

A BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS: ON THE REFLECTION AND FRACTURE OF STEREOTYPES IN THE HARRY POTTER NOVELS

Natalia Gómez Pascual
Universitat de València
natalia.gomez@uv.es

Un cruce entre dos mundos: reflejo y fracturación de estereotipos en el mundo mágico de Harry Potter. A bridge between two different worlds: on the reflection and fracture of stereotypes in the Harry Potter novels. Natalia Gómez (Universitat de València (Spain)) natalia.gomez@uv.es

AIM

To explore the reflective and fracture of stereotypes in the first and second Harry Potter novels.

REFLECTION OF STEREOTYPES

Star Myths

Mr. Weasley

Mrs. Burdock

REFRACTURE OF STEREOTYPES

RELATIONSHIP + PROBLEM

WORDS

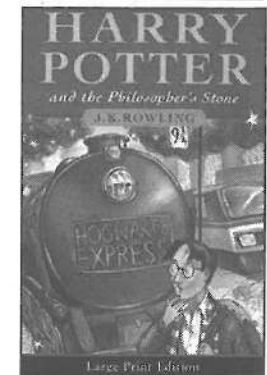
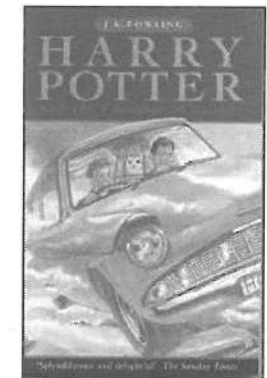
CHARACTERS' LANGUAGE USE

CONCLUSIONS

There is a use of language that reflects when English readers are not young and stereotypes are clearly reflected.

Reflection of stereotypes in English is a magical world as a tool for young readers.

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Resumen

Justamente porque se trata de un verdadero fenómeno literario, Harry Potter puede convertirse o lo ha hecho ya, en un referente literario para la juventud de nuestro tiempo. Un bestseller que ha conseguido relanzar el género fantástico dirigido al público infantil y juvenil. Es interesante, así pues, observar cómo, un aspecto social tan intrínsecamente ligado a la individualidad de las personas como es el género, se representa en esta saga internacionalmente conocida, leída y discutida. Para ello propondré algunos ejemplos del primero de los volúmenes de la saga, en los que, a mi juicio, se puede vislumbrar cómo se puede entender el género a través de la práctica literaria. En concreto, la base de análisis es tanto aquello que los personajes dicen de sí mismos, las opiniones de otros personajes acerca del resto, de qué manera son descritos los personajes la primera vez que aparecen en el hilo narrativo, los roles que desempeñan, los estereotipos que se representan y los que – en su caso – se fracturan. En particular, tomaré como referencia a la familia Dursley y al personaje de Hermione.

Palabras clave: identidad de género, fractura de estereotipos, diferencias de género, saga de Harry Potter.

Abstract

The unprecedented success of the Harry Potter series in the history of children's and juvenile literature has been a controversial topic among scholars. The Harry Potter phenomenon (so-called Pottermania) has assembled fans and academia together around the world. Events such as Nimbus 2003, Accio 2005, Patronus 2006, Sectus 2007, of international relevance, aim at determining the role played by the Potter novels among youngsters living in a society with a marked growth of consumerism. Some of the analyses carried out recently (Zipes 2002, Whited 2002, Gupta 2003, Heilman 2003, Lurie 2004, Blake 2005), share a common interest in framing this bestseller either as an element of the compendium of works acknowledged to be "quality literature" or else as an example of paraliterature. Furthermore, the question is raised as to the reader's implied need to find a behavioural model. Do they really look for a sociological paradigm of their society or do they simply seek fun in their spare time? I will make an attempt to differentiate these aspects of quality literature in relation to the potential ties to linguistic patterns. A brief analysis of the narrative structure and the language used by the author in the first and second books will be carried out. The angle of observation will be gender identity. Above

all, the reflection or, by contrast, the fracture of gender stereotypes will be the point of departure by examining adjectives, verbs – activity verbs, communication verbs, mental verbs, causative verbs, verbs of simple occurrence, verbs of existence or relationship and aspectual verbs –, adverbs and so on. In sum, Rowling seems to make use of a very clear differentiation between Muggles and the magic world represented in the books as a tool for developing the narrative stream by means of either considering gender stereotypes or refusing their presentation. This seems to be an invitation of the author for the audience to cross the bridge of their mental schemata and walk across two different worlds. The main challenge is to reconstruct the inherent characteristics associated to the romantic notion of the hero and, as a consequence, depriving him of a superhero element.

Key words: gender identity, fracture of stereotypes, gender differences, Harry Potter novels.



1. Gender identity: the idea of oneself

Before concentrating on the very Harry Potter matters, it is worth looking at some basic concepts in order to lay down the theoretical principles of my analysis.

Firstly, taking into account gender, it seems appropriate to establish a clear distinction between what is biologically determined ('sex') and what is culturally associated to our identity ('gender'). Thus, sex would be formed by all those biological components of masculinity and femininity, whereas gender would be reflected as a compendium of different aspects of cultural, psychological and social nature of identity.

The majority of us feel identified with one of the sexes, that is, we consider ourselves as being men or women. This generic identification ('gender identity') – which is solidly established in puberty – is a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, gender identity is forged by means of a wide range of variables, such as the person's characteristics, social groups in which people develop their activities, educational schemes, and so on. On the other, identification as men or women implies a dynamic aspect ('gender roles'). Gender roles influence men and women's behaviour in the numerous social situations they may find themselves.

Dealing with the different lexical aspects to which the term identity alludes some of the meanings found in both Spanish and English dictionaries will be detailed here. In the electronic version of de la Real Academia Española's dictionary the definition is as follows:

Identidad. (Del b. lat. *identitas*, -&tis). 2. f. Conjunto de rasgos propios de un individuo o de una colectividad que los caracterizan frente a los demás. 3. f. Conciencia que una persona tiene de ser ella misma y distinta a las demás.

Identificar 2. tr. Reconocer si una persona o cosa es la misma que se supone o se busca.

The Webster's Dictionary¹ and the Merriam-Webster's Thesaurus define this category as follows:

Identity: Etymology: Middle French *identité*, from Late Latin *identitat-*, *identitas*, probably from Latin *identidem* repeatedly, contraction of *idem et idem*, literally, same and same
1 a: sameness of essential or generic character in different instances b: sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing: **ONENESS**

2 a: the distinguishing character or personality of an individual: **INDIVIDUALITY** b: the relation established by psychological identification

Identification: 1 a: an act of identifying; the state of being identified b: evidence of identity
2 a: psychological orientation of the self in regard to something (as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional association b: a largely unconscious process whereby an individual models thoughts, feelings, and actions after those attributed to an object that has been incorporated as a mental image.

Hence, identification would derive from the very process of recognition of one's own identity. Identity, then, would be both the characteristics which define us as unique and diverse from the other, but also our proximity to others and, as a consequence, what makes us equal. Gender identity seems to be the result of the negotiation between oneness and otherness. Furthermore, it is a negotiation between what is established, the socially acquired patterns, and the internal mechanism which in-

¹ Webster's Dictionary and Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus are available in <http://www.m-w.cpm>

dicates what people feel they are. Looking at cross-cultural aspects, there seems to be little difference between the Spanish and the English-speaking context definitions.

The idea of "aspiration" to what the individual desires to be is what Goffman describes best in his article "The arrangement between the sexes" (1977): 'In so far as the individual builds up a sense of who and what he is by referring to his sex class and **judging himself in terms of the ideals of masculinity (or femininity)**, one may speak of *GENDER IDENTITY*².

In sum, it is this "ideal" of the socially established basis for femininity or masculinity that is actually intrinsic to the notion of gender identity. And, surprisingly, Goffman declares an "or" which seems to expose his viewpoint on the impossibility for people to feel identified with both identities (masculine and feminine) at the same time.

2. Gender, language and society

In general terms, Gender Studies have got a multidisciplinary nature since the numerous fields from which they can be approached range from anthropology, psychology, history, sociology, etc. Nevertheless, the existing relationship between gender and language seems to be observable from the constructionist perspective mainly targeted as an evolutionary medium. That is to say, gender identity is not an isolated aspect of identity with which the individual grows up – it is not a fixed, stable variable of the individual traits – but it is transformed, developed and self-constructed. Thus, gender scrutinised from a sociolinguistic angle may be established as a social construct – then "doing gender" would be an appropriate approach. Constructionism requests an acquisition of a generic status. A status carefully developed through psychological, cultural and social means, not only individually but also by the interaction with each other. Not only it is a construction of the self-concept of individuals but also of the perception of others.

Moreover, constructionist theories – mainly devoted to the psychological and sociological fields – deal with the premise that we develop our idea of gender by observing the social norms, sociocultural aspects and activities surrounding us. Therefore, it is highly recommendable to connect gender with a determined social

² Theory and Society 4: 301-331 (emphasis added).

and historical context. As a consequence, gender intrinsically proclaims a dynamic aspect. Studies by Kessler & McKenna (1978) and Butler (1990) are examples of the analysis of gender as a constantly changing variable.

On the one hand, several studies have approached gender from a multidisciplinary perspective, though Hall & Bucholtz's 1995 publication vastly examines gender identity and language, and, for that reason, is a reliable source for transcription for the purpose of this paper. To this end, I will just focus on the expression "communities of practice" which Eckert & McConnell-Ginet explain as follows in the above mentioned Hall & Bucholtz's edition:

'A single individual participates in a variety of communities of practice at any given time, and over time: the family, a friendship group, an athletic team, a church group. These communities may be all-female or all-male; they may be dominated by women or men; they may offer different forms of participation to women or men; they may be organized on the presumption that all members want (or will want) heterosexual love relations. Whatever the nature of one's participation in communities of practice, one's experience of gender emerges in participation as a gender community member with others in a variety of communities of practice.' (1995: 469)

The notion of community is interesting for the purpose of this paper not only because of the clear intention of associating the individual with the idea of participation in a multitude of social actions, but also because belonging to a community is also connected to the magic community developed through the novels by J.K. Rowling. I will develop further the critical hypothesis that deals with the author's intention of separating groups according to this notion of community in terms of sexual stereotypes.

On the other hand, one of the most recent theories born to explore identity is the so-called '*queer theory*'.³ Queer theory revisits the speech act theory developed by Austin and J.R. Searle in the 1960s. For the sake of this analysis, I will briefly deal

³ See <http://www.theory.org.uk>. 'What is Queer Theory? Queer theory is a set of ideas based around the idea that identities are not fixed and do not determine who we are. It suggests that it is meaningless to talk in general about 'women' or any other group, as identities consist of so many elements that to assume that people can be seen collectively on the basis of one shared characteristic is wrong. Indeed, it proposes that we deliberately challenge all notions of fixed identity, in varied and non-predictable ways.'

with what this linguistic theory is founded on. Speech acts constitute the minimum unit of linguistic communication. According to Searle, speech acts are not symbols but productions of an instance of a sentence under certain circumstances. 'Felicity conditions', that is, social norms which coincide with the social environment in which those speech acts take place, and, in addition, which coincide with a previous context of authority, hence speaker and hearer share the presupposition that, because of the previous referents in the language, speech acts become performative formulaic. An instance of performatives would be – in the Harry Potter terms – the declaration of houses to which the Hogwarts' pupils would belong. Then, speech acts theory show that many social realities are so because of the sentence nature of language.

Additionally, gender roles do play a fundamental role in the performativity of gender. Generally speaking, playing a role is linked to the idea of representation and of construction. Thus, gender roles are dynamically constructed the same as gender identity is.

Therefore, speech acts are social acts which function as mechanisms of coordination for future actions within a determined historical and cultural context. In sum, we do gender.

3. Gender approaches

Regarding the linguistic field, I will briefly review some of the most recently developed empirical approaches to gender.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the predominant tendency was that of pointing out gender differences in terms of subordination and domination. That is, whereas men dominate discourse, women are the subordinate elements of the conversation. In order to determine power and status in the linguistic interaction, conversation analysis greatly contributed to the examination of aspects such as interruptions, turn taking schemata, etc. This tendency corresponds to the so-called '*dominance approach*'.

'*Vive la différence*' could be the underlying maxim in the 80s and 90s. Differences between men and women are analysed as an expression of a gender-based subculture which prepares diversely men and women through the agents of socialisation (the family, peers, at school, etc.). It is then coined the expression "cross-cultural communication". This tendency corresponds to the '*différence*' or '*cultural difference approach*'.

Thus, the difference between both tendencies lies in the fact that the dominance approach interprets interruption as a sign of power, whereas interruptions are observed according to the gender of the interlocutor in the difference approach. In general terms, men concentrate on interruptions within the usual conditions of the conversational flow, whereas interruptions, according to women, would be an aggressive token and, as a consequence, a personal attack.

Lastly, during the 1980s, men's and women's language was analysed regarding power (*power/deficit approach*). Interruptions in the doctor-patient interactions were examined. Due to the fact that interruptions were more frequently present in women's discourse rather than in men's discourse, the conclusion was quite inaccurate: women's language is intrinsically inferior and powerless.

4. Stereotypes

Generally speaking, stereotypes are hyperbolic, exaggerating generalisations of those traits that delimit the individuals' personality. Basically, stereotypes deal with physical details, but also with social and psychological traits.

Interestingly, stereotypes actually function in the society. It is amazing that such exaggerations as to say that all men are active, strong and energetic, and that women are just the opposite, paradoxically have a place in our belief system. It is a valid variable for gender demarcation. Stereotypes are then socially validated and proved as behaviourally apt to become a paradigm for appropriateness criteria. As a consequence, stereotypes are adaptable to the social circumstances.

It is worthy noting that the Real Academia Española's dictionary adds a curious nuance to the ones I have exposed above: the unchanged nature of stereotypes.

estereotipo. 1. m. Imagen o idea aceptada comúnmente por un grupo o sociedad con carácter inmutable.

Nevertheless, the idea that stereotypes do not change through time does not really fit the dynamic essence of society. For instance, let us take the example of a rather old-fashioned stereotype: women used to be the ones to be at home while men developed their professional careers. Nowadays, this stereotype should not be valid any more.

Taking into account both the Webster's Dictionary and the Cambridge Dictionary online definition of the term *'stereotype'* a cross-cultural difference sheds light to this social variable: whilst immutability is of a certain significance in the Spanish culture, fixation and social acceptability seem to be of main relevance in the English-speaking countries.

'a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with social meaning and held in common by members of a group.' (Webster's Dictionary)

'a fixed idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong.' (Cambridge Dictionary online)

5. The Harry Potter phenomenon

The unprecedented success of the Harry Potter series in the history of children's and juvenile literature has been a controversial topic among scholars. The literary character of the books has been questioned above all things. Zipes (2001) accurately coined the term *The Harry Potter Phenomenon*, since, according to him, these novels cannot be categorised as literature. One of the main tendencies available at this moment is that a wide and abundant marketing campaign has been launched. However, it seems unthinkable that both youngsters and adults wait anxious for the next Harry Potter book to come. The novel in English is read in all over the world even before the numerous translations are published. And, eventually, we cannot forget the arduous task by Rowling of reconciling different topics and symbols used in the fantastic literature from Celtic to Scottish traditions.

Furthermore, the Harry Potter phenomenon has relegated to a second place the playstation era in which youngsters nowadays live. The reading competence has been increased thanks to the vast length of the Potter novels. As a consequence, young readers are able to face books they never thought would read.

But it is precisely because of the feeling of disconnection with their social and cultural reality that becomes more appealing for the readers. Blake (2005) points to what he calls a retrovolutionary effect. That is, the hope in a post-modern society to return to a traditional world, forgetting the pda, the electronic mails, etc.

Eventually, Gupta (2003) affirms that the very success of the Harry Potter books lies in the reflection outside the books context, that is to say, young readers feel connected to the competitions when reading about the Quidditch game in the

books. They also feel able to read fluently and to comment on the exciting adventures Harry and his peers encounter in the novels. This is the Harry Potter phenomenon. A fantastic series translated to more than 47 languages of which 140 million copies have been sold worldwide.

6. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

The main aim of this paper is to examine the reflection or fracture of gender stereotypes in the first two Harry Potter books – *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997) and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1999). For that purpose I will begin with a narrow compilation of characters' descriptions which, in my opinion, can be a clear instance of the aspired aim.

6.1. *The Dursleys*

(1) 'Mr Dursley was the director of a firm called Grummings, which made drills.' (Rowling 1997: 7)

(2) 'Mrs Dursley was thin and blonde and had nearly twice the usual amount of neck, which came in very useful as she spent so much of her time craning over garden fences, spying on the neighbours.' (Rowling 1997: 7)

The description of the Dursleys by J.K. Rowling illustrates two of the most common and perpetuated stereotypes. We are told about Mr Dursley's occupation (1), firstly. The connected role would be that of the 'breadwinner'. Whereas Mrs Dursley's (2) physical details are talked about by means of adjectives also connected to gossiping. The connected role then would be the household chores.

(3) 'Mr Dursley hummed as he picked out his most boring tie for work and Mrs Dursley gossiped away happily as she wrestled a screaming Dudley into his high chair.

...At half past eight, Mr Dursley picked up his briefcase, pecked Mrs Dursley on the cheek...' (Rowling 1997: 8)

In the next page the description continues with an enumeration of the daily activities of Mrs Dursley (3). And, on the other hand, the professional career of Mr Dursley is again mentioned. It is worth noting the use of symbols usually connected to the masculine gender such as the tie and the briefcase.⁴

⁴ These symbols have been extracted from Turin's (1995) analysis on children's picturebooks.

Moreover, talkativeness is a recurrent trait of Mrs Dursley. It is described by means of adverbs such as 'away' – which adds a nuance of repetition and, as a consequence, of habit – and 'happily'. And, in addition to the stereotype of women being talkative and talking nonsense, Rowling informs about Mrs Dursley's secondary activity: to care for her son. Hence two of the most connected stereotypes to the feminine gender: idleness and care for others.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that the explicit reflection of stereotypes in a story for young readers implies a risk of consolidation for such a special audience, since youngsters are developing their social and personal identity. However, I do think that Rowling is establishing a clear contrast between the Muggles world – no magical beings – and the magic world of Hogwarts. As I mentioned earlier, it is a critical viewpoint of an archetypal society in which hierarchy plays a doubtful but fundamental role. To illustrate this aspect we can examine the contrast between the expressions 'boring tie' and 'gossiped away happily' used in the descriptions of the most stereotyped characters of the first volume. That is, men work – a really hard and boring activity – whilst women, on the contrary, stay at home as their private domain and live happily forever as traditional fairy tales have depicted women for ages.

Dudley Dursley, the grotesque cousin of Harry Potter, contains some of the illustrated above stereotypes as we can see in the following example: (4) '...playing a computer game with his father, being hugged and kissed by his mother...' (Rowling 1997: 19)

This example also demonstrates that there are two connected roles with stereotypes, those of fatherhood and motherhood. Mothers are relegated to the caring of others and, therefore, are associated to the affective and protective pattern of human beings. In contrast, fatherhood refers to the fun side of life and, nowadays, to technology. Literature frequently uses a clear-cut distinction between masculine and feminine gender in terms of aptitudes. That is to say, women are usually found in the emotional arena and are responsible of the acquisition of language and, as a consequence, connected to the reading competence. The masculine gender, on the other hand, stand out from women for being naturally able to solve spatial conflicts, hence men's resolve at managing instruments.

And last but not least, for the purpose of examining another aspect associated to the masculine gender from a stereotype-based perspective, I will briefly compile a few examples:

- (5) 'Dudley's favourite sport: Harry-hunting' (Rowling 1997: 28)
- (6) 'Smelting boys'--> 'They also carried knobbly sticks, used for hitting each other while the teachers weren't looking. This was supposed to be good training for later life. (Rowling 1997: 29)
- (7) 'Get the post, Dudley', said Uncle Vernon from behind the paper. --Make Harry get it. -- Get the post, Harry. -- Make Dudley get it. --Poke him with your Smeltings stick, Dudley.' (Rowling 1997: 29-30)

Consequently, Rowling adds a different nuance to this representation in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, since the promotion of an aggressive behaviour in social contexts such as the household is used by the author as a critical tool for the narrative stream. The critical aspect is observed in the use of a humorous archetypal character - the caricatured Dudley - and the extension to another prototypical context - the school - by means of the 'Smelting boys' group .

6.2. Hermione

Hermione, the female form of Hermes, messenger of the gods, is represented in the Greek tragedy as the daughter of Helen of Troy and Menelaus, King of Sparta. In the classical and contemporary literature the name of Hermione has been written in the Bible, the Greek texts such as Andromache and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. In the XXth century D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, (1919) and Hilda Doolittle's *HERmione* (1981) put emphasis on the psychological insight of the character. Thus, Hermione is built as a resolve woman whose intellectual ability out of the ordinary allows her to seek for knowledge in every act. Rowling's Hermione seems to be provided with an intertextual nature, then. Therefore, Hermione is the name of a powerful and strong female character.

After the introductory description of the character above, I will examine Hermione in the narrative flow. First of all, Hermione is firstly described as accompanied by Neville. Neville has lost his toad and Hermione is helping him to find it. Interestingly, Hermione is introduced to the narration in the context of help to others. It is an anticipation of the connection with maternity. It is worth mentioning at this point that feminine language is associated to the affective and interpersonal use of the language. In contrast, referential and informative aspects of the language

would be mainly allocated to men. It is generalised that women's language is oriented towards solidarity. Nevertheless, in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone* Hermione shows this interpersonal attitude towards her peers but the same happens with Harry, who appears to be interested in the well-being of others.

In relation to physical details, and before Hermione introduces herself, we are told that she has got '*a bossy sort of voice, lots of bushy brown hair and rather large front teeth.*' Bossy is translated both into Spanish and Catalan containing the same nuances. However, in the Catalan translation Hermione's appearance is described in other terms: "mousy teeth". This expression seems to anticipate the cultivated Hermione that Rowling extensively elaborates through the pages.

Regarding the pragmatic use of language, in the first speech of Hermione some common characteristics can be observed. The reiterative use of hedges - question tags such as '*is it?*', '*are you?*'; clarifying expressions such as '*I mean*'; others such as '*of course*', '*you know*' and '*by the way*'; fast speech ('*She said all this very fast.*') in contrast with the characteristic dropping of Ron and Harry ('*Course*' for '*of course*', '*Said*' for '*It is said*', '*Wish*' for '*I wish*').

Later in the book, the fast speech connected with Hermione is repeatedly described, although nobody is talking except for her. She is also said to be whispering. Thus, the gender stereotype of whispering in relation to women is firstly introduced: '*No one was talking much except Hermione Granger, who was whispering very fast about all the spells she'd learnt [...]*' (Rowling 1997: 86).

To this end, I will revisit Trudgill's *Sociolinguistics* (1988) in which Trudgill analyses gender differences from a sociolinguistic perspective. Trudgill concludes that women are more oriented to the social status language conveys. Women would be expected to use standard linguistic forms much more frequently than men do. Hence the characteristic dropping associated to men. However, in my opinion, in the first two Harry Potter novels there is no stereotyped use of the language in this sense. Hermione's know-it-all image is clearly reflected in many aspects of Rowling's description of the character. And, to this end, the use of this metaphor is a sort of stylistic manner adopted by the author and not so a gender difference in itself.

Another linguistic aspect related to gender differences, qualitatively speaking, would be the use of terms connected with expectations and hopes, that is, what

could be expressed as “emotional language”: i.e. ‘hope’, ‘expect’, ‘goodness!’, also by means of intensifiers such as ‘ever so pleased’. Words are sometimes italicised for emphasis. Eventually, the use of emotional language conveys a certain association to the affective function of women and, therefore, seems to be a gender stereotype.

Here, I will observe what is said about Hermione’s character: ‘she was such a bossy know-it-all’ (p. 121); ‘Harry couldn’t believe anyone could be so interfering’ (Rowling 1997: 115); ‘said Hermione, rather bravely, Harry and Ron thought’ (Rowling 1997: 194). At the very beginning, Hermione appears to be a threat to the growing friendship between Harry and Ron, but, shortly afterwards – Hermione’s worth recognised – Hermione’s character becomes principal in the trio. Each of them possesses an aptitude to overcome the difficulties they encounter throughout the pages.

On the other hand, it is also worth noting what the character tells about herself: ‘Of course not’ said Hermione briskly. ‘How do you think you’d get to the Stone without us? I’d better go and look through my books, there might be something useful...’ (Rowling 1997: 197). Hermione shows a great determination to act. She is willing to participate in the adventures Hogwarts’ daily life conveys, and she is conscious of being the mind without which the happy ending of these adventures would not be such a success.

To sum up, Rowling could have made a mere subversion of roles, that is, she could have given Hermione an active and strong role and, by contrast, Harry a passive and observer nature. However, Harry plays an active role at times while Hermione just thinks and passively observes the best conditions of the situation, and, on the contrary, Hermione acts at times while Harry states what should be done. Thus, Rowling consciously provides the audience with two different approaches of gender and, therefore, invites readers to question socially imposed models of behaviour.

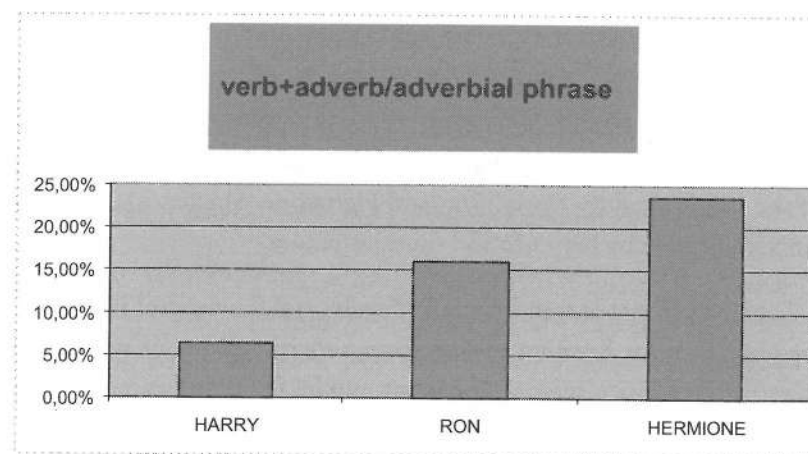
7. Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

Regarding the second novel, I will briefly refer to the qualification of the characters by observing the linguistic constructions of the main characters.

The omniscient narrator qualifies characters by means of adjectives –verb constructions: verb + adverb/adverb phrase – as for example: regarding Harry Potter: ‘burst out angrily’, ‘said desperately’, ‘whispered urgently’; Ron Weasley: ‘sighed happily’, ‘said Ron sleepily’, ‘said Ron in exasperation’; and Hermione Granger: ‘said

Hermione miserably’, ‘said Hermione with a small voice, ‘with a bossy sort of voice’. For a graphic image of the results see the graph below.

In relation to the characters’ language use, the same patterns employed by Rowling in the first Harry Potter novel are present in the Chamber of Secrets book: Hermione uses linguistic hedges and tags i.e. ‘is it?’, ‘are you?’, ‘of course’, ‘you know’, ‘by the way’, ‘I mean’, etc; both Harry and Ron reiteratively make use of droppings: i.e. ‘Wish’, ‘Said’, ‘Course’, and so on; and Mrs Weasley repeats ‘dear’ over and over.



Regarding lexical verbs, I have randomly chosen two chapters in the Chamber of Secrets book and observed some of the verbal constructions used in the speech and descriptions of 3 characters – Harry, Hermione and Mrs Weasley. See some examples in the chart below.

Harry	Hermione	Mrs Weasley
creeping to the window	shriek	Shout
Pushing it up	squeak	say in a deadly whisper / snap
Climbed onto the window	wail	Shriek
dashed around his room	squealed	cooking breakfast
moved back	whimper	to call us for breakfast
snatched up Hedwig’s cage	raised a trembling hand	was clattering around
passed it out to Ron	flushing furiously	swelled like a bullfrog

backed away	said Hermione sceptically	said Mrs Weasley, starting to clear the table
Listened anxiously	said Hermione cautiously	kept patting her hair

In sum, Harry's speeches are mainly developed by activity verbs, whereas both Hermione and Mrs Weasley are relegated to hysteria-related verbs. Finally, Mrs Weasley's language clearly belongs to the household ambit.

8. Conclusions

Due to the fact that the reflection of stereotypes is present in the two Harry Potter novels examined and this is a potential risk for stereotypes to become reinforced in a young audience, I have devoted a brief part of my analysis to deduce from the reading whether a fracture of stereotypes is also represented in the books. Surprisingly, there is a fracture of stereotypical concepts regarding the role subversion developed in the Hermione's character. She is represented as the reasoning alma mater of the trio formed by Harry, Ron and Hermione. She has a problem solving role mainly observable by her logic and cautious nature.

The underlying contrast between Muggles and the magical Hogwarts seems to be used as a tool for Rowling to introduce a social critique of stereotypes. Mrs Dursley and Mrs Weasley serve as a counter-model for those women who aim at departing from a traditional view of women as slaves of the household ambit. Mr Dursley is the breadwinner par excellence. He is clearly oriented to his professional career – as most men do – and no other inconveniences, whether magical or real, may enter his life. Rowling seems to have (un)consciously described the surface of two different worlds with the objective of representing reality as it is: stereotypes are present in our society though they can be relegated to a secondary role. Perhaps Rowling's intention was to consider children's literature as a prolific field for introducing sociological aspects and, as a consequence, her unconfessed need to be considered a quality-literature author.

In brief, the role subversion of the characters in the novels and the potential dual nature – active/passive – of the Harry/Hermione duo are intended to question behavioural models socially validated. May J. K. Rowling be providing the audience with a conception of the two characters as interchangeable and, therefore, possessing the same heroic qualities?

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LA CONDESA DE PARDO BAZÁN
Y LA LECTURA INFANTIL Y/O JUVENIL

Araceli Herrero Figueroa

Universidad de Santiago de Compostela

aracelih@lugo.usc.es

Resumen

La edición actual con vistas a la lectura infanto-juvenil de textos de Emilia Pardo Bazán suscita toda una serie de interrogantes sobre qué lector solicitan o cuál es su horizonte de recepción. Nuestro estudio asume y considera una serie de textos que sí pueden considerarse dentro del sistema LIJ, y a la par desarrollamos la hipótesis de la ambivalencia de otros textos del *corpus* pardobazaniano que, desde luego, justifican las modernas ediciones juveniles de sus relatos. Y dado que muy excepcionalmente se cita a la escritora coruñesa en las Historias de la Literatura Infantil y/o Juvenil Hispánica, concluimos solicitando su consideración.

Palabras clave: lectura, recepción, ambivalencia textual.

Abstract

The countess of Pardo Bazán and children's and/ or youngsters readers: The present edition of Emilia Pardo Bazán texts to be read by children and youngsters gives rise to the question about what type or reader wants to read these texts or which are his/her receptive abilities. In my study I have selected a series of texts, which can