

Redefining “Hero:” Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Language, Gender, and Age

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Abstract

This study examines ways people conceptualize and apply the word “Hero” across genders and ages to find differences between dictionary meanings and practical usage. Using natural language processing to extract morphological and lexical features characterizing terms of reference to “Hero,” past and present, these semantic fragments are compared among age categories and gender through lexicographic-psycholinguistic analysis. A lexicographic analysis via Cambridge, Oxford, and Etymology dictionaries finds meanings of “Hero,” changes in its meaning from past to present, and ways it is utilized across cultures. Then, a psycholinguistic analysis of “Hero” in different genders (males-females) and ages (under 13 – after 13 – adulthood over 20 years old) through a survey collects 20 participants’ responses about “Hero.” These 20 people include 10 males and 10 females from different countries and age groups. Findings from lexicographic and psycholinguistic analysis of “Hero” indicate variations in perception and usage of “Hero” across times, places, cultures, genders, and ages. This study will not only benefit the field of linguistics, including psycholinguistics, but also contribute to the existing literature by supplying various aspects of the use of “Hero” in different genders and ages.

Keywords: Age; Gender; Hero; Lexicography; Psycholinguistics; Socialization