

Linguopsychological Analysis of the Characters of Guy De Maupassant on the Example of Short Story “Pierrot”¹

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Abstract

The article considers the distinctive features and specificity of the style of French novelist master Guy de Maupassant. By conducting a deep analysis of the novel “Pierrot”, the writers had set a goal to demonstrate how psychological realism and subjective attitude to the surrounding world are reflected in the author’s work. The writer manages to emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of the natures of his characters via lexical means. In the novel “Pierrot” Maupassant emphasizes the description of the psychological profiles of the characters. The relevance of the topic of the article is attached by the fact that at the present time there is a lack of research in the field of linguopsychological analysis of the works of French literature of the XIX century. In philology, one of the significant problems is the issue of understanding and interpreting texts. The research was conducted as part of areal linguistics — the sphere of the dynamically developing scientific direction. The main method used for the selection of practical material was the linguistic method of continuous sampling. Apart from that, the conceptual analysis of lexicographic sources was used. The way of reconstruction of the human lexicon, the analysis of lexical and grammatical structures, which the writer uses when describing the images and actions of characters, allow the authors to open the lexical and semantic connections existing in the consciousness of the person. The forms and methods of linguopsychological analysis of the work of art considered in the article allow to better understand the meaning of the author's text. They also contribute to the transfer of the author's vision of reality, the reconstruction of the images of his characters and the atmosphere in which the actions unfold. The objectives of the study are to establish some basic concepts for French culture and to analyze linguistic and stylistic language tools.

Keywords: Social Aspect; Psychological Profile; Rhetorical Figures; Moral Aspect.

¹ Please cite this paper as follows:

Bashkirova, K. A., & Galeeva, G. I. (2019). Linguopsychological analysis of the characters of Guy De Maupassant on the example of short story “Pierrot”. *Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics*, 10(SP), 732-739.

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1. Introduction

Linguopsychological study of the literary text is one of the main directions in teaching in Higher School. A detailed analysis of the work arouses interest in language, history, culture of the people, their worldview, expanding the socio-cultural horizon. The principles and methodology of linguopsychological analysis of the text can be different and depend on the goal, the degree of preparedness of the students for the perception of the work of literature. The main thing in the analysis of the text is the perception of its aesthetic integrity, which makes it impossible to analytically divide it into the constituent parts. Resulting from the research, a linguistic analysis of the novel has been made and a psychological description of the main characters has been given.

The purpose of the study is to identify the language means that helped the author to convey the figures of the protagonists in the novel “Pierrot” and show how he managed to get the effect of speech influence by selecting the linguistic means, rhetorical figures (Marandi et al, 2018).

When analyzing the text, the external strand of the passage is outlined, which deals with the facts, the place where the actions come, and also the behavior of the characters themselves. The inner strand is meant to convey the vision of events and feelings of the characters, which allows to penetrate into their inner world.

Analyzing a fiction, first of all, the author’s manner of describing the events is studied. Narrative style allows you to emphasize the main idea and typical features of the characters, tell about their life, and here there are enumerations that add dynamism.

In linguopsychological analysis of the text it is important to determine whether there is speech from the author in the text and whether an estimate of the author is expressed, in what form someone else’s speech is presented (direct, indirect, reported).

The rhetorical figures inherent in the analyzed text give vividness and color to the work: metaphors, hyperbolae, epithets, comparisons, antitheses, etc.

The works by Henri Rene Albert Guy de Maupassant does not abound with them. His style differs from the style of other writers with clarity, precision, simplicity.

Guy de Maupassant is a French writer who continued the brilliant traditions of critical realism, opposing the bourgeois world order of his time. His talent was unlocked most brilliantly in novels.

The tone of Maupassant’s novels always sounds in unison with the character of the plot. He portrayed the peasants with their merits and demerits. Language and culture are closely united, they reflect the world outlook and mentality of the people. The complex interlacing and interdependence of language and culture predetermine

the universal and at the same time specific character of perception of reality (Zamaletdinov, 2011).

His characters are real people. And at the same time, when creating their portraits, the author seeks to put his lively imagination, empathic heart in the profiles of the characters, and the reader senses pain that fills the author (Gazizova et al., 2017).

In that manner, Guy de Maupassant wrote the short story “Pierrot” which refers to a series of Norman short stories. Comic moments also appear, but the fate of an unhappy, innocent animal makes one think about the human true self and draw a parallel between the kennel, where the weakest always becomes a victim of the stronger.

2. Methods

The main method of selecting the factual material of this study is the linguistic method of continuous sampling in analyzing the novel by Guy de Maupassant “Pierrot”. And also, in characterizing personages and studying the characteristics of the discourse of heroes, the linguopsychological analysis of this fictitious text has been used.

In the novel by Guy de Maupassant “Pierrot” the events unfold in the Normandy village and, the writer often uses the Norman dialect in order to convey the local flavor, characterization, atmosphere and mentality of the Norman people. The novel shows the way of knowing of the meaning of the linguopsychological concept of personality (Yakubova et al., 2016), and in this vein this novel has not previously attracted the attention of the researchers of Maupassant’s works, which explains the relevance of choosing this particular theme by the authors.

The study of a concept is through analyzing the results of cognitive activity and is based on analyzing lexicographic sources that are part of the study of all linguistic material (Pleujóva & Gazízova, 2015). The analysis of the vocabulary of the texts created by an individual, of his discourse makes it possible for the researcher to reveal lexical and semantic links, to discover lexical associations existing in the mind of a person (Klimchak et al., 2015). This helps to form an idea of the realities and language means of expression (Lee, 2019).

3. Results and Discussion

In the course of this investigation, a linguistic analysis of the novel was made and a psychological profile of a certain group of people was presented.

The study revealed the linguistic means, lexical and grammatical structures that allowed Guy de Maupassant to convey the psychological profiles of the main characters. The article demonstrates how the writer managed to obtain an effect from linguistic persuasion via selecting rhetorical figures.

Consequently, it should be noted that:

- Maupassant gives a high status to the observation of the human psyche and describes in detail the mental state of his characters, accompanying the narrative with psychological commentaries, delivering his subjective opinion of the reality to the reader;
- with the help of linguistic devices, the realistic expression of the imagery increases;
- Maupassant's language is simple and easy to understand, every word is carefully weighed up, the writer does not use intricate epithets, laborious and detailed metaphors and comparisons;
- he managed to deliver the philosophy and mentality of the society in which he lived.

4. Summary

The novel by Guy de Maupassant "Pierrot", like any literary text, has its own internal structure. Analyzing the language norm, the style of presentation, the situation described by the writer, the semantic words embedded in this situation, the author's intention becomes clear, the idea he wanted to express via linguistic devices. For example, describing the appearance of Madame Le Febvre, Maupassant uses the directly opposite definitions: *dame* → *de campagne* ; *grosses mains rouges* → *gant de soie*. This allows the writer to present the main character as a two-faced nature, insincere and mendacious.

The subjective factors include the author's personality, his world view, the character of the protagonists of the analyzed text, the ideological and aesthetic orientation of the work. These factors help penetrate into the inner world of the writer and through his perception - into the inner world of the characters, create their psychological profile (Fonyi, 2005).

Realism of Guy de Maupassant manifests itself in striving to be honest with the reader, not to thrust the perfect idea of things and people they should be on himself or others. The writer sincerely and truly describes the society of his epoch - the bourgeois class and the simple Norman peasants. Rudeness, uncouthness, envy, ingratitude, bragging, betrayal is often found in life, and Maupassant does not mask these disgusting qualities, as if being intent on illustrating through a destructive example how society can fall low (Bulgakov, 2017).

In his work the writer resorts to the richness of the national language and seeks his own way of expressing the thought more concisely and more figuratively. The writer has his own lexicon, his own way of expressing his thoughts by language means and his own stylistic devices (Raimond, 1985).

The novel “Pierrot” narrates about Madame Le Febvre, a country-lady, who, together with her maid Rosa, discovering a petit theft in the vegetable garden, on her neighbor’s advice, decides to take in the dog as a guard. But this bargain causes a whole array of problems for a stingy mistress, these difficulties are reduced to financial expenses. When the patience of the stingy lady gave out, she and Rosa threw the poor animal into a well with marl. Women were full of remorse for what they had done. The mistress tried to return the dog, but having learned that she needed to pay, she gave up the idea. To better the poor animal’s lot, women stated fattening it up. But since food was snatched away by other dogs, Madame Le Febvre renounced her idea and went away with the remnants of bread.

After analyzing Maupassant’s novel “Pierrot”, we should sum up the following points that help to create imagery of the main characters:

1. Le Febvre is an ambivalent character, both by her social status and her psychological profile. She is not a peasant since she has her lands, her house, she keeps her maid, and she is proud of this, as if wants to demonstrate her social position in every way. Describing this image, the author uses the epithets “des airs grandioses” – “lofty appearance”, “une âme brute prétentieuse” – “a lousy soul with pretensions” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974). But she is uneducated, illiterate, the author emphasizes that “elle parle avec des cuires” – “she mangles words” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974). Madame Le Febvre is extremely stingy. She understands that she needs a dog to watch over her house and crop, but the animal must eat to live, and the thought about it makes the woman restless. She calls the dog “un avaleur de soupe à faire frémir” – “soup-feeder, striking an awe into her” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974). A bowl full of pâté, which she will have to feed the animal, haunts her. To emphasize the small size of the dog, Maupassant borrows from the Norman dialect a lexical unit “le quin” – “a toy of a dog, little dog”. Madame Le Febvre’s stinginess is evinced in everything: starting from free water and cheap crust of bread for dog meal to the mistress’s intention to let the dog go on food search so that it becomes even angrier. Madame Le Febvre is a representative of a cruel, ruthless, selfish world. Madame Lefevre and Rosa are overcome with remorse, which is manifested in their desire to escape from this ill-fated well as quickly as possible, from where the unbearable howling and barking of the dogs are heard. The nightmares with poor Pierrot stalk her sleep. Maupassant does not have compassion on this woman. The dog was thrown into the well by her own decision. It is too late to be conscience-stricken, when nothing can be changed. It is necessary to pay to rescue Pierrot, and avidity does not allow her to do it. When the well cleaner calls the sum of four francs, she screams in horror “Vous vous en feriez mourir!” – “But that is tantamount to death” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974). To convey the atmosphere of the Norman rural area and the character of its inhabitants, the vocabulary from the Norman patois which is replete with the mangled grammatical structures is introduced: je vais > je vas [ve > va] “Je vas apporter mes cordes...” – “I will fetch my strings” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974). To show the

ambivalent image of the character, the writer resorts to the use of antitheses: “dame de campagne” – “rural lady”; “grosses mains rouges” (red ham fisted) – “gants de soie” (silken gloves) (Maupassant, 1954; 1974).

2. She is “shadow” of Madame Le Febvre, who is agreeable to everything with her mistress, being an accomplice in evil deeds over the animal. Like her mistress, she is avid of money and her phrase “Quatre francs! C’est de l’argent, madame!” – “But this is lots of money, Madam!” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974) backs it up. She is dependent on her mistress, but she loves Pierrot with all her heart. Rosa is crying, hugging on the animal on parting with him. However, it is she who throws the dog into the well by the order of the hostess and does not protest at all.

3. Pierrot is a victim of the depicted tragedy. The dog’s story is terrible. The author gives a detailed description putting emphasis on its being deformed by using the epithets “tout jaune” – “entirely yellow”, “monstrueux” – “monstrous”, “presque sans pattes” – “almost without paws”, the comparisons “corps de crocodile” – “the body like crocodile’s”, “tête de renard” – «the head like fox’s”, “queue en trompette” – “tail like a pipe” (Maupassant, 1954; 1974), which is in tune with its unfortunate fate. Maupassant gives the dog a human name, diminutive, which is usually used to call the boys in families. And the contrast between this name and the terrible fate of Pierrot becomes more terrible. The name “Pierrot” – “a pebble” successfully selected by the author – is his destiny - to be thrown into the well like a pebble.

4. Maupassant acquaints the reader with the inhabitants of the village. Using the word “le larcin” – “petty theft”, taken from the Norman dialect, the writer illustrates how, just because of the petty theft, the indignation of the inhabitants of the village grows, terrified by the fact that this can happen to each of them. The author often uses the verb “voler” – “steal”, although the point is a merely dozen of onions. The selection of vocabulary points to their moral tragedy: “une désolation” – “despair”, “une terreur” – “terror”, “effarés” – “frightened” and these hyperbolae add the comic element to the narrative. The use of exclamation marks expresses an emotional state of the inhabitants.

5. At the same time, Guy de Maupassant acquaints the reader with the world of animals who are the victims of inequity. The word “condamnés” – “condemned” generates the question in this context: what crime are they convicted of? Enumerations the author uses make the description of the dog’s life and fortune even more terrible: “hurlements plaintifs” – “pitiful howling”, “aboiments furieux” – “furious barking”, “appels lamentables” – “mournful, crying groan” (Maupassant, 1954; Maupassant, 1974). They hang on for grim death; they know that they are condemned and will die some day or other.

Guy de Maupassant in his novel “Pierrot” succeeded in brilliant depicting an ambivalent image of his characters. Vice and virtue coexist in this story. On the one hand, these images are comical. But on the other hand, they frighten with their heartlessness and selfishness. A half-lady and a half-rural person with a ruthless soul

and experiencing simultaneously belated remorse, greedy and avid Madame Le Febvre. Cowardly servant Rose being in dependence on her, who is more compassionate than her mistress, but for whom money is also always in the first place and for the sake of it she is capable of betraying a defenseless creature, mopping tears from her face at the same time. The instinct of community knits her with Madame Le Febvre. Pierrot is an awkward creature with a human name for boys and an ugly appearance.

Description of the main characters are based on oppositions that make one think about the ambivalence of the world in which the writer lived and worked. He saw and realized the contradictions concealed from many people, the struggle between lies and truth (Antoine, 1971).

This novel contains a lot of heavy and gloomy things. The writer showed the reality being gloomy and terrible. The author draws a parallel between the human community and a pack of animals.

The moral of the novel is as follows: people by nature are not good. Even women who are considered to be susceptible, to feel affection for animals are also heartless. The heartlessness of Madame Le Febvre and Rosa incite them to extreme cruelty.

The animal world is no less disgusting and the law of the jungle reigns where a weak being always becomes a victim of a strong one. But animals are guided by the instincts of self-preservation, which is given to them by nature and unlike humans they are not endowed with reason.

5. Conclusion

The conflicts presented by the author in the novel are connected with the contradiction of human nature. Two opposite people are as if in constant antagonism in the representation of his characters. This confrontation being the result of the pressure of social causes inspires the author to create an example of the novel of characters, where the writer vividly showed a man in his actions and gestures.

Studying the novel by Guy de Maupassant “Pierrot”, the students get acquainted with the mentality of the Normans, with their characters and psychology; with grammatical and lexical structures of the Norman dialect, kindling their interest, which are a sociolinguistic component of teaching foreign languages. The students’ motivation increases, which is of practical importance for studying a foreign language at classes in educational philological institutions.

Aknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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