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SECTION IV. LITERATURE OF PEOPLES AND NATIONS OF THE WORLD

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Epithets in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*:
status and perspectives

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Abstract. The paper focuses on the analysis of the status of the epithet in the contemporary literary text of K. Ishiguro. The pertinence of the study stems from the fact that in Western linguistics, there is no tradition to consider the epithet as a distinct and independent stylistic means, and its main features have not been widely distinguished; in some cases, researchers endow the epithet with the function of the characters' personality description. The problem of how the epithet claims an auxiliary role as an image-creating element of language is disclosed. The analysis showed that the type of epithet used is directly related to the character or thing being described and the ideological intent of the work, while the predominance of evaluative epithets of ethical assessment is due to the way of narration. The frequency of using one or another type of epithet in the novel *Never Let Me Go* in creating a particular imagery element may vary, in the climactic scenes more complex expressive epithets perform the function of hyperbolization predominate. A comprehensive analysis showed that the epithet has the right to be recognized as an imagery related unit, since this stylistic tool demonstrates a distinct distribution in heroes, objects, places and nature descriptions.

Keywords: Imagery; Epithet; Formative function; Categorical epithet; Ethical epithet; K. Ishiguro's novel "Never Let Me Go"

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Introduction

Issues related to the study of lexical and stylistic means involved in the formation of an artistic image are being actively developed in modern linguistics. This research

complements and deepens the already existing understanding of the epithet as an effective formative component of an artistic image. The aim of the study is to analyze the models of the formation of basic images in the modern

literary text with the help of the epithet. Observations and conclusions can serve as a basis for further research in the field of the study of the character trait adjectives and the theory of the epithet.

The distribution of the epithet in the creation of an artistic image has not been sufficiently studied. In Western linguistics, there is no tradition of considering an epithet as a separate and independent stylistic means, and its subsidiary formative function has practically not been investigated.

Not all Western authors distinguish an epithet in the status traditional for Russian stylistics; there is also no single approach to the nomination of this linguistic means, in particular, M. A. Garland (Garland, 2021), L. S. Lendik, C. M. Yuit (Lendik, Yuit, 2021: 56), H. Poutiainen (Poutiainen, 2019: 122), J. Berškýtė and G. Stevens (Berškýtė, Stevens, 2019) and a number of other researchers adhere to the term "epithet", adding various characteristics to it ("derogatory epithet", "specific epithet", "magic epithet"), while not all of them endow this linguistic means with subjective evaluations. In linguistic literature, we also find such names as "trait attribution" (Westra, 2020: 583), (Kroo, 2020: 326), "person attribution" (Gallardo, Weiss, 2017: 904), «adjectives in character description» (Haapiainen, 2020) and other phrases, the use of which is of an occasional nature, however, indicates the fact that in Western linguistics there is no uniformity in the interpretation and understanding of the term.

The special status of epithets is considered in the work of B. D. Raad and C. Passakos (Passakos, De Raad, 2009: 75), who define an epithet as an adjectival phrase in which adjectives are used in combination of a noun, usually a person's name, as well as to describe external phenomena (feelings, thoughts, actions, facts of history, etc.) In doing so, a fixed combination of the name-plus-trait-adjective produces a figure of speech that is easily identifiable, one that typically fits the oral recitation. Thus, the authors endow the epithet with the function of

"describing the personality and character". An indirect reference to the role of an epithet in creating an image can be traced in the work by J. Navitsky, who points to the functioning of a proper name (Momus) as an epithet describing skepticism and captiousness (Navitsky, 2020). N. V. Papić defines an epithet as a figure of speech based on the interaction of the emotional and logical meaning of a word, emphasizing its subjective and evaluative nature. She also argues that the epithet conveys firm impressions on the readers, guiding them to perceive images through the eyes of the writer (Papić, 2020: 192).

Noteworthy is the fact, that some foreign scholars consider the epithet in discourses other than the artistic one, and it pertains, although not directly, to the imagery. In particular, D. Binder writes: "One might imagine that "nationalist" in the form of epithet-as-smear would gradually recede with time or even disappear at least in the Balkan context", which leads to a conclusion that the epithet can be regarded as one of the imagery means, in this case, imposed on the public, the image of political behavior (Binder, 2008: 83).

In Russian linguistics, within the framework of functional stylistics, the epithet has an unambiguous interpretation, defining it as a stylistic means, a trope with an evaluative function.

A. A. Zelenetskij suggests a theory of the origin of the epithet within which he divides words into two types: "prosaic" and "poetic". The sound of prosaic words does not contain imagery and serves as a sign of any concept, for example, the word "sea". Pronouncing poetic words evokes in a listener a specific image that is different from the lexical meaning, for example, "firefly" or "snowdrop". A. A. Zelenetskij believes that earlier all prosaic words belonged to the poetic form, but over time the images that they contained have been erased. Consequently, earlier all names had the character of epithets. He refers to such epithets as to "the embryos of nouns", since

they were both a name and a sign. Modern epithets have no independent meaning and are used to describe an object and endow it with a certain character and content (Zelenetskij, 1913: 10).

Russian linguist G. Stashko considers an epithet as a laconic, but not self-sufficient means of building an image without tracing a direct correlation between the image and epithets (Stashko, 2017: 356).

Modern research of the epithet involves its consideration with respect to various aspects, such as semantics, imagery, the degree of mastery and stability, structure. There is a tradition to describe the epithet in the framework of two spheres, namely literary criticism and linguistics. The figurative character as the main feature of the epithet is common for literary criticism. It is viewed as an expressive means giving a figurative characteristic. Initially, this term referred only to a poetic definition. V. M. Zhirmunskij suggested distinguishing between an epithet in a narrow and a wide meaning (Zhirmunskij, 1977: 355). This duality is associated with a change in the use of the word when the poetic style changes. In a broad sense, an epithet is a technique of poetic style that introduces a new feature, narrows the meaning of the object being defined and enriches it. It makes the combination casual and individual. The epithet in the narrow sense does not introduce anything new into the concept being defined and is a definition rooted in the literary tradition.

In literary studies, it is difficult to accentuate a single definition of an epithet, but in most cases, the term "epithet" is understood in the context of various types of poetic definitions. For example, in the dictionary of literary terms, an epithet is defined as "a figurative definition that emphasizes any property of an object or phenomenon that has special artistic expressiveness" (Belokurova, 2006: 207). It should also be noted that not only an adjective, but any word denoting a sign can

serve as such a definition (Gubanov, 2015: 36).

Let us consider the epithet from the point of view of linguistics. In the dictionary of linguistic terms, the following definition is given: "an epithet is a kind of attributive lexical unit that differs from a descriptive word in expressiveness and figurative (inherent to the trope) character" (Akhmanova, 2007: 527). In general, it is noted that an epithet is a lexico-syntactic trope, which necessarily contains an expressive coloring, and also performs the function of a definition, circumstance or appeal. The Russian stylistic tradition considers an epithet regardless of the functions performed, and defines a word as an epithet if it is used as an expressive means, most often based on highlighting the quality of an object, which characterizes it from the point of view of individual perception. Here we deal with the interaction of denotative and contextual meanings, the connection of which creates imagery. The epithet exists in the form of attributive words or phrases.

Thus, we can conclude that within the linguistic approach, the main feature of the epithet is the expressive character and emotional coloring. But questions about morphological and syntactic characteristics remain open. As we can see, opinions on the grounds and forms of expression of the epithet differ. Let us consider one of the most complete definitions of the concept of "epithet", containing a generalization of earlier works of researchers, which is cited by the philologist A. V. Pavshuk: "An epithet is an artistic definition (definition in the aesthetic function) of an object, person, phenomenon, process, situation, highlighting, emphasizing, reinforcing an essential, from the point of view of the author, a feature that can repeat or update the meaning of the word being defined, be typical and inalienable for a whole class of objects, an individual feature of a specific object, create a micro- or macro-image, giving it picturesqueness, contain hidden meanings and assessment, create an emotional mood of the work, enhance the

impression on the recipient, referring to his intellectual, emotional and aesthetic perception” (Pavshuk, 2007: 20).

In general, what is common in the literary and linguistic approach is that they both characterize the epithet as one of the main means of expressing an individual, subjectively evaluative attitude to the described object or phenomenon, as well as highlighting a significant feature of a specific object from its class, and at the syntactic level they consider it as an attribute element.

Due to the divergent views of researchers on the nature of the epithet, there is no single classification of it, so the question of its typology remains open.

S. L. Neveleva, while studying the epic literature, distinguishes two main groups of epithets: ascertaining and evaluative. The first group includes those that determine the real signs of the external manifestation of objects, for example, color, size, age. The second refers to the characteristics of the aesthetic, emotional, moral and ethical plan (Neveleva, 1977: 10).

Having adhered to the typology of S. L. Neveleva, A. V. Pavshuk has created a more detailed classification. She divided the stating epithets into physical and categorical, and evaluative ones into ethical, aesthetic and emotional. Physical epithets are those that designate specific features of objects, for example, shape, color, sound, taste, size. Categorical epithets describe abstract features of an object, person, or phenomenon. Ethical epithets carry an assessment in terms of moral convictions, feelings and habits. Aesthetic epithets "are associated with the satisfaction of the feeling of beauty." Emotional epithets realize the expression of the emotions themselves; they depict the emotional state and/or emotional attitude.

Main part

The purpose of the article is to specify the status of epithets in the literary text and to analyze the main types of epithets employed, regarding them as an integral part of idiomatic style.

Materials and Methods

The research was implemented on the basis of the famous contemporary writer K. Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*. The choice of material is not accidental and is due to the understudied character of the figurative component of K. Ishiguro's work, which reflects the modern literary tradition. Research of this kind involves the use of qualitative and quantitative content analysis, which allows one to move from intuitive thinking to accurate data.

At the first stage of the study, epithets were selected by the continuous sampling method which, according to the classification put forward by A. V. Pavshuk, were divided into two main categories: ascertaining (physical and categorical) and emotional (ethical, aesthetic and emotional). In some cases, the division was quite subjective, since the epithet contained both an evaluative and a stating basis, for example, such epithets as "stage-whisper style", "late night and American", or "bulldoggy figure".

At the second stage of the study, we selected the epithets that, in our opinion, pertain to the imagery of the novel (total of 242 units), and also an attempt was made to identify the most represented types of epithets related to certain images of various subject content: hero, place, subject, nature.

Results and Discussion

Description of heroes, surrounding objects, place, and nature through the epithet gives expressiveness to the image and allows the reader to interpret it in accordance with the author's idea.

The imagery of K. Ishiguro's novel "Never Let Me Go" is created on the basis of the description of the main character (character A), the second main character (character B) and the place in which the events take place (Hailsham school), also there are secondary images of objects and nature.

The distribution of the types of epithets depending on the image they contribute to is presented in Table.

Table. Types of epithets contributing to image-making

Image	Type of epithet				
	physical	categorical	ethical	aesthetic	emotional
CHARACTER A	-	36	52	1	2
CHARACTER B	6	26	35	1	22
PLACE	2	11	4	5	2
OBJECT	4	3	6	1	-
NATURE	4	2	-	3	-

The story is narrated by Character A, all the events are described through her perceptual prism. The analysis showed that ethical epithets prevail when creating Character A image, which is due to the humanistic idea of the novel about the future of cloning. The effective use of this group of epithets is noted not only in reflections concerning the field of eternal categories, but also in describing the feelings of Character A, which allow the reader to sketch the character and her relationship with other characters in the novel. An insignificant share of physical epithets is explained by the author's possible intention to achieve sympathy for the hero by revealing her inner world, without using external characteristics.

The same tendency was found when analyzing the image of Character B, in the description of which ethical (39%), categorical (28%) and emotional (24%) epithets received the greatest distribution. The frequent use of epithets of emotional evaluation in the formation of the image is associated with the character of the hero himself – a hot-tempered and noisy child, transforming into a quiet, thoughtful young man, with the development of the character and a change in his worldview.

When describing the image of a place (boarding school), 46% of categorical, 21% of aesthetic, 17% of ethical, 8% of emotional and 2% of physical epithets are used. The widespread use of subjective categorical and an insignificant share of physical epithets indicate the importance of the image in the work: a school is not just a building, but a place, the existence of which raises the ques-

tion of the humanity and ethics of the events taking place in it.

The importance of physical epithets increases when describing the images of an object (drawings of Character B) and nature. The image of Character B's drawings is an important detail of the narrative, since the presence of the creative principle present in the clone hero confirms the idea of human equality and explains the use of ethical epithets.

The analysis showed that the type of epithet used is directly related to the formed image and the ideological concept of the novel. The choice of the epithet is rather deliberate; the predominance of evaluative epithets is due to the narrative method, since it is a first-person narration in which subjective perception comes to the fore. The epithets of ethical assessment received the greatest distribution, since they reveal not only moral convictions, but also the feelings of the heroes, which are the leitmotif. Epithets of emotional assessment are used by the author rather occasionally, the novel is built on the memories of Character A, and as a result of such reflection, and some of the images lose their emotional content.

Let's consider the epithetic content of the novel in more detail. The narration is done in the voice of Character A, and contains a significant amount of reminiscences about childhood and growing up period. A distinctive feature of the description of the hero is that the image is formed without reference to her direct external and internal characteristics, largely due to the use of ethical epithets, often accompanied by intensifiers: "I wasn't exactly

the *wilting* type myself...", "I said, *quite sternly*", "...it wasn't *really very fair*" etc.

The ethical epithet with an intensifier, in most cases, is used for the purpose of exaggeration. It should be noted that the emotional type of the epithet ("*excited and worried*") is practically not involved in the formation of the image, as well as the aesthetic one.

Another type of formative epithet – a categorical epithet – comes to the fore when describing the interaction of Character A with the outside world: "...*strange* time in our friendship", "...to give her *silent* support", "...it's *pointless* trying to judge her", "...there were *powerful* tides tugging us apart", "...my mind searched back frantically, and with a *cold* horror". In culminating cases, two categorical epithets form a gradation: "It was a *sweet* idea. It was a *great* idea".

In the description of Character B, there is also a tendency to use ethical and categorical epithets: "A *bad* temper, but a *big* heart", "I'm a *pretty good* donor, but I was a *lousy* carer".

There are a significant number of emotional epithets that represent the stage of the formation of a character and building relationships with the external environment: "... the different expressions ... across Tommy's face: the *bright eager* one at the start; the *puzzled* concern ...", "... students think him a *right* clown", "... had left him *upset* and *disorientated*", "... timed *very carefully* and *deliberately* everything they told us".

In some cases, the significance of a particular characterization of the hero is emphasized by the repetition of the epithet, as, in the following example, the hot temper, rambunctiousness is shown: "... burst into *thunderous* bellowing...", "... Tommy came out of the room with *thunderous* footsteps...".

The use of epithets allows the author not only to describe the inner world of Character B, but also represents his attitude towards Character A, allowing the reader to trace the change that he is undergoing: "... voice was *gentle*, full of *child-like* curiosity", "... looked at me *sheepishly*", "... him go off

grateful and *reassured*", "... his hands were hovering *fretfully* in the air...", "... was letting out *hesitant* little half-laughs...".

When describing the image of a place, categorical epithets are used. The author creates this image through reminiscences, childhood memories, and the attitude of clones that grew up in a different environment to it, stating the abstractness of the object's features: "...The thing about being from Hailsham was that you had this *special* chance", "we ... had our *most intimate* conversations".

The significant role of aesthetic epithets associated with the reflection of the forms of beauty is noted: "... I bet that was a *beautiful* place", "...*sweet* little *cottages* people always had in picture books".

The outside world, everything that is outside the gates of the territory, is seen in contrast to this special beautiful place. This world is unfamiliar and dangerous: "We had only *the haziest* notions of the world outside." So the forest behind the main building on the hill is described as something terrifying: "... *the distant* outline ... that was enough for her a *sobbing night of terror*". In this case, a metaphorical complicated reverse epithet based on syncretism is used. Such epithets are rare in use and are employed by the author to describe intense emotions and important details. The Fair can be regarded as one of the significant events held at school and it is described with the help of the reverse well-established epithet "*the craze of the day*".

Ethical epithets are formative not only for the characters' images, but also serve as a way of giving expressiveness to the image of a place, reflecting the main idea of the author: "... to a *more humane* and *better* way of doing things", "... *humane, cultivated* environments".

Character B's drawings served as material for analyzing the image of the object. Their description is characterized by the use of physical epithets that provide for materiality and visual representation of these drawings: "... *tiny* canals, weaving tendons, miniature screws were all drawn with *obsessive precision*", "*metallic* features".

The image is also formed using categorical and ethical epithets: "... Deliberately childish pictures", "... there was something sweet, even vulnerable about each of them."

The drawings of the hero are proof of the creativity of the clones and the idea of equality. The creative component is a symbol of hope to become equal to man, proof that clones also have a soul. The hero's drawings are detailed; he accurately conveys his world perception through them: a living personality is depicted as a mechanical object, behind the metal of which vulnerability is hidden.

The image of nature in the novel is secondary. It can be assembled from the rare memories of Character A, it is dynamic, like all other images: the bright sun in childhood "... a morning of brilliant sunshine", "bright sunshine" changes to the invariably gray sky in adulthood "... the sky big and gray and never changing".

Nature conveys the mood of the heroes, before tragic events, epithets create an alarming and gloomy atmosphere: "featureless countryside", "pale sky", "ghostly dead trunks". In the final scene, Character A looks at the same empty fields "... those empty fields", at the fence, which has caught debris, most likely brought by the wind from the sea shore "that strange rubbish", "the shore-line of odd stuff". The scene is metaphorical: a wide empty field is the life of Character A, coastal debris is the clones themselves – something strange and incomprehensible, accidentally found in this world, vulnerable and dependent on the "direction of the wind." The use of physical (44%) and categorical (22%) epithets allows not only to transfer the image, but also to emphasize the figurative aspect of the epithet use.

Conclusions

Having analyzed the epithets employed in creating the main images of K. Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*, we came to the following conclusions: the images of Character A and Character B are abundant in categorical, ethical and emotional epithets. The approach to the choice of the means used to reveal the image of the characters is not acci-

dental. Since the main idea of the novel is the ethical question of whether clones, as well as people, have a soul, ethical epithets, being a formative dominant, hold a specific place. The frequency of the use of one or another type of epithet in the creation of a particular image can change; in the climax scenes, more complex expressive epithets prevail, performing the function of hyperbolization.

A distinctive feature of the main characters' images of the novel is the presence of an accompanying image, which not only reveals the character more fully, but also gives the image a special expressiveness. For Characters A and B, this is an object which is supplemented with epithets of ethical assessment, this may be due to the fact that the author's task is to reveal its significance within the framework of the ideological content of the novel, and not to give an external description. Common to the various images of objects is the absence of meaningful physical descriptions.

Categorical epithets, which are subjective and describe abstract signs, play a significant role when creating an image of a place.

The image of nature in the text of this work consists of rare references, but due to the epithets we can trace its change. In the early years, Character A's attention is directed to the bright sun, but with age, it is replaced by a gray endless sky.

The analysis showed that the epithet in the novel under study can be recognized to have the image related status, since this stylistic means has a distinct status in creating an image, in particular, the image of heroes, an object, a place and nature.

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