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NATIONAL SPECIFICITY OF LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVIZATION OF THE CONCEPT «FEMININITY» BASED ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

***Abstract:** The article aims at linguistic aspects that represent the concept «femininity» in the English language. The linguocultural approach to the study of the concept as part of the national sphere of concepts allows to consider the inner form, passive, actual layers and peculiarities of verbalization of the concept «femininity» in feature discourse on the basis of the literature of 19th century British novelists.*

***Keywords:** language world view, concept, feature discourse, linguistic and cultural approach, ethnic culture, national specificity.*

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НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ СПЕЦИФИКА ЯЗЫКОВОЙ ОБЪЕКТИВАЦИИ КОНЦЕПТА «ЖЕНСТВЕННОСТЬ» В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

***Аннотация:** Целью работы является рассмотрение языковых особенностей, репрезентирующих концепт «женственность» в английском языке. Лингвокультурологический подход к исследованию концепта как части*

национальной концептосферы позволяет рассмотреть внутреннюю форму, пассивный, актуальный слои и особенности вербализации концепта «женственность» в художественном дискурсе на материале литературных произведений британских романисток XIX века.

Ключевые слова: языковая картина мира, концепт, художественный дискурс, лингвокультурологический подход, этнокультура, национальная специфика.

In this paper, the concept is considered from the linguocultural perspective and is understood as a marked by cultural specificity verbalized meaning, which is manifested in its linguistic incarnations that form the corresponding semantic lexical paradigm. This is a unit of knowledge of an ethnic group that has a linguistic expression and is distinguished by a specific ethnic culture [1, с. 46].

In English, the word «femininity» (the name of the concept) is realized in the following synonymic row: femininity, feminity, womanhood, muliebrity [5]. The name of the concept is the word «femininity», since it is the synonymic dominant of the proposed synonymous series.

The aim of the paper is to analyze the linguistic aspects that represent the concept «femininity» in the English language. The methodology of Yuri Sergeyeovich Stepanov on the «layered» organization of the concept is taken as the basis; it presuppose three layers - the inner form of the word or the etymology of the word, the passive and active layers. English Etymological dictionaries show that *femininity* consists of two morphemes: the root morpheme *feminine* of Lat origin which came into English via Fr and the bound morpheme *-ity* of Romanic origin [4]. *Femininity* is the possession of qualities that are considered characteristic of women and girls, such as gentleness, weakness, delicacy, modesty. Its first mention is found in the XIV century in the meaning of «feminine» quality, womanliness, female nature». The XIX century provides a new look at the woman; FEMININITY is understood as «character or state of being a woman».

The analysis of linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the concept «femininity» helps to single out the following significant features:

- 1) appearance (beauty, appearance);
- 2) character / behavior;
- 3) social status / occupation;
- 4) relationships with a man;
- 5) relationships in the family / home;
- 6) intellectual abilities;
- 7) speech characteristics.

The actual layer shows that traditionally a feminine woman is considered to be gentle, attractive, soft, modest, tactful, restrained, affectionate, humble, housewifely. On the other hand, the factual linguistic material gathered from the books by Charlotte Bronte «Jane Eyre» and Jane Austen «Pride and Prejudice» has proved that for British representatives of romanticism the basic conceptual features of femininity are attractiveness, tenderness, beauty, gentleness, modesty and tact, as well as expressiveness, straightforwardness, courage, stubbornness and courage.

As for appearance, long hair and eyelashes are considered feminine. Appearance and clothes also make the girl feminine and attractive. Traditional femininity is symbolically embodied by such characters as Jane Bennet who is contrasted with Elizabeth Bennet; Blanche Ingram who is contrasted with Jane Eyre:

*«Oh! She is the most **beautiful creature** I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very **pretty**, and I dare say very **agreeable**».* (Jane Austen «Pride and Prejudice» Ch.3) [2, c. 28].

While Jane Bennet is depicted as a beautiful, charming, pleasant girl, Elizabeth Bennet has antonymous characteristics: she is not beautiful in traditional sense and has an asymmetrical figure:

*«She is tolerable, but not **handsome** enough to tempt me»* (Jane Austen «Pride and Prejudice» Ch.3) [2, c. 30].

*«Though he had detected with a critical eye more than one failure of **perfect symmetry in her form**».*(Jane Austen «Pride and Prejudice» Ch.6) [2, c. 67].

The analysis of feature discourse shows that one of the means of linguistic objectification of the concept «femininity» is clichéd phrases. In the works by Jane

Austen lexemes explicating the positive evaluative adjectives prevail: **pretty**, pretty girl, pretty woman; **charming**, charming woman; **intimate**, intimate friend; **fine**, fine woman, fine lady, etc. Combinatory analysis proves that negative evaluative adjectives are rarely used to verbalize the concept «femininity».

A sign of femininity is also manifested in the behavior of a woman. Character and behavior constitute basic components of the analyzed concept as femininity is not only an attractive appearance, but also an ability to hold oneself. While Jane Bennet is depicted as a quiet and calm girl, the antipode of traditional femininity, Elizabeth Bennet is stubborn and courageous:

*«There is a **stubbornness** about me that never can bear to be frightened at the will of others. My **courage** always rises at every attempt to intimidate me».* (Jane Austen «Pride and Prejudice» Ch.31) [2, c. 256].

In the works of British novelists, a woman is primarily positioned as a true friend, honest and reliable partner, but not exclusively as a wife and mother. Such a «new» woman was especially interesting to men, because she needed to be understood and unraveled.

In the Charlotte Bronte's novel, St. John notices only positive qualities in Jane Eyre: *«God and nature intended you for a **missionary's wife**. It is not personal, but mental endowments they have given you: you are **formed for labour, not for love**. Jane, you are **docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic**: cease to mistrust yourself—I can trust you unreservedly. I want a **wife: the sole helpmeet** I can influence efficiently in life, and retain absolutely till death. And for the rest, though you have a **man's vigorous brain**, you have a **woman's heart** and—it would not do».*

*The veil fell from his hardness and despotism. Having felt in him the presence of these qualities, I felt his imperfection and **took courage**. I was **with an equal**—one with whom I **might argue**—one whom, if I saw good, I **might resist**.* (Charlotte Bronte «Jane Eyre» Ch.19) [3, c. 135].

The aforementioned extract proves that St. John is interested in Jane as a life partner rather than a woman. He singles out such characteristics as **the sole helpmeet**;

a man's vigorous brain, a woman's heart. He believes that she is created for labour rather than for love. It indicates the fact that the man chooses a life companion with a poignant wit and strong character, and not a wife for love and a mother for his children. When describing Jane's character, the following synonymous specifiers are used: **docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic.** A special emphasis is made on two adjectives: gentle and heroic, while the antinomy is emphasized by the adverb-intensifier - **very**. These character traits are positive for a woman as an individual, but they contradict the traditional idea of femininity, because stubbornness and courage are considered strong character traits that are inherent in men. Therefore, we can conclude that these traits do not make a woman truly feminine.

While Jane Bennet had a soft character, her emotions, movements and speech were restrained and tactful. Elizabeth Bennet, on the contrary, was emotional and judicious, her character manifested in her speech. She was often straightforward and spoke sharply and sarcastically: *«I am sick of them all. Thank Heaven! I am going tomorrow where I shall find a man who has not one agreeable quality, who has neither manner nor sense to recommend him. Stupid men are the only ones worth knowing, after all».*

«Take care, Lizzy; that speech savours strongly of disappointment». (Jane Austen «Pride and Prejudice» Ch.27) [2, c. 210]. Such harsh phrases were unacceptable at that time, so Lizzy did not allow herself to say them in society, but in her close circle she could speak emotionally, for example with her aunt.

In the XIX century a feminine woman is *manly*, and this is the main and striking feature, which is manifested in appearance, behavior and speech. It is impossible to fully relate it to negative qualities, because a woman shows men and the whole society that she has her own position, her own opinion and is ready to develop as a personality.

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