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3.7. Gender Differences In Color Term Use In Fashion Magazines

Introduction

It is known that every person uses language differently. The reason why a language varies significantly from person to person lies in the set of one's characteristic features of speech. This phenomenon is called idiolect. The term refers to a set of individual features or patterns used by the speaker. However, not only our personality plays a role in shaping speech. Many other factors affect one's idiolect. One of the most significant of them is gender.

This research was conducted in the frames of a new field of linguistics — gender linguistics. Gender is a set of cultural characteristics, which determines social behaviour of men and women. Gender linguistics studies language cliches, language features and speech behaviour of communicants [Макшакова, с. 7]. Recently, more and more Russian linguists have shown interest in this field of linguistics. At the present moment, a lot of studies have been conducted on the topic of gender differences in language use.

Variations in speech can be seen on all language levels: grammar, pronunciation, syntax, vocabulary. This paper presents a comparative study of vocabulary used by men and women in their daily speech. Women are stereotypically known for being chatterboxes who use more expressional and emotional vocabulary. If this statement is true, then women will be expected to use more color terms in their language than men. Some scholars believe that color preferences depend on the gender of a person

[Al-Rasheed, p. 2]. Our research will cover gender differences in color use by males and females in fashion writing discourse.

This topic was chosen for several reasons. First, although a lot of studies on the topic of gender differences in language have been made, the topic is controversial and remains interesting to researchers. We have gone far with women's rights and gender equality but some stereotypes remain around gender differences and especially around women's behavior and language. Second, we believe that vocabulary used in fashion magazines represents fast-changing tendencies and current movements in language. Moreover, color terms are widely used in fashion texts that allow us to investigate what color terms male and female writers use to apply to both men and women.

Some scholars believe that women have specific language features that are different from men's features [Lakoff, p. 49]. Robin Lakoff was one of the first linguists to speak about women's language and language as a key to gender inequality, inspiring many different strategies of studying gender and language. Lakoff's influential work "Language and Woman's Place" introduces to the field of sociolinguistics many ideas about women's language that are now often commonplace. She pointed to two areas in which inequalities can be found: language used about women, such as the asymmetries between seemingly parallel terms like *master* and *mistress*, and language used by women, which places women in a double bind between being appropriately feminine and being fully human.

Robin Lakoff talks about "women's language" that has its features on all language levels, and one of these features is precise color naming [Ibid.]. Historically, women were not allowed to make important decisions in contrast to men who were expected to regulate things and not to talk much, thus, women were considered to talk about unimportant matters, and color discussion is one of them. Heather Arthur, Gail Johnson, and Adena Young conducted a study of gender differences in color use and found out that women tended to use more words to describe different hues than men [Arthur et al., p. 831].

Some scholars believe that gender is not something people are born with but something that people absorb over time while growing up [Arvidsson 2009, p. 20]. Sofia Arvidsson investigated whether fashion magazines "still describe women and men in a stereotypical manner" [Ibid.].

She concluded that adjectives (including color terms) had no clear difference in magazines addressing men and women. On the other hand, there are studies of gender and cultural differences in color preferences, which show evidence of both cultural and gender differences in hue preference [Al-Rasheed, p. 4]. Moreover, some findings prove that women use more basic color terms than men, it is also true about specific color terms which are used significantly less by males [Kasmiran, p. 40].

The purpose of the study is to investigate the differences in color terms use in fashion magazines for men and women. We hypothesized that writers use different color terms for male and female readers and the number of basic and specific color terms used by male writers is less than the number of the same terms used by female writers. It is supposed that there are more specific color terms in magazines for women than in the ones for men because women are assumed to use more terms for hues in their speech.

Method

The study involves analysis of color terms selected from fashion articles written for men and women in *Esquire* Magazine and *Vogue* Magazine, published online. During the research, both basic and specific color terms were gathered and examined. We have examined 16 articles: 8 from the women's magazine and 8 from the men's magazine. The choice of articles is determined by the search results by the keyword "color" on the websites of the magazines. Then, the first eight articles were selected for examination. The chosen articles were dated October and November 2021. All articles in *Vogue* Magazine were written by women, while the articles in *Esquire* Magazine were written by male writers. All the articles addressed topics of fashion trends, style, and beauty.

While reading the chosen articles, we picked out all the color and hue terms, which were used to describe clothing, hair colors, and objects. The chosen words were put on two tables. The first table (Table 1) gathers all the collected basic color terms: colors from *Esquire* Magazine are put in the left column and corresponding colors from *Vogue* Magazine — in the right. The total number of basic color terms in the men's magazine is 9, in women's — 3. Compound color terms and hue terms are put accordingly in the second table (Table 2). Specific color terms make up 16 units selected from *Esquire* and 23 units from *Vogue*. Then, the selected words were ana-

lyzed. We compared basic and specific color terms in both magazines and put them in a table where one color term in the men's magazine goes along with the same color term or similar hue term from the women's magazine.

Table 1. Basic color terms

	Basic color terms	
	<i>Esquire Magazine</i>	<i>Vogue Magazine</i>
1	Black	n/a
2	White	n/a
3	Green	green
4	Red	red
5	Yellow	yellow
6	Pink	n/a
7	Brown	n/a
8	Blue	n/a
9	Gray	n/a
	Total: 9 (45 %)	Total: 3 (29 %)

Table 2. Specific color terms

	Specific color terms	
	<i>Esquire Magazine</i>	<i>Vogue Magazine</i>
1	blush pink	tickled pink
	n/a	candy-floss pink
2	n/a	deep red
3	n/a	rich cranberry
4	Purple	n/a
	pale orange	rusty orange
	n/a	bright orange
5	Terracotta	n/a
6	n/a	copper
	n/a	bright copper
	n/a	bold copper

	Specific color terms	
	<i>Esquire Magazine</i>	<i>Vogue Magazine</i>
7	Navy	n/a
	true navy	n/a
8	golden khaki	n/a
9	n/a	neutral brown
10	natural black	n/a
11	natural white	n/a
12	Blonde	blonde
	platinum blonde	platinum blonde
	honey-blond	n/a
13	Platinum	n/a
14	Brunette	n/a
15	n/a	earthy
16	heather gray	n/a
17	Pine	n/a
18	n/a	bold green
	n/a	bright green
	n/a	lady liberty-green
19	n/a	bright blue
	n/a	nautical blue
20	n/a	bright yellow
	n/a	sunshine yellow
	n/a	zesty pale yellow
	n/a	anything-but-mellow yellow
	n/a	bus-yellow
	Total: 16 (55 %)	Total: 23 (71 %)

Results

The results of the research show that female writers tend to use more color terms in their articles than male authors, which supports our hypothesis. We analyzed 16 articles from two gender-oriented magazines and found out that basic color terms were used 11 times (Table 1). However, basic color terms in *Vogue* Magazine were mentioned only 3 times (29 %), while in *Esquire* Magazine basic color terms were used 9 times (45 %). In the men's magazine writers mentioned almost every color from eleven basic color terms range. In a women's magazine, we found only three basic color terms in 8 articles: green, red, and yellow. Writers oriented on male readers are more likely to discuss fashion topics using basic color terms in contrast with women writers who use fewer basic color terms in the same discussion. The choice of basic color terms in *Vogue* can be determined by tendencies in the fashion world. On the other hand, the analyzed data is not enough to reveal reasons why women writers mention basic colors less frequently.

We found 39 specific color terms in total in *Vogue* and *Esquire* (Table 2). Both men and women tend to use more specific color terms than basic ones. Although the number of specific color terms used in the men's and women's magazines does not differ extremely, the percentage of specific color terms from women's magazines is higher. We found 23 specific color terms (71 %) in *Vogue* Magazine and 16 (55 %) in *Esquire* Magazine.

Discussion

The research shows that male writers use more basic color terms in fashion discourse than women do, which disagrees with our hypothesis. The data is limited by the number of articles, so it gives a lot of opportunities to investigate more articles and have a precise look at the gender differences in basic color terms use in future studies. Although the number of basic color terms in *Vogue* was limited, women writers made up a great number of specific color terms adding adjectives to basic color terms or using other words to describe particular hues. For example, women added different adjectives to *yellow* referring to different shades of the color (*bright yellow*, *sunshine yellow*, *zesty pale yellow*, *anything-but-mellow yellow*, *bus-yellow*). At the same time, male writers used only the basic color term, *yellow*. As Lakoff says: "Women, then, make far more precise

discriminations in naming colors than do men; words like beige, ecru, aquamarine, lavender, and so on, are unremarkable in a women's active vocabulary, but absent from that of most men" [Lakoff, p. 49]. Thus, the reason why female writers mention fewer basic color terms is that they tend to describe colors using specialized vocabulary.

The statistics support our hypothesis in that women use more specific color terms than men. However, it does not mean that male writers did not mention specific color terms. They mentioned many more specialized color terms than they mentioned basic color terms but the difference between the same terms used by women was in the range of color hues. Male authors described a wide range of brown, grey, green, and other dark shades and hues. In women's articles, bright colors such as yellow, pink, red, orange, and corresponding shades dominated. One possible explanation for this fact is that articles represent trending colors that are different in men's and women's current fashion. The study shows that there is no huge difference between color terms use in men's and women's magazines. The same conclusion is drawn by *Marselus Suarta Kasmiran* and *Ouda Teda Ena* in their study: "There is no clear-cut of gender differences in using language" [Kasmiran, p. 43].

Conclusion

The study aimed to investigate whether women writers use more color terms in their articles addressing women than men writers use color terms to address men. We hypothesized that there would be more basic and specific color terms in women's magazines than in men's. It is partially true: female authors mentioned a lot of specialized color terms in contrast with male authors. Nevertheless, we did not expect to see the number of basic color terms to be higher in *Esquire Magazine* than in *Vogue Magazine*. The results support the hypothesis and show that women writers use more specific color terms than men writers do. In other words, women tend to use compound color terms to be accurate in naming colors, while men do not pay much attention to the exactness of color naming and have a tendency to use more basic color terms.

The research was limited by time and gathered data, so the conclusions cannot be generalized. For further investigations, we suggest collecting more primary materials and data, so it will help to draw con-

clusions that are more accurate about gender differences in color term use. It is possible to investigate whether authors of the opposite sex from the reader adapt their language to the readers, especially it is of interest to learn if male and female authors change the color terminology when writing for readers of the opposite gender.

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