

Georgia on my mind



English language
and discursive practices
in Georgian culture

General Editor
Sonia Maria Melchiorre
Editor
Manan Ruseishvili





Introducing **Genderising. Redesigning Gender**

Sonia Maria Melchiorre
University of Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy

The idea of creating a series that would host the work of both Italian and foreign scholars working in the many fields of gender studies was born about three years ago, before the pandemic disrupted our lives and revolutionised our work.

The inspiring meetings with colleagues who have been working on gender studies in their respective countries for years, and who, in many cases, have brought civic engagement back to the fore in university research, have convinced me that academia is ready and well equipped to deal with the epochal change underway.

This series is dedicated to all those who have always believed that gender studies, as a transdisciplinary investigation, could have a future in academia. For too long, in fact, scholars and researchers have been derided for their efforts in this direction, and not only outside the academy.

Gender studies have taught us to look at the world with fresh eyes; they have problematised the concept of freedom in Western societies; they have allowed the invisible to become visible in the light of day and have eventually revolutionised the language of the future.

The series *Genderising. Redesigning Gender* is a gamble that demonstrates how much the networking activity of universities, together with

other society actors, such as our publisher here, and all over the world, can contribute to bringing different cultures together, to help them grow in their respective socio-cultural contexts.

I am also convinced that education is still a privilege for those who are appointed to convey knowledge, and a gift for those who receive it. It is our duty to create a space where younger generations can rediscover a love of knowledge and become whoever they wish to be.



Foreword

Manana Ruseishvili – Cartledge
“Ivane Javakhishvili” Tbilisi State University, Georgia

This volume is a result of academic cooperation between the University of Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy and Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), Tbilisi, Georgia.

The authors of the volume express their gratitude to Dr Sonia Maria Melchiorre from the University of Tuscia, under whose initiation and general management the publication of this volume has been possible.

The papers were written by academic staff and young researchers working at TSU. They all discuss some of the issues concerning gender from different points of view. Gender has become an interesting issue for research in academia due to its interdisciplinarity.

This volume reveals the diversity of the directions for research in this respect.

The paper by Manana Rusieshvili-Cartledge & Rusudan Dolidze “*There is no room for weakness here! (Cultural metaphors and stereotypes versus gay love in film and society)*”, describes the reasons for the mixed reactions generated regarding a Georgian-Swedish film “*And then we danced*” which has won several prestigious awards since its release in 2019.

Specifically, based on two sets of data, this paper explores the reasons for the above-mentioned

attitudes to the film. First, the “battle” of the director of the film against socially rooted cultural metaphors and gender stereotypes (for instance, those associated with the Georgian national dance) as depicted in the film are described and their significance for Georgian culture is explained.

At the second stage of the research, the posts describing the reactions to online film reviews and discussions (initiated largely by church people, ultranationalist and ultraconservative party members and their followers) are presented. The online comments are analysed based on the points of view expressed toward the plot of the film – positive, neutral (conciliatory) and negative. The main arguments are foregrounded and verbal strategies (for instance, employment of hate speech, impolite and rude lexical units) are identified and explained in the context of Georgian culture.

Two papers in this volume are dedicated to the description of the ways the representatives of the two most vulnerable groups of society (LGBT+ people and women) contemplate their roles and self-esteem and how these are expressed through linguistic and paralinguistic means.

Linguistic and sociolinguistic manifestations of self-esteem of LGBT+ people, one of the most discriminated communities not only in Georgia but globally, are discussed in the paper by Tinatin Dadianidze “*Just put up with it and turn a blind eye! How do LGBT+ people estimate themselves in Georgia?*”.

The empirical data for this study were taken from the interviews conducted with the representatives of the LGBT+ community and based on an open-ended questionnaire that included questions about self-attitude and self-esteem.

Employing a combination of the qualitative method of research and the interdisciplinary approach to discourse analysis, Dadianidze explores the reasons behind low levels of self-esteem the respondents revealed through linguistic and paralinguistic markers. In addition, the answers to the interviews show the general atmosphere and attitudes of certain groups of society toward sexual minorities.

A paper by Mariana Papashvili “*Is a woman’s place in the kitchen? – Women’s perception of their role in society: Georgian context*” focuses on the women’s perception of their role in a male-dominated society. The main method utilized during the data collection process was interviewing focus groups (25 women of various social and cultural backgrounds from different regions of Georgia) employing open-ended questionnaires regarding women’s perceptions of their role in Georgian society.

As a result of this research, linguistic features regarding the women's stereotypical perceptions of their role in Georgian society were revealed which describe women as subordinated, culturally constrained members of society. The data also discuss social statuses, obligations, and commitments that build up a woman's image in Georgian society.

The author believes that the main challenges to the women's perception of their role in society are the empowerment of women, solidarity in society, adjustment of jobs both in the capital of the country and the regions.

In her paper "*Gender Assessment Tendencies of the English Term of Endearment "baby" (and its Variations) in the Speakers of English*" Sofia Nikolaishvili analyses gender assessment tendencies regarding the English term of endearment "baby" (and its variations) in mono and bilingual speakers of English. The research is based on the online questionnaires and online interviews and discusses the connection between the attitudes to the gender on the one hand and various societal, cultural and psychological elements of a linguistic community. The data led the author to conclude that there must be a difference between the ways mono VS bilingual speakers of English assess gender regarding the particular term of endearment, as well as endearment terms in general. Following Mills (1995), it is believed in the article that these differences are determined by the type of grammatical category of gender in English and the second language of bilingual speakers, by the beliefs and ideas that motivate the lexico-semantic gender conferred to words and reflect the stereotypes and dominant ideologies in societies.

Two papers are dedicated to the gender roles as described in fairy tales which reflect gender stereotypes practised in the culture within which they were created.

Sopio Totibadze's paper "*A Woman Turned into a Man*" – a Sociolinguistic Analysis of a Georgian Fairy Tale," discusses an old Georgian fairy tale and its implications for gender studies. Although the topics of transgenderism or lesbianism are extremely rare or non-existent in old or modern, literary Georgian fairy tales, the existence of such a tale is significant for the research from the point of view of the social context and linguistic peculiarities serving to convey and pass on the meaning indirectly in a disguised manner.

A paper by Nato Peradze "*Conceptual Metaphors and Gender: A Study of Fantasy Books and Their Japanese Animations*" analyses gendered

conceptual metaphors in several fantasy books and their Japanese animations. In the first part of the paper, utilizing the quantitative and qualitative methods of gendered conceptual metaphors found in classical fairy tales are analysed and their emergence in the novels against the influence of cultural and social background are discussed. The second part of the paper focuses on the transposition of the metaphors into another medium and discusses differences in metaphors and proposes explanations behind certain cultural and gender-specific motifs.

*Professor Manana Rusieshvili-Cartledge
Head of the Department of English Philology at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi
State University, Georgia*

