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Statistical characteristics of portrait stereotypes verbalization in fiction: gender aspect

Abstract. The focus of the paper is on gender stereotyping of people by their appearance. It examines male and female portrait descriptions based on the examples from Russian and English prose of the XXI century. Considering the structure of a character's appearance, in terms of stereotypes implementation we pay our attention to the features described more often or in the first place. The database of female and male appearance descriptions is compiled. All selected examples are classified according to four lexico-semantic groups: 1) body and its components; 2) face and its components; 3) hair 4) clothing. With the help of statistical analysis of language means describing appearance the paper reveals some tendencies in selecting significant features of men / women's portrait depending on the sex of the author and the character of the literary text.

Keywords: frequency; gender stereotype; appearance; portrait; description of a character.

Modern linguistics is characterized by intensive development of a new research direction "linguistic genderology", which is an integral part of the anthropocentric paradigm.

Linguistic genderology is a scientific field that studies the problem of relationship between language and gender as one of the parameters of personality, which is constructed by a human and society in accordance with the norms of the culture. Within gender studies language is seen as "an essential component of human interaction, which reflects not only our life, but becomes its forming factor" [1, p. 16]. The main purpose of linguistic genderology is "the study of gender categories involving linguistic tools" [2, p. 15].

Problems of linguistic genderology include determining the gender component in communication [3; 4], investigation of gender stereotypes [5; 6], representation of gender in texts of various types on lexical [7; 8], grammatical [9; 10], discursive [11; 12] and other levels.

This paper considers gender stereotypes of a person's portrait. The problem of creating a verbal portrait attracts many linguists and literary critics, who study the structure and linguistic features of the portrait and its verbal construction [13; 14], portrait as a genre [15], portrait as a speech technology [16], portrait in a particular genre form [17].

The meaning of a character's portrait in fiction is rather complex. In modern science, there are following types of portrait: the portrait, reflecting only appearance, the social portrait (a typical set of socio-cultural, behavioral traits of a particular social group member), the psychological portrait (a human model as a combination of basic personality characteristics), the portrait, reflecting an emotional state of the character, etc. As for our study we highlight only appearance characteristics from all the diversity of portrait forms. Thus the paper examines static stereotypes of portraits, which include face, body, hair, and costume.

Most of the researchers involved in the study of characters' portrait firstly pay their attention to the description of his / her appearance as the main component of the portrait. Appearance characteristic creates a visual image in the reader's mind, which is perceived as an emotionally expressive and aesthetically significant object. The analysis of portrait descriptions created by fiction writers is of great scientific interest to the present-day researchers. At this stage of linguistics development it is especially important to study verbal means of creating appearance characteristics used by the author, and mechanisms of their use.

The gender aspect of language is revealed through the analysis of gender stereotypes, which are culturally and socially constructed views of masculinity and femininity, i.e. combined internal and external characteristics, qualities, and behavior of both sexes.

Considering the structure of a character's portrait, in terms of stereotype implementation we have paid attention to the features described more often or in the first place. Trends in the choice of significant portrait components depending on the author's sex and the artistic character's sex may be set with the help of the quantitative analysis of speech indicators.

For our study, we compiled a database of female and male appearance descriptions from modern Russian and English prose. All selected descriptions are classified according to the following lexico-semantic groups (LSG): 1) the LSG representing the human body and its components; 2) the LSG indicating face and its components; 3) the LSG 'hair' 4) the LSG 'clothing'. The description of one portrait component is considered to be a unit of measure in this research. The total number of portrait descriptions taken from Russian texts is 955, and from English texts it equals 1459 units.

Then we estimate the number of examples describing a specific element of the character's portrait considering the sex of the author: among 955 units of the Russian-language material 504 descriptions belong to male writers and 451 portrait descriptions belong to female authors. As for

English-language database, among 1459 units 612 are from men authors books and 847 are from women authors books.

The study shows, that description of the character's body and its components gets the highest frequency in the text, it's – 36 % (178 units) of all Russian descriptions and 37.5 % (230 units) of English ones. At the same time a specific feature here is that the descriptions of such body parts as *грудь / breast*, *бедро / thigh*, *ягодица / butt*, *нога / leg* are found mostly in women verbal portraits. While characterization according to the height parameter of a hero on the contrary is frequent in male appearance descriptions – 92 % (33 units) in Russian and 70 % (30 units) in English.

The second largest number of descriptions takes the LSG 'face and its components' – 30 % (157 units) in the Russian sample and 29 % (177 units) in the English one. The English-language authors concentrate on women's faces in 65 % (115 units) and on men's faces in 35 % (62 units). Russian authors describe both women and men's faces in the equal proportion (78 and 79 units.).

The LSG "clothing" is represented by 22.5 % of descriptions (138 units) in English texts. The proportion between male and female clothing descriptions is almost equal. In Russian texts this percentage is somewhat less than 16 % (78 units). 72 % (56 units) reflect women's clothing and footwear, and only 28 % (22 units) fall on the description of men's garments.

Hair characteristics are depicted in 11 % (67 units) and 18 % (91 units) of all English and Russian portrait descriptions respectively. It should be noted that in the former case, the number of women's hair descriptions is three times as much than the number of examples describing men's hair. Russian authors describe this appearance component with 6 % difference in favor of female characters – 53 % (48 units) versus 47 % (43 units).

Next, we consider the quantitative characteristics of portrait descriptions the authors of which are women. In the Russian-speaking database we can see a clear predominance of describing a character's face – 41 % (185 units), that gives us the right to assume its high significance. The LSG 'body and its parts' takes second place in frequency – 27 % (128 units), then "clothes" – 23 % (99 units) and in last place there is the LSG 'hair – 9 % (39 units). Female faces are described almost twice as often as male ones – 66 % (122 units) versus 34 % (63 units), while women's hair is mentioned in modern Russian fiction three times as often as men's hair 77 % (30 units) versus 23 % (9 units). The description of women and men's clothing is at a ratio of 5 (84 units) to 1 (15 units).

According to the material represented in our English-language database, the writers' attention is divided almost equally among three areas of characters' appearance: clothing (28 % – 237 units), face (28 % – 237 units) and body (27.5 % – 233 units). It is necessary to emphasize a certain quantitative difference in description of some appearance components depending on the sex of the character described. For example, in female portrait descriptions such element of appearance as clothes is characterized twice as frequent as the same in portraits descriptions of men – 67 % (120 units) versus 33 % (60 units). The description of women and men's footwear is at a ratio of 8 (51 units) to 1 (6 units).

As for body characteristics, we pay attention to the fact that appearance description of female body touches such parts as breasts, thighs, buttocks, legs, i.e. those areas that are of particular interest from men. While in description of male characters the great importance is attached to the male figure.

Considering the LSG 'face and its parts', we should note a slight predominance of women's descriptions – 52 % (123 units) versus 48 % (114 units) of the total number of face characteristics in female authors' texts. Furthermore, it should be noted that in verbal portraits of male characters this LSG is not widely represented, at the same time the characteristics of a chin and jaw occur almost in every verbal male face image.

The LSG 'hair' comes to 16.5 % (140 units) where the characteristic of women's hair is almost twice as much as the characteristic of men's one – 35 % (49 units) versus 65 % (91 units). Women's hair stands as an object of admiration and excitement, which is not typical for the description of men's hair.

The analysis shows that the verbal image of a female body and its parts in Russian fiction uses the lexeme *стройный* with high frequency, it is found in 20 % (38 % of the total number all female body descriptions equal to 180 units). *Платье подчеркивало стройную фигуру, во всем облике чувствовалось природное изящество* [18. С. 20]. *Анна нежилась в пенной, наполненной до краев ванной, лениво положив на бортик стройные ноги* [19. С. 183]. *...четко обозначалась талия, перетекая в очертания стройных бедер, туго обтянутых форменными голубыми брючками* [20. С. 50].

In English portrait descriptions, our attention is attracted by the frequent use of the lexeme *curve* and its derivatives in verbal women's images (20 % or 43 units of the total number of all female bodies descriptions equals 210 units), while we can't find this feature in the descriptions of men's bodies, for example: *... she paused for a moment, and then slowly removed her fur coat, revealing her perfectly curved figure* [21. P. 264]. *Her green dress was low-cut enough to show slight but very feminine curves* [22. P. 124]. *After getting dressed, Chanel surveyed her curvaceous body and whispered to herself, "Not bad."* [23. P. 62].

The adjectives *большой, широкий, сильный, мускулистый, атлетический* / *big, broad, strong, muscled, athletic* are used in 66 % (85 units of the total number of all male body descriptions in the Russian texts equal to 129 units) 85 % (215 units of the total number of all male body descriptions in the English texts equal to 253 units): *руки жилистые, мускулистые* [24. С. 9], *без ума от его атлетической фигуры* [25. С. 153], *его широкую, слегка смуглую спину «украшали» ссадины* [26. С. 226], *his strong, muscled arms* [27. P. 313], *his big hard shoulder ... his muscled abdomen* [28. P. 87], *strong wrist* [29. P. 41], *his forearms, strong and muscled* [30. P. 39], *he had a strong jaw* [21. P. 126].

In addition, our quantitative analysis proves a high frequency of the lexeme *мощный* that is typical of verbal male body characteristics – 18 % (23 units of the total number equal to 129 units): *его мощный торс* [25. P. 389], *на мощной груди управляющего* [31. С. 62]. The noun *power* and its derivatives have the same meaning in English portraits and they also characterize only male appearance descriptions: *his legs were long and powerful* [23. P. 38], *he had the powerfully tapered build of a swimmer* [32. P. 199].

The description of makeup amounts to 15 % (25 units of the total number 172 in Russian and 40 units of the total number 190 in English). It is noteworthy that a detailed description can be found not only in the texts written by women authors, but also in the texts of man authors, for example: *Легкое движение пуховкой, чуть пудры на лицо, чтобы получить ровный оттенок. Подправить брови карандашом, они и так темные, красивые, но немного подчеркнуть их форму не повредит. Некоторое время Вера размышляла над тенями: стоит или нет? Решила, что стоит, почти незаметные, золотисто-коричневого оттенка, волнующие. Подвела глаза, четко обозначив миндалевидный разрез, остановилась, глядя на свое отражение: «Бог ты мой, я сама готова в себя влюбиться!»* [19. С. 134]. *She was looking out the window, and I could see only part of the left side of her face, which was flushed and streaked with makeup; back then, when she'd first arrived at Ault, Rufina had worn a lot of makeup, even during games-mascara, and black or purple eyeliner* [33. Электронный ресурс].

The description of facial hair can be found only in verbal characteristics of male characters: *Она даже не видела его лица. Как он сейчас выглядит? Похудел? Отрастил усы, бороду?* [34. С. 236]. *Gently touching his beard, her skin erupted with goose bumps, and she grinned* [35. P. 34].

Long head hair is of high frequency in women characters descriptions – 63 % (45 units of the total number of female hair accounted to 72 units in the Russian texts) and 69 % (90 units of 130 units in English texts) for example: *Клавдия вспомнила длинные волнистые волосы девушки, ее стройную фигурку и совсем расстроилась* [36. С. 230]. *Her long hair was half drenched and clung to her neck and shoulders in dark gold tendrils* [37. P. 250].

As for the LSG "clothing", we should note that the frequency difference in the use of appropriate descriptions of the costume depending on the sex of the character takes the following parameters:

1) garment;

Dresses and skirts are not found in the descriptions of male character's appearance and accordingly excluded from the male wardrobe, while it's characterized by suits, trousers, shirts and ties.

2) colour;

Some bright colours can be considered more typical of women's clothing. Male colours are usually dull like *серый / grey, зеленый / green, коричневый / brown*, they are used in 80 % (27 units) of all clothing descriptions (34 units) in Russian texts and in 83 % (62 units of 75) in English texts.

3) fabric.

The fabrics which are not typical of menswear include thin, transparent, soft materials such as silk, lace, satin, velvet as well as fur.

We give the following examples verbalizing these features: *На нем были коричневые вельветовые джинсы и более темный свитер* [38. С. 305]. *I hurriedly dressed in a lime-green blouse and the lime and fuchsia Lilly Pulitzer print skirt* [39. P. 134].

Shoe models for women include: shoes, sandals, clogs, boots, etc. High heels of various forms are the characteristic feature typical of women's shoes. Footwear for men includes shoes, boots and high boots, the colours are limited they are mostly black, brown, white, and beige. There are some examples of women's and men's shoes from the texts: *Вроде девушка, но почему у нее на ногах кожаные мужские ботинки?* [40. С. 86]. *I believe men should be required to wear high heels for one day...* [21. P. 83]. In the first example, the stereotype, that men's leather shoes should not be worn by a woman verbalized by the formula: X but Y, moreover, it is confirmed by the very attribute *мужские*. The context of the second example indicates the absence of high-heeled shoes in the male wardrobe.

Underwear description is a typical feature of female verbal characteristics, details of women's body-cloth can be found in texts of both women authors and men authors, for example: *... she was wearing good lingerie that day – a white, lacy push-up demi bra and matching thong panties...* [21. P. 232]. *Кружева бюстгалтера мягко обняли грудь, тончайшие трусики подчеркнули бедра и талию, легчайший пеньюар сверху...* [19. С. 135].

Thus, the analysis of accentuation of portrait components lead to the following results:

1. Women's faces are described twice as often as men's ones in the English fiction (men authors) and in the Russian fiction (women authors). They are often characterized in detail. Makeup descriptions take from 15 % (Russian texts) to 20 % (English texts) of all descriptions concerning women's faces. The features of men's faces such as chin and jaw are of high-frequency in male appearance descriptions.

2. In the Russian texts (female writers) women's hair is represented three times more than men's one. In the English texts descriptions of women's hair occur in approximately two (female writers) –

three (male writers) times more than men's hair description. Long head hair is of high frequency in women's verbal characteristics – more than 60 % in both languages. Facial hair is men's appearance attribute.

3. Such body parts as breast, thigh, buttock, leg have a clear gender marking and are primarily used in women characters descriptions.

4. High frequency of indicating men's height is observed both in Russian (92 %) and English 70 % fiction of men writers.

5. In the Russian texts the men authors describe female clothing twice as often as male one. The women authors describe female clothing five times as often as male one. In the English texts descriptions of women's clothing is twice as often as men's clothing while women's footwear is describe eight time as often as men's one. Underwear description is found only in heroines characteristics. Men and women clothing differs according to such parameters as garments, colour, and fabric.

6. Adjectives *большой, широкий, сильный, мускулистый, атлетический* / *big, broad, hard, strong, muscled, athletic* are of the greatest frequency in descriptions of a male body and its parts that is 66 % of all the characteristics of the male body in the Russian texts and 85 % in the English ones. In addition, the lexeme *мощный* is very often used by the writers describing male appearance in Russian text (18 %), in English the same function performs by the lexeme *power* and its derivatives (22 %).

7. The attribute *стройный* is frequently used in the verbal image of a female body and its parts in Russian text material (approximately 20 %) similar to this English word *curve* and its derivatives are typical of female appearance in the English-language fiction (also 20 %).

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**Статистические особенности вербализации стереотипов
внешнего портрета в художественной прозе:
гендерный аспект**

Аннотация. Рассмотрены гендерные стереотипы людей по их внешнему виду. Изучены мужские и женские портретные описания на основе примеров из русскоязычной и англоязычной прозы XXI века. Учитывая структуру внешности персонажа, с точки зрения реализации стереотипов внимание привлекли портретные характеристики, описанные чаще других или в первую очередь. Составлена база данных примеров описания внешнего вида мужчин и женщин. Все выбранные примеры классифицированы согласно четырем лексико-семантическим группам: 1) тело и его компоненты; 2) лицо и его компоненты; 3) волосы; 4) одежда. С помощью статистического анализа языковых средств, описывающих внешний вид, раскрыты некоторые тенденции в выборе существенных особенностей портрета мужчины / женщины в зависимости от пола автора и пола персонажа литературного текста.

Ключевые слова: частность; гендерный стереотип; внешний вид; портрет; описание персонажа.

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