An SFL approach to gender ideology in the sentence examples in the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary

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Abstract
This study concerns the gender ideology reflected by dictionary examples. It mainly used the transitivity and interpersonal systems in Systemic Functional Linguistics to analyze the gender discourse in the seventh edition of the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD7). The analysis reveals certain differences between the transitivity patterns and interpersonal meaning of female- and male-related sentence examples from the A-B sections of CCD7. Women's experiences are mostly confined to themselves and their adjacent environment. Their actions are often self-directed, seldom affecting other participants or the environment. In contrast, men are usually portrayed as the typical social men, active social participants, and shapers of the environment, whose actions often bring concrete changes to other participants or to the environment. The differences between transitivity patterns and interpersonal meaning construct men as valuable social members while overlooking the due value of women in the social world.

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1. Introduction

Sentence examples serve a multifold purpose in dictionaries (Martínez de Sousa, 1995; Porto Dapena, 2002; Garriga Escribano, 2003; Svensén, 2009; Xu et al., 2012). Firstly, they exemplify the usage of a headword. They show, in a concrete manner, how a headword functions in a given syntactic and situational context. Secondly, as important carriers of cultural information, they enrich a dictionary both linguistically and culturally. Thirdly, sentence examples serve as the record of human experience. Since they are either clauses or clause complexes, they are known to be the representations of human experience. It is for these reasons that sentence examples have entered the vision of lexicographic studies with a focus on the cultural side of dictionaries (Huang, 2001; Szende, 1999; Yong and Peng, 2015).

Gender is an important aspect of cultural ideology in dictionaries, and gender ideology reflected in sentence examples has long been explored by researchers. Nilsen (1972) found that sentence examples often portray men in respect of their activities and intellect, whereas women's representations are usually related to their looks and featured by trivial matters or negative connotations. Gershuny (1974:167) claimed that illustrative examples in the Random House Dictionary of the English Language tend to “repeat stereotyped semantic associations for various masculine and feminine gender words”. Smith (1985) argued that by limiting women to roles in affective and domestic settings, sentence examples reflect the

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social stereotyping of women Whitcut (1984), Kaye (1989) and Hidalgo-Tenorio (2000) also noticed that invented examples differ greatly in regard to the kinds of activities in which male and female actors are seen to be engaged. Those studies are quite revealing about the gender ideology reflected by dictionary examples, and have rightly related the study of examples to the activities in which men and women are engaged. However, previous studies lack the categories for a description at the clause level, thus restricting the levels of meaning uncovered by their analysis. Moreover, most previous studies focus on English or other European languages, and the sexist semantics in Chinese dictionaries has rarely been studied.

Dictionaries “do not exist in a vacuum, but are produced and used in contexts that can vary considerably across space and over time” (Hartmann, 2001: 4). Thus dictionaries can be considered as “text in context” (van Dijk, 1997:3), the general concept on which definitions of discourse are based. As important ideological products, they constitute an indispensable link in the process of social interaction. Within critical lexicography, numerous scholars have studied dictionaries as discourse, including Dubois (1970), Beaujot (1989), Benson (2001), Hornscheidt (2008) and Chen (2016). Dictionary examples constitute a special genre of discourse, and the discourse approach “will deepen our understanding of the general factors which affect dictionary-making” (Xu, 2009:210).

This study adopts mainly the transitivity and interpersonal systems within SFL to show the experiential and interpersonal aspects of different genders displayed in the sentence examples in the seventh edition of the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD7) (Jiang et al., 2016). Though we wished to cover LGTBI collective, but in CCD7, there are only two genders to study: the female and the male. Genders other than the two have been excluded from the dictionary.

The transitivity system is defined as “the grammar of the clause”, and as “the grammatical system of experience” (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:170). As the cornerstone of the semantic organization of experience, it subsumes all experiential functions relevant to the grammar of the clause. SFL sees transitivity as “a mode of action […] of imposing order on the endless variation and flow of events” (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004:170). It centres on how people construe reality and convey experience differently through employing a wide range of syntactic structures and specific vocabulary choices. Transitivity is specifically associated with the ideational function of language. In our study, transitivity analysis will help to show how sentence examples express a particular range of experiential meaning. Since the ideational meaning is inextricably connected with the interpersonal meaning in SFL, our study also inevitably concerns the interpersonal system, with special emphasis on the evaluative meaning. Interpersonal analysis will show how those ranges of ideational meaning serve to construct each gender in a positive or negative way.

Transitivity has long been employed as a basis for determining the way in which social ideology is represented, and it is common to combine transitivity analysis with interpersonal analysis. Since the very early application of transitivity in Halliday's paper (1971) on William Golding's The Inheritors, transitivity analysis has been extended to a wide range of text types. In literature, O’Halloran (2007) and Nguyen (2012) studied how transitivity choices contribute to the shaping of characters and the development of plot (Bartley and Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2015). In media discourse, Clark (1992) and Adampa (1999) showed how news items portray victims and perpetrators of crimes of violence differently. In education, Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2012) “the linguistic representation of males and females in EFL textbooks” (Bartley and Hidalgo-Tenorio, 2015:19). These studies show that transitivity analysis can uncover a level of meaning embodied in clauses, and can serve as the basis for the study of interpersonal meaning and ideology at large. However, previous studies applying the transitivity system focused more on traditional discourses such as literary texts, news reports and textbooks, while dictionary examples constitute a special type of discourse. As “hive texts” (Hoey, 1996), examples are scattered throughout a dictionary, part of the reason why transitivity analysis has rarely been used to analyze them. The ideational and interpersonal meaning embodied in dictionary examples has been little studied and thus merits our attention.

This study aims to answer the following two questions:

1) What are the transitivity patterns and interpersonal meaning for females and males, respectively, in sentence examples in CCD7?
2) What gender ideologies are reflected by the transitivity patterns and interpersonal meaning for females and males?
What effects do they have in the construction of each gender?

2. Data and methodology

The data consist of sentence examples from the seventh edition of the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (CCD7). CCD is extremely influential in China and has been serving as a model for many other Chinese dictionaries (Yu et al., 2014:291). It is the first dictionary to set the standards for the Chinese language and later dictionaries “merely make amendments along the path it opens up” (Yu et al., 2014:203). The first edition came out in 1978, and the seventh edition
in 2016. Since its publication, most medium and small-sized dictionaries in China have been compiled using CCD as their model. And due to the lack of qualified Chinese dictionaries on the market, it also serves as a learners’ dictionary for L2 Chinese learners (Zhao, 2015). Most of the examples in CCD were coined by the compilers (Yu et al., 2014).

The criteria for selecting those sentence examples is that they contain gender-related terms, either gender pronouns such as 他 (‘ta’, he) and 她 (‘ta’, she), or other gender nouns, such as 小伙子 (‘xiaohuoz’, young fellow), 爷爷 (‘yeye’, grandpa), 姑娘 (‘guniang’, girl), and 妈妈 (‘mama’, mum). Sentences including 他们 (‘tamen’, they) will not be included, since this pronoun usually refers to both genders in the Chinese grammar. For our research to be manageable, an analysis was carried out of all the gender-related sentence examples from the A to B sections in CCD7. The number of examples for females and males from the A to B sections is 30 and 250 respectively. To our knowledge, these figures are representative of the whole dictionary. Our investigation shows that in the whole dictionary, the ratio of female- and male-related sentence examples is roughly 1:8, suggesting that for every female-related example, there will be approximately eight male-related examples. Besides, with a smaller sample, we do not need to pick out examples randomly, and can conduct an exhaustive and in-depth analysis of them.

Our analysis focuses on the transitivity patterns and interpersonal meaning. SFL typically identifies six types of processes: material, mental, verbal, relational, behavioural and existential. Material process describes actions and events in the world, both abstract and concrete. Mental process is a process of perception, cognition and affection. Relational process describes notions such as possession, equivalence, and attribute. Verbal process is a process of communication situated in between mental and relational processes. Behavioural process is concerned with physiological and psychological behaviour. Existential process describes the fact that something exists or happens (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The transitivity analysis involves the participants in the process, various attributes and circumstances of the process (Halliday, 1967:38). There have been controversies about the application of transitivity analysis to the Chinese language, and different categorizations have been put forward (He et al., 2017). This study adopted Halliday’s original categorization, and all the sentences were coded following the descriptions above. Since the experiential meaning and the interpersonal meaning are inextricably connected to each other, for some examples, interpersonal analysis was conducted on the basis of transitivity analysis.

The analysis was carried out in two steps.

Step 1: divide the sentence examples into two groups, with Group 1 containing female characters, and Group 2, male characters.
Step 2: analyze the transitivity patterns of each group. Specify the participant roles, process types and circumstances of each group; calculate the relevant ratios of each process type; and compare the similarities and differences between the two groups. For most of the examples, interpersonal analysis was also done alongside, to determine whether they have positive or negative effects in the construction of gender.

3. Results and discussion

We first considered the range of transitivity patterns and their distribution in female-related sentence examples, with special attention to the extent of how those examples might construct a positive or negative image of women (section 3.1). Then we proceeded to the transitivity patterns and their distribution in male-related sentences. The means by which masculinity is portrayed and constructed within the social context merits our attention (section 3.2). During the course of analysis, we compared the findings for females and males, and discussed the similarities and differences between them.

Fig. 1 shows the overall distribution of process types of female- and male-related sentences. It demonstrates that for both genders, material clauses constitute the major type, with variations and contrasts in other process types. There is a sharp contrast between the total number of processes between females and males, reflecting an imbalance in the amount of attention given to different genders.

We ran a Chi-square test to examine the relationship between gender and transitivity type. Considered together, no significant difference is found in the distribution of the six transitivity processes across the two genders ($\chi^2 = 0.763$, df = 5, $p > .05$). In other words, in each transitivity process type, there is a general tendency that the number of clauses for males predominates that of females (see Table 1).

3.1. Transitivity patterns and their distribution in female-related sentences

Table 2 shows the process types in female-related sentence examples. In the 30 examples containing female characters, we identified a total of 41 process types. The majority of the process types are Material (18) and Relational (14) ones. Mental (5), Behavioural (2) and Verbal (2) comprise the rest. No Existential processes were found.
Apart from 1 case, in which the gender of the participant is not specified, the material clauses all have a female person as a participant (either as Actor or Goal). The verbs demonstrating the material processes include 抱 ('bao', hold), 爱抚 ('aifu', caress), 梳理 ('shuli', comb), 安顿 ('andun', do/settle down), 去 ('qu', go), 开始 ('kaishi', begin), 走 ('zou', walk), 别 ('bie', turn), 参军 ('canjun', join the army), 邀请 ('yaoqing', invite) and 抓 ('zhua', grab). To adequately describe those processes, we have to consider Actor, Process type, Goal (if there is one) and Circumstance together.

Actor represents a special status in a clause. It is often, at the same time, theme and subject. The female figures which serve as Actor in the above sentences include 她 ('ta', she), 母亲 ('muqin', mother), 女儿 ('nü'er', daughter), 祖母 ('zumu', grandmother), 老妈妈 ('lao mama', the old lady), 我奶奶 ('wo nainai', my grandma), 这班姑娘 ('zhe ban guniang', these young women), etc. Apart from the pronoun 她 ('ta', she), a majority of the females are addressed by reference to their domestic roles (e.g. mother, grandma), or by reference to age (e.g. the old lady). When mother is Actor, the affected entities are often related to persons which are closest to them: the child in (1), her daughter's hair in (2), and her daughter's face in (8).

1. 母亲 抱着 孩子。
   muqin bao zhe haizi
   mother hold particle child
   ‘The mother is holding the child in her arms.’

2. 母亲 爱抚地 为 女儿 梳理 头发。
   muqin aifu de wei nü'er shuli toufa
   mother caress particle for daughter comb hair

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Table 1
Gender * Transitivity process cross tabulation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitivity process</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Existential</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Relational</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Process types in female-related sentence examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process types</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Relational</th>
<th>Behavioural</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Existential</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘The mother caressed and combed her daughter’s hair.’

(3) 妈妈 安顿 好 家里的 事情，又 赶去 上班。
mama andun hao jiaji de shiqing you ganqu shangban
‘After doing the housework, Mum went to work.’

All the processes have something to do with child-caring. There is one case (3) indicating the role of a working mother, but she goes to work only after making sure everything is OK at home. More often than not, there is no entity being affected by the female Actor other than herself, as in (4) and (5). In some cases, the entity affected is part of the Actor’s body, as in (6).

(4) 我 奶奶 去年 就 不在 了。
wo nainai qunian jiu buzai le
‘My grandma died last year.’

(5) 护士 放轻 脚步 闭气 走到 病人 床前。
hushi fangqiong jiaobu biqi zoudao bingren chuangqian
‘Holding her breath, the nurse walked softly to the patient’s bedside.’

(6) 她 把 头 别 了 过去。
ta ba tou bie le guoqu
‘She turned her head away.’

Material clauses often indicate actions in the physical world. The typical ones indicate concrete actions that bring about some changes in the physical world. In the examples above, women have actions, but the influence of their actions is rather restricted. Most of their actions are directed towards themselves or to the persons they take care of. The Scope of their action is limited, and the Circumstance of their actions is predominantly that of location and manner.

We further analyzed two examples which we think can best represent this type.

(7) 为了 减肥，她 每天 暴走 10 公里。
weile jianfei ta meitian baozou 10 gongli
‘She hikes for 10 kilometers each day to reduce weight.’

In (7), the choice of she instead of he as the subject as well as Actor of the sentence is peculiar in its own sense, since a great majority of the example sentences (about 80%) use a human pronoun he (‘ta’, he) as the subject. The use of she (‘ta’, she) as the subject is a marked linguistic choice, illustrating that (7) is typical of female behaviour. The Process is realized by the verb 暴走 (‘baozou’, hike), a physical movement which takes the Actor herself some distance away, but will not impinge on something or someone else. The Circumstance (purpose) indicates that she, the Actor, does it to change her physical feature: to be slimmer (see Table 3).

(8) is also quite typical.

(8) 母亲 慈爱地 抚摸 着 女儿 的 脸。
muqin aili an de fumo zhe nu'er de lian
‘The mother fondly caressed her daughter’s face.’

(8) represents a common pattern for female-related sentence examples. The Actor may vary, nevertheless, among different female roles of mother, grandmother, aunt, etc. There can be a transitive verb, 抚摸 (‘fumo’, caress), in this instance. And the Goal is a person closely related to them, often an offspring (see Table 4). But the action is more of a display of their affection, instead of one which brings concrete, recognizable changes in the physical world.

There are not many mental clauses in our sample, merely 5 out of 41. Of them, four clauses have the female participant as Sensor. The following shows a typical example.
Table 3
Transitivity pattern of (7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>She</th>
<th>hikes</th>
<th>for 10 kilometres (distance)</th>
<th>each day (frequency)</th>
<th>to reduce weight (purpose)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Circumstance</td>
<td>Circumstance</td>
<td>Circumstance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4
Transitivity pattern of (8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The mother</th>
<th>Fondly</th>
<th>caressed</th>
<th>her daughter's face</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Circumstance (manner)</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Goal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Transitivity pattern of (9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>She</th>
<th>disdains</th>
<th>that kind of affected singing style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensor</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Phenomenon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(9) 她 鄙弃 那种 矫揉造作 的 演唱 作风。
    ta biji nazhong jiaorouzaozuo de yanchang zuofeng
    ‘She disdains that kind of affected singing style.’

她 (‘ta’, she), as the Sensor in this mental clause (see Table 5), is depicted to be of a negative opinion of a particular singing style. This sentence is of positive value in the construction of the female image, which can be explained from two angles. First, she is no longer confined to the domestic role of mother or grandmother. She might be a professional singer or lover of music. Either role will depict an image of a highly intellectual, probably well-educated woman. Second, the mental process 鄙弃 (‘biji’, disdain) illustrates that such a woman is capable of discerning among different singing styles, and hence she is a woman with an attitude of her own, and with artistic literacy.

There are 14 relational clauses, of which 13 are relational-attributive and 1 relational-possessive. The attributes which are connected with women are many and varied, referring to the state of mind (anxious, full of nostalgia), psychological outlook (cheerful and merry, full of energy, full of love, piteous), looks (prettier), physical condition (seriously ill), intelligence (clever), and age (seventeen). In general, those attributes correspond to the conventional view of what constitutes femininity, featured by attention to their looks, feminine beauty, a touch of shyness and their love towards children.

(10) 她 穿上 这身 衣服, 显得 越发 标致 了。
    ta chuan shang zhe shen yifu xiande yuefa biaozhi le
    ‘She looks even prettier in that dress.’

(11) 孤儿 寡母, 令人 哀怜。
    gu'er guamu lingren ailian
    ‘No people are more piteous than orphans and widows.’

(12) 老太太 病 重, 眼看 不行 了。
    laotaitai bing zhong yankan buxing le
    ‘The old lady is seriously ill, and is dying.’
There are 2 behavioural clauses. In one of them, the female figure serves as the Behaver, who *choke on her sobs*, while in another, the woman is embarrassed by people who are staring at her.

Verbal processes are limited in number, namely 2 out of 41. This indicates that they occupy a peripheral position in the syntactic structure.

In summary, the transitivity patterns of female-related example sentences have some distinctive features. The majority types are material and relational clauses. In the material clauses, the actions of women often affect themselves or persons close to them, but do not bring considerable changes to the environment. In relational clauses, women are referred to as having typically feminine traits, such as love for children. In mental and behavioural clauses, women are depicted as easily affected by others and by the environment. Verbal processes often combine with other processes, showing that verbal acts of women are often accompanied by non-verbal acts. There are no existential clauses in our sample.

### 3.2. Transitivity patterns and their distribution in male-related sentences

From the 250 example sentences, we identified 392 clauses. Table 6 shows the number and ratio of various clause types for men.

Material clauses constitute the largest portion, namely 46.9% of the total. The ratio is slightly higher (3%) than that of the female. It was noticed that in female-related material process clauses, women are depicted as less likely to bring concrete changes to the environment. In contrast, the material processes related to men, particularly the actions of men, differ greatly from those of women in at least two aspects. First, whereas women's actions are limited in their number and types, men are connected with a huge variety of acts. While women are more or less confined to instinctive behaviours such as caressing and touching, men are capable of a greater variety of actions: actions requiring physical strength, e.g. 扛 ('kang', carry), 扔 ('rong', throw), 跳 ('tiao', jump) and 跑 ('pao', run); actions requiring highly refined intelligence, e.g. 读 ('du', read), 写 ('xie', write), 画 ('hua', draw) and 演 ('yan', act); actions requiring administrative ability, e.g. 管理 ('guanli', manage), 组织 ('zuzhi', organize) and 指挥 ('zhihui', direct); and actions requiring altruism, e.g. 救 ('jiu',
save). Those actions demonstrate the ability level and the social sphere of men. In other words, men are described as a much more versatile human being, capable of participating in almost all sorts of social activities. In short, they are portrayed as social beings. Second, men's actions are more likely to produce results, bringing noticeable changes to the goal of their actions, or to other entities in the environment. Material clauses, according to Halliday, describe mainly the goings-on and doings in the physical world. If a material clause involves a person, the person is either the agent affecting the environment, or is the entity affected by the environment. Unlike women, whose actions rarely have an impact on the environment, men's actions are represented as a shaping force for the environment, as in the following example.

(19) 他一绷，就把大石头举过了头顶。

he tighten muscle immediately take big rock lift over particle head

‘He tightened his muscle and lifted the big rock over his head.’

(19) is indicative in various ways (see Table 7). Firstly, it reflects the popular myth that men are strong and that they should be strong. Strength is often considered the foremost symbol of masculinity. This emphasis on physical strength of men can be explained perhaps from the sociological perspective. In primitive times, when survival depends on one's ability to lift, run or chase animals, strength must be a favourable trait. In medieval times, strong men often excel in farming, hunting, building and fighting. To this day, men with physical strength are still quite valued, as they are more likely to win out in games, contests, etc. Men without strength are often described using derogatory terms such as weak, meek, timid, powerless, etc. In Chinese, men without strength are often referred to as “incapable of catching chicken” and serve as objects of mockery. The society as a whole tends to value strength in men, viewing it as the symbol of masculine power. Secondly, it shows that men are active shapers of the environment. With the man's moves, something in the environment has changed. The rock was somewhere else before his act, but now the rock is over his head, and it is his act of lifting that brings about that change. With this strength, he is able to do many other things. A typical pattern is an indication of similar patterns, and points out what is more likely in a given circumstance. It shows what is more probable for the subject (Halliday, 1971:353). In this case, other possible sentences may include He pushed the car aside. / He cut the tree down., etc. Actually, it is the case with the male-related examples of CCD7. But such a pattern seldom occurs in female-related examples.

(20) 他拿起镰刀比量了比量，就要动手割麦子。

he take sickle measure going to start cut wheat

‘After measuring up with the sickle, he set about reaping the wheat.’

(21) 这个收音机让他摆划好了。

this quantifier radio passive voice he repair well particle

‘This radio works well after he repaired it.’

While (19) displays a man of physical power using his bare hands, (20) depicts a man equipped with a tool – the sickle for reaping the wheat. From his action of “measuring up with the sickle”, we can tell that he is skilled in farm work and acquainted with his tool. What is more, he is engaged in an activity in the social production sector, providing food for the society. This social productive activity locates the man in the social world, indicating that he contributes to the society through his acts. In this sense, this pattern adds value to the image of men as a whole. (21) is similar to (19) in that something in the environment changes because of the man's action. It differs from (19) in that the action requires not strength, but professional knowledge, skills and dexterity. To fix a radio requires skills and knowledge in more than one domain of human cognitions. It requires knowledge in semi-conductor chips, circuit boards and radio technology as well as manual dexterity and accuracy. The man in question possesses all those positive qualities, because the radio is fixed through his actions. His actions have brought about positive changes to some other entity in the environment.
The following is another example which contains both behavioural and material processes.

(22) 他不顾一切，跳到河里把孩子救了。

He disregarded all jump into river get child save particle up.

‘Completely disregarding his own safety, he jumped into the river and saved the child.’

(22) describes an act of goodwill. It shows a man who is not only capable of “jumping into the river”, but also philanthropic and noble, because “he saved the child” while “completely disregarding his own safety”. The man’s act is considered heroic in almost any culture. By describing men as “capable and noble”, (22) contributes to the positive image of men.

Actions in the above sentences are all concrete and specific, requiring strength, intelligence or courage. Moreover, those actions all produce positive results. In other words, the material processes of men usually have an impact on the environment in which they take place: in (19), the rock was lifted; in (20), the wheat was about to be cut down; in (21), the radio was fixed; and in (22), the child was saved. Actions, particularly actions with a usually positive impact on the environment, characterize the description of the male. The fact that the actions of men serve as a shaping force of the environment, together with the fact those actions require strength and intelligence, help to construct men in active and progressive roles.

Mental clauses take up 15.6% of the total. The mental process of men shows a somewhat different tendency from women. While women are usually connected with emotive actions such as love, hate or detest, men’s mental actions have more to do with cognition and thoughtful decisions, showing a strong will power.

(23) 不论困难有多大，他都不气馁。

However difficulty have how great he all never lose heart.

‘However great the difficulties, he never loses heart.’

(24) 他不论考虑什么问题，总是把集体利益放在第一

He whatever consider what question always get collective interest put the first place.

‘He always puts the collective interests first no matter what is on his mind.’

(23) portrays a man who, in the face of difficulties, orients himself towards solving the problem. The man sets out to accomplish a challenging task, which may require energy, intelligence, skills and patience, and he is persistent and “never loses heart”. That sentence shows a man of fortitude and perseverance, and helps to construct men in a positive manner.

(24) is a reflection of one aspect of the socialistic ideology in the dictionary, which is the contention between collective and personal interests. If the two kinds of interests are in conflict with each other, individuals are encouraged to sacrifice their personal interest for the greater good. This hierarchy of interests is not imposed on individuals by law, but the advocacy of collective over individual interest is often realized through education, in the form of didactic discourses such as textbooks and dictionaries. In (24), the man’s mental act concerns not himself, but something bigger than himself, namely the collective well-being of the community. In this way, his mental process transcends above himself or any other personal matters, and becomes connected to the society. It implies that he is not only a capable member of the society, but also a member willingly contributing to the society. That depiction adds to his value as a social being and is thus of positive value in the construction of men.
Relational clauses account for a quarter of the total. Of them, approximately 80% are relational attributive clauses. The attributes range from physical features such as height, age and appearance, to moral characters such as integrity and patience. A majority of the attributes are positive, while others are more or less neutral, with a few exceptions of negative attributes.

(25) 他为人热情，正直，深受大家的爱重。

The above reference sign a man in a positive light, from various angles, such as morality, verbal art and writing ability, integrity and expertise, character, and performance art. Those positive characteristics are ascribed to the contemporary "man", in an all-around way. (25) and (26) are straightforward descriptions of a man's moral character.
and level of expertise. In (25), the man is loved and respected for his “warm-heartedness and integrity”. In (26), the man tops in integrity and talent in his work unit. Besides, those men are projected as possessing those qualities not as solitary individuals, but as valuable members of the society. Their qualities are manifested and recognized by the community in which they live and work. It is an obvious fact that their characters are tested in the public sphere and acknowledged by the public. In (28) through (31), the attributes are ascribed to men's creations, celebrating men's excellence in writing, calligraphy and performance. Nonetheless, they contribute to the construction of man in a positive way. (32) indicates that the man has excellent farming skill, which is also positive.

But not all male-related example sentences are positive. The following sentences, for example, convey a negative image of men from the perspective of age.

(33) 他 都 快 四十 岁 了, 还 没 成 家。
    ta doukuai sishi sui le hai mei chengjia
    ‘He's almost forty age particle still not get married
    ‘He's turning forty and hasn't got married yet.’

(34) 他 是 奔 六十 的 人 了。
    ta shi ben liushi de ren le
    he be turning sixty 's person particle
    ‘He is getting on for 60.’

(33) contains an attributive clause indicating the man's age. Interestingly, the man's age is related to the fact that he is still single, reflecting a popular notion that men should marry at a proper age. Deviation from the marriage norm will be considered more or less abnormal. Hence “forty” implies that the man in question should not be single anymore. Many reasons may account for one's failure to sustain a relationship and establish a family, but it is not considered a desirable condition, as that sentence suggests. In (34), the subject is actually in his fifties, possibly well into his fifties. Because 60 is normally considered the dividing line between the middle and old age, to be near sixty means that the man will soon become a senior citizen. Being old is not considered a desirable quality in a man either. This is understandable against the aforementioned popular notion that man should be strong, because strength diminishes as a person ages. Nevertheless, males are not considered as declining much in value as they get on age, in the way women devalue with age since their beauty is declining.

Being senior in China is not just a matter of age; it is more about a person's position in the family clan, as we can see in the following examples.

(35) 论 辈分, 我 是 他 叔叔。
    lun beifen wo shi ta shushu
    by virtue of generation I be his uncle
    ‘I am his uncle by virtue of seniority.’

(36) 他 年 纪 比 我 小, 辈 分 比 我 大。
    ta nianji bi wo xiao beifen bi wo da
    his age compare I younger generation compare I senior
    ‘Though younger than I, he is my senior within the family generational hierarchy.’

(37) 他 虽 然 年 纪 轻, 辈 数 小, 但 在 村 里 很 有 威 倪。
    ta suiran nianji qing beishur xiao dan zai cunli hen
    you weixin
    he although age younger generation lower but in village very much
    have prestige
    ‘Although young in age and low within the family hierarchy, he enjoys high prestige in the village.’

Seniority also refers to one's position according to the family tree of a certain clan. The dictionary examples reflect that aspect of Chinese traditional culture. In (37), seniority in the family is just one attribute of the subject, and the other more important attribute for him is that he is prestigious as a person.
Besides, men are often portrayed in historical contexts. (38) Zheng Chenggong 不愧 为 一 位 民族 英雄。Zheng Chenggong proved to be a national hero. ’

(39) 在 词 的 发展 史 上， 苏轼 和 辛弃疾 都是 别开生面 的 大家。zai ci de fazhan shi shang Su Shi he Xin Qiji dou shi biekaishengmian de dajia
In ci poetry ’s development history up Su Shi and Xin Qiji both be great of master ‘Su Shi and Xin Qiji were both great masters that opened new vistas in the history of ci Poetry.’

The above two clauses, which are token-value relational clauses, mention three names: Zheng Chenggong, Su Shi and Xin Qiji. The first one, Zheng Chenggong, is a Chinese national hero who drove away the Dutch. Both Su Shi and Xin Qiji are literary masters in the Song dynasty. And whether as a national hero or a master of poetry, they are of positive influence in the construction of the male gender.

(40) 他 原来 是 医生， 还是 让 他 干 老 本行 吧。ta yuanlai shi yisheng hai shi rang ta gan lao benhang ba
he originally be doctor still let him work old trade particle ‘Let him take up his old job as a doctor.’

A number of relational sentences concern occupations, typically in the pattern of “A is B”. While A is a man, B covers a variety of occupations, such as farmer, writer, reporter, teacher, director and doctor. Reference to occupation depicts men with expertise and social participation, adding to their social competitiveness.

4. Conclusion

To recapitulate, the transitivity patterns and interpersonal aspects of female- and male-related sentence examples from CCD7 display differentiating features between the two genders.

Women are often constructed in peripheral and domestic roles, as daughter, mother or grandmother. Their experiences are mostly restricted to themselves and their adjacent environment. When they act, their actions rarely bring noticeable changes to other participants or to the environment. Women are described as sensitive, loving and emotional, particularly preoccupied with familial, marital and domestic matters. On the other hand, men are mostly constructed in their central and social roles, as the prototypical adult men. Their experience shows that they are active participants of the process, involving the environment and others. When they act, their actions often bring concrete changes to other participants or to the environment. Men’s mental processes usually involve some social undertakings and thus are not limited to emotional reactions. Men are described as strong in physical strength, versatile in skills and noble in their actions. In other words, men are represented as valuable, active social members.

Transitivity patterns of dictionary examples are inevitably shaped by our previous experience, and have the potential to shape our future experience. The examples for women and men point to different social roles. Those social roles are mediated through the use of language, and they may in turn contribute to the establishment and maintaining of power relations and social hierarchies in the society. The differences concerning the construction of genders in CCD7 do not mean that the dictionary compilers construct the images of men and women consciously and in a systemic way, but the effect of the differences is systemic and seems to be out of negligence. In other words, dictionary compilers might be unconscious of the collective, accumulative effect of isolated, individual decisions that are made in the compilation process. As a literate writing activity, dictionary making “is inevitably bound up with subjectivity, re-representation, objectivity and ideology” (Chen, 2015:312). Our findings also echo the findings of research conducted in English lexicography and many other European languages in respect of sexism, and complement similar findings in Chinese lexicography regarding entry selection and definition.

This study has rich implications for dictionary compilation regarding the treatment of sentence examples. SFL theories prove to be powerful explanatory frameworks and they may also serve as guiding tools in sorting out different levels of meaning in the analysis of examples. Lexicographers who are familiar with SFL theories will be able to ask questions like:
Who are the normal Agents of example sentences? Who are the normal Patients? Can we strike a rough balance between the clause roles occupied by men and women? Is there a danger of stereotyping in portraying one particular gender involved too frequently in the same type of activities? Transitivity and interpersonal analysis provides a perspective through which dictionary compilers can better construct meaning with the language resources they have. Besides, this study holds certain value for dictionary criticism, in that dictionary critics can examine more layers of meaning in light of SFL theories, regarding various issues such as gender, race and religion, and draw insightful conclusions from their observations in this new light.

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