Gender-Colored English Neologisms in Cinematic Discourse

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Abstract: The paper dwells upon the study of English neologisms with a gender component in cinematic discourse. The paper considers gender-colored neologisms of the space of cinematic discourse, classified on a semantic basis into neologisms that characterize genres of cinema, participants of cinematic discourse (filmmakers, viewers, actors), the process of creating a film. The research material was the neological units of cinematic discourse with a gender component which were taken from modern English-language online dictionaries, guides, glossaries, social news sites. The paper gives definitions of such notions as “neologism”, “cinematic discourse” and also identifies “distorted” and “fair” gender stereotypes in the composition of the definitions and contextual field of the neologisms under consideration. The presence of a rather large stratum of new terms related to the considered groups which include a gender component indicate the connection between cultural and linguistic aspects of life: new words reflect the changing realities, preferences of people and the relationship of old language forms with
new concepts and ideas. Neologisms under study are grouped by gender opposition if there are similar neologisms in meaning but different in gender. Synonymous rows of some gender-coloured neologisms that characterize a certain gender and do not have a “gender opposite” are given. In addition, the authors consider neologisms that are applicable to both sexes simultaneously. In the process of the research, the authors turn to the presence of gender stereotypes in the composition of the neologisms under consideration. The authors distinguish between fair and distorted gender stereotypes. Based on the definitions and contextual field of the considered English neologisms with a gender component of cinematic discourse, it is concluded that there are both fair and distorted gender stereotypes in different neologisms, and fair gender stereotypes prevail over distorted ones.

**Key words:** cinematic discourse, neologism, gender stereotypes, buddy film, camerawoman, chick flick, chick noir, cross-cast, digital surgery, drag, female buddy film, fem-jep, gender-bending role, gender twist, guy-cry, Mary Sue, Marty Stu, mellers, shero, soapers, stuntwoman, tearjerkers, weepies.

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Гендерно-окрашенные англоязычные неологизмы в кинодискурсе

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Резюме: Статья посвящена изучению англоязычных неологизмов с гендерным компонентом в кинодискурсе. В работе рассматриваются гендерно-окрашенные неологизмы пространства кинодискурса, классифицированные по семантическому основанию на неологизмы, характеризующие жанры кино, участников кинодискурса (создателей фильма, зрителей, актеров), процесс создания киноленты. Материалом для исследования послужили неологические единицы кинодискурса с гендерным компонентом, которые были взяты из современных англоязычных онлайн-словарей, справочников, гlosсариев, социальных новостных сайтов. В работе даются определения понятий «неологизм», «кинодискурс», а также выявляются «искаженные» и «справедливые» гендерные стереотипы в составе дефиниций и контекстного поля рассматриваемых неологизмов. Наличие довольно большого пласта новых терминов, относящихся к рассматриваемым группам, в составе которых есть гендерный компонент, говорит о взаимодействии лингвистического и культурологического аспектов жизнедеятельности: неологизмы являются отражением всеизменяющихся реалий, концептов, суждений, идей, при этом сохраняя связь со старыми представлениями, отраженными в языке. Изучаемые неологизмы группируются по оппозиционно-половому признаку при наличии схожих по значению, но отличающихся по гендерному признаку неологизмов. Приводятся синонимические ряды некоторых гендерно-окрашенных неологизмов, характеризующих определенный пол и не имеющих «гендерной противоположности». Кроме того рассматриваются неологизмы,
применимые относительно обоих полов одновременно. В ходе исследования авторы обращаются к наличию гендерных стереотипов в составе рассматриваемых неологизмов. Гендерные стереотипы подразделяются авторами на справедливые и искаженные. Основываясь на дефинициях и контекстном поле рассмотренных англоязычных неологизмов кинодискурса с гендерным компонентом, делается вывод о наличии как справедливых, так и искаженных гендерных стереотипов в составе разных неологизмов, при этом справедливые гендерные стереотипы превалируют над искаженными.

**Ключевые слова:** кинодискурс, неологизм, гендерные стереотипы, buddy film, camerawoman, chick flick, chick noir, cross-cast, digital surgery, drag, female buddy film, fem-jep, gender-bending role, gender twist, guy-cry, Mary Sue, Marty Stu, mellers, shero, soapers, stuntwoman, tearjerkers, weepies.

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**Introduction**

In terms of the degree of influence on the audience, cinema occupies a leading position due to its accessibility, diversity, and extreme proximity to reality. For a modern person who has adapted to the fast pace of urban life, it is easier to perceive a one and a half to two-hour audio-visual series than to spend effort and time reading a book. Accordingly, films and related elements attract the attention of many scholars.

In a linguistic environment, the complex language of the movie is seen as a special kind of text. In the scientific literature, the relative terms “film discourse”, “film text”, “film narration”, and “film dialogue” are used. In our opinion, cinematic discourse is the most appropriate concept in this series.

The process of adding neologisms is inexhaustible; this phenomenon is determined naturally and historically. In periods of social stability, the processes of
language development proceed gradually, and language changes affect individual parts of the system [1].

Individual and collective picture of the world are constructed using language tools. Analyzing the choice of these means of modern social interaction, we can make a conclusion about their gender marking [2].

The gender aspect is an integral part of social organization. Gender roles are designed to structure relationships in society both at the behavioral and at the linguistic level, being fixed in the language in the form of stable stereotypes [3].

The definition and / or contextual field of a single neologism in the context of the modern politically correct world is often not devoid of a gender component. Gender stereotypes transmitted by such gender-related neologisms can be both fair and distorted. Speaking about generally accepted ideas, a man and a woman are usually credited with such binary characteristics as logic – intuitiveness, concreteness – abstractness, rudeness – tenderness, elevation – ordinariness, activity – passivity, etc. These characteristics which are included in the category of stereotypes can be called *fair* since they correspond to generally accepted ideas about men and women. *Distorted stereotypes* are the same fair stereotypes, provided that typical characteristics, usually inherent in a particular sex, are attributed to the opposite sex. In the cinematic discourse there is also such an “extreme polarization of gender roles” [4: 71].

**The aim of the article**

The purpose of the article is to analyze English-language neologisms in the cinematic discourse to identify gender-related traits in their definitions and contextual field – indications of the specificity or universality of gender, gender stereotypes (fair or distorted).

**Literature review**

New words are an integral part of the vocabulary of the language: they are created to name new phenomena, to detail existing ones, to eliminate the ambiguity of a term if possible [5]. In modern linguistics, a lot of attention is paid to the study of neologisms in various types of discourse [6; 7].
The problem of identifying new knowledge, which has the nature of infinity, in view of the constantly changing reality or its other interpretation, is gaining incredible significance. One of the main carriers of such knowledge is neologisms.

The study of cinematic discourse, as well as gender stereotypes in cinematic discourse is an urgent topic among modern researchers. Various aspects of this phenomenon are highlighted in the works of T.V. Dukhovnaya [8], V.V. Katermina, A.A. Linnik [9], M.A. Samkova [10], Z.R. Dohova, T.A. Cheprakova [11], N.P. Prosuntsova [12] and others.

**Methods of research**

The priority methods for identifying and analyzing gender-colored neologisms in cinematic discourse for us are the method of contextual description and descriptive method. The contextual method was applied in order to establish the characteristics of the actualization of the studied gender-colored neologisms in the studied type of discourse; descriptive method was used to identify the characteristic features of gender-colored neologisms in cinematic discourse.

**Results and Discussion**

The neologisms of cinematic discourse in the realities of the 21st century are often not devoid of a gender component, designed to emphasize the specificity (or universality) of a particular phenomenon from a gender perspective.

Consider neologisms in cinematic discourse, in the definition or contextual field of which a gender element is contained referring to three groups of neologisms: *characterizing the genre of cinema, participants in cinema discourse, and also the process of creating a movie*.

I. To the group of neologisms that characterize the cinema genre, for example, the term “guy-cry” can be applied. *Guy-cries* are such films that make men cry [13]. As can be seen from the definition, this movie genre is designed for male representatives (The Legends of Autumn (1994), Patriot (2000), Gladiator (2000), and The Last Samurai (2003), 300 Spartans (2007) and others can be attributed to the genre.). Here we see an example of a *distorted* gender stereotype: according to the general idea, excessive manifestation of emotions is alien to men,
however, this genre, on the contrary, disputes the prevailing phrase “men don’t cry”.

The opposite to “guy cry” in terms of gender is the neologism “chick flick”. *Chick flick* is a “movie designed specifically for women” [14]. And although this definition does not directly indicate the “tearful specificity” of such films, it is often assumed. So, for example, films of the genre “chick-flick” are often mentioned for comparison with the films “guy cry” [15]. There are many names for “tearful” female films. In addition to “chick-flicks” having an implicit tearful subtext, there are genres “*tearjerkers*”, “*weepies*”, “*soapers*”, “*mellers*” [16], which directly appeal to the emotions of spectators. Vivid examples of this genre are the films Unforgettable Romance (1957), Sleepless in Seattle (1993), Letters to You (1998), Bridget Jones's Diary (2001), Exchange Holidays (2006). If the “guy-cry” genre implies a *distortion* of the gender stereotype of masculinity, then films of the “chick-flick” genre, as well as the perception of such films, transmit *fair* gender stereotypes of femininity.

Another neologism that characterizes the cinema genre is “buddy film”. *Buddy film* is a subgenre of the film (comedies, westerns, dramas, action films, road movies, etc.) in which two dissimilar characters (usually males) are forced to work together, often a couple of police officers [16]. There are many such films (Seven (1995), Men in Black (1997), Sherlock Holmes (2009), Island of the Damned (2009), Macho and Nerd (2012), Real Detective (2014), “Kingsman: Secret Service” (2015), “Agents A.N.K.L.” (2015), etc.). In films of this kind, there is often an obvious contrast between the main characters – one is the embodiment of masculinity, courage, dexterity, endowed with remarkable strength and ingenuity, while his partner is his direct opposite. Thus, the film demonstrates both *fair* and *distorted* gender stereotypes.

The “buddy film” also has a gender opposite – “Female buddy film”. This genre is similar to the “buddy film” genre, except that the main characters are women, and the plot is centered around them [17] (for example, the films “Cops in Skirts” (2013), “Ghostbusters” (2016), “Ocean's 8 Friends” (2018), “Inveterate
Fraudsters” (2019)). The heroines of this genre, like the heroes of its gender opposite, are often antonymic – one heroine has an impeccable appearance, style, and communication skills with the opposite sex, while her “partner” lacks these qualities. One of the most common fair gender stereotypes is the desire of women to conform to the canons of beauty, because a woman depends on the standards that society sets for the appearance of women [18]. Women “are associated with beauty, tenderness, which are sometimes exalted” [19: 65]. So, in the female buddy film genre, one can find both fair and distorted gender stereotypes.

There is also a gender-colored cinema genre “chick noir”. Chick noir are psychological thrillers depicting the fears and anxieties that many women face. Thrillers interpret the idea that you can never be sure of your husband or partner [20]. In the “chick noir” genre, we most often see heroines in all sorts of dangers: psychological, intimate, physical. “Chick-noir” is similar to the genre of “fem-jep” (female in jeopardy) or “WIP” (women in peril). According to Jim Butler, in the films of the “women in peril” genre, a woman falls into a deadly situation against her will, where there is no way out and there is no one who could protect her or help her [21]. However, women do not always have advocates in such films. So, H. Efron believes that “a knight in shining armor” should save a lady from trouble [22]. In the cinema, you can find a large number of examples of the genre “fem-jap” (“Room of fear” (2002), “Illusion of flight” (2005), “Girl with a dragon tattoo” (2011), “The girl who got stuck in the web” (2018 ) and others). Genres “chick-noir” and “fem-jep” broadcast fair gender stereotypes – according to their main storyline, a fragile, defenseless person gets into trouble, from which a man is most often called to help her out. It happens that a lady saves herself from trouble herself, but in this case it will be possible to conclude that the stereotype of femininity is distorted.

Another neologism belonging to the cinema genre group is “drag”, where artists dressed in clothing of the opposite sex caricature gender stereotypes through the use of colorful costumes and exaggerated mannerisms [14].
There are a lot of films with elements of dressing in clothes of the opposite sex (“Some Like It Hot” (1959), “Boys Don't Cry” (1999), “Mulan” (1998), “White Chicks” (2004), “Dallas Buyers Club” (2013), “Girl from Denmark” (2015), “Split” (2017), etc.). Due to the characteristics of this genre, stereotypes associated with a particular gender come to the fore and often somewhat exaggerate. Thus, we can talk about predominantly *fair* gender stereotypes depicted in films of this kind.

II. Among the neologisms that characterize the participants in the cinematic discourse, the following stand out: neologism “shero” – “a female hero, especially one who supports women’s issues” [23]. And although many dispute this term, believing that it is not etymologically motivated (the word “hero” is of Greek origin, which means that the “he” component cannot indicate gender as in English), “shero” is quite common. This term should be distinguished from the term “heroine” for two reasons: firstly, the heroine is exclusively a female character, while “shero” can be used in relation to a man [24] (if he advocates equality gender and / or protection of women's rights); secondly, “the heroine” is called the main female character, while “shero” is a character either advocating for the rights of women or proving by her actions that a woman is by no means a representative of the “weaker sex” (“Lara Croft: Tomb Raider” (2001), "Eon Flux" (2005)). The term “hero”, originally gender-neutral, due to the consonance with the English pronoun “he” in the modern politically correct space acquires masculine coloring and is increasingly used for male heroes.

Another neologism used in relation to female characters is “Mary Sue” (Mary Sue) – a female character invented by the author who is so perfect that it annoys [25]. These characters include Ray in Star Wars (2015), Hermione in Harry Potter (2001-2011), Nina in Black Swan (2010). Mary Sue has a gender opposite - “Marty Stu” (or “Gary Stu”) – seemingly perfect character with no flaws, or who always overpowers other characters [24]. Examples of such characters include Walter in The Painted Veil (2006), Edward Cullen in Twilight (2008), and Eddie in the movie Jumanji: A New Level (2019). If Marty (Gary) Stu is the embodiment
of masculinity – he is stronger, faster, more charming than everyone, then with Mary Sue the situation is somewhat more complicated. Mary Sue is usually smarter and more attractive than other characters, but many negatively perceive this hero, considering such impeccability to be unrealistic and insulting the feelings of women who are not without flaws. Previously, the terms “ingenue” (positive female character, young and naive girl) and “juvenile” [16] (positive male character, gender opposite “ingenue”) were used in cinematic circles, but they were used in a positive way: these characters were not devoid of flaws, and therefore looked realistic.

In addition to gender-related terms related to characters and actors of the filmstrip, film culture is increasingly using gender-differentiated terms for various participants in the process of creating a motion picture. So, the terms “stuntman” – “stuntwoman”, “cameraman” – “camerawoman” are gender-antonymic.

III. In the third group of our classification we include units that characterize the process of creating a movie: terms related to the selection of actors for a particular role. So, the gender-colored term of this group can be called a “gender-bending role” – as a rule, this is dressing up in which a man or woman plays a character of the opposite sex [16] (“Some Like It Hot” (1959), “Tutsi” (1982), Victor / Victoria (1982), Guys Don't Cry (1999) and others). The phenomenon of changing an actor into clothes of the opposite sex is not uncommon (recall the aforementioned “drag” genre). In discussing the justice or falsity of gender stereotypes represented in such films, one can make an assumption about the prevailing *fairness* of such stereotypes.: “Dressed” in clothes of the opposite sex, the hero tries to match the role unusual for him, using exaggerated mannerism, extremely bright clothes and makeup (if we are talking about dressing in a lady), trying to behave as rude, brutal (transforming into a man).

In this series, it is also worth mentioning the term “gender twist” — a situation where one or another role that a man or woman traditionally plays is played by a representative of the opposite sex [16]. The same term is “cross-cast” – “to cast women in men's roles and vice versa” [25]. Examples of “gender twist”
and “cross-casting” include Rosalind Russell in the role of Hildy Johnson in the film “His Girlfriend Friday” (this was originally a male role) (1940), Judy Dench in the role of Em in “Bondiana”, Pavel Volya in the role Vadik in the film “Office Romance. Our Time ”(2011), Lenny Kravitz as Zinn in the Hunger Games series, Melissa McCarthy as Susan Cooper in Spy (2015). This phenomenon involves a distortion of the gender stereotype: traditionally, the male role is played by the woman (and vice versa), which means that the character is endowed with characteristics unusual for his sex. For example, the character of Judy Dench in “Bond” is endowed with more masculine traits than feminine ones: Em is decisive, stingy with emotions, inclined to think rationally. These terms should not be confused with “gender-bending roles” in the “drag” genre, where actors literally dress up in clothes and try to adopt a manner of behavior of the opposite sex, portraying, although exaggerated, fair gender stereotypes.

Filmmakers often try to make actors (especially women) more attractive in appearance. This phenomenon is called “digital surgery” – post production techniques are used to make actors appear taller and slimmer, and less wrinkled [23]. So, in particular, the Daily Mail news portal says that the creators of Hollywood films use “digital surgery” to make celebrity women look taller and slimmer [26]. Such “manipulations” with a female appearance are not accidental: they reflect the aforementioned fair gender stereotype – women following the canons of beauty. Ladies depend on the dictated by society attitudes regarding the appearance of the "fair sex.

Conclusion

Neologisms in the cinematic discourse are designed to denote newly emerging phenomena of the film industry, to clarify existing concepts, to eliminate the ambiguity of certain terms. The neologisms that characterize the genres of cinema, participants in the cinema discourse and the process of creating films are of particular interest because of their relative prevalence, the breadth of the context field, the ambiguity of the inherent characteristics.
The study found that each group of neologisms considered reflects both fair gender stereotypes and distorted ones. Some new terms are characterized by a variation in the depicted gender stereotypes – one film can broadcast fair and distorted gender stereotypes through both different heroes and one hero at the same time. The transmitted gender stereotypes considered in the work include the stereotypes of masculinity, femininity, the stereotype of women following the canons of beauty, emotional masculine restraint and feminine looseness.

So, the examined gender-colored neologisms of cinematic discourse can be visualized in the form of a table (Table 1):

| № | Gender stereotype | Neologism with a MALE component | Neologism with a FEMALE component | Gender stereotype |
|---|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Cinematic genre (киножанр) |
| 1. | Distorted | Guy-cry | Chick flick, tearjerker, weepy, soaper, meller | Fair |
| 2. | - | Buddy film | Female buddy film | - |
| 3. | - | - | Chick noir, fem-jep, WIP | Fair, distorted |
| 4. | Fair | Drag | Fair | |
| Participants of cinematic discourse |
| 5. | - | Hero (герой), shero | Shero | - |
| 6. | Fair | Marty Stu | Mary Sue | Distorted |
| 7. | - | Stuntman | Stuntwoman | - |
| 8. | - | Cameraman | Camerawoman | - |
| Filmmaking process (процесс создания кинофильма) |
| 9. | Fair | Gender-bending role | Fair |
| 10. | Distorted | Gender twist, cross-cast | Distorted |
| 11. | - | Digital surgery | Fair ( |

Table 1. Gender-colored neologisms of cinematic discourse

The table shows that in the considered neologisms of the cinematic discursive space, the dominant position is occupied by neologisms that contain a fair gender stereotype in their context field. This allows us to conclude that the
canonical attitudes dictated by society regarding the appearance and behavior of a representative of one gender or another are also transmitted in such “free” modern art as cinema. Filmmakers, being artists to some extent, like creators of literature and painting, try to reflect the world in all its diversity in their works, at the same time as truthfully, reliably as possible.

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