

Title: Sound Symbolism of gender in Personal Names: Western Armenian and Kutchi

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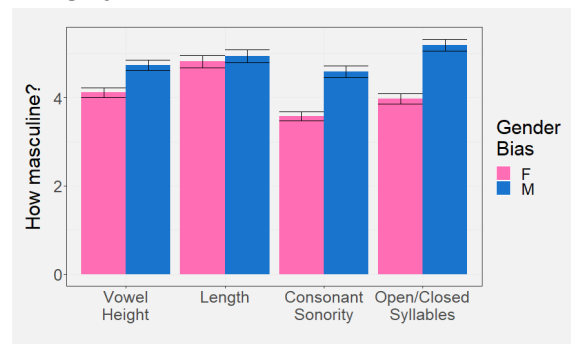
In this study, we report on corpus and experimental studies on the sound symbolism of gender in personal names in two heritage languages spoken in GTA, namely Western Armenian and Kutchi.

Corpus study: 198 Armenian personal names and 386 Kutchi personal names are collected and phonologically analyzed to explore the connection between the gender and phonological attributes. Predictions are generated based on previous work on English names and purported iconic connection between sound and gender hypothesized in the literature. Armenian followed most of the expected trends while Kutchi showed the opposite effect more often than not.

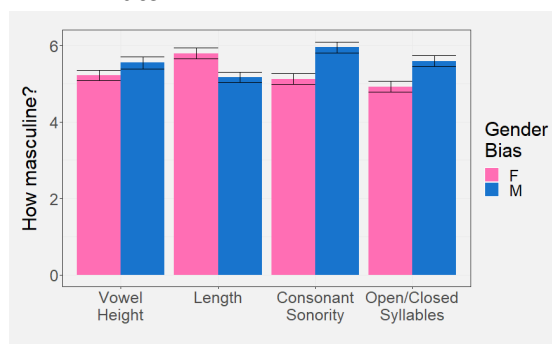
FACTOR	Armenian		Kutchi	
	TREND IN EXPECTED DIRECTION	STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT	TREND IN EXPECTED DIRECTION	STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT
Initial segment type (F: Vowel)	NO	NO	NO	YES
Initial syllable type (F: open)	YES	NO	YES	NO
Final segment/syllable type (F: open)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Length in syllables (F: longer)	YES	YES	NO	NO
Length in segments (F: longer)	YES	NO	NO	YES
Proportion of round consonants (F: more)	YES	YES	NO	NO
Proportion of front vowels (F: more)	YES	YES	NO	NO
Proportion of back vowels (F: less)	YES	YES	YES	NO
Proportion of high vowels (F: more)	YES	YES	YES	NO
Proportion of low vowels (F: less)	YES	NO	NO	NO

Experimental study: For each language, a pair of 20 made up names designed to minimally differ in one of four phonological variables were presented to native speakers of each language (19 Armenian; 13 Kutchi) to rate the gender of the name on a 6 point scale. In this nonce name experiment where the phonological factors are narrowly targeted, the participants showed preference in the expected direction. The implications of the finding for the sound symbolism and future plans will be discussed.

Armenian



Kutchi



Presentation preference: 15 min + 5 (20 + 5 is also possible.)