

# Gender Discrimination in English and Chinese

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**Abstract:** Gender discrimination is a pervasive issue in societies worldwide, extending to various aspects of life, including language. This paper aims to explore and compare gender discrimination in English and Chinese languages. Through an in-depth examination of linguistic features, social perceptions, and cultural influences, this study reveals that while gender discrimination exists in both English and Chinese, its manifestation and intensity differ due to linguistic structures, historical contexts, and cultural norms. By understanding these differences, we can work towards achieving gender equality in language and society

**Keywords:** Gender Discrimination; Social Gender; Language; Equality

## 1. Introduction

Gender discrimination is a deeply-rooted problem that impacts individuals in various spheres, including language. Discriminatory language perpetuates unequal power dynamics and reinforces harmful stereotypes. The research objectives outline the specific goals of the study, which include analyzing linguistic features, exploring social perceptions, investigating cultural influences, and proposing strategies for addressing gender discrimination.

## 2. Linguistic Analysis

### 2.1 Grammatical Gender

In English, grammatical gender is relatively limited, with only a few nouns having inherent gender. Conversely, Chinese lacks grammatical gender distinctions, employing gender-neutral pronouns. This subsection examines how these linguistic differences contribute to gender bias. Next to the word female contains the profound thought of male superiority and female

inferiority. From a calligraphic point of view, the woman's folding of this radicals is like a kneeling knee. Generally speaking, Chinese characters pay attention to symmetrical beauty, but before the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the lower part of the female character was rarely symmetrical with skimming.

### 2.2 Occupational Titles and Roles

English and Chinese languages may exhibit gender bias in occupational titles and roles, perpetuating stereotypes and unequal representation. This section delves into the specific examples and societal implications of such biases in both languages. Some nouns in English that indicate occupation and high status (e.g. president, doctor, lawyer, etc.); French medecin, architecte, general, minister, etc.; Chinese "scientist", "judge", "chairman", "director", etc.) generally refers to men, and if you want to express women, you often add fixed words in front of it to limit it, such as English "woman doctor", "female pilot"; The Chinese words "female judge" and "chairwoman" distinguish between men and women. Some lower-status occupations, such as nurse, secretary, etc., refer only to women, without a sign, to male, male, etc.

### 2.3 Lexical Choices

Both English and Chinese languages employ specific lexical choices that reinforce gender stereotypes. Words may carry different connotations when associated with males or females, perpetuating gender bias. This subsection provides detailed examples and explores the impact of these choices. The sexism in English proverbs is also vividly reflected. For example, A fair woman without virtue is like palled wine. A fair woman without virtue is like palled wine. Long hair and short wit. Long hair and short wit. A man of straw is worth of a woman of gold. A man of straw is worth of a

woman of gold. A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you bit them, the better they'll be. A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you bit them, the better they'll be.

"Implies that they are reluctant to make a direct statement of their views and hope to gain support from others. The discrimination of Chinese characters against women is mainly reflected in the female side characters. Many derogatory words are inseparable from a "female" word. Such as demon, slave, rape, greed, vain, jealous, bitch, prostitute, prostitute, etc., and even sell the male sex, can only be called "male prostitute", must be hard to drag a "female" to foil. According to the preliminary statistics of "Cihai", there are 257 female characters in Chinese characters (including false characters, different characters, complex characters, ancient and modern characters). There are a total of 100 positive and negative comments, of which 47 are positive, 35 are negative and 18 are mixed. Of course, many praise words also do not leave "female", such as good, wonderful, enchanting, Wu, good, Ting, Xian, tender, wan, Jiao, Jing, charming and so on. But this just shows that "good" and "play" are related to women. Because women are just the things to be seen, the objects, while men are the viewers, the subjects. The object can only be passively judged by the subject. The viewer (subject) does not care about "good" "play", his function

Only to be observed (object) for praise and criticism, judgment, evaluation. Therefore, most of these words or words of criticism or praise have nothing to do with men.

## **2.4 Stereotypical Expressions**

Expressions in both English and Chinese languages may contain stereotypes and gendered expectations. This section analyzes these expressions, their origins, and the consequences of their usage in reinforcing gender discrimination. In the long-term language habits, the word order for both sexes mostly follows the principle of male and female first, such as the Chinese "men and women, husband and wife, husband and wife, children, in-laws, brothers and sisters, parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, in-laws, husbands and wives, men and women, men and women, men and women, men and women, men and women, men and women, men and women, men and women love, men and women

marry women" and so on. This order is actually a manifestation of the concept of supremacy. As a result, giving birth to a son is "Zhang", and getting a daughter is just "Li Hua". Due to the influence of this language habit, some derogatory words also use this word order, such as "men do not have men and women do not have women", "men steal women prostitute". Because of the stereotype of male as a species, it also affects the word order related to animals, such as "male and female, male and female, mandarin duck, dragon and phoenix, dragon fly wind dance". For this reason, for brave and courageous women, we can usually only call them "heroines", otherwise there is no name. Therefore, we have to "decide male and female" with the opponent, the winner is "male" and the loser is "female". When you are stuck, it is "female", and when you are excited, it is "vigorous". Here, "male" and "female" are not a pure gender indication, but have obvious commendatory and derogatory meanings.

## **3. Social Perceptions and Language**

### **3.1 English: Stereotypes and Bias**

English language usage often reflects societal perceptions, stereotypes, and biases related to gender roles. This subsection explores the influence of historical and cultural factors on language usage and how it perpetuates gender discrimination.

### **3.2 Chinese: Traditional Gender Roles**

Chinese language and culture have long-established gender roles deeply rooted in Confucian traditions. This section examines the impact of these traditions on language usage and the resulting gender discrimination in Chinese society. The gender role model formed in the pre-Qin period opened a social role model in which men were superior to women, and became the basic gender role model in Chinese society for more than two thousand years. For more than two thousand years from the Qin Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, men and women and couples existed according to the pattern of "being different" from each other. On the basis of king and minister, father and son, brother and husband, the male gender role has continuously perfected many social roles which are active in every corner of social life. Accordingly, the gender role of women is the basic role of woman or woman, continuous activities in the

narrow circle of family life, engaged in the work of raising children and pleasing men, and as a family sideline practitioner.

#### **4. Cultural Factors**

##### **4.1 Western Individualism and Chinese Collectivism**

Cultural differences between English-speaking Western societies and Chinese societies influence the manifestation and intensity of gender discrimination in language.

##### **4.2 Historical Perspectives**

###### **4.2.1 English: Feminist Movements**

Feminist movements in English-speaking countries have challenged gender discrimination, leading to changes in societal perceptions and language usage. This subsection explores the historical context and impact of these movements. In the history of human society, the concept of human rights has a history of more than 200 years, but the concept of human rights does not include women's rights in a long historical period. The feminist movement began as early as 1791, when Olympe de Gouges, the women's leader of the French Revolution, published the Declaration of Women's Rights and Women's Citizenship, or the Declaration of Women's Rights. The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Rights of Women begins by stating that "women are born free persons and have equal rights with men." Two years later the author of this manifesto was beheaded by her former male Allies.

In the Declaration of Human and Civil rights of France and the Declaration of Independence of the United States, "rights of man" means only the rights of men and does not include women. The feminist movement emerged in this context, meaning women's human rights, pushing women's human rights from the periphery into the mainstream, making women's rights an important part of the whole human rights.

Feminist criticism, as a fashion for textual criticism or discursive criticism, did not appear in the West until the political turmoil of the late 1960s. In fact, as early as the beginning of the last century, Virginia Woolf, one of the pioneers of contemporary feminist criticism, had noticed that there was a lack of women's voices in mainstream discourse, and that women in most literary works were actually just saying what male writers wanted them to say and doing what

male writers wanted them to do. The French feminist thinker Simone de Beauvoir's famous argument in 1949 about the "artificial woman" (that is, women are artificially constructed) spawned a group of feminist critics who began to focus on how the mass media had "conspired" with patriarchy to construct a weak little woman. These discourse critics believe that criticism of patriarchal institutions cannot be separated from criticism of patriarchal discourse.

Feminism gradually transformed into an organized social movement in the 19th century, as there was a growing belief that women were not treated equally in a male-centered society. The feminist movement has its roots in Western progressivism, especially in the reform movement of the 19th century. The organizing movement began with the first Women's Rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.

###### **4.2.2 Chinese: Confucian Traditions**

Confucian traditions in Chinese society have traditionally reinforced hierarchical gender roles, impacting language and perpetuating gender discrimination. This section examines the historical roots of these traditions and their influence on language usage. *Zhouyi* is a masterpiece of traditional Chinese thought. As one of the representative works of Confucian classics, the earliest discussion on the relationship between men and women can be found in *Zhouyi*. It discusses the relationship between nature and man from the unique ethical perspective of ancient China, with Yin-yang and Qiankun as its main axes throughout the book. "Great zai Qian Yuan, the beginning of all materials, is the unification of heaven", "Yang is the male is just, female is the Yin is soft", "Although Yin has beauty, it contains from the king's work, Verdare also." The tunnel also, the wife also, the minister also, the tunnel has nothing but the end." [1] From the discussion that heaven is superior to earth, and then extended to the gender relationship between men and women, *Zhouyi* established the basic pattern of male and female superiority formed in the Chinese traditional society. Chinese Confucian traditional female ethics gradually improved and developed after *Zhouyi*.

In the Confucian division of the status of men and women, the scope of male activity extends from society to the family, while women can only be confined to the family, and only belong to one of the five virtues. Their social relationships are very homogeneous, have been

reduced to a minimum, and are always in a subordinate position. Combing through the development of traditional Chinese ethics, it is easy to see that women have always belonged only to the family, and looking at the entire history of ancient women's view, the sleeping female consciousness has not been awakened.

## **5. Effects of Gender Discrimination in Language**

### **5.1 Discrimination Reinforces Existing Gender Stereotypes, Limiting Opportunities and Reinforcing Social Expectations.**

This subsection provides a comprehensive analysis of how such reinforcement occurs, examining the effects on individuals and society as a whole.

As a symbol, language embodies social culture and people's thoughts, and at the same time, language also shapes people's ideas subconsciously. Gender inequality in language not only reflects the existence of gender discrimination in today's society, but also unconsciously deepens and solidifies this gender discrimination. We need to reflect on the language we use daily. For example, the language of women is mostly about women's marriage and family, and mentions gender relations more than the development of women's self, but it is not the case for men, men are isolated to get married and establish a career, women are married to good men

### **5.2 Psychological Impact**

Gender discrimination in language can have a profound psychological impact on individuals. This section explores the negative effects on self-esteem, self-perception, and overall well-being. It discusses the internalization of gender biases and the long-term consequences for individuals' mental health.

First of all, sexism does harm to women's self-esteem. In many societies, men are seen as the more powerful and superior sex, while women are seen as weak and subordinate. This perception of inequality can cause women to feel undervalued and undervalued, which can affect their self-esteem. For example, some jobs recruit only men, and women face greater difficulties and challenges in the workplace, which will make them feel that their abilities can not be fully developed, thus lowering their self-esteem.

Secondly, gender discrimination also affects men. In some societies, men are seen as the gender that must take responsibility, and they must have enough wealth and status to be considered successful men. This perception can make some men feel that their worth and abilities are not being fully developed, which can affect their self-esteem. For example, if a man is unemployed or does not have enough wealth, he may feel unable to fulfill the role of a man, which lowers self-esteem.

In addition, sexism can have an impact on the LGBTQ+ community. In some societies, LGBTQ+ people face discrimination and exclusion, and they may feel that their gender identity cannot be fully accepted, which can affect self-esteem. For example, members of an LGBTQ+ group may feel that their identity and sexual orientation are not recognized by society, resulting in lower self-esteem.

In short, sexism can have a great impact on one's self-esteem. In a fair and equal society, everyone should be recognized as a unique individual, not just defined as male or female. We should respect everyone's gender identity and strive to break down sexist prejudices and perceptions.

## **6. Strategies for Addressing Gender Discrimination**

### **6.1 Language Reforms and Inclusive Language**

To combat gender discrimination in language, this section proposes the adoption of language reforms and the use of inclusive language. It discusses the importance of employing gender-neutral terms and eliminating gender stereotypes in language usage.

Language reform in English included the use of neutral language such as Policeman to police. Chinese uses inclusive language such as turning women from known to known, widows into widowed women, and verbal men doing housework into men doing housework (because housework itself is a joint obligation of the couple and not of the woman).

### **6.2 Educational Initiatives**

Education plays a pivotal role in challenging and dismantling gender discrimination. This subsection emphasizes the need to incorporate gender equality principles into curriculum and promote awareness among educators and

students. It explores the implementation of inclusive language education and the creation of safe spaces for discussing gender-related issues. Make your ideas concrete. "To be closely integrated with daily life, in the occupation, image, profession, name, clothing, color, mood, temperament, division of labor, role and other levels to show their relationship with gender." Teachers should inspire students to discover gender issues together, and be good at changing students' gender stereotypes and showing more characters who are brave enough to break through gender restrictions in their lives." In addition, gender classes should extend sex protection education to include: "Open the black box of sex, de-stigmatize sex, and incorporate awareness of rights into sex education..

"Gender stereotypes affect the development opportunities of men and women, which in turn affects people's self-esteem and security." In order to enhance students' social gender sensitivity, students learn to respect and accept differences.

"Shy, strong, gentle, decisive, careful..." Are these words suitable for men or women, or both? The teacher leads the students to think about whether the difference between men and women is absolute, and the possible consequences of traditional gender biases. "Every student has unlimited potential and should try many things, and have a more inclusive attitude towards the world and towards others."

"The purpose of examining the impact of gender stereotypes is to plant the seeds of gender equality in the minds of students who may become managers when they enter society, so that gender stereotypes do not affect the next generation."

### **6.3 Advocacy and Awareness**

Advocacy and raising awareness are vital for addressing gender discrimination in language. This subsection emphasizes the role of organizations, campaigns, and individuals in promoting inclusive language and challenging gender biases. It explores the power of collective action and the impact of grassroots movements in effecting change.

Change discrimination and promote equality through education and reform. For example, the

recent popular variety "Siren's Call to the Island of Fire" reflects female police, female soldiers, female firefighters and other traditional male occupations, reflecting the strength of women and showing the diversity of women. The advertisement should reflect the equality of housework, the diversity of men and women's dress, the diversity of professions and other gender equality elements, oppose all forms of gender discrimination, oppose the solidification of the image of men and women, respect individual differences, and advocate equality and harmony

### **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper has provided a comprehensive and detailed analysis of gender discrimination in English and Chinese languages. Through the examination of linguistic features, social perceptions, and cultural influences, the study has shed light on the manifestation and intensity of gender bias in both languages. By understanding these differences, we can work towards creating a more inclusive linguistic landscape that promotes gender equality in language and society. Continued research, advocacy, and awareness are crucial in challenging gender discrimination and fostering positive change.

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