infrastructures rather than the categories. Coates mainly discusses the gender relations within a family which also affect the fundamental knowledge of a child, creating the notion of a family and gender roles of the mother and the father in the child's overview of the world-understanding.

For our further concern, we need to take a look specifically at the English language to find out the specific aspects and similarities with the theoretical assumptions. Marlis and Hadumod in their thesis are discussing the English language as part of 30 other languages which contain ones with varying origins and constructions. The research discusses the gender in a grammatical context taking into consideration the specific aspects of the English language that may be specific to cultures speaking the language and even some subdivisions among those multiple cultures. Yet English is mainly describing the cultures that own it (presupposing UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, etc.), it has become a language of not only these few countries but a much bigger and a wider language which has reached worldwide functionality. Meanwhile, Xiaolan Lee in his "Sexism in the English Language" sees language as the main source of creating a society. This everlasting debate, similar to the "Eggs were the first or the chicken" will never come to its end, while answering the question whether it is the language that creates the social interaction or it is the vice versa and the language is born and developed because of the natural need to be socialized. Lee, in his research has come to the idea that it is the language that creates the social communication and the specific structures built in it are the main source of creating the differences in gender roles. What differentiates a group of people from the society is the certain meaning that communication has created through the functional tool called language. While the tool has been created out of that social interactions, it also affected the basic understandings about that society and the hierarchies within it. If we look at the specific case of the English language, the fact that the language is gendered, brings the presupposition that the specific structure may lead to a sexist

ideology among English-speaking nations. As we saw in the two articles that specifically discuss English, that is true: English language does presuppose a basic level of sexism.

Until now we've come to the idea that gendered language presupposes sexism in the language. But what if the language is not gendered? Can it still be sexist? What we will try to prove, is the positive answer. To look specifically at the Armenian language and the culture accordingly, we need to see the parallels between other languages and other researches in the similar context. Armenian is not a gendered language as opposed to English. But, in fact it contains a lot of sexist traditions, customs, and taboos that have several roots and explanations. Finding out the reasons of sexist ideology we seek to question the way the language may dictate a way of thinking and, maybe, will be able to change the overall viewpoint in a specific culture.

As similar to Armenian culture, Persian and Japanese are both non-gendered languages but are owners of a big history and culture. "On Sex Discrimination in Persian Proverbs", by cowriters Fekhteh and Shahla as well as Storm's "Women in Japanese Proverbs" discuss the specific cultures by researching Persian and Japanese proverbs accordingly. It is important to note the usage of the same art form of cultural representation as the main material for identifying the certain ideology within the culture. Both Persian and Japanese proverbs showed similar characteristics of conservative cultures with the many specific examples that the authors provide. In the Persian culture women are conceived as perverse, stubborn and selfish while men are represented as brutal villains. It is interesting that while looking at the sexist ideology in any sphere, we look for misogyny (hatred against women), while the study of the Persian proverbs provides us with the other perspective as well. While this may not seem to be important to look at, in terms of the message it will provide, it is very important to have the two sides of the story. Although we see the main tendency in all the research articles that we have reviewed, toward the discrimination against women, an important part of our research will be to keep the objectivity as much as possible. The article "Women in Japanese proverbs" is slightly different from the discussion of Persian proverbs with the different method that the author chose for the research. In this case, not only the

suppositions by the author and the thoughts of other researchers have been looked but also a questionnaire was conducted among people. This adds to the value of the research in the specific context the author tries to concentrate on, which is the contrast of newer proverbs and the old ones. In this case a questionnaire aims to show the current ideology on this matter which also serves as a tool to bring objective analysis of the culture rather than basing only on the subjective viewpoint of the author.

As for our final step in discussing the differences of Armenian and English language cultures through the discussion of proverbs, it is important to look at the specific differences of the Armenian language and the culture accordingly. In the article by Nona Shahnazaryan, “Androcentrism in Kharabakhi Armenian dialect” is research done by the author to find out the specific factors that affect sexism in the language and thus in the culture too. It is interesting to point out that the main source of her research is constructed of proverbs, cultural sayings, and lullabies used in the specific Karabakh region. While the findings have similar contexts with the researches on Persian or Japanese proverbs, the specifics of the languages have different nuances that may be important to look at. In her thesis, Shahnazaryan concentrates on the concept of “Androcentrism”, the tendency to take masculine ideas as the center of the Universe. In this thesis our goal will be identifying the tendencies in the specific cultures, yet it is already presupposed that discrimination will mostly be one-sided. And so looking at the concept of androcentrism is a very important aspect of our research which leads to the theoretical explanation of sexism against women. While Shahnazaryan’s article doesn’t concentrate on the theoretical explanations of androcentric theories, it gives a good hint for us to have a thorough look at the conceptual part of this theory as part of methodology construction.

On the further analysis of Armenian cultural specific features, “Women in a traditional Armenian Family” is an article by Rafik Nahapetyan which is another important discussion of specific Armenian cultural aspects. While looking at the gender relations within a culture, an important emphasis should be put on the family relations and the two-way communication between

men and women. While the family relations are important to look for all other cultures, it is way more important to look at, in case of the Armenian culture because the roles of Armenian women in the society are bound to very few fields, especially before the Soviet Union period and after. And among those few roles, family was the main source of power for women, having the other roles circled around the construction of family. In his research, Nahapetyan points out different literary examples that are representative of the Armenian culture. He doesn't mention proverbs as his main source for research but his methodology is similar in terms of the concept and the main goal that we are looking for.

With the discussion of similar cases in different cultures, looking at the specific representations of Armenian and English cultures we come up with the overall basis to make further steps on our research. Not only the methodological similarities but also the conceptual findings are important for us to refuse repetitiveness and step forward for the higher scholarly value of this research. Based on our assumptions and observations by scholars discussed earlier, we will discuss Armenian and English proverbs specifically. In the scholarly works we've discussed, only in some cases proverbs were taken as the main subject of discussion, while in our study, proverbs will be the primary focus. Other than finding out tendencies in the two cultures we will compare them trying to come up with objective explanations based on historical and/or ideological differences.

Research Question

With this thesis project we want to find out the sexist tendency in specifically Armenian and English cultures with the use of proverbs and sayings representing both cultures. Based on the literary analysis of similar features of other cultures we are trying answer the logical pattern of questions, "What are the indications of sexism in the proverbs? Are there any? What are the specific terms or phrases used to indicate sexism? What roles are given to specific genders? Are they really representative of their culture? What are the differences in Armenian and English proverbs in terms

of gender discrimination? What are the possible reasons for differences? What are the reasons or roots of misogyny (that is assumed to be found) in proverbs?”

Methodology

Trying to find out gender discrimination in Armenian and English cultures, the final choice of the primary research was to analyze proverbs as condensed forms of cultural representations. Having proverbs and gender relations as our main focuses of discussion, we have reviewed several academic works as our primary source for research method construction. With the help of the different methods used in the different researches we have analyzed, we have come up with an original method that combines several of the elements in these works. Although there are many other approaches we could take, considering the time and resource limitations we have constructed an optimal method accordingly.

Having into mind the “Women in Japanese Proverbs” article, we can recall the interesting approach used by the author who chose to have a survey along with the analysis of the proverbs. While this is a good method to make objective observations, the main effect of the survey will be to find out modern tendencies in the languages. Although this is also an interesting topic to discuss, the main purpose of this very research seeks to merely find out the ideologies attached to the historical representations rather than modern deliveries. Taking comparison as our basis for finding out the differences in the languages, our goal will be to use objective methods along this way. As compared to the article by Marlis and Hadumod taking English language as part of 30 other languages, we will consider the two languages only, concentrating on the specific aspects of those languages rather than language as a part of language family. What concerns other types of cultural representations, such as lullabies and literary works used by the Armenian scholars discussed earlier, we have differentiated them from our research method for a defined purpose. As literary works and lullabies (most of them having similar structure as a novel, short story or a poem or are even based on literary works) have the role of representing a culture rather than being a culture or

showing the culture as a whole. While stories and novels are concentrating on individual stories or events, proverbs are revealing and touching the general topics related to the specific culture. However, for some sections of our discussion we have referred to literary works from the two cultures as supporting material for the argumentations we made.

Having proverbs as the comparably more representative form of literary unit, we now need to understand the basic rules of getting the methodology structure of selecting the proverbs. For having a better representative sample, we decided to maximize the number of proverbs for a better proficiency level. During the first steps of collecting the proverb database we decided 200 (100 from each) as the initial number for both languages to consider.

At the final stage of the database collection, we have come up with 69 English proverbs and 67 Armenian proverbs (see Appendix A, B). Most of the proverbs were observed in their original languages; representations from other languages were sometimes reviewed too. The original Armenian ones were translated into English for the readers to be able to differentiate the specific aspects that are discussed during the analysis. Having the translation, we should also keep it in mind that cultural representations such as proverbs, cannot be fully translated with all the nuances and the culture-specific aspects such as dialects or slang words.

There are some geographical aspects that we encountered while looking at proverbs from both languages. English is an international language and is being used in different countries. Armenian, on the other hand, has a huge diaspora worldwide and has a huge influence from different cultures. Taking into consideration the different geographical spread of both languages we may not be able to exclude all the different impacts the host cultures may have had but we need to make sure to concentrate only on specific geographical points. For Armenian proverbs, the only country that predominantly is an Armenian-speaking country is Armenia yet the Armenian culture differs when we take the ones from different countries. As we can't exclude the effects of the worldwide impact on the Armenian culture, we can put restrictions by using only Eastern Armenian proverbs. There is another subdivision in the Eastern Armenian. As we observed in Shahnazaryan's

article about specifically Karabakhi dialect, there can be a concentration on only one specific dialect rather than observing the whole language. For the higher result of our accuracy, we included all the dialects of the Armenian language, used within Armenia (dialects from all the marzes). For choosing the English proverbs, we have put differentiations on the geographical range of the proverbs. While in case of Armenian it is easier to make the restrictions, English is much more difficult to deal with. With the choice of English language proverbs from all the countries we will not find out the culture specific factors of a specific geographical point but a certain language. As our main goal is to compare the cultures through proverbs and not the languages, we shortened the list of English-speaking communities to Great Britain and US. The choice of the countries is based on the origin of English language (alluding GB) and the modern representation of the language which predominantly became so widespread due to American culture.

The selection process included both online and hard-copy dictionaries. While picking proverbs, we have concentrated on the ones that are related to gender relations. The presence of gender relations was categorized based on different factors indicating gender relations. The choice was made through different methods. One of the primary methods was differentiation based on key-words. Words that have been used for the choice were: *woman/en, girl, lady, madam, mother (also mom, mummy), grandmother, daughter* for both English and Armenian proverbs with different language specific aspects included. This method provided a certain level of neutrality in the selection process. The other level of selection was based on subjective judgment as not all the proverbs selected with the key-word method were relevant to the gender relations topic. Another thing considered is the linguistic aspect in both languages. While we observed that language has an important role in forming the gender bias in a certain culture, we made sure to be careful about the edge between giving the dominant role to the language and looking for merely cultural formations as separate from linguistic representations. While looking at specific words, phrases, we looked at the etymology of some words that suggested the different possible meanings of a certain proverb.

Among the proverb databases that we collected from both languages we have differentiated several categories that were the main aspects based on which we differentiated our discussions of the findings.

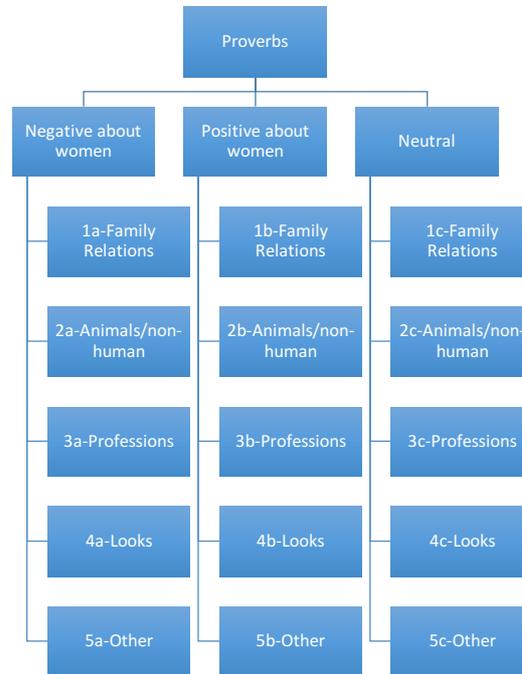


Figure 1: Proverb Categorization Map

As illustrated in Figure 1 we can see that there are 5 thematic categorizations and three positivity level categorizations. The thematic categorizations, *Family Relations*, *Animals/Non-human category*, *Professions*, *Looks*, and *Other* are selected based on the close analysis of the proverb databases of both languages. The *Family Relations* category includes proverbs that are related to aspects of marriage, mother-father relationship, parent roles etc. The *Animals/Non-human* category discusses proverbs that include direct or indirect comparison of men and women with different kinds of animals or objects. The *Professions* category discusses the different kinds of professions or occupations that are referred to men and women differently. The *Looks* category is the fourth one on the list, which discusses how the two cultures relate to appearance, its importance in the cultures of discussion etc. And finally the *Other* category includes the proverbs that couldn't be categorized under a certain topic so were presented here for constructing the overall picture of positivity level for the entire database.

For the English proverbs, the primary source of proverbs was from online outlets while in case of Armenian most of the proverbs were taken from hard-copy sources. Although it was much easier to search the English proverbs through the key-word method, the hard-copy Armenian sources contained a large collection of proverbs which made the collection process much easier. There were several primary sources for the English proverbs, such as *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs*, *Oxford dictionary* and several other online outlets for small amounts of proverbs. For the Armenian proverbs the two primary sources were Ghanalanyan's "Aratsani" and Sardaryan's "Khratani" on hard copies and several other online outlets, such as personal collections of a blogger nicknamed Vardan. As mentioned earlier, 100 proverbs were selected on the first stage, some of which were chosen to be excluded from the database. All the proverbs in our database were made sure to have English, American and Armenian origins, otherwise they were again, excluded from the list. There were cases when the translation of a foreign proverb was quite popular in either of the cultures but was not included in the list to keep the initial strategy which was made to exclude the foreign influence.

All the proverbs were categorized based on personal judgment with the thematic aspects of the proverbs. The indicators were not definite for most of the categories that is why all of the proverbs were categorized after a close-reading stage. The only category that had linguistic indication was the *Animals/Non-human* category which made the process less subjective. There were proverbs which could be categorized in several of the categories. But they were divided based on the primary meaning and the purpose of the certain proverb. While a proverb contains an animal or object comparison it can still be in the Family Relations category. Yet these categorizations are not restricted for the explanation stage. Some proverbs from the *Other* category or from *Family Relations* were used to describe a certain tendency in a set of proverbs from both languages. An important lead in the methodology construction and the analysis process was the first part of Ghanalanyan's "Aratsani" which contains an interesting analysis of the proverbs included in the dictionary section. With the help of this and other sources mentioned in the References and the

Literature Review, it was possible to construct the methodology structure of this research and the findings we have come up.

Findings

After choosing the proverb database according to the methodology that was assumed with the natural amount of modifications, the most important stage of analysis is to come. The database of 68 proverbs from each language was collected which will become the basis for the assumptions of the findings we will have.

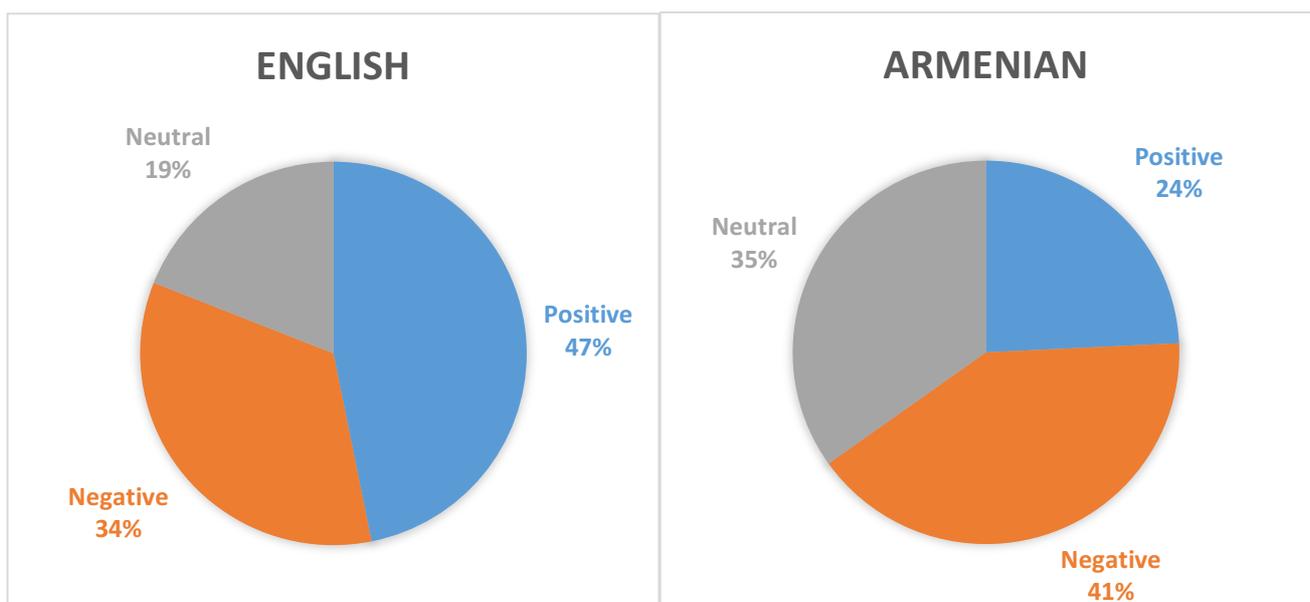


Figure 2: Overall Comparative Level of Positivity

Within the categories that we have divided the proverbs into, there are a lot of specific aspects that we need to address. As we can see in the charts above (Figure 1), the English proverbs have significant dominance in having proverbs with more positive connotation (47%) about women than in the Armenian one (24%) (From now on, by saying positive/negative/neutral proverb, we will mean positive/negative/neutral about the attitude toward women). Yet it is very important to look at the neutral category which includes proverbs that are neutral to both genders and/or are

descriptive of only male characteristics. Within this category, however, we can see that in the Armenian language the neutral ones are 35% as opposed to 19% in the English ones. And finally in the negative category as we could infer, there are more negative proverbs in the Armenian language than in the English ones.

Having the general overview in mind, it is time to go deep into the specific subcategories that each big category has. As we could see in the methodology section, there are 5 big categories within which we will elaborate our findings. Each category will be described based on the analysis of the same category in the two languages which will be followed by the similarities and differences of the two. Let's start from the beginning.

Family Relations

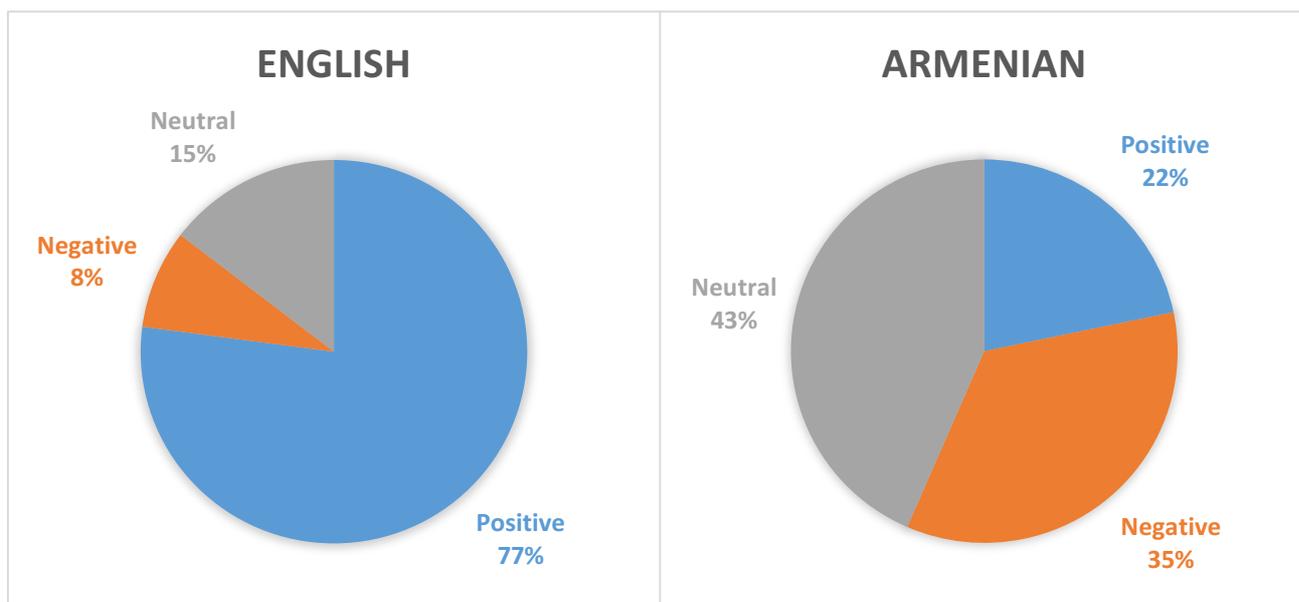


Figure 3: Comparative Level of Positivity-Family Relations Category

Family Relations is the first category that we have. Within this big category we have several subcategories which will help us to make certain implications. The subcategories are descriptive of the specific notions the languages and the cultures include. Some features are very similar or are radically different which will be discussed in each separate subcategory.

In the list of English proverbs that are in the *Family Relations* category there are different aspects that we differentiated. The first specific aspect is about *Marriage*. Here we will discuss marriage as a form of commitment, a stage within the life of two people that changes the form of life. Marriage is also taken as a goal of life for both genders, the destination of all young people after which they change their status and become something else than young people.

While scrutinizing the English proverbs in this subcategory, there was a tendency showing marriage from the perspective of men. The proverb *A young man married is a young man marred* is an example from English proverbs that show the attitude toward marriage. As we can guess, the initiators and transmitters of this proverbs are people who experienced unsuccessful marriage which is shown from a male perspective. In this and some other proverbs we can see that marriage is identified as something that takes away the freedom from men. While we can assume that marriage does the same to women as well (even more, if we consider the possibility of having children), the female perspective on the loss of freedom is not discussed. While this proverb doesn't contain direct stereotyping, it has many layers of indirect stereotyping. First of all, the word *marred* can be referred to the marriage with a woman and not the other difficulties that it causes. With this example we can see that responsibilities and difficulties of marriage are often blamed on women, the only other side involved in the commitment. The other point in the proverb mentioned above is the fact that the person expressing this idea is men. While this may seem normal that each gender expresses their own attitude toward something common, like marriage, it is important to point out that male opinion in our database is dominant. The proverbs can be originated in different time periods when women were not allowed to speak up or just wouldn't. This is a greater issue while discussing literary works. In the context of proverbs this issue is less applicable yet is one of the big reasons it exists.

There is a different picture in the database of Armenian proverbs. In Armenian context, marriage is discussed from the perspective of women, or rather girls. For an Armenian girl, there is a “problem” of getting married. While men are free to choose a girl to get married, girls don't have

that power. So what they and their parents do is try to “advertise” the girl. As it is stated in this proverb, *Չը գովված աղջիկը տասնն է մնացեր*: *A girl without praise didn't get married*, we can see that even though the proverb is shown from the perspective of a woman (as opposed to the English proverb example) it is not characterized as positive because of the evident negative attitude toward a woman as a product. This proverb has two layers of discrimination toward women. The first meaning, as we already mentioned is the attitude toward women as a product and the prejudice that women should be praised just like milk in the market to get married. There is nothing about the feelings of a woman, or what the woman wants; it's more about the attitude of the parents which shows the traditional values and attitude toward relationships. The other meaning the proverb conveys, is that a non-married woman at a certain age has a lower status than the ones that got married or are younger. This supports the idea that for a woman it should be a life goal to get married and the failure to do so by a certain age will lead to a lower status in the society.

There is another interesting aspect within the collection of Armenian proverbs that is worth discussing. It is the notion of dowry portrayed in the proverbs which is still a common tradition in Armenia. As we already discussed in the previous paragraph, getting married is a social status issue for a young woman. It should be noted that this is also a problem for the parents of a non-married woman. The fact that parents are involved in this, makes the custom of dowry “justified”. In the modern context, dowry is justified to be the gift from the parents of the bride to the newborn couple, to the newborn household, while the house itself (a bigger asset) is provided by the groom's parents and the groom himself. This is how the interpretation of dowry changed through time, while in the initial context it was much more business-oriented. As we can observe in many literary works as well, (e.g. Gabriel Sundukyan's “Pepo”) dowry was the important part of the “deal” of marriage. And the feelings were not very important because marriage was usually not the decision of the couple but their parents instead. And because parents were the decision-makers, they considered more practical values than love, which was money. (Earlier, dowry was only in form of money; later the tradition changed to presents that can be used in the household, starting from furniture to

forks and knives). And dowry was, in fact, a way to show the social status of the bride's family and if the bride was in a poor family, no matter her skills or appearance, it was quite hard for her to get married to a man from a rich family. In this proverb, *Բաժինքը մաշ, հարսը՝ դուժմաշ*:/If the dowry is good, the woman is good we can directly see the attitude that was common in the Armenian society.

One more aspect connected to the notion of dowries in our society that we can see in several of our proverbs from the dataset is that women are often blamed for exaggerating their dowry in front of their family-in-laws to show that they brought some value to the family. There is even a very accepted custom to have a celebration of dowry. This is kind of a ceremony after the wedding which is called *Գլուխլվանք* in Armenian, which, in a literal translation means, “Washing the head”. During the ceremony, relatives of the bride gather in the groom's house (mostly women over 30 years old) to celebrate the union of the couple, during which the aunt or another woman relative of bride's shows off the minor part of the dowry to the other people gathered there (mostly the towels, the small assets. Furniture, washing machine, etc. come later, not during the ceremony). This tradition, which is sometime used even now, in the regions of Armenia is a vivid example of exaggeration and highlight of dowry which is sometimes criticized by the groom's family (although it is interesting to note that if the ceremony is not organized, that will be criticized by the groom's family as well). It is greatly illustrated in this proverb, *Կնճա բերած փողը դռան զանգակ ա, անց ու դարձ անելիս՝ ճկատիդ կդիպչի*:/The money earned by a woman is like a door-bell, when you go across the door it jumps to your head. Although it is not directly about dowry, it is about the money the woman brings to home which is used in the context of dowry as well (not only the woman's salary). This shows the fact that it is believed that a woman shoves the money (the dowry) into the man's face all the time, trying to exaggerate what she brought which serves as a token for her status to go up in the relationship, in the family hierarchy, and in her self-esteem as well.

As we can see, the overall attitude toward marriage is shown in a negative context in both cultures. In the English proverbs there is an obvious “warning” especially to men, to not get married. As opposed to English, in the Armenian ones, marriage is taken as a life goal, which implies that it is considered to be a good thing, but it is a reason for a lot of troubles for both the person that is getting married and the parents as well. Although we are now discussing the proverbs from the perspective of the attitude toward marriage and not toward women, it is interesting to note that the proverbs related to marriage in the English context are placed mostly in the neutral category whereas the Armenian ones are mostly placed in the negative and neutral categories.

There is another subcategory within the category of *Family Relations* which is the wife-husband relationship in the family. By discussing this subcategory, we will concentrate on the roles each of them take in the power hierarchy of the family. While discussing the specific aspects in the proverbs in this context, this is one of the categories that the evident difference of cultural attitudes exists. In the English proverbs we can see that there is no clear evidence of patriarchy and there is a positive attitude toward women who are in charge of the household.

In the Armenian proverbs dominance of the husband is more evident (or at least its importance as a social convention is stated). A clear example is, *Տան համար տղամարդու ոտի կեղտն էլ հարկավոր ա*:/Even the dirt on a man’s feet is necessary for the house. But there is one more interesting fact to concentrate on. In the Armenian proverbs the role of a wife is mentioned as the “undercover” leader in the house. As it is stated in this proverb, *Տղամարդը տան գլուխն է, կինը՝ վիզը*:/The husband is the head of the family, the woman is the neck, we can see that although man is given the role of a thinker, the more responsible job, the woman is the one controlling that same thinker (thus, this proverb is categorized as neutral). This is also depicted in the proverb, *Տղամարդը որ կա դրսի պատ է, կնիկը որ կա ներսի պատ է*:/The man is the outside wall, the woman is the inside wall. In this case the woman is considered to be the person who stays at home all the time. Although this mostly has to do with jobs and responsibilities of men and women in the society (which will be discussed later in this section), this proverb also illustrates

the fact that women are actually the one that stay at home all the time and thus govern the whole household. It is interesting to notice that we have a similar proverb that can be put parallel to this one exists in the English language, *Men make houses, women make homes*. Although in a little different and even more positive way, this proverb also conveys the meaning that women are the ones that stay at home and that they are the ones that are in charge of moderating the family. One important part of that governance is considered to be taking care of children in the family. But it is questionable whether women were also in charge of governing the money outflow (it can differ from family to family).

As opposed to the Armenian ones, the English proverbs are more on the neutral attitude about the role of the leader in the family. *A man without a wife is but half a man* is a great example of how the attitude toward women goes. Of course, we can see some negative context in the proverbs as well, e.g. *The husband is always the last to know*. But this supports the idea that women have bigger roles in the English context as the aforementioned proverb is a complaint against a woman who does her job without telling the husband.

In the family context it is very interesting to look at in-law relationships. We will discuss this in the relationship in the subcategory *Wife-husband relationship*. Both Armenian and English cultures have proverbs about in-law relationship yet there are different approaches that we can propose different explanations. *There is but one good mother-in-law and she is dead* is an English proverb that is implied to be from the perspective of a man. It shows the attitude of men toward mother in-laws in the English context. While there are a lot of jokes about mother in-laws, (the wife's mother, զոգանչ/zoqanch in Armenian) in Armenian language, we can see less cultural sayings, proverbs that express the perspective of a man in this context. Being projected more in jokes, this context is taken much easier than the woman's perspective. In Armenian culture the woman's perspective is more often projected in proverbs rather than jokes which take the context into the level of complaint. The difference between the cultural perspectives can be given simple explanations. One is that in Armenia extended families are still very common and so after marriage,

the couple lives with the groom's parents. The generation gap, the social, economical, and hierarchical dominance issues are key factors that become a reason for the gap to rise. In addition, there is a clash of value systems of two families, two households (the bride being the representative of "the other" family).

While discussing the notion of extended families, there is one more aspect in the Armenian context that is unusual for American or British audience. It is the relationship between the bride and sister in-law. The one-in-one relationship between the sister in-law and the bride which is often discussed in the context that the bride is jealous of the sister in-law. This is vividly illustrated in the Armenian folk tale *Կռկատ աղջիկը*/ *The girl without hands* which portrays the bride as the evil character who destroys the life of her sister in-law out of jealousy toward her husband and his sister. Not only the fact that the character is taken as an evil but also the fact that at the end, the wife gets tossed out of the house tied to the back of the donkey shows the extreme version of the attitude that occurs in the Armenian context. The jealousy and the bad relationship can also rise from the attitude of the mother in-law toward the bride and the sister in-law. As a case example we can discuss a situation when the mother in-law (the groom's mother) cuts the cake. It is perceived in the Armenian context that the mother would give the bigger portion to her daughter rather than the daughter in-law. This example is just an illustration how discrimination rises (which is also because the mother in-law has the highest power in the household). It is quite logical to think that this problem is less illustrated in the American and English culture because of the fact that during adulthood, children tend to leave their parents' apartment and live independently. It is also very much connected to economic factors. This also leads to the fact that the newborn couple will live independently. And while not sharing the same household, it becomes less likely that the wife would be jealous of the sister in-law or the mother in-law would prioritize the division of goods (both material and non-material). As it is noted in Nahapetyan's research (p. 73) describing the role of women in an Armenian family, specifically in the Sasunian region, women would become socially independent and would get credibility later in their life when they already have children. As

a follow up to this case, it is quite interesting to notice that the groom's mother becomes more powerful after the bride has entered their household. This is also because there are many more aspects to control within the household governance, such as, who is going to wash the dishes, who will do the laundry etc. This is why household problems become more important for the wellbeing of the family and thus the father (also father in-law) approves the leadership of his wife in the decision making process. (This is a common interpretation that can be different based on the characteristics of certain people and may not be projected in every family).

In the proverb *Ես ախջիկ՝ տղին եմ տըլե, իս տալվերաց չեմ տըլե: /I've given my girl to the man not his sisters* we can see the specific problems that rise in the family. Firstly, it is important to note that this proverb is from the perspective of the mother in-law, the bride's mother. The next thing to pay attention to is that the mother in-law complains not about the groom's mother but about the sister in-laws. The proverb has different layers of discussion yet we will concentrate on the ones that were left from the previous paragraphs. As portrayed in the proverb, there is often misunderstanding within the sister in-laws and the bride which is mainly because of the age similarities. In the household, it is the bride and the sister in-law that have the most interaction and thus the more disagreements. While mother in-law is identified as the most powerful female character in the family, the next on the rank is the daughter of the family. And thus, the newcomer bride is seen as lower than the sister in-law. We can bring the analogy of Cinderella story, identifying the bride as a step-sister character. As we earlier mentioned, the folk tale *Կռևատ աղջիկը/ The girl without hands* is often characterized as the Armenian version of Cinderella, which instead of step sisters has the sister in-law character as the evil ones.

As we spoke about the relationship of the sister in-law relationship, it is now time to transfer to the brother-sister relationship in the family. While there are certain factors such as age difference and social status that affect the relationship between a brother and a sister, there are a lot of value perceptions that affect the worldview creation of a child. It is interesting to note that only in the Armenian part of our database we can observe proverbs related to brother and sister relationship.

In many of the proverbs in the Family Relations category we can see that there is an evident discrimination against the female child in the family. The proverb *Աղջկերանց տերը դուռնը հուսկ կուտա:* /The man having daughters would stay silent expresses the accepted “hatred” of the attitude of parents toward their female child, whereas this one shows the worship toward the male child, *Կինն որ մանչ ծնի՝ տան պատերն ալ կը խնդան:* /If a woman gives birth to a son, even the walls of the house get happy. One interpretation of this phenomena is the analogy between the character roles of the parents: the daughter being similar to the mother and the son being similar to the brother. Thus, the unequal relationship between the mother and the father also affects the



Figure 4: Sex-selective Abortion in the Caucasus Region

perceptions of gender roles in the brother-sister relationship which is later portrayed in their own families.

Unfortunately, the high level of discrimination toward female children is still a current issue. Armenia each year loses 1400 potential mothers (UNFPA, 2011) that are victims of sex-selective abortion. As noted in the article of the Economist Magazine, sex-selective abortion rate in Armenia is one of the highest in the world exceeding the distortion in India (Gendercide in Caucasus. September, 2013). As it is illustrated

in Figure 3, the issue is typical for the Caucasus region which has both political and traditional background. Because of current conflict situation between the countries, there is always need for soldiers which has big roots in the history as well. Another aspect is the traditional values in Armenia and the neighboring countries which have been discussed earlier in our paragraphs. The economic factor is one of the biggest in these all explanations. With the social taboos in mind, it is accepted that men can earn more than women and thus it is economically more beneficial to have a son rather than a daughter. Another factor is that the daughter is expected to get married after a certain age and thus will leave the house and will not be able to bring economic profit to the family. It is interesting to see that according to Figure 3, the level of sex-selective abortion was much less

during the Soviet era. At this period, the level is very similar in all the countries mentioned in the chart. One reason can be the non-competitive job market which was regulated by the government.

While abortion is a big theme for debate in US too, the specific case of sex-selective abortion is often not even recognized in the society. While looking for statistics of sex-selective abortion in US, one can hardly come over any significant research done in the field. On the first sight, the research done by American scholars is mainly done for other countries. In the general top country list discussed, we can never find US among them. This is one more big difference in the culture acceptances that affect the evident difference of Armenian and English cultures toward gender discrimination, in extreme levels.

After discussing the relationship between the brother and a sister, it is important to look at the wife and the husband as parents. In both of the cultures we can see that parents are perceived as respected characters. There are several characteristics that are identified by parent characters. One important aspect of parenthood discussed in English proverbs is the role-model character. It is portrayed in the proverbs that the father is the example for the son and the mother for the daughter. As an example, *Like mother, like daughter* or *One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters*.

As separate from a parent character, it is important to look specifically to the character of **mother** which is considered to be one of the big roles in the family relations. The character of the mother is discussed aside from the parental responsibilities in general. It is rather an honored role which also comes from the fact that it is the mother that is responsible for the biological creation and care for the child. *A mother never thinks her baby is ugly* or *A mother's love never ages* are both examples of how the mother is viewed as the loving character that takes care of everything about the child.

It is very interesting to note that within the database of our Armenian proverbs we don't have ones describing the character of a mother. One reason is the vague definitions of the origins of the proverbs under this theme (applicable to other themes as well). While looking for Armenian proverbs, there were many that would discuss mother's character but were not of Armenian origin

and were rather widely used translations of foreign authors. To stay true to the initial methodology of choosing proverbs with solely pure origins we will not discuss the commonly used yet translated sayings. As a substitute, we will discuss the character of a mother in popular poems by famous authors. There are a lot of poems dedicated to mothers. Poets that have several poems with this theme include Parouyr Sevak, Hovhannes Shiraz, and many others. In one of the most famous poems in Armenian about mother, is “Mother’s hands” by P. Sevak which shows all the feelings connected to the attitude toward mother through the description of a mother’s hands. An interesting poem by Shiraz is called “My mother” that lists all the things, the occupations, and the functions that a mother takes in the house. By the list of these “occupations” the authors contrast the actual things mothers do and the honor they (deserve) to get. In other cases, the authors contrast the hard occupations the mother takes care of and the kind and honorable occupations. As literally translated from the poem we can see the specific characteristics that are put in rhyme in the original version:

Մեր տան ծառան է մայրս, My mother is the servant in the house,

Մեր տան արքան է մայրս, My mother is the king in the house,

Մեր տան անճարն է մայրս, My mother is the helpless in the house,

Մեր դեղ ու ճարն է մայրս... My mother is the cure in the house...

Having these poems as the constituents of proverbs discussing motherhood, we can infer the attitude toward a mother in the Armenian literature that portrays the attitude of the corresponding society. One important factor is that Armenian proverbs tend to teach something rather than state. In most of the cases, there are vivid comparisons to create implicit metaphors. In this case, it would sound inappropriate to teach a moral about a mother or to compare a mother with something else within a proverb. Although proverbs have literary meaning as well, they tend to have more sarcastic and ironic tone which makes it inappropriate to use for describing mothers. This can be another explanation for people to choose to praise their mothers through poems by honored authors, through well-developed poems rather than proverbs that serve as folk wisdoms. Having seen the attitude toward women in the context of a family, it is now time to turn to the other category in our scheme.

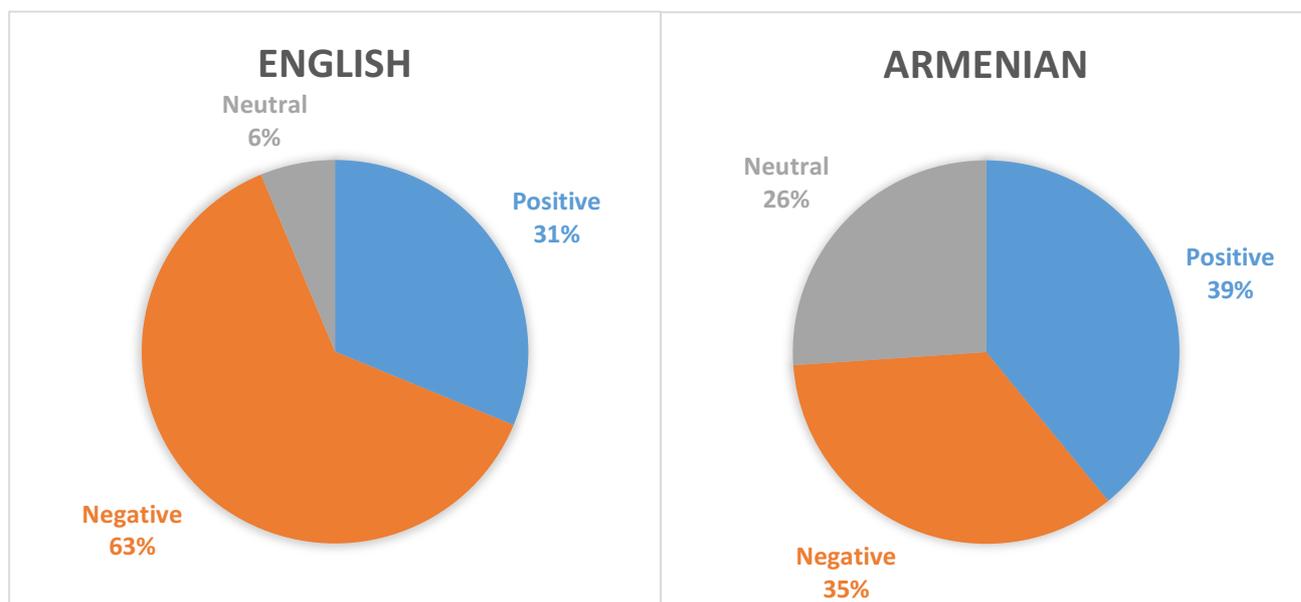
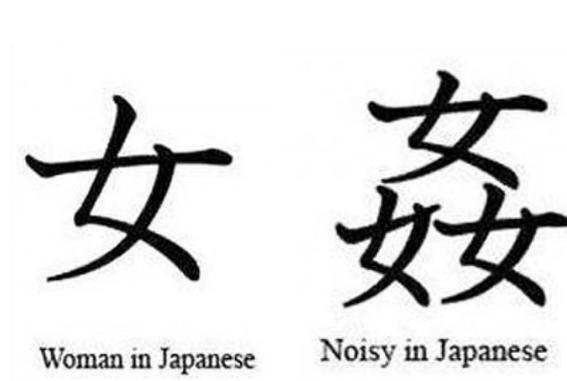


Figure 5: Comparative Level of Positivity-Animals, Non-human Characteristics Category

In this category we will discuss the different non-human characteristics that are compared to women. A highly used linguistic method that led to the idea of discussing this subcategory was *comparison*. As a linguistic tool it is widely used in the database of both Armenian and English proverbs. In many of the proverbs we can see that women and men are compared to objects that create certain meanings, thus becoming metaphors in the specific contexts. As differentiated in the subtitle of the category, there is also a separate tendency to compare women with animals which is also a widely used form of allegory in literature used to describe not only women but people in general. It is of our interest, however, to differentiate the animals and the objects that women and men are compared with, having in mind the conventional metaphorical characteristics given to each animal and object.

In this category there are different layers that are worth discussing within the two cultures. Let's start from the *Animal* subcategory. In the English proverb database of our research we can see the tendency to compare women with loud animals. As portrayed in this proverb, *Many women, many words; many geese, many turds* we can see the obvious prejudice against women. It is biologically

true that female vocal range is in a higher register than male and is perceived as louder than men. But the problem in this proverb is different. First of all, this proverb is shown from the perspective of a man and thus shows the attitude toward the other part. Another aspect is that geese are perceived to make noise even if not necessary. So the analogy is not only offensive because of the



fact that a woman is compared to an animal but the specific characteristic of the animal as well- the noisy character. This prejudice is also shown in the proverb *a DEAF husband and a blind wife are always a happy couple* from the Family Relations category that describes the ideal version of a woman within a couple as one that is not heard.

Figure 6: Japanese Symbols: woman and noise

As we see the analogy of a noisy character of a woman in the English language, it is interesting to note that noise prejudice is shown in the Japanese culture as well, and most evidently in the alphabet itself (Figure 5). While *woman* is the first symbol, *noise* is the group of women. This attitude is shown in another English proverb, yet not from this category, *three women make a market* which is similar to what the Japanese symbols convey.

In the Armenian database there is only one proverb that shows comparison with an animal. In fact, this proverb is a very important one, in terms of its role as a “call for change”. It says, *Առյուծը առյուծ է՝ էգ լիսի թե ործ: /A lioness or a lion, it's a lion.* This proverb shows the positive attitude that a person should be judged not based on gender prejudices but on the absolute strength and the value as a person.

After discussing the animal characteristics, it is important to look at one aspect that is discussed both in the Armenian and English databases. As separate from animals, we differentiated the *Devil* character which is often referred to women. While we consider the devil as a bad character, these proverbs put women in comparison with them giving them an even worse position in the comparison scale. *Վատ կևարմատից քաջկերև (տեսիլքեր) էլ փախել են: The devils*

ran away from the bad woman. This proverb shows that woman is perceived to be something that can scare even the devils. As shown in the English proverb, *Man, woman, and devil, are the three degrees of comparison* we can see the interesting scale. Although in this case the woman is not perceived as a worse character than the devil, the woman's character is put in a worse level than a man on the scale.

Getting to the Non-human characteristic subcategory, there are much more aspects to look in terms of stereotyping than in the Animal. In this subcategory we can see highly different characteristics in the two languages.

In the English database we can make an interesting comparison between two proverbs from our database that support each other and the convention they both contain. *A man without a woman is like a fish without a tail* and *A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle (A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle)*. These two proverbs have an interesting commonality by having a fish as the animal of comparison to men in one case and to women in the other case. Although conventionally fish are known for their silence, in this case lack of voice is not the purpose of the comparison. While in the first one the fish is taken as just one other animal character, in the case of the second one, fish serves to add the ridiculous tone of the proverb by putting together a fish and a bicycle. It is important to note that in this case the proverbs are positive toward women (and are categorized so). Another proverb which is important to mention from the English database is *Dally not with money or women*. Unlike the first two, this one is clearly negative toward women and has the comparison between a woman and money which is perceived to be negative.

In the Armenian database there are a lot of proverbs that characterize men and women as objects that have certain characteristic conventions. Here is the list of objects that are compared with men and women in our Armenian proverb database:

- *Men- golden pouch, stone, rose (with thorns), wall*
- *Women- wine (negative), book (negative), dusty pouch, egg, water (as something that makes the stone thinner), flower, tree, watermelon, glass, rose, winch, sock*

It is interesting to see the general group of words used describing men and women in comparison. In the proverb *Մանչ՝ օսկի փարջ, աղջիկ՝ հողե փարջիկ*: /A boy is a golden pouch; a girl is a dusty small pouch we can see the direct comparison of men and women with a top level of discrimination which doesn't even require any discussion. As opposed to this proverb and these objects there are objects here that are not necessarily perceived to have negative characteristics, such as, *cow, water, flower, book, tree, rose, etc.* What is interesting, all these conditionally positive words show their negative side in the proverbs, like this one, *Կինը գիրք է, ինչ իմանաս քանի մարդ է կարդացել*: /A woman is a book; how would you know how many have already read it. While book has a lot of good characteristics that could be mentioned, it is mentioned in the most unflattering way possible. This phenomenon may be explained with the idea that women are also perceived to be good yet they show their negative side instead.

In these words we can see certain tendency of using physically stronger objects for men and soft and fragile objects for women, such as, *Աղջիկը որ կա շուշա է, որ կոտորվեց չի կարկաստվիլ*: /A girl is like glass, if you break it, it can't get fixed or *Կնիկարմատն ու ձուն մեկ օրինակ են, հենց ձեռն ես տալիս թե չէ, էն սիաթը փխլվում են*: /A woman and an egg are the same thing: the moment you touch it, it breaks. There is one other object that is interestingly enough compared to both men and women-the rose. Flowers are usually referred to be female. And it is also perceived that the rose is the queen of all the flowers. Women are often compared to a rose not only because of its classic beauty but also the thorns it has, making it unreachable. In the proverb *Չոռավ պացված վարթան վետ(հոտ) չի կյալ*: /A rose flourished by force doesn't smell good woman is compared to a rose with no indication of specific characteristics of the flower but rose as a representative of a female character. In this proverb though, *Մարդի ծեծած, վարդի ծեծած*: /Man hitting is a rose hitting men are compared with a rose rather than women but with the indication of certain characteristic of rose having thorns.

While talking about the nonhuman characteristics and having discussed the animal category earlier, it is important to discuss a nursery rhyme in English which sometimes serves a proverb

because of its popularity. In the nursery rhyme mentioned afterward, we can see a clear analogy of boys and girls differentiated in terms of the characteristics they are described with.

What are little boys made of?

What are little boys made of?

Snips and snails

And puppy-dogs' tails

That's what little boys are made of

What are little girls made of?

What are little girls made of?

Sugar and spice

And everything nice [or "all things nice"]

That's what little girls are made of

In this case the nursery rhyme has a reverse-stereotyping. While in the proverbs we discussed we could predominantly see discrimination toward women, in this case men are subject to discrimination which is crucial to note. But an important aspect is not the overall positive or negative attitude toward women and men accordingly, but about the stereotypes between the lines. While snails or puppy-dog tails are perceived as not very good things, they represent a tricky character which also leads to a smarter character (note that this is one interpretation and there can be other explanations as well). While girls are represented as sweet and nice characters which, although has overall positive perception has stereotypes against women being look-oriented (see the last section for Looks category). Another aspect to note here is that the non-human characteristics and the animal comparisons given to girls and boys are different also with the locations they can be found in. While sugar and spice are found in the kitchen, snips and snails and puppy-dog tails are

outside the house. This interesting fact leads us to the discussion of the conventional occupations for men and women, which is discussed in the next section.

Professions, Occupations

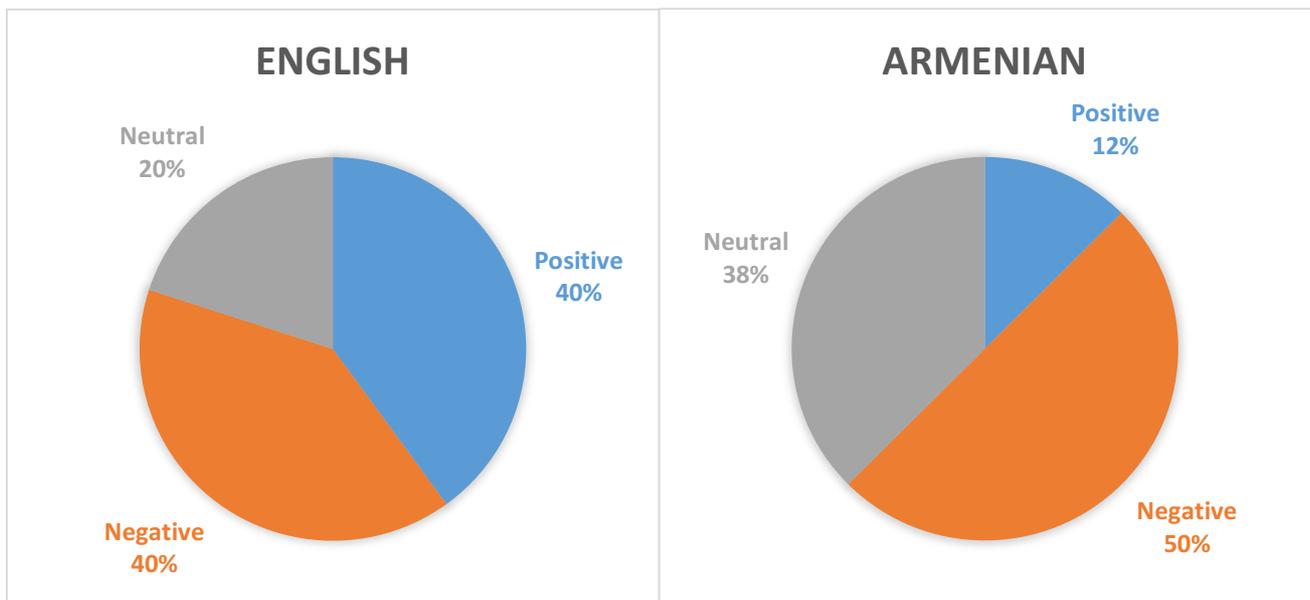


Figure 7: Comparative Level of Positivity-Professions/Occupations Category

While discussing the tendencies of attitudes in this category, we will not only look at professions per se but will consider its bigger meaning including the occupations and the roles men and women take in the society. Taking the two languages in comparison we can see a lot of similarities, even though, in general, we can see high level of difference between the positive, negative, and neutral portions within the two databases. Although the database is not full of many proverbs to describe this specific category fully, it has some characteristic that give the general overview for both cultures.

It is interesting to note that in the English database there are no proverbs talking about professions that women or men are handier in. What is spoken about is the “musts” that are believed in the society. An interesting point is discussed in this proverb, *Discreet women have nether eyes nor ears. (Tactful women neither see nor hear what they should not)*. While the phrasing of the proverb conveys a positive attitude, having an advice-giving kind of tone, it rather

shows the fact that women tend to keep what they see or think without having a voice or being able to intervene in the problem. And the most important part is that a woman keeping the “things they should not hear” are considered to be tactful.

One positive aspect that is highly discussed is the hard-working character of the woman which is praised. This is seen in both of these proverbs, *A woman’s work is never done* and *If you want something done, ask a busy woman*. Both of this shows the perception of the character that does a lot of work and helps everybody. A common stereotype that we can see from a proverb which we saw with indirect implication in the previous chapter concerning nursery rhymes. *A woman should be (kept) barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen*. A highly stereotypical proverb like this shows three kinds of stereotypes at the same time. It is interesting to note that it doesn’t use any kind of metaphor or comparison as a tool to convey the meaning but rather states the idea directly. After the occupation of a woman as the worker in the kitchen, another conventional thinking is the idea that a woman is a tool for natural reproduction. While this is biologically true and women are the gender that is accountable for natural reproduction, it is evident that in the proverbs, the reproduction process is the only thing a woman should be doing. This is also one of the reasons of the highly praised mother character of a woman in the family (because it’s the only occupation connected to women).

There are other interesting aspects in the Armenian database that are not seen in the English ones. But as we discussed earlier for the English proverbs, we could see the clear distinction between the outdoor and indoor occupations being described to men and women accordingly in the Armenian database as well. While most of it is more evident in other categories of the proverbs which we already discussed earlier, there is one proverb that shows the men’s side of the convention. *Տղեն կամ փորն է (դեռ չծնված), կամ ձիու վրա: /The guy is either in the womb (not born) or on top of the horse (riding somewhere)*. Another one showing this aspect, having both men and women with distinct occupations, *Մարդը տան մշակ, կինը տան ճախարակ: /The man is the farmhand of the house; the woman is the winch of the house*. One important aspect here

is that in this proverb we not only see the indoor-outdoor aspect but also the fact that the man is given a human occupation/profession characteristic while the woman is characterized as an object, a winch. This serves as an explanation and also an excuse for men doing the outdoor work, which is usually explained by the biological factor. This is supported by one proverb here, *Կնիկարմատը հավ չի մորթի*:/ *A woman won't kill a chicken*. Although this can also be discussed as a positive saying, taking the idea that women are not cruel, there is one more aspect which suggests that women are not able to handle rough jobs. By stating this in harsh terms, using the word *cruel*, we also mean other characteristics “necessary” for the outdoor jobs.

The other characteristic which is very interesting is the “quality of money” earned by men and women being described with different values. Although the proverbs show the male perspective solely, saying, *Կնգա բերած փողը փողոլութիւն չի անի*:/ *Money brought by a woman doesn't feel like money*, it shows the attitude about women earning money. An interesting point here, however, is the idea that “*Money brought by a woman*” is usually not about the money that a woman earns for a job but a one-time salary-the dowry. As we discussed it in the Family Relations category the dowry phenomena is a very important aspect in the communication within an Armenian family. Another proverb (also discussed under Family Relations) showing the idea that a woman always shows off her dowry is, *Կնգա բերած փողը դռան զանգակ ա, անց ու դարձ անելիս՝ ճկատիդ կոխաչի*: /*The money earned by a woman is like a door-bell, when you go across the door it jumps to your head* (see Family Relations, p. 17)

After discussing the negative points found in the database, it is important to pay attention to the positive parts as well. There are two interesting proverbs in the Armenian database that complement on each other and allude to a very interesting discussion. As it is stated in these two proverbs, *Խապարիս (լուր) աղեկը կնիկներէն առ*:/ *One can get the real news from a woman*. And, *Տղի խաբար վերա չ'են դնէ*: (*ուշք չեն դարձնի*)/ *One shouldn't pay attention to a man's news*. This interestingly has reverse-stereotyping. While discussing news, and talking about professions, we automatically come up with the discussion of journalists. It is interesting that

journalism is a relatively new field and is definitely not discussed in the proverbs. And yet we see the same prejudice in the modern Armenian reality as well. As we can't count all journalists in Armenia and decide the gender balance, we can rather look at a number of journalists that are involved in popular journalistic trainings in Armenia. Narine Safaryan, the Training Coordinator in the Media Initiative Center in Armenia, a company that implements several training courses for journalists, shared with us the demographic information about the participants of the trainings since 2012. According to the data, out of 850 participants only 110 have been men, which takes 12.9% of the sample. We should take into account that journalists participating in these trainings are the relatively active members of the journalist society which can affect the number of men being involved in the trainings. As we can see, the prejudice of women being more reliable sources for news in a different context of everyday life has been reflected in the modern society in a form of a profession which although implies outdoor work (which was not acceptable for women in earlier terms of standards), is now considered to be more of a feminine job than masculine.

Looks

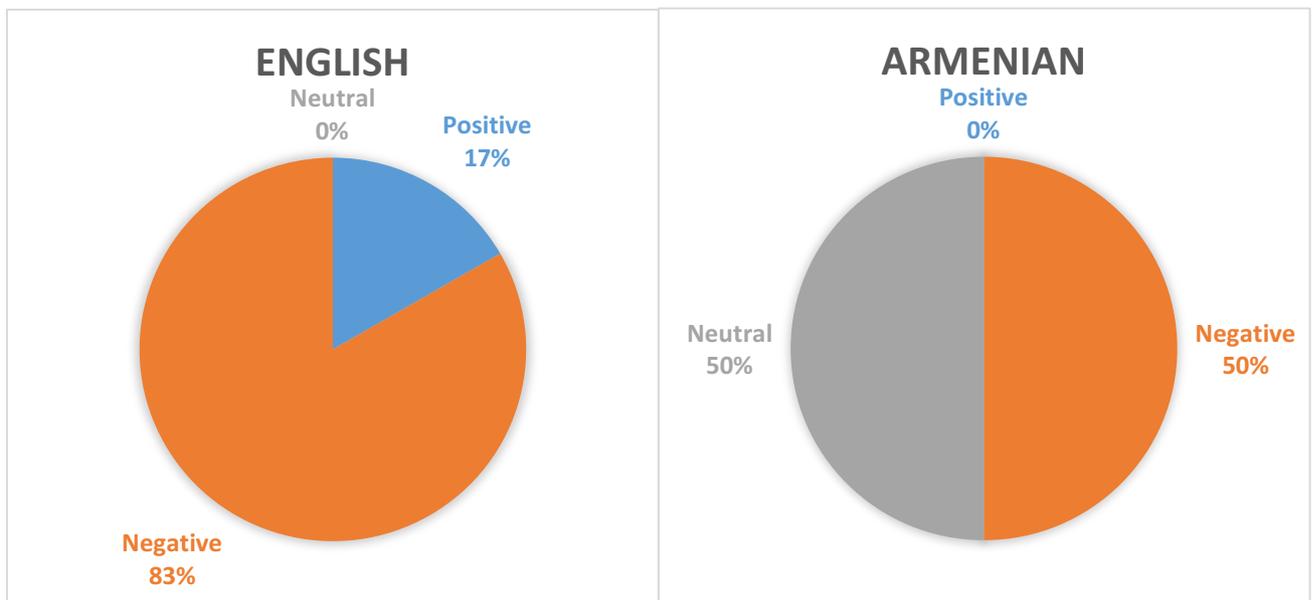


Figure 8: Comparative Level of Positivity-Looks Category

When we look at the chart, we can see that there are no positive proverbs in the Armenian ones and there are no neutral ones in the English proverbs. But it is important to note that the lack

of proverbs listed in this category have a huge influence on the picture because of the small numbers being depicted. It is interesting to see that in this category we cannot find any similarities between the cultures. There was one interesting aspect that in the Armenian database, the discussions were more about the value of natural beauty of a woman or a girl while in the English database the discussions are concentrated on the make-up and complaints about it, especially about the time used for getting ready.

In the English proverb, *when prayers are done, my Lady is ready. (Prayers are over before a lady decides what to wear, make up her face, etc.)* we can see that this is a male perspective and that the woman is judged for the amount of time she is spending on it. Another proverb that shows male perspective is, *A BLIND man's wife needs no paint*. Yet this proverb has some other explanation. It stresses the idea that a woman should look appealing to the man. But there is one other proverb that, in fact, disvalues the make-up culture and indirectly encourages natural beauty by comparing the make-up of a woman with the coloring of a fruit, *a woman and a cherry are painted for their own harm*.

Talking about the natural beauty, it is interesting to speak about the beauty measurements and perceptions in the Armenian culture through proverbs. It is interesting that hair is considered to be an asset adding to the value of a woman. *Աղջկա լավ մազն էլ մի աղջիկ ատէ: /A girl's good hair costs a whole other girl*. The proverb indicates the beauty of something that is naturally given to a person rather than discussing the make-up or other unnatural aspects related to beauty. Here we can see the difference between the Armenian and the English attitude toward beauty. While in the English proverbs we observed a discussion of natural beauty, it was again in the context of wearing make-up or not. But in case of the Armenian proverb we can see the praise of something that a person naturally wears.

Other

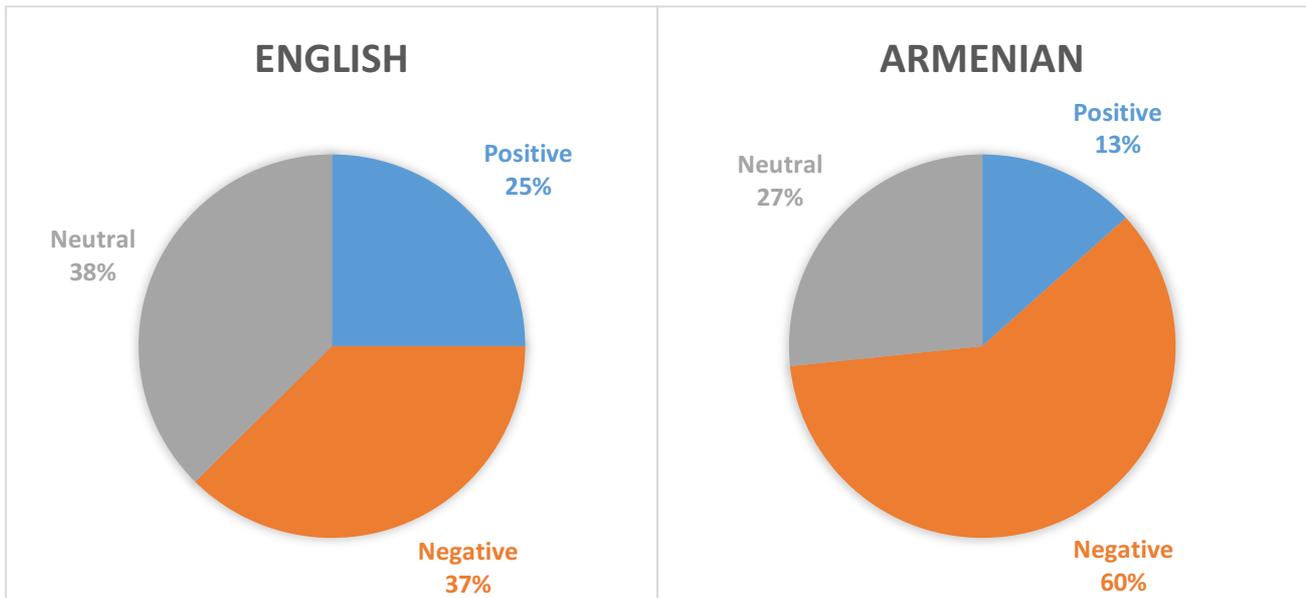


Figure 9: Comparative Level of Positivity-Other Category

In the Other category we have placed the proverbs that do not show specific tendencies but are rather supportive of the points made before. To see the overall picture of the level of positivity we presented this category too. As we can see, the picture is rather similar to the overall tendency of positivity level within the other categories. Although the positivity level in the English ones is higher than the Armenian ones, we can see that the positivity level is still very low for the English ones as compared to previous categories- both the levels of neutral ones and negative ones are rather high. For the Armenian ones the negativity level comes mostly from the negative categorized proverbs and from neutral ones, which intensifies the negativity level.

Conclusion

As we had several categories, discussing all the specific factors within the English and the Armenian databases, it is important for us to look at the similarities and significant differences we could see. The first important similarity that we need to point out is the fact that we had so many categories about which we could talk about. Of course, we could see significant differences in them

but even though the amount of the categories and the subcategories were rather few to fit both cultures, we managed to do that. The second important aspect to note is that there were several linguistic tools that were used in both languages. Comparison was one of the most used ones both in the form of a metaphor and as a direct comparison. While English ones tend to have direct implications, the Armenian ones are more likely to use metaphors (we could especially observe this in the Animal, Non-human category).

Looking at the charts from each category, and the overall chart as well, we can see that in most cases Armenian proverbs have a tendency to contain more negative context against women than in the English ones. Although we have come to this result, it is important to look at the technical differences that we had. One of the most important factors is the time period of the proverbs. Although we cannot have exact time periods for the proverbs, we can imply from the sources we used that some of the proverbs in the Armenian database date back to earlier periods than the English ones. And it is rather important the level of usage of these proverbs. While the Armenian ones are taken from old sources, like the primary Armenian database which was published in 1960, the English sources are more recent publications and may contain modern sayings as well.

Besides the origin of the proverbs it is important to look at the cultural differences as well. Armenia, being in a transition period of socioeconomic development, contains several layers of culture that have not been synergized. Yet, in the American and British cultures, the social value changes in a larger period of time because of the higher independency and socially developed status of the countries. One great example is the fact that in Armenia, the younger generation and the older generation can have radically different worldviews because of some historic, economic factors, such as the Soviet Union and its collapse, or the foreign language usage of English as opposed to Russian for older generation. Thus, the generation gap between the older and the younger generations is much more evident than in the English speaking countries that we've discussed. This is an evidence, proving that while these proverbs are representative of the cultures, the expiration date changes much faster for the Armenian proverbs than for the English ones which are exposed to

changes in much milder terms. This assumption gives us hope for the less discrimination toward one gender within the Armenian culture.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

While we have discussed the aspects that we found in this list of proverbs, there were several aspects that could be furthered in this research. There were some aspects that were not only difficult because of the time aspect but also some methodological aspects that we would need to consider. As it is discussed in Aram Ghanalanyan's book "Aratsani", in the chapter discussing the time periods of Armenian proverbs, it is very hard and often impossible to find out the specific time period of the proverbs. Having at least the century level information about the time periods, would give us more room for comparison of the two cultures, with the freedom to apply those implications to historical facts and events. But the problem is that even with a bigger amount of time for research, it would be much difficult to find out because of the nature of proverbs itself. Proverbs, being oral pieces of cultural representations, just like folk tales, are transmitted through the word of mouth and thus have no written evidence of their origin.

One more aspect that caused limitations was the fact that not only the origin but also the level of usage of these proverbs was unknown. A possible solution to this problem could be conducting a survey (similar to Hiroko Storm's methodology discussed earlier in the research), asking people whether these proverbs are familiar to them or not and whether or not they use them with the level of usage provided. Thus we would need a higher number of database out of which we would filter the ones that are more common according to the survey. While having a bigger database would be good in any case, experience shows that within limited time of research it is difficult to find out sources that can provide proverbs that were more than our database. The initial goal was to have 100 proverbs from each language but it was decided to go with a smaller number because of some aspects. Although this number was reached in the beginning for both of the languages, it was

chosen to eliminate some for the fact that some of them were taken from literary works or were found to have foreign origin.

There was another idea that would need more time resource was the idea of another survey, that would rate the level of misogynistic thinking or rather, the level of discrimination in the two cultures. Having this information, it would be interesting to compare the level of discrimination “now and in the past” taking the proverbs as the evidence of earlier period. Of course, we can understand that this survey shouldn’t be done through explicit questions and would rather be formulated in hidden terms through certain psychological tests that can be identified by professional psychologists. Thus we would need more cooperation with scholars involved in this field which would require more time and other kinds of resources. Another difficult technical issue would be conducting the survey in the UK and in the US. And having the big countries, it would be necessary to diversify the cultural aspects from rural areas and urban areas which makes the research even more time-consuming.

With the overall findings and the suggestions for further discussion, the research gives ground to more people to discuss cultural comparison within these two and other languages and cultures accordingly. Being the first step in this field, the research shows the gap in this area, encouraging more people to get involved.

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Appendix A: English Proverbs

1a/Negative/Family Relations

1. a DEAF husband and a blind wife are always a happy couple.
2. Old men, when they marry young women, make much of death.
3. There is but one good mother-in-law and she is dead.
4. A house well-furnished makes a woman wise.

1b/Positive/Family Relations

5. If the mother had not beene in the oven, shee had never sought her daughter there. (If the mother bakes, the daughter bakes. Parents teach by example.)
6. Men make houses, women make homes.
7. the OPERA isn't over till the fat lady sings
8. Like MOTHER, like daughter
9. PRAISE the child, and you make love to the mother.
10. A mother never thinks her baby is ugly.
11. A mother's love never ages.
12. He that would the daughter win Must with the mother first begin.
13. Children suck the mother when they are young and the father when they are old.
14. Many a one blames his wife for his own unthrift.
15. A man without a wife is but half a man.
16. A worthy woman is the crown of her husband.

1c/Neutral/Family Relations

17. The HUSBAND is always the last to know
18. a YOUNG man married is a young man marred.
19. One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters.
20. He that has no fools, knaves, or beggars in his family was begot by a flash of lightning.

21. The married man has many cares, the unmarried one many more.
22. Command your man, and do it yourself.
23. When Adam delved, and Eve span, where was then the gentleman?

2a/Negative/Animals, Non-human characteristics

24. A man who kicks his dog (hound) will beat his wife.
25. Always take a woman past forty: She won't tell, won't swell, is grateful as hell.
26. Never run after a woman or a streetcar (Girls are like busses); if you miss one, another will come along soon.
27. the FEMALE of the species is more deadly than the male.
28. Man, woman, and devil, are the three degrees of comparison.
29. Many women, many words; many geese, many turds.
30. Hell has no fury like a woman scorned.
31. Arthur could not tame woman's tongue. (meaning)
32. Women and elephants never forget.
33. Dally not with money or women.

2b/Positive/Animals, Non-human characteristics

34. A man without a woman is like a ship without a sail.
35. A man without a woman is like a fish without a tail.
36. A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle (A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle).
37. A good surgeon has an eagle's eye, a lion's heart, and a lady's hand. (not really a comparison)
38. What are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice
And everything nice

2c/Neutral/Animals, Non-human characteristics

39. What are little boys made of?

Snips and snails

And puppy-dogs' tails

3a/Negative/Professions

40. A woman should be (kept) barefoot and pregnant (barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen).

41. 0511 Discreet women have nether eyes nor ears. (Tactful women neither see nor hear what they should not.)

3b/Positive/Professions

42. A woman's work is never done.

43. If you want something done, ask a busy woman.

3c/Neutral/Professions

44. Well-behaved women rarely (seldom) make history.

4a/Negative/Looks

45. Inside every fat woman there's a thin woman trying to get out.

46. A BLIND man's wife needs no paint

47. A MAN is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks

48. A woman and a cherry are painted for their own harm.

49. When prayers are done, my Lady is ready. (Prayers are over before a lady decides what to wear, make up her face, etc.)

4b/Positive/Looks

50. Inside every old woman, there is a young woman.

4c/Neutral/Looks

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5a/Negative/Other

51. Three women make a market

52. EXPERIENCE is the father of wisdom (look 5b-4)
53. Absence is the mother of disillusion.
54. A foolish woman is clamorous. Bible.
55. No mischief but a woman or a priest is at the bottom of it.
56. There was never a conflict without a woman.

5b/Positive/Other

57. Women in mischief are wiser than men.
58. A woman's place is any place she wants to be.
59. The EARLY man never borrows from the late man (man referred as generally people)
60. Experience is the mother of knowledge. (look 5a-2)

5c/Neutral/Other

61. A good woman is hard to find.
62. Never send a BOY to do a man's job
63. Two BOYS are half a boy, and three boys are no boy at all
(BOYS will be boys)
64. Occasionally girls will be girls.
65. Like MASTER, like man (The female equivalent is like mistress like maid.)14th century
66. A woman's advice is no great thing, but he who won't take it is a fool.

Appendix B: Armenian Proverbs

1a/Negative/Family Relations

1. Աղջկան որ թողնեն, կերթա գուռնաչուն կառնի: (If you leave the girl, she will get married to a flutist.)
2. Չը գովված աղջիկը տանն է մնացեր: (A girl without praise didn't get married.)
3. (also2a) Աղջիկն որ հարս կերթա՝ գուրպի պես է քանդեն, նորեն կը գործեն: (A girl that just got married is like a sock, you dig it and knit again.)
4. Ազապ աղջիկ ա՛ռ, որ շապիկդ ի մտնե: (Get married to an unmarried woman so that she fits your shirt.)
5. Աղջկերանց տերը դունչը հուսի կուտա: (The man having daughters would stay silent.)
6. Կինն որ մանչ ծնի՝ տան պատերն ալ կը խնդան: (If a woman gives birth to a son, even the walls of the house get happy.)
7. Տան համար տղամարդու ոտի կեղտն էլ հարկավոր ա: (Even the dirt on a man's feet is necessary for the house.)
8. Ձեռեզով հարսը կիրել է համ իրեն բերածը համ էրկան դատածը: (A woman with a good dowry used both what she brought and what the husband brought.)

1b/Positive/Family Relations

9. Քույրն ասել է եղբայր ունեմ, եղբայրն ասել է քույր չունեմ: (The sister said she has a brother, the brother said he doesn't have a sister.)
10. Որ տուն գնաս, կնկա բարեկամ ըլիիր: (If you go to a house, get friends with the wife.)
11. Կնիկմարդ որ կա՝ մարդու կյանքըն ա: (A woman is the life of the man.)
12. Կնիկը տղամարդի հոգին ա: (A woman is the man's soul.)
13. Վերթին հորը չի, մորն ա: (The son is his mother's not the dad's.)

1c/Neutral/Family Relations

14. Հարևանի հարսի հետևը կարմիրա: (Neighbour's bride's butt is always rosy. (In a good way))
15. Մանչ բերող աղջկան դրսեցիի չեն տալ: (The girl who can have a baby-boy shouldn't be given to a foreigner.)
16. Աղջիկը պասակվել ուզելիս տան կճուճներն է ջարդում, տղան ուզելիս՝ օտարութուն է գնում: (When a girl wants to get married, she breaks the jars, when a guy wants to get married, he wonders away.)
17. Ամեն ծառի հազար քար կշարտեն (աղջկա ուզողների մասին): (They would throw tones of stones on each tree (about the lovers of the girl))
18. Մանչ ունենամ ապավոր, հարս կբերեմ կապավոր: Տղա ունենամ ջիբավոր, աղջիկ կու ճարիմ ջիլավուր(գլխազարդով): (If I have a boy with money, I will get him a girl with a headdress.)
19. Տղամարդ որ կա դրսի պատ է, կնիկ որ կա ներսի պատ է: (The man is the outside wall, the woman is the inside wall.)
20. Ես ախջիկ՝ տղին եմ տըվե, խո տալվերաց չեմ տըվե: (I've given my girl to the man not his sisters.)
21. Տղեն մորից, փողը հորից: (The son from the mother, the money from the father.)
22. Տնփեսան որ կա, ոտնատակ ընկած փալաս ա: (A groom living in his wife's house is like a doormat)
23. Տղամարդը տան գլուխն է, կինը՝ վիզը (The husband is the head of the family, the woman is the neck.)

2a/Negative/Animals, Non-human Characteristics

24. Կինը գիրք է, ինչ իմանաս քանի մարդ է կարդացել: (A woman is a book, how would you know how many have already read.)

25. Ինչը կհաղթի կյանքում հերոսին, թե չլինեն կինն ու գինին:(What would win the hero if not the woman and the wine.)
26. Մանչ՝ օսկի փարջ, աղջիկ՝ հողե փարջիկ: (A boy is a golden pouch, a girl is a dusty small pouch.)
27. Կնկա ֆել (խարդավանք) բարձեր են սել, սելը չը տարե կնկան ֆել: (They put the trickery of a woman on a cart, the cart couldn't take the trickery.)
28. Կնիկարմատն ու ձուն մեկ օրինակ են, հենց ձեռն ես տալիս թե չէ, էն սհաթը փխլվում են: (A woman and an egg are the same thing: the moment you touch it, it breaks.)
29. Վայ էն կալի տիրոջ, որ որ առաջի կամը կով ա լծած: (որի հոգսը կնոջ վրա է). (Shame on the owner of the cart which is lead by a cow (a female) (trashing floor))
30. ճուրղ քարին ա դում(ավազ) շինում, մարդին կնիկն ա մում շինում: (Water makes the stone into a sand and a woman makes the man into a candle.)
31. Գինին կընտրին համով, աղջիկը՝ ճամով (ամոթխած): (One should choose a wine based on the taste and the woman based on her shyness.)

2b/Positive/Animals, Non-human Characteristics

32. Աղջիկն օր կա, տան ծաղիկն է: (There are days when the girl is the flower of the house.)
33. Առյուծը առյուծ է՝ էգ լինի թե ործ: (A lioness or a lion, it's a lion.)

2c/Neutral/Animals, Non-human Characteristics

34. Անպտուղ ծառը կկտրեն, պտղատու ծառին քար կզցեն: (One would cut the unfruitful tree, and throw a stone on the fruitful one.)
35. Աղջիկը երկնքից ըլներ, ում ձեռը հասներ, նա առներ:(I wish girls came from the sky, the taller you were, the more you got.)
36. Աղջիկը որ կա, անկտրիլ ձմերուկ ա: (Girl is a watermelon uncut.)

37. Աղջիկը որ կա շուշա է, որ կոտորվեց չի կարկաստվիլ: (A girl is like a glass, if you break it, it can't get fixed.)
38. Չոռավ պացված վարթան վետ(հոտ) չի կյալ: Գորիս(A rose flourished by force doesn't smell good.)
39. Մարդի ծեծած, վարդի ծեծած: (Man beating is a rose beating.)
40. Կնոջ հերսը կճուճի ետն ա: (A woman's revenge is crushing the jar.)

3a/Negative/Professions

41. Կնիկարմատը հավ չի մորթի: (A woman won't kill a chicken.)
42. (also 2a)Մարդը տան մշակ, կինը տան ճախարակ: (The man is the farmhand of the house, the woman is the winch of the house.)
43. Կնգա բերած փուղը փուղութիս չի անի:(Money brought by a woman doesn't feel like money.)
44. Կնգա բերած փողը դռան զանգակ ա, անց ու դարձ անելիս՝ ճկատիդ կդիպչի: (The money earned by a woman is like a door-bell, when you go across the door it jumps to your head.)

3b/Positive/Professions

45. Խապարին(լուր) աղեկը կնիկներեն առ:(You can get the real news from a woman.)

3c/Neutral/Professions

46. Տան տղամարդը իր տան մշակն է: (The man of the house is the farmhand of the house.)
47. Տղի խաբար վերա չ'են դնե: (ուշք չեն դարձնի)- (One shouldn't pay attention to a man's news.)
48. Տղեն կամ փորն է (դեռ չծնված), կամ ձիու վրա: (The guy is ether in the womb or on top of the horse.)

4a/Negative/Looks

49. Պառաւաճ աղջիկը շատ անբախտ կըլնի:(A woman old is very unfortunate.)
50. Գեշ կնիկմարդէ դևերը փախիլ ին: (The devils ran away from the ugly woman (woman-man as a substance for wo-man))

4b/Positive/Looks

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4c/Neutral/Looks

51. Աղջկա լավ մազն էլ մի աղջիկ աժէ: (A girl's good hair costs a whole other girl.)
52. Աղջիկ օրնին տակ (հասակ հավաքելիս) գովելու է: (A girl should be praised while growing taller.)

5a/Negative/Other

53. Աղջիկը դռան ետնն ա:(A girl is the back of the door.)
54. Կինը մեղմ պիտի խոսի՝ նուրբ, դուրեկան ձայնով, ոչ թէ ճղճղա-թոււմանյան: (A woman should speak in a delicate, pleasant voice and not scream.)
55. Կնկա շինած տունը աստոճ չի քանդի, աստծու շինածը կնիկը կը քանդի:(God won't crush the house of a woman, a woman will crush the house of the God.)
56. Կնկան արտսուկք աչիչ ծերն ի: (A woman's tear is always on the way to drop.)
57. Կնկա իրեք բաժինը լաց է, մեկն էլ շորեղեն: (The three portions of a woman are tears and the other one is clothes.)
58. Բաժինքը մաշ, հարսը՝ դումաշ:(If the dower is good, the woman is good.)
59. Վատ կնարմատից քաչկերն(տեսիլքներ) էլ փախել են: (The devils ran away from the bad woman)
60. Տղին ջուխտ ձեռով են պահել, աղջկան մեկ: (They raised the boy with two hands and the girl with one hand.)
61. Կանայք ատելութեան մեջ ավելի հաստատամիտ են, քան թե սիրո մեջ: (Պարոնյան) (Women are more certain in hatred than in love.)

5b/Negative/Other

62. Լավ աղջիկը օխտը տղին ամբ: (A good girl costs twice a boy.)
63. Կինը, եթե սիրի, լեռան ծանրություն կարող է կրի իր հոգում: -Թոթովենց (If a woman loves, she would carry the weight of mountain on her soul.)

5c/Positive/Other

64. Տղի մեռնելն մի վախենա, խանգրելն վախեցի: (Don't be afraid of the man dying, be afraid of him getting mad.)
65. Աղջիկը միսաֆիր (հյուր) է, ժամանակն եկավ՝ վայել է: (A girl is a guest, when the time comes she is welcome.)
66. Կանանց ամենեն մեծ թշնամիները կիներն են: - Պարոնյան (The worst enemies of women are women.)
67. Մարդի նամուսը գտակն ա, կընկանը՝ լաչակը: (A man's dignity is his hat, a woman's dignity is her kerchief)
68. Կնոջ սուզն ի սեղան, մարդուն՝ փողդան: (A woman will weep for the empty table, the man for the empty pocket.)