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**LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF GENDER  
PREJUDICE IN VIETNAMESE COMMUNICATION**

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**ABSTRACT OF  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale of the Research**

**1.1.** Gender prejudice is one of the most pervasive forms of social prejudice historically associated with the domain of gender. Beneath the cultural veil often exalted as “traditional values,” gender prejudice reinforces gender stereotypes, normalizing erroneous and biased gender-based perceptions. As a result, such prejudicial views become taken for granted in everyday life and exert increasingly profound influence.

**1.2.** Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, linguists tended to focus exclusively on language itself while overlooking the social nature of linguistic phenomena. As linguistic research advanced but still failed to account for non-structural linguistic events, there emerged a need to explore how external social factors influence, reflect in, and map onto language. With the strong development of Pragmatics in the latter half of the 20th century, linguists discovered new research orientations and achieved increasing scholarly progress, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive picture of language.

**1.3.** Gender equality is an important objective in international human rights instruments. Researching the linguistic representation of gender prejudice, thereby proposing measures to reduce, or ideally eliminate gender-prejudiced expressions in communication in particular and in language use in general, holds significant practical value. Such efforts align well with contemporary social development trends.

### **2. Research Questions, Research Purpose, and Research Tasks**

#### **2.1. Research Questions**

To conduct this dissertation, we propose the following research questions:

- What linguistic means are selected to express gender prejudice in communication?
- Which factors govern the choice of linguistic devices that convey gender prejudice?
- In relation to gender prejudice, how is the relationship between language and culture manifested?

#### **2.2. Research Purpose**

#### **2.3. Research Tasks**

### **3. Research Object and Scope**

#### **3.1. Research Object**

The issue of gender and language can be approached from two complementary perspectives: language about each gender and gender-related features manifested in language use. In this dissertation, we focus on the former, with the research object being utterances containing gender prejudice that belong to the line of inquiry examining language about each gender.

### **3.2. Research Scope**

Within the scope of this dissertation, we delimit our investigation to gender prejudice as manifested in dialogic language, specifically in the speech of characters extracted from literary works written by modern Vietnamese authors, spanning from the 1930s to the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

## **4. Data and Research Methods**

### **4.1. Data**

To ensure the reliability of the arguments developed in this dissertation, the study is conducted on a corpus of textualized data collected from officially published short stories and novels belonging to the period of modern Vietnamese literature.

### **4.2. Research Methods**

## **5. Contributions of the Dissertation**

### **5.1. Theoretical Contributions**

### **5.2. Practical Contributions**

## **6. Structure of the Dissertation**

## **CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1. Research on Gender Prejudice in Language**

#### ***1.1.1. Studies on Gender Prejudice in Language in International Scholarship***

Interest in the issue of gender prejudice emerged as early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, beginning with the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. Following Wollstonecraft, a number of prominent writers, social activists, and scholars across various fields, such as Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Ester Boserup, Betty Friedan, Monique Wittig, Margaret Atwood, and Sherry Ortner... continued to develop and deepen discussions on gender-related inequalities.

Research on language and gender was initiated by Robin Lakoff with her article and book of the same title, *Language and Woman's Place* [151], [153]. After Lakoff, many scholars further explored the relationship between language and gender, including Dale Spender with *Man Made Language*. Numerous books entitled *Language and Gender* were published in different regions and at various moments from the late twentieth to the early twenty-first century, authored by figures such as Jennifer Coates, Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, Angela Goddard, Lindsay Mean, and Mary Talbot.

Several studies have demonstrated a deeper concern with gender prejudice in language, such as “Don't Touch My Projectile: Gender Bias and Stereotyping in Syntactic Examples” (Macaulay & Brice, 1997); the article “Gender Bias and Sexism in Language” by Menegatti M. and Rubini M. (2017); and “Gender Bias in Linguistics Textbooks: Has Anything Changed Since Macaulay & Brice (1997)?” by Pabst and colleagues. In 2021, Hadas Kotek, Rikker Dockum, Sarah Babinski, and Christopher Geissler published a notable study on gender bias in language through their article “Gender Bias and Stereotypes in Linguistic Example Sentences.”

Overall, findings synthesized from research across different domains and contexts of language use consistently affirm the existence of gender prejudice in language.

### ***1.1.2. Studies on Gender Prejudice in Language in Vietnam***

Based on our review of existing scholarship, several major research directions can be identified concerning gender prejudice in language in Vietnam:

*1.1.2.1.* Studies examining manifestations of gender prejudice in language from various socio-cultural perspectives.

*1.1.2.2.* Studies exploring the relationship between gender and language, in which gender prejudice is treated as one aspect manifested in language (particularly in folk literature and written literature). Representative works in this line of research include studies by Đỗ Thị Kim Liên (2008), Đinh Việt Hà (2016), Lê Đức Luận (2019), Nguyễn Thị Thuỳ Linh (2021), and Trần Thị Huyền Gấm (2024). A common feature of these studies is their identification of the existence of gender prejudice and the description of several of its linguistic manifestations.

1.1.2.3. Studies examining gender prejudice in language at the lexical level (the level of the linguistic system). This direction includes works by Nguyễn Văn Khang (1996, 1999, 2000), Lê Hồng Linh (2010), Trần Xuân Điệp (2011), and Cao Như Nguyệt (2017).

To date, in Vietnam, no study has approached gender prejudice in communicative language use from the perspective of Pragmatics theory.

### ***1.1.3. Proposed Research Direction on Gender Prejudice in Communicative Language***

Adopting a Pragmatics-based approach, we propose examining gender prejudice in communicative language, that is, in dynamic language use—distinct from previous studies that have primarily focused on gender prejudice in the linguistic system, which is inherently more static.

## **1.2. Theoretical Framework of the Study**

### ***1.2.1. Overview of Gender and Gender Prejudice***

#### ***1.2.1.1. Overview of Gender***

In this dissertation, we adopt the following understanding of gender: *Gender refers to the concepts, behaviors, relationships, and social status relations between men and women, shaped by socio-cultural characteristics.*

#### ***1.2.1.2. Overview of Gender Prejudice***

##### **a. Definition of Gender Prejudice**

In this dissertation, the following definition is used as the basis for identifying and examining linguistic data:

*Gender prejudice is a biased and stereotypical assessment of the characteristics, status, roles, abilities, and occupations of men and/or women.*

##### **b. Major dimensions of gender prejudice**

##### **c. Characteristics of gender prejudice**

##### **d. Consequences of gender prejudice**

### ***1.2.2. Communication Theory***

#### ***1.2.2.1. Communication and Communicative Factors***

In its broadest sense, communication is the process of transmitting information through signals. In a narrower sense, communication refers to the exchange of ideas and information between two or more individuals through language and non-verbal means.

The study of communication plays an important role in linguistics. Communicative factors are defined as the elements present in a communicative event that have the capacity to influence that event and to shape discourse both in form and content. These factors include context, language, and discourse.

#### *1.2.2.2. Communicative Roles and Interpersonal Relations*

##### *a. Communicative Roles*

In any communicative event, participant roles are typically assigned: the speaker role (Sp1) and the hearer role (Sp2). Throughout the interaction, these two roles alternate continuously. Besides Sp1 and Sp2, there is also the referent - the entity being talked about. This referent may be Sp1, Sp2, or an entirely different person, object, or phenomenon.

##### *b. Interpersonal Relations*

Interpersonal relations between communicative roles are examined along two axes:

- The vertical axis, also referred to as the axis of social status or power relationship, is established based on objective factors associated with social values such as age, position, occupation, etc.
- The horizontal axis reflects distance or solidarity, with its two poles ranging from intimacy to unfamiliarity.

#### *1.2.2.3. The Category of Address Terms*

In Vietnamese, address terms are strongly influenced by interpersonal relations between communicative roles. The first-person (Sp1) and second-person (Sp2) pronouns are used for address in communication, while third-person reference is used to denote entities being talked about and does not participate directly in the communicative interaction. Thus, the category of address terms essentially applies only to the first- and second-person forms, whereas third-person forms refer to entities that are already known to both Sp1 and Sp2.

### ***1.2.3. Speech Act Theory***

#### *1.2.3.1. Speech Acts and the Classification of Speech Acts*

##### *a. Speech Acts*

According to J. L. Austin, a concrete utterance involves three major types of speech acts: the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act. The illocutionary act refers to the act performed by the speaker in saying something, creating linguistic

effects - that is, eliciting corresponding linguistic responses in the hearer.

#### b. Classification of Speech Acts

Searle proposed twelve criteria for distinguishing between types of illocutionary acts, which he then used to establish his classification system. Accordingly, Searle categorizes illocutionary acts into five types: Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, and Declarations. In this dissertation, Searle's classification criteria are adopted to examine and analyze linguistic data containing gender prejudice.

##### *1.2.3.2. Conditions for the Use of Illocutionary Acts*

##### *1.2.3.3. Illocutionary Utterances, Illocutionary Expressions, and Illocutionary Verbs*

##### *1.2.3.4. Direct and Indirect Speech Acts*

According to Đỗ Hữu Châu, direct speech acts are “genuine speech acts, that is, acts performed in accordance with their conditions of use and with their intended illocutionary force.”

Indirect speech acts occur when the speaker uses the form of one type of speech act to achieve the illocutionary force of another.

#### ***1.2.4. Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis***

*1.2.4.1. Discourse:* refers to language used in concrete communicative situations, shaped by specific contexts and social factors.

*1.2.4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* focuses on uncovering the relationship between discourse and power, as well as the ideological dimensions embedded in discourse.

#### ***1.2.5. The Relationship Between Language and Culture***

##### *1.2.5.1. The concept of culture*

Culture is understood from multiple perspectives and levels, yet scholars generally agree that culture shares a common feature: it is a complex whole consisting of material and spiritual products created by humans or re-created from nature. Culture is composed of the following core elements: activities, values, and development.

*1.2.5.2. The relationship between language and culture from the perspective of Anthropological Linguistics*

*1.2.5.3. The role of language in culture*

*1.2.5.4. The influence of culture on language, linguistic diversity, and cultural diversity*



## Summary of Chapter 1

With the aim of identifying the research gap for the issue of gender prejudice in language, we have conducted an overview of studies on gender prejudice in language abroad and in Vietnam. Accordingly, linguists in the world and in Vietnam have paid certain attention to the aspects that reveal gender prejudice in general and gender prejudice in language in particular.

In addition to presenting an overview of research on gender prejudice in language, we have also outlined the foundational contents that serve as the basis for orienting the study Linguistic Representation of Gender Prejudice in Vietnamese Communication, specifically the concept, origin, and characteristics of gender prejudice; communication theory, speech act theory, critical discourse analysis theory, and the relationship between language and culture.

## CHAPTER 2.

### LINGUISTIC MEANS EXPRESSING GENDER PREJUDICE IN UTTERANCES CONTAINING GENDER PREJUDICE

#### 2.1. Words Expressing Gender Prejudice in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice

##### *2.1.1. Words and Word Combinations Containing Elements Denoting Specific Gender in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice*

The expression of gender prejudice in its most easily recognizable form appears through words denoting specific gender. These words are associated with basic gender pairs such as *nam – nữ*, *trai – gái*, *đàn ông – đàn bà*, *đực – cái* (in each pair, the first word refers to man and the second word refers to woman), along with common variants, especially dialectal forms such as *trai → giai*, *đàn ông → đòan ông*, *đàn bà → đòan bà*, etc. The survey results of 932 utterances containing gender prejudice show that as many as 526 utterances (equivalent to 56.44%) include words and phrases containing gender markers as mentioned above.

##### *2.1.1.1. Words and Phrases Containing Male Gender Markers in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice*

Regarding male gender markers, including “đàn ông”, “nam”, “trai”, “đực”, our survey identified 37 words/phrases with a total of 313 occurrences in the data.

### *2.1.1.2. Words and Phrases Containing Female Gender Markers in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice*

Regarding female gender markers, including “đàn bà”, “nữ”, “gái”, there are a total of 55 words/phrases in the utterances containing gender prejudice under study, far exceeding the number of words/phrases containing “đàn ông”, “nam”, “trai”. The survey results show that there are a total of 749 occurrences of words and phrases containing gender markers in the utterances examined, of which words and phrases containing male gender markers account for 313 occurrences, and female gender markers account for 436 occurrences. Words and phrases containing the gender marker “đàn bà” appear most frequently, with 240 occurrences, followed by the marker “đàn ông” (196 occurrences) and “gái” (162 occurrences). Words and phrases containing the gender marker “trai” appear quite commonly (102 occurrences). The group of words/phrases containing the markers “nữ” – “nam” are less frequent in speech: “nữ” (34 occurrences), “nam” (11 occurrences). Phrases containing the male gender marker “đực” are very rare in utterances containing gender prejudice (4 occurrences). Notably, the female gender marker “cái” (used to refer to people) does not appear in the surveyed data.

### *2.1.2. Words and Phrases Emphasizing Gender Stereotypes in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice*

There are semantic fields that emphasize gender stereotypes for males:

***Table 2.3. Semantic Fields with Gender Stereotypes Related to Males***

No	Semantic Field	Frequency
1	Regarding the reproductive function and duties of men	07
2	Regarding the strength and personality traits of men	42
3	Regarding the emotional life of men	33
4	Regarding the role in religious or ancestral worship	14
5	Regarding the role as the primary economic provider in the family	21
6	Regarding the role as head of the household	19
7	Regarding the social image of men	17

Table 2.3 shows that, for men, words and phrases emphasizing male strength and personality as well as emotional characteristics are dominant. Meanwhile, for females, words and phrases describing and emphasizing gender stereotypes for women are presented in Table 2.4.

***Table 2.4. Semantic Fields with Gender Stereotypes  
Related to Women***

<b>No</b>	<b>Semantic Field</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Regarding the reproductive function and duties of women	39
2	Regarding the physical appearance of women	37
3	Regarding the emotional life of women	26
4	Regarding chastity of women	75
5	Regarding the role of women in the family	59

Words and phrases emphasizing gender stereotypes related to women appear most frequently regarding chastity, family roles, reproductive functions and duties, and physical appearance.

### ***2.1.3. Evaluative Words and Phrases for Each Gender in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice***

We have compiled 416 words and phrases carrying evaluative meaning for men and women. Table 2.5 below shows the differences in evaluation between the two genders.

***Table 2.5. Evaluative Words and Phrases in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice***

<b>Evaluative Words and Phrases</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Positive	55	72
Negative	77	212
Total	<b>132</b>	<b>284</b>

Words and phrases carrying evaluative meaning for women are overwhelmingly higher than for men. Considering both genders, words and phrases expressing negative evaluation dominate over those expressing positive evaluation. For men, the number of words and phrases with negative evaluation is only 1.4 times that of positive evaluation, whereas for women, this figure is 3 times higher.

### ***2.1.4. Words and Phrases Associated with Folk Motifs Marking Gender Stereotypes in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice***

**2.1.4.1. The “Thân em...” Motif in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice:** The “Thân em” motif has variant forms: *thân gái, thân con gái, thân đàn bà, phận gái, phận đàn bà*. Among 932 data items, there are 18 instances using these variants of the “Thân em...” motif, including: *thân gái* (3 occurrences), *thân con gái* (4 occurrences), *thân đàn bà* (1 occurrence), *con gái có thân* (1 occurrence), *con gái con đưa có thân* (1 occurrence), *giữ thân* (1 occurrence), *phận gái* (3 occurrences), *phận đàn bà* (4 occurrences).

**2.1.4.2. The “Làm trai...” Motif in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice:** Among the data examined, there are 16 instances using the “Làm trai...” motif, with specific forms expressed as words and phrases containing the male gender markers “trai” or “đàn ông”: *làm trai, làm thằng con trai, làm thân con trai, sức trai, trai thời loạn, làm con trai thời loạn, làm trai tài, làm con giai, làm đàn ông, làm thằng đàn ông, làm cái thằng đàn ông*.

## **2.2. Sentence Structures Reflecting Gender Stereotypes in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice**

### **2.2.1. Sentences Containing Pro-Stereotypical Gender Prejudice**

#### **2.2.1.1. Pro-Stereotypical Model 1**

[Words/Phrase containing gender markers] + *phải/ là* + X.

*Where:* X: Linguistic expressions containing features of gender roles or gender stereotypes.

*Meaning:* Emphasizes gender roles or gender stereotypes associated with men or women in a reinforcing direction.

Model 1 is realized in several commonly occurring sentence forms, such as: *Đàn ông là..., Đàn ông thì phải..., Đàn bà là...*

#### **2.2.1.2. Pro-Stereotypical Model 2**

B + *là* + [Word/Phrase containing gender markers] (so B has) Y.

*Where:*

- B: An individual whose gender is mentioned in the sentence.
- Y: A gender role or gender stereotype associated with the gender of B.

*Meaning:* Affirms the gender role or gender stereotype associated with men or women based on a cause–effect relationship.

### **2.2.2. Sentences Containing Counter-Stereotypical Gender Prejudice**

### 2.2.2.1. Counter-Stereotypical Model 1

[Word/Phrase containing gender markers] + <i>mà</i> + Z.
--

Where:

- Word/phrase containing gender markers: *Đàn ông, đàn bà, con trai, con gái, nam giới, phụ nữ*, etc.
- Z: Linguistic expressions containing features contrary to traditional gender roles or stereotypes.

Meaning: Highlights an evaluative implication, often reproachful, directed at a man or woman who exhibits or possesses Z in a way that contradicts conventional expectations, failing to conform to traditional gender roles or stereotypes.

Counter-Stereotypical Model 1 can be realized in several commonly occurring sentence forms, such as: *Đàn ông mà..., Đàn bà mà..., Con trai mà...*

### 2.2.2.2. Counter-Stereotypical Model 2

[Word/Phrase containing gender markers] + <i>ai lại</i> + T.
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Where: T: Linguistic expressions containing features contrary to traditional gender roles or stereotypes.

Meaning: Expresses the negation of a man or woman performing/possessing characteristic T that does not conform to traditional gender roles or stereotypes, thereby emphasizing the gender stereotype.

Counter-Stereotypical Model 2 can be realized in several commonly occurring sentence forms, such as: *Đàn ông ai lại..., Đàn bà ai lại..., ...*

### 2.2.3. Sentence Structures Incorporating Folk Cultural Discourses Containing Gender Prejudice

The use and incorporation of folk cultural discourses containing gender prejudice into sentences is also a common form of expressing gender bias in spoken communication. Among 932 data items containing gender prejudice, 83 items (nearly 9%) use idioms, proverbs, or folk verses containing gender prejudice to convey the speaker's bias. Common forms of citation include:

#### 2.2.3.1. Sentences quoting a single folk cultural discourse containing gender prejudice

*2.2.3.2. Sentences quoting a folk cultural discourse containing gender prejudice verbatim, accompanied by explanatory content*

*2.2.3.3. Sentences in which the folk cultural discourse containing gender prejudice forms a part of the sentence*

*2.2.3.4. Sentences using words inserted into or partially modifying a folk cultural discourse containing gender prejudice*

### **2.3. Speech Acts Expressing Gender Prejudice in Utterances Containing Gender Bias**

#### ***2.3.1. Gender Prejudice Affects Both Men and Women***

Among the data containing utterances expressing gender prejudice, some utterances contain bias against men, some against women, and particularly, there are utterances containing prejudice toward both men and women. In the data examined, there are 74 utterances exhibiting dual-standard bias, accounting for 7.94% of the total utterances containing gender prejudice surveyed.

***Table 2.6. Targets of Utterances Expressing Gender Prejudice***

<b>Target of Gender Prejudice</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Frequency (n/932)	336	670
%	36,05	71,89

The number of utterances expressing prejudice against women is very high (670/932 utterances, accounting for 71.89% of the data surveyed). This confirms the widespread existence of prejudice targeting women. However, the figure of 36.05% of total utterances containing bias against men also reveals the profound impact of such prejudices on men across many aspects of daily life.

#### ***2.3.2. Common Speech Acts Expressing Prejudice Against Men***

The most commonly used speech act group to express prejudice against men is the Representatives group, with 153 data items, accounting for 45.54% of the total data examined. Another group appearing with a fairly high frequency, nearly one-third of the data expressing prejudice against men, is the Expressives group with 101 utterances (30.06%). The Directives group, including speech acts such as orders, requests, advice, etc., and the Declarations group are used at lower levels, around 10%: specifically, Directives account for 13.69%, and Declarations for 8.63% of the total 336 data items. The Commissives group, with acts such as promising or threatening, is the least used (only 7 utterances, corresponding to 2.08%).

Representatives are the preferred group of speech acts when expressing prejudice against men, with a fairly diverse range of specific speech acts including: describing, narrating, affirming, explaining, asserting, announcing, etc. Among these, the most frequently used speech acts to express prejudice against men include asserting (58/153 utterances), explaining (35/153 utterances), narrating (25/153 utterances), and evaluating (29/153 utterances).

In the Expressives group, common speech acts used to express prejudice against men include criticizing (43/101 utterances), complaining (27/101 utterances), cursing (16/101 utterances), praising (11/101 utterances). Additionally, there are acts of wishing or cursing.

### ***2.3.3. Common Speech Acts Expressing Prejudice Against Women***

When expressing prejudice against women, the frequently chosen speech act groups are Representatives, Directives, and Expressives. Among these, the Representatives group accounts for the highest proportion, nearly half of the data examined, specifically 303/670 data items, corresponding to 45.22%. The Expressives and Directives groups are also commonly chosen, with usage rates over 20%: 26.27% of data items contain Expressives, and 20.75% contain Directives. The least used groups are Declarations (5.52%) and Commissives (only 2.24%).

Similar to men, among women, the Representatives group appears most frequently. Within this group, frequently chosen speech acts include: asserting (101/303 utterances), explaining (77/303 utterances), evaluating (74/303 utterances), and narrating (42/303 utterances). In the Expressives group, the most commonly used speech acts are criticizing (64/176 utterances), complaining (49/176 utterances), cursing (24/176 utterances), blaming (19/176 utterances), and praising (16/176 utterances).

The Directives group is more frequently used to express prejudice against women than men, with 139 utterances compared to 45 utterances for men. Within Directives, the most frequently chosen acts are asking (53/139 utterances) and advising (51/139 utterances).

### ***2.3.4. Illocutionary Verbs, Explicit and Primary Illocutionary Expressions in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice***

*2.3.4.1. Illocutionary verbs in utterances containing gender prejudice:* Only 17 utterances conveying gender prejudice contain illocutionary

verbs. This clearly demonstrates the dominance of speech acts without illocutionary verbs in utterances containing gender prejudice.

*2.3.4.2. Explicit and primary illocutionary expressions in utterances containing gender prejudice:* According to the survey of the data, among 932 utterances containing gender prejudice, only 17 utterances contain illocutionary verbs, i.e., only 17 explicit illocutionary expressions; the remaining 915 utterances (corresponding to over 98% of the total utterances) contain primary illocutionary expressions.

### **Summary of Chapter 2**

In Chapter 2, we surveyed, described, and analyzed the common linguistic means used to express gender prejudice. The research results show that, in communication, certain linguistic means are capable of conveying content containing gender prejudice: the group of words and phrases containing gender markers; words emphasizing gender roles and gender stereotypes, forming semantic fields associated with each gender; evaluative words concerning each gender; words applying the motifs “Thân em...” and “Làm trai...” and their variants.

At the sentence level, two common forms are observed: the affirmative-prejudice structure and the contradictory-prejudice structure, which have been modeled into four typical sentence patterns. In addition to the above linguistic means, we noted that embedding and applying folk cultural discourses containing gender prejudice in speech is also an effective form for Sp1 to express gender bias. We also identified the speech acts most commonly used to convey prejudice toward each gender

## **CHAPTER 3. COMMUNICATIVE ROLES AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN UTTERANCES CONTAINING GENDER PREJUDICE**

### **3.1. Communicative roles in utterances containing gender prejudice**

#### ***3.1.1. Characteristics of speaker and listener roles in dialogues containing gender prejudice***

##### ***3.1.1.1. Speaker role in utterances containing gender prejudice***

Among 932 utterances containing gender prejudice surveyed, 13 utterances do not indicate the gender of the speaker. Excluding the utterances with unidentified speaker gender, the remaining 919 utterances all explicitly indicate the gender of the utterance creator.



From the perspective of speaker gender in utterances containing gender prejudice, there is a certain difference between women and men. Accordingly, women are more often the ones producing utterances containing gender prejudice than men, with specific figures of 50.92% versus 49.08%. However, this difference is not substantial (difference <2%), indicating that gender-biased thinking is commonly present in both genders.

### *3.1.1.2. Listener role in utterances containing gender prejudice*

In communication, the counterpart of the speaker role is the listener role (Sp2). A dialogue between a speaker and a listener can occur in different ways: one speaker may address a single listener (Sp2 as an individual) or one speaker may address multiple listeners (Sp2 as two individuals or a group). Among 932 utterances containing gender prejudice surveyed, the case of a speaker addressing a single listener is far more common (879/932, corresponding to 94.31%) compared to 53 cases where the speaker addresses a group of listeners (corresponding to 5.69%).

In addition to the characteristic of the listener being an individual or a collective, the data allow identification of the relationship between the listener and the target of prejudice. Accordingly, the listener in a dialogue containing utterances with gender prejudice can be the direct target of the prejudice. There are also cases where the listener simply serves as the recipient of information about another target who is neither Sp1 nor Sp2.

### *3.1.2. Targets of gender prejudice from the perspective of communicative roles in utterances containing gender prejudice*

In utterances containing gender-related elements, some Sp1 turns reveal gender prejudice toward Sp2 or another target/group of targets; there are also cases where Sp1 expresses gender prejudice related to themselves.

***Table 3.2. Targets of gender prejudice from the perspective of communicative roles***

<b>Target of gender prejudice</b>	<b>Number of utterances (n)</b>	<b>Frequency (n/932)</b>
Sp1	166	17,81%
Sp2	323	34,66%
Others	470	50,43%

The “Others” target of gender prejudice can be an individual or a specific group whose identity can be determined within the story of Sp1 and Sp2 (267 utterances), or men/women in general (203 utterances). Data from Table 3.2 show that, from the perspective of communicative roles, the “Others” group (related to the topic of Sp1 and Sp2’s dialogue) accounts for a predominant number of turns compared to Sp1 and Sp2, with a total of 470 utterances, corresponding to 50.43% of the total utterances.

### **3.2. Content of Gender Prejudice Linked to Communicative Roles in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice**

#### ***3.2.1. Common Aspects of Gender Prejudice in Daily Life***

There are various ways to classify the content of prejudice in utterances. Within the scope of this study, we build on the research results of previous scholars, specifically the approach to categorizing prejudice content by Trần Thị Minh Đức (2006). Accordingly, the societal stereotypes imposed on men and women regarding age, appearance, personality, abilities, sexual characteristics, roles within the family, and in society are richly reflected in language.

#### ***3.2.2. Common Aspects of Prejudice Against Men in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice***

Prejudiced utterances directed at men often focus on men’s personality traits and their role as the main pillar of the family. Prejudice concerning age, appearance, abilities, sexual capacity, and men’s role as social pillars are less frequently mentioned. Specifically, the role of men as the main pillar in the family is mentioned most frequently, accounting for nearly half (44.94%) of all utterances containing prejudice against men. Personality traits of men are also often highlighted, with over one-third (34.23%) of all utterances containing prejudice against men reflecting biases regarding men’s personality, particularly traits such as womanizing and promiscuity. Less frequently mentioned aspects include appearance, abilities, self-worth, sexual traits, and social roles of men, with the respective frequencies being 4.46%, 4.76%, 5.06%, and 5.65%. Finally, men are least subjected to age-related prejudice, with only 3 out of 336 utterances reflecting age-based prejudice, corresponding to 0.90%.

#### ***3.2.3. Common Aspects of Prejudice Against Women in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice***

The survey of 670 utterances containing prejudice against women shows a predominance of utterances regarding women's roles within the family. The absolute number of these utterances is 231, 1.54 times higher than the absolute number of utterances containing prejudice about men's roles in the family. In relative terms, utterances reflecting prejudice about women's roles in the family account for more than one-third of all utterances containing prejudice against women. Prejudiced utterances against women also focus on women's abilities and self-worth (171 utterances, 25.52%) and women's personality traits (137 utterances, 20.45%).

Factors related to sexuality (emphasizing women's chastity) and appearance appear less frequently, accounting for 8.96% and 6.87%, respectively. The least frequently mentioned aspects of prejudice against women are age and social roles, with only 2.99% of utterances mentioning age as a factor of prejudice against women and particularly only 0.75% of utterances addressing women's social roles.

#### ***3.2.4. Differences in Aspects of Prejudice Against Men and Women***

For both men and women, aspects of personality and family roles constitute a significant proportion of the examined utterances.

The most notable difference lies in prejudice concerning abilities and self-worth. For women, this aspect is particularly emphasized, with a total of 171 out of 670 utterances (25.52%), i.e., over one-quarter of the examined data, whereas for men, this aspect is less emphasized, with only 15 out of 336 utterances (4.46%) mentioning it. Another notable difference is the least frequently mentioned aspect for each gender. While men are least subjected to age-related prejudice (3 out of 336 utterances, 0.90%), women are rarely subjected to prejudice regarding their social roles (5 out of 670 utterances, 0.75%). These figures are very low and can be considered almost negligible.

### **3.3. Interpersonal Relationships and Context in Utterances Containing Gender Prejudice**

#### ***3.3.1. Relationship of Speaker and Listener on the Closeness Axis***

The survey results reveal a significant difference in the range of conversations containing gender prejudice. Conversations among family members are the most frequent context for gender-biased statements, accounting for nearly half of the examined data, specifically 47.42%. Another environment conducive to the occurrence of gender prejudice is conversations among people with

close relationships, such as friends, neighbors, or colleagues, representing over 47.10% of the utterances studied. This indicates that the closer the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the listener, the lower the social restraint regarding gender prejudice. Conversely, conversations between strangers or first-time encounters rarely contain gender prejudice, corresponding to 5.47% of the total utterances examined.

Within families, the closer the relationship between communicative participants, the higher the likelihood of utterances containing gender prejudice. Conversations among nuclear family members (spouse-to-spouse or parent-to-child) most frequently contain gender prejudice, with relatively even distribution: 40.50% of utterances between spouses and 34.84% of utterances between parents and children. Sibling conversations also frequently feature gender prejudice-related content, accounting for over 15% of all utterances. When the Sp1–Sp2 relationship becomes more distant along the closeness axis, gender prejudice-containing utterances decrease significantly, with only 16 utterances in grandparent–grandchild conversations (3.62% of total utterances) and 20 utterances among other family members (4.52%). This clear difference further supports the claim that closeness between communicative participants influences the presence of gender prejudice in utterances.

### ***3.3.2. Relationship of Speaker and Listener on the Authority Axis***

Under the influence of power, a speaker (Sp1) can engage with a listener (Sp2) at one of three levels:  $Sp1 > Sp2$ : Sp1 communicates with a subordinate;  $Sp1 = Sp2$ : Sp1 communicates with an equal;  $Sp1 < Sp2$ : Sp1 communicates with a superior.

The survey of Sp1–Sp2 relationships along the authority axis yielded the following results for conversations containing gender prejudice: 403 instances where Sp1 held a higher status ( $Sp1 > Sp2$ ), 413 instances of equal status ( $Sp1 = Sp2$ ), and 116 instances where Sp1 held a lower status ( $Sp1 < Sp2$ ). Utterances from speakers in higher or equal positions are relatively balanced and account for a large portion, 43% and 44% of total gender prejudice utterances, respectively. Utterances from speakers in a lower position relative to the listener account for a considerably smaller proportion, only 13% of all gender prejudice utterances.

### ***3.3.3. Relationship Between Context and Authority in Utterances***

### ***Containing Gender Prejudice***

Among 442 gender prejudice-containing utterances between family members, cases where the speaker held a higher position than the listener ( $Sp1 > Sp2$ ) were dominant, with 344 utterances (78%). Utterances from  $Sp1$  in a lower position ( $Sp1 < Sp2$ ) within the family were much fewer than  $Sp1 > Sp2$ . However, compared to other contexts, this number is substantially higher than the 24 utterances in the colleague/friend/neighbor context and 2 utterances in conversations between strangers. In the other two contexts, utterances where the speaker and listener were of equal status ( $Sp1 = Sp2$ ) occurred most frequently, far exceeding cases where the speaker was higher or lower than the listener. These analyses confirm the close link between context and the distribution of authority among communicative participants in conversations containing gender prejudice.

### **Summary of Chapter 3**

Studying gender prejudice in language from the perspective of communicative roles has practical significance, as it identifies the characteristics of speakers and listeners, the targets of gender prejudice, and common contexts in which gender-prejudiced utterances occur. Regarding the content of prejudice linked to communicative roles, for both genders, the most frequent aspects are prejudice about personality and prejudice regarding the role of men and women in the family. At the same time, differences between the two genders are evident in other aspects of prejudice. The most noticeable and easily observed difference is prejudice concerning competence and personal value: it is particularly emphasized for women but largely overlooked for men. Additionally, men are rarely subjected to age-related prejudice, while women are seldom prejudiced regarding social roles.

Close interpersonal relationships between communicative participants influence the likelihood of gender prejudice appearing in speech. The closer and more intimate the relationship between speaker and listener, the greater the chance of gender prejudice occurring in the conversation. Along the authority axis, gender prejudice typically arises when the speaker holds a higher or equal communicative position relative to the listener. Furthermore, the study highlights the distribution of power corresponding to contexts in which gender prejudice occurs. Within families, gender prejudice is associated with

asymmetrical power, where the speaker, usually in a higher-power position, uses language to impose gender roles, norms, and expectations on the listener. In contrast, gender prejudice occurring between speakers and listeners of equal status is more common in non-family contexts.

## **CHAPTER 4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE ISSUE OF GENDER PREJUDICE**

### **4.1. The influence of gender-prejudiced culture on language**

#### ***4.1.1. Some characteristics of Vietnamese culture affecting gender-prejudiced language***

*4.1.1.1. Confucian culture: the ideology of male superiority over female, the principles of “three obediences and four virtues”*

*4.1.1.2. Mother Goddess worship culture: glorifying the role of women while still maintaining stereotypical norms*

#### ***4.1.2. Culture generates and shapes linguistic elements containing gender prejudice***

Concepts of gender and gender roles in Confucianism have produced words and phrases containing gender prejudice, such as “xuất giá tòng phu”, “tam tòng tứ đức”, “nhất nam viết hữu...”, and so on. Because of the influence of Confucianism and patriarchal ideology on the roles of each gender, the ritual roles of men in the family and clan were emphasized, giving rise to a range of terms related to inheritance functions, rituals, and ceremonial duties. In addition to the vocabulary shaped by Confucian cultural influence, the Vietnamese Mother Goddess worship culture also contributes expressions that glorify the role of mothers, while simultaneously shaping stereotypical norms about women’s roles.

#### ***4.1.3. Gender-prejudiced culture influences the choice of linguistic means in communication***

The linguistic means commonly used to express gender prejudice have been presented and analyzed in Chapter 2. The organization of linguistic units into utterances depends heavily on the speaker’s choice of language. Specifically, in Vietnamese, the choice of words, speech acts, and discourse structures to convey gender prejudice reflects cultural characteristics of the Vietnamese people.

Tied to a culture that values male dominance, the linguistic elements expressing gender prejudice and evaluative judgments in

Vietnamese are often directed at women. For example, regarding the targets of gender-prejudiced utterances, the number of statements containing prejudice against women is roughly twice as high as those containing prejudice against men (see Table 2.6).

Associated with a culture that favors concise or moderate forms of expression, it is also understandable that speakers often incorporate gender-prejudiced motifs, proverbs, and idioms into their speech.

#### **4.2. The role of gender-prejudiced language as a means of reflecting and maintaining cultural values**

##### ***4.2.1. Language reflects the existence of gender prejudice, reproducing gender roles and traditional gender stereotypes***

Researchers such as Nguyễn Văn Khang, Trần Xuân Điệp have highlighted the existence of gender prejudice in the Vietnamese lexicon (at structural level). Our study continues to affirm the presence of gender prejudice in Vietnamese, specifically in communicative language, which is dynamic and shaped by social variables such as gender, age, occupation, and social position, as well as context. The persistence of gender-biased ideologies in daily life and in all communication environments is reflected primarily in the gender roles and stereotypes reproduced through language. The contents discussed and analyzed in Section 2.2 demonstrate the ability of language to flexibly and diversely recreate gender roles and stereotypes.

##### ***4.2.2. Language maintains and reinforces gender stereotypes***

The presence of gender-prejudiced ideologies from culture and society in everyday life, and the repetitive use of language containing gender prejudice, serve to entrench these biases, contributing to their maintenance and reinforcement by emphasizing gender roles and stereotypes. Gender-prejudiced cultural discourses frequently found in communicative language include idioms, proverbs, and folk songs. Due to their concise and figurative nature, these forms are preferred in daily speech. Their brevity, rhythmic qualities, and memorability allow such folklore discourses to effectively convey and reinforce gender stereotypes.

#### **4.3. Proposed measures to eliminate gender-prejudiced elements in speech**

##### ***4.3.1. Using gender-neutral language***

In both daily communication and official documents, the choice of gender-neutral language is an important solution to eliminate

gender prejudice and promote social equality. Many sociolinguistic studies recommend using neutral terms that emphasize function or social position rather than gender characteristics. In addition, international documents such as the UN Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Language (United Nations, 2019) affirm that gender-neutral language creates a fair communicative environment and contributes to removing gender bias in thought and action.

#### ***4.3.2. Establishing standards for fair communication***

Establishing standards for fair communication is an essential step in eliminating gender prejudice in speech and creating an environment of social interaction based on equality. Communicative language not only conveys information but also reflects and reinforces power relations among individuals. To address gender bias, it is necessary to develop communication standards that promote fairness, where language demonstrates respect and recognition of competence rather than emphasizing gender. Thus, establishing and maintaining fair communication standards has significance not only in the linguistic domain but also contributes to forming a culture of equal, respectful interaction that encourages participation from all individuals.

#### ***4.3.3. Promoting social awareness of gender equality through language***

Promoting social awareness of gender equality through language is an important orientation, as language not only reflects culture but also has the capacity to shape, construct, and transform it.

### **Summary of Chapter 4**

The close interconnection between language and culture has created a vivid landscape for the issue of gender prejudice. Vietnamese culture is deeply influenced by Confucianism and by the Mother Goddess tradition. The combination of foreign cultural elements and local cultural practices, along with the Vietnamese people's ability to assimilate them flexibly, has resulted in an open and adaptable culture.

The influence of Vietnamese culture on language is evident in the production of words and expressions related to gender prejudice, which reinforce gender roles and social stereotypes. Culture also affects the selection of linguistic means used to convey gender prejudice and contributes to the formation of communication norms in which gender bias is marked.

Language itself, when used in practice, reciprocally impacts



culture. It reflects the existence of gender prejudice, reproduces traditional gender roles and social stereotypes, and thereby contributes significantly to maintaining and reinforcing these norms. Moreover, biased evaluations of behavior conveyed through language provide fertile ground for gender prejudices to take root, embedding themselves deeply in culture and transmitting across generations.

Given the reciprocal relationship between language and culture, we argue that changing perceptions of gender prejudice must begin with daily speech and the way people communicate in everyday life.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The study of commonly occurring linguistic elements contributing to gender-prejudiced utterances has practical significance. It helps identify the linguistic features that reinforce gender prejudice in speech, thereby raising awareness and progressively limiting or eliminating such elements in communication. The manifestation of gender prejudice in speech results from the selection of appropriate linguistic means. Common linguistic means include words containing gender markers, words emphasizing gender stereotypes, evaluative terms associated with each gender, syntactic structures reflecting gender prejudice, and prefabricated expressions, all of which are strategically employed to convey prejudice towards a specific gender.

2. In spoken communication, from the perspective of communicative roles and the relationships between interlocutors, language expressing gender prejudice exhibits the following characteristics:

- Regarding the gender of the speaker producing gender-prejudiced utterances, the distribution between the two genders is relatively balanced. However, when considering the target of gender prejudice, such prejudice is more frequently directed towards females, significantly exceeding that directed towards males. In an interaction where gender-prejudiced utterances occur, the target may be the speaker, the listener, or another individual.

- The interpersonal relationship between communicative roles is closely associated with the presence of gender-prejudiced content in speech. The closer the social proximity between interlocutors, the greater the likelihood of gender-prejudiced utterances; conversely, if

the Sp1-Sp2 relationship is distant or formal, the presence of gender prejudice is less probable. Along the power dimension, when the speaker holds higher communicative authority, prejudiced utterances tend to occur more frequently. This can be considered an indicative factor for predicting the likelihood of gender-prejudiced language.

3. Gender prejudice is an inherent feature of Vietnamese society, influenced by cultural and social factors and reflected in language. Vietnamese cultural elements have strong diffusion and influence over language that conveys gender prejudice. Simultaneously, linguistic products containing gender-prejudiced elements reinforce cultural norms, perpetuating and amplifying gender stereotypes in society, which accounts for their enduring presence today.

4. Practically, the research findings show the transformative role of language on culture. Changes in linguistic expression are crucial for fostering anti-prejudice thinking. Conscious language use contributes to gradually eliminating, and ultimately eradicating, gender prejudice in speech. This is a highly practical endeavor that supports the broader process of achieving gender equality.

5. Several issues remain open for further investigation:

- This dissertation has demonstrated a close relationship between the characteristics of the speaker and gender prejudice, partially reflecting the interplay between language and culture regarding gender prejudice. Future research could expand the sample population, taking into account social characteristics of interlocutors such as gender, age, occupation, and position.

- This study is based on a corpus of literary texts, contributing in part to the identification of gender relations in literature and culture. From the perspective of communicative roles, future research could extend to other types of speech, including social media interactions, films, interview responses in the press, mass media, or daily conversations.

- Gender prejudice is one of many prevalent social prejudices. We suggest that linguistic manifestations of other prejudices, such as biases against children, occupational prejudices, regional prejudices, etc., also represent promising avenues for further research.

## **LIST OF SCIENTIFIC WORKS PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR RELATED TO THE DISSERTATION**

1. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2019). “Men’s Prejudices against Women in Conversational Language (through Literary Data).” *Science Journal – Đồng Nai University*, No. 14 (2019), pp. 83–95.
2. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2019). “Linguistic Signals Revealing Men’s Prejudices against Women (Through Selected Prose Works of Nam Cao, Vũ Trọng Phụng, Nguyễn Công Hoan).” *Proceedings of the National Scientific Conference on Literature and Gender*. Hue University Publishing House, pp. 370–383.
3. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2025). “Prejudice against Men in Language (Through Literary Corpus).” *Proceedings of the 10th International Interdisciplinary Conference on Language Research and Language Teaching*. Hue University Publishing House, pp. 689–698.
4. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2025). “Common Speech Acts Expressing Prejudice against Men in Conversation.” *Science Journal – Ho Chi Minh City University of Education*, Vol. 22, No. 10 (2025).
5. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2025). “Communicative Roles in Gender-Prejudiced Utterances.” *Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference: Culture, Society, and Humanities toward Sustainable Development*. Can Tho University. (Accepted for publication).
6. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2025). “Common Dimensions of Prejudice in Gender-Prejudiced Utterances (Through Vietnamese Literary Corpus).” *Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education – The University of Danang – University of Science and Education*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (2025).
7. Trần Thị Mai Hương (2025). “Interpersonal Relationships and Power Distribution in Gender-Prejudiced Utterances.” *Proceedings of UniC 2025: Artificial Intelligence and Language Education & Language Studies in Vietnam*. Vietnam National University Publishing House. (Accepted for publication).