How male and female characters have been portrayed

---An investigation on the use of nouns and adjectives in Pride and Prejudice from the perspective of linguistic sexism

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1. Introduction

Language is seen as the mirror of the culture and society, and people’s socio-cultural behaviors and attitudes are reflected through their use of language. When it comes to language, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary are usually analyzed if it is deeply studied. Sexism is one of the reflections in language which is probably one of the best known linguistic concerns. Sexism is considered as any discrimination against women or men because of their sex and made on irrelevant grounds, according to Graddol and Swann (1989), especially by males against females. Society nowadays is still andocentric and men’s language is often treated as the norm.

The English language, like some other languages, is indeed sexist to some extent, considering that throughout history men have been at the helm in the English-speaking society and male references and word forms have been strictly used. According to Graddol and Swann (1989), sexism in English language results from the two social phenomena: women’s status is disappearing while men’s status makes an ascent; women are scorned. There is evidence of a linguistic parallel to the social and male-as-norm bias. Two examples of the former phenomenon are the linguistic markings of words for women and an absence of words to refer to women’s experiences. The facts that words for women and men are rarely parallel in English and that non-parallel terminology is used for women and men are the evidences of the latter phenomenon.
1.1 Aim and scope

The aim of the present investigation is to study the particular nouns and adjectives used to describe four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) in the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice*, from the perspective of linguistic sexism.

1.2 Material

In order to study sexism in English lexicon, the material studied is the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice* which was written by the English writer Jane Austen and first published in 1813. The story is mainly about a young girl (Elizabeth) who rejects an offer of marriage because the young nobleman (Darcy) who makes it has been rude to her and her family. The novel is selectively chosen for two reasons. One reason is that it is the primary novel written by Jane and it is also one of the important works in the 19th century. The other reason is that, as the theme of the fictional novel is pride and prejudice, it seems interesting to study the words and expressions in the novel to see whether those words are of prejudice to either women or men.

The samples of the novel that has been used in the study are roughly the first 30 pages, including chapter1-7, or about 12000 words, from the whole novel which contains 300 pages more or less. To make the data comparable, two men characters Darcy and Bingley and two women characters Elizabeth and Jane are selected at the same time to analyze the nouns and adjectives in use, for Darcy and Bingley are the heroes and Elizabeth and Jane are the heroines of the novel. The words used to describe the four
characters are more than those to describe other characters. What is more, it is widely agreed that the character of Jane is, in all aspects, the perfect 19th century woman and Bingley is thought to be the perfect gentlemen of the time, while Darcy’s character seems to be the polar opposite of Bingley’s warm demeanor although he is as rich and handsome as Bingley and Elizabeth is wise and does not submit to unjust decisions. Thus, description and narration of the two different pairs of main characters are studied for the purpose of comparatively comprehensive analysis. By using this method of selection, it is hoped that the findings will be reliable.

1.3 Method

The fictional novel Pride and Prejudice has been used as primary materials to investigate sexism in English lexicon. The method is based on a study involving a close reading of the first 30 pages or about 120,000 words from the novel. The purpose for this method is to group the nouns and adjectives in terms of the internal qualities and feelings of the four main characters in the novel and the external appearances of the characters as well, so as to make a comparison between females and males.

2. Theoretical background

English language, as a mirror to reflect the English-speaking society, images the social views and values at the time. Consequently, literary works can be regarded as having close connection with the real life.
2.1 Life in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century

In the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Britain became the first urban society, and until 1850s more than half the population lived in towns. However, in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, at least 80% of the population are working class. If people wanted to be considered to be middle class, they should have at least one servant who was most probably female as male servants charged more at that time. Through the 19\textsuperscript{th} century service was a major employer of women.

In the 19th century families were very large, and the Father was head of the family. His wife and children should respect him and obey him. Until 1879 a man could legally beat his wife and all of a woman’s property, even the money she earned, belonged to her husband until 1882. The way to choose the partner in the marriage mostly is to judge the internal qualities of the men and the external appearances of the women.

On the one hand, for working class women, life was an endless round of hard work and drudgery. As soon as they were old enough they worked on farms and in factories. Even when they married and had children, housework was very hard without electricity or modern cleaning agents. In the early and mid 19\textsuperscript{th} century the churches provided some schools for the working class girls. On the other hand, wealthy women in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century were kept busy running the household and organizing the servants, with some of them often doing charitable work.
Life became more comfortable for most women in entertainment and the occupation in the 19th century. Women practiced archery which was considered ladylike, and in the late 19th century tennis, croquet and cycling were popular pastimes. Some intrepid women even went mountaineering. What is more, in that century women did gain more rights and some women became famous novelists.

In the early 19th century women wore light dresses. In the 1830s they had puffed sleeves. In the 1850s they wore frames of whalebone or steel wire which called crinolines under their skirts. In the late 1860s Victorian women began to wear a kind of half crinoline. The front of the skirt was flat but it bulged outwards at the back. That was called as a bustle and it disappeared in the 1890s. From the 1840s onwards it was fashionable for women to have very small waists and they wore corsets.

2.2 Gender and literary works

When it comes to analyzing literary works, gender of the author or of the characters is always one of the main discussion points to be taken into consideration. But what is gender? What is the difference between gender and sex? According to Coates (2004), sex refers to a biological distinction, while gender is the term used to describe socially constructed categories based on sex. Coates also argues that gender is no longer seen as a static, add-on characteristic of the speakers, but as something performed by speakers. In the field of sociolinguistics, doing gender is performing either as a male
or a female in interaction with others.

The most common notion of gender available in the USA is stated by Wiegman and Glasberg in Literature and Gender (1999): gender states your biological sex. If you are born male, you will do masculinity. If, on the other hand, you are born female, you will do femininity. Doing masculinity or femininity has something to do with doing gender. Doing femininity usually means that people appear gentle, caring, maternal, and attentive to their appearance, and talk about clothes or make-up issues in the conversation. While doing masculinity shows that the topics in the conversation will be car, fight, and sport, and people sometimes will use taboo words.

In literary works, differences between the descriptions of female characters and male characters have been noticed for a long time. Women are always portrayed as weak, emotional and neurotic while men are expected to be strong, aggressive and dominant, which are depicted from both their external appearances and internal qualities.

The gender of the author also contributes to the different descriptions of the characters in the literary works. Women authors and men authors use language in various ways. On the aspect of vocabulary, many linguists have done some research. Referring to Coates, Otto Jespersen who is a Danish professor of English language in 1922 claims that it is men rather than women who introduce “new and fresh expressions” (Coates, 2004:12) and thus men are “the chief renovators of language” (Coates, 2004:12). He
also asserts that “the vocabulary of a woman as a rule is much less extensive than that of a man” (Coates, 2004:12). When it comes to word choice, especially the adjectives, Jespersen declares that women differ from men in their extensive use of certain adjectives, such as pretty and nice. Coates (2004) also mentions that Robin Lakoff, an American linguist, specially single out empty adjectives like divine, charming, cute...as typical of what she considers to be women’s language typically.

As some descriptions about gender stereotypes exist, David Graddol and Joan Swann (1989) refer to the National Union of Journalists’ guidelines caution against relying on stereotypes in describing women and men:

There is no reason why girls and women should be generally characterized as emotional, sentimental, dependent, vulnerable, passive, alluring, mysterious, fickle, weak, inferior, neurotic, gentle, muddled, vain, intuitive...Nor is there any reason why boys and men should be assumed to be dominant, strong, aggressive, sensible, superior, randy, decisive, courageous, ambitious, unemotional, logical, independent, ruthless (Graddol & Swann, 1989:118).

Graddol and Swann mentions that the adjectives above are regarded by feminists as words containing bias and women in the society are discriminated. Another example is shown by Lynn (2001). According to Lynn, Freud believes that “the superego of women was not as powerfully formed as that of men and the women consequently had weaker ideas of justice and authority” (Lynn, 2001:188). As fictions have close
relationship with society, it is seen that men are the dominant group while women are the subordinate one.

2.3 Linguistic sexism

Different socio-economic backgrounds between men and women reflect in the language system. Women's lower social status leads to sexism in the language using.

According to Thomas and Wareing (1999), the definition of sexism is that as if members of one sex had fewer rights than the members of the other sex. Sexist language represents women and men unequally, and it also represents those stereotypes of women and men, sometimes to the disadvantage of both, but more often to the disadvantage of women.

Sexism in English language exists in various aspects, and one of the aspects we may look for is in the vocabulary. As to the sexism in English lexicon, especially in daily usage of the most common words, the masculine forms are traditional used for general references where the sex in discussion is unknown and not relevant. We may refer to a generic person as the noun man, and the pronoun he. Besides, when the lexicon of English differs between masculine and feminine forms of a word for a human being, the masculine form is usually unmarked and the feminine form marked, such as actor-actress, host-hostess, waiter-waitress (the latter one is formally marked as the feminine term). However, it is also true that some terms which apparently refer to
females or males are in fact used as if they really only applied to one gender sometimes, such as surgeon, doctor, professor and nurse. People usually say a lady doctor, a woman professor or woman surgeon, for they consider that the norm is male, and say a male nurse, considering the norm is female. Therefore one way which these examples can be interpreted as sexist in most cases is that they imply that normal people are men.

3. Analysis and discussion

This study is to investigate whether there is sexist language in the use of particular nouns and adjectives in describing the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) in the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice*, and the analysis is divided into two main aspects. The first aspect focuses on the use of the nouns, and the second one refers to the use of the adjectives. Both of the two aspects are analyzed from three specific perspectives:

- Internal qualities
- Internal feelings
- External appearances

Three specific perspectives of category above are the result of the researcher’s reading through the novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The novel presents that the way of depicting the characters in the novel mostly is to describe the characters’ internal qualities, internal feelings and external appearances. The internal qualities here emphasize the characteristic of the characters, and the external appearances here
focus on the outside looking of the characters. As the novel also shows a large number of descriptions of the characters’ feelings in the specific situations, the internal feelings are added in the category to further explain the internal qualities of the characters.

Consequently, there are three parts in this section: the first one focuses on nouns modifying the characters’ internal qualities, internal feelings and external appearances; the second one refers to the use of the adjectives which are used to describe the characters’ internal qualities, internal feelings and external appearances; finally comes the overall comparison.

3.1 Focus on nouns

In linguistics, a noun is a member of a large, open lexical category whose members can occur as the main word in the subject of a clause, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition. In English, nouns may be defined as those words which can occur with articles and attributive adjectives and can function as the head of a noun phrase. Thus nouns in the fictional novels are chosen to analyze how the characters are portrayed from various aspects in fiction.

This section focuses on the nouns which describe the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) in the fictional novel Pride and Prejudice from three perspectives: the internal qualities, the internal feelings and the external appearances.
All the nouns are collected and classified into groups of the internal and external characteristics and then into subgroups according to the gender of the characters. The researcher once intended to further classify the internal qualities of the characters into thoughts, attitude and ability, and classify the external appearances of the characters into body, face, hair, and clothes. It led to failure when it came along with the examples in the novel, for there are few words in the sample of the novel which describe the characters in details. The number, underlined, noted in the right of the column is the times that the particular word appears in the sample of the novel.

### 3.1.1 Internal qualities of the characters

This subsection mainly investigate that how the internal qualities of the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) are described through the use of the nouns and whether there is any difference or similarity between the portrayal of the male characters and the female characters. The distribution of the collected nouns is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Qualities</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Bingley</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>figure, 2</td>
<td>quality, 2</td>
<td>quickness,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Nouns about internal qualities of the characters
In Table 1, a large number of nouns about the internal qualities which describe the four main characters have been collected from the sample of the novel. Referring to the total number of the nouns that modify the male or the female characters, it is seen that the number of the nouns describing the male characters is 22, and the number of the nouns describing the female characters is 14, which apparently shows that the number of the nouns describing the male characters is much more than the number of the nouns describing the female characters. Thus, it may be claimed that the author of the novel paid more attention to depicting the internal qualities of the male characters.
rather than the female characters with nouns. It is presumably in accordance with the life in the 19th century when the internal qualities of the men are more emphasized than that of women. In addition, some nouns used to modify the male characters are the same as those used to modify the female characters, such as temper and disposition, which indicates that there are some similarities in describing both gender of the characters.

3.1.2 Internal feelings of the characters

Besides the internal qualities of the characters, here is Table 2 showing the collection of the nouns describing the internal feelings of the four characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) to see the differences and similarities between the portrayal of the male characters and the female characters as well. The internal feelings are one of the phenomena of the internal qualities, and the internal feelings of the characters in the novel are largely described. But unlike the internal qualities which are formed, the internal feelings are more changeable. Here comes the individual section of the internal feelings of the characters.

Table 2: Nouns about internal feelings of the characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Feelings</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Bingley</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns about internal feelings</td>
<td>indignation,</td>
<td>admiration,</td>
<td>astonishment, joy, discomposure,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seen in Table 2, there are not so many nouns about the characters’ internal feelings as those about the characters’ internal qualities. Table 2 shows that the total number of nouns modifying the female characters’ internal feelings is 10, while the total number of the nouns modifying the male ones is 2. It is seen that the nouns describing the internal feelings of the female characters are much more than the nouns describing the internal feelings of the male characters. It appears that the author of the novel drew more attention to the internal feelings of the female characters. Besides, astonishment and joy are the two nouns used to describe both Elizabeth and Jane. The nouns describing the internal feelings of the female characters may show an agreement with the portrayal of female characters in novels in the 19th century, in which the female characters are portrayed emotional and sentimental.
3.1.3 External appearances of the characters

Compared with internal qualities and the internal feelings of the characters, the external appearances are more fixed and natural. This subsection mainly investigate that how the external appearances of the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) are described through the use of the nouns and whether there is any difference or similarity between the portrayal of the male characters and the female characters. The distribution of the collected nouns is shown in Table 3. The adjectives in the brackets are the detailed modification of the specific nouns to show the differences of the same noun when it is used together with different adjectives.

Table 3: Nouns about external appearances of the characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Bingley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns about external appearances</td>
<td>(fine, tall) person</td>
<td>(pleasant) countenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(handsome) features</td>
<td>(easy, unaffected) manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(noble) mien</td>
<td>(happy) manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(forbidding, disagreeable)</td>
<td>manners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 appears that the number of the nouns describing the male characters’ external appearances is 8, while the number of the nouns describing the female characters’ external appearances is 14. It indicates that the author used more nouns in depicting the external appearances of the female characters, which may be in accordance with the life in the 19th century when the appearances of the women or girls played an important role. Furthermore, feature is used to describe Darcy at the same time when it is used to describe Elizabeth, and manner is used to modify both Bingley and Jane. It seems that the author adopt the same nouns to describe both male and female characters. Consequently, it may show that the author was influenced by the thoughts in the 19th century that women’s rights were more emphasized, so she consciously or unconsciously use the same nouns to depict both male and female characters. In depicting the external appearances of the female characters, beauty and angel are the two nouns adopted to describe both Elizabeth and Jane. It may be considered that the gender of the author contributes to the word choice beauty and angel, which somehow can be seen as women’s language.
3.2 Focus on adjectives

In grammar, an adjective is a word whose main syntactic role is to modify a noun or pronoun, giving more information about the noun or pronoun’s referent. Lots of famous people have commented on adjectives. Constance Hale once claimed that the alchemy of adjectives is to boil down an excess of ideas to the essence of a thing with words that surprise. William Zinsser advocated to make the adjectives do work that needs to be done. The adjectives in the fictional novels are another good choice besides nouns to analyze how the characters are portrayed from various aspects in fiction.

This section focuses on the adjectives describing the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) in the fictional novel Pride and Prejudice from three perspectives: the internal qualities, the internal feelings and the external appearances. All the adjectives are collected and classified into groups of the internal and external characteristics and then into subgroups according to the gender of the characters. When considering the further sub-categories, classifying the internal qualities into thoughts, attitude and ability, and the external appearances into body, face, hair, and clothes, it came to failure when it is combined with the examples. The number which is underlined in the right of the column is the times that the particular word appears in the sample of the novel.
3.2.1 Internal qualities of the characters

This subsection mainly investigate that how the internal qualities of the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) are described through the use of the adjectives and whether there is any difference or similarity between the portrayal of the male characters and the female characters. The distribution of the collected adjectives is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Adjectives about internal qualities of the characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Characters</td>
<td>Darcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives about internal qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proud,</td>
<td>agreeable,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pleased,</td>
<td>lively,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fastidious,</td>
<td>unreserved,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagreeable,</td>
<td>sensible,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>horrid,</td>
<td>good-humoured,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clever,</td>
<td>perfect,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>haughty,</td>
<td>dissatisfied,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reserved,</td>
<td>deficient,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>well-bred,</td>
<td>inviting,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is seen from the Table 4 that the number of adjectives used to describe the internal qualities of the male characters is 23, while the number of the adjectives used to describe the female characters is 10. Thus, the number of the adjectives used to describe the internal qualities of the male characters is much more than that of the adjectives used to describe the internal qualities of the female characters. It shows accordance with the results of Table 1 which focuses on the nouns, and it may be still related with the life in the 19th century. What is more, good-humoured is the adjective which is used to modify both male character Bingley and the female character Elizabeth. It shows that the female characters can also have the internal quality of good humour. Furthermore, the adjective intelligent is used to define the female character Elizabeth, which may indicate the roles of the females in the 19th century are growing up. Besides, in the description of male characters, the author adopted the adjective agreeable to depict Darcy and Bingley, which appears that the internal qualities of the males are preferred.
3.2.2 Internal feelings of the characters

Besides the internal qualities of the characters, here is Table 5 showing the collection of the adjectives describing the internal feelings of the four characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) to further show their internal qualities.

Table 5: Adjectives about internal feelings of the characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Bingley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives about internal feelings</td>
<td>angry,</td>
<td>delighted, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>insupportable,</td>
<td>glad,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>serious,</td>
<td>angry,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pleased,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>satisfied,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with the total number of the adjectives which describe the internal feelings of the male characters in Table 5, the total number of the adjectives that modify the female characters’ internal feelings is more or less the same. It differs from the results...
of Table 2 which focuses on nouns. But if Table 5 is combined with Table 2, the total number of the words, including nouns and adjectives, which are about the internal feelings of the male characters is 10, while the total number of the words which are about the internal feelings of the female characters is 17. It also indicates that female characters’ internal feelings are more emphasized. In addition, delighted and glad are the two adjectives used to depict both the male characters Bingley and the female characters Elizabeth and Jane. Furthermore, angry is the adjective used to modify both Darcy and Bingley. All of them are the common feelings of human being.

3.2.3 External appearances of the characters

Besides the internal qualities and the internal feelings of the characters, the external appearances of the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) are described through the use of the adjectives. The distribution of the collected adjectives is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Adjectives about external appearances of the characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Bingley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives about</td>
<td>fine, young, handsome,</td>
<td>young, handsome,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Darcy</td>
<td>Bingley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows that the total number of the adjectives, describing the external appearances of the male characters, is 6, and the total number of the adjectives, modifying the external appearances of the female characters, is 13. It can be concluded that the author adopted more adjectives to depict the external appearances of the female characters rather than the male ones. It is in agreement with the results of Table 3 which is analyzed with nouns, and both of the results show relationship with the life in the 19th century when the women’s appearances are mainly focused on.

It can be said that to some extent, there is discrimination against women for they are only focused on by their external appearances rather than internal qualities. Besides, young and handsome are the two adjectives used to describe both the male characters Darcy and Bingley and the female character Elizabeth. It shows some similarity in adjectives choice. What is more, pretty, beautiful and sweet are the three adjectives
used to depict both Elizabeth and Jane, which can be regarded as the women’s language as well. In addition, *gentlemanlike* is the typical adjective to describe male, and *pretty*, *beautiful*, and *sweet* are the typical adjectives to describe female.

3.3 An overview of the entire results

The nouns and adjectives which describe the four main characters in the chosen sample of the novel are analyzed both from the quantitative aspect and the qualitative aspect in the tables.

There are both differences and similarities between the portrayal of the male characters and the female characters on the use of nouns and adjectives. Firstly, in quantitative discussion, what is apparent is that the author of the novel adopted more nouns and adjectives to depict the internal qualities of the male characters than female characters, and adopted less nouns and adjectives to depict the external appearances of the male characters than female ones. It may be one example of discrimination against women for they are only focused on by their external appearances rather than internal qualities. Secondly, in qualitative discussion, referring to the nouns and adjectives used, it can be concluded that maybe the author of the novel did not intend to add discrimination into description of female characters since she used the same nouns and adjectives to describe both the female character and the male character, but to some extent when depicting the external appearances of the characters, the author used some sexist words to modify the characters, such as *gentlemanlike*, *pretty*,

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beautiful, and sweet.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the present investigation is to study the particular nouns and adjectives used to describe the four main characters (Darcy and Bingley, Elizabeth and Jane) in the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice*, from the perspective of linguistic sexism. The results of the investigation show that there is linguistic sexism in the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice*, since the author presumably focused more on the internal qualities of the male characters and the external appearances of the female characters.

This investigation only focuses on the gender of the characters in the fictional novel *Pride and Prejudice*, regardless of many aspects such as the nationality of the author and the genre of the fictional novel. Moreover, the questions investigated in the present study can be used in a wider study where other word classes like verbs and adverbs are in focus.
References

Primary material

Secondary material