

THE LANGUAGE OF FLESH AND ROSES IN FRAGRANCE ADVERTISING – DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FRAGRANCE WRITTEN ADS

Abstract: For centuries now, scents have been categorized as either male or female, although there is nothing in the scent itself that can be classified as either of the two. What underlie such a division are sociocultural conventions and ideologies. Pursuant to this, the aim of the paper will be to show how gender ideologies are being promoted and reproduced through male, and female, written perfume advertisements. With special emphasis on how language is used as the medium for establishing gender segregation in society, as well as for maintaining gender socialization. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used as the methodological framework. Within it, we have analysed what type of language is perceived as feminine or masculine, which role models are particularly promoted in perfume advertisements and which gender ideologies they reflect.

Key words: gender, ideology, marketing, perfumes, advertising, language

1. Introduction

For centuries now, scents have been categorized as either male or female. It was only recently that the fragrance industry has launched perfumes that are gender neutral. However, there is nothing in the scent itself that can be classified as either male or female. Instead, it is only the social and cultural conventions and ideologies that have produced such a division. The world of marketing itself heavily rests on these conventions and ideologies. It employs them in its advertisements aimed at inducing the consumers to buy not only a product, but also a lifestyle this specific product reflects. Gender ideologies are so deeply ingrained in our society that they are deemed as almost natural. Their most banal realization is found in every store, in divisions of female and male products, and the practice referred to as „gendered marketing“.

The primary aim of this paper is to analyse the discourse of fragrance i.e. perfume advertising. The objective is to compare the advertisements found on official producers' sites for men's and women's perfumes and to specify which of the linguistic means have been conventionally attributed to feminine, and which to the masculine side of the scale. The secondary aim is to distinguish which linguistic expressions are used for reference to a particular type of person or, more precisely, as an embodiment of a role model in the contemporary Western society. In addition,



this analysis shall be also related to the gender ideologies which govern the choice of linguistic resources.

The introductory part of this paper deals with a theoretical framework relevant to the topic. In particular, it covers definitions and ideologies that govern the fragrance advertising. The following part focuses on the analysis of the target discourse, whereas the last part will comment on the possible practical applications of this study in the context of foreign language teaching, or special writing courses.

2. Theoretical Background

This paper examines the interrelation between ideologies, marketing and advertising on the one hand and gender and language on the other, through critical discourse analysis.

Van Dijk defines critical discourse analysis as „a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context“ (2001: 352). Namely, ideologies are expressed in and reproduced by various discourses. By examining the discourse, we can explain „how ideologies influence our daily texts and talk, how we understand ideological discourse, and how it is involved in the reproduction of ideology in society“ (Van Dijk, 2000: 4).

Marketing refers to „the ways in which a company encourages people to buy its products by deciding on price, type of customer, and advertising policy“ (Macmillan Dictionary, 2007). This includes systematic planning, management and organization of various business activities the aim of which is to relate vendors and consumers to increase the sale of a certain product. To accomplish this, marketing relies on social ideologies on the basis of which it creates advertising policies and strategies. However, it is important to distinguish the terms marketing and advertising. Advertising is only a part of marketing. It involves actions such as describing and presenting the product or service in order to induce individuals to buy the advertised product or a specific service through the creation and promotion of advertisements. And it is through these advertisements that we are able to trace social ideologies.

Ideology is the system of the ideas and representations that dominate the mind of a man or a social group (Althusser, 1971: 106–107). According to Althusser (1971: 109), ideology does not „reflect“ the real world but „represents“ the „imaginary relationship of individuals“ to the real world, it is materialized because it „always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices“ under and with help of which individuals become subjects to some ideologies. For some ideologies, the „becoming-subject“ happens even before child’s birth. This is achieved by ideological state apparatuses (ISA) which secure that the „reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. of capitalist relations of exploitation“ is achieved (Althusser, 1971: 95–100). There are various ISAs, but in this paper the emphasis will be placed on the communications ISA (Althusser, 1971: 96), which „bombs“ every member of a certain community with „daily doses“ of different doctrines or „social ideologies

by means of the press, the radio and television“ (ibid.), and, in the present day, the Internet, social media, and interactive sites and platforms.

What does an ideology tell us? How does it govern our lives? Ideologies are usually adopted subconsciously. Along with them, we also adopt a practical attitude and take part in certain regular practices. These are delivered to us by the apparatus via a specific context and by means of a medium. This attitude serves as the basis for a vast majority of ideas and actions that we create or choose, „freely and consciously“. The ideology governs the actions, which are inserted into practices. These are then governed by rituals that turn us into its subjects. By ideology, we do not accept just beliefs, i.e. the ways we perceive our reality, but also the adequate manner how to construct and shape it.

One of the ideologies we adopt is gender ideology. Before defining gender ideology, let us just briefly discuss the notion of gender. Gender should not be used interchangeably with sex. Sex refers to a biological constant used to describe living organisms as either male or female. Gender is „a far more complex, socially grounded variable which entails the interactive relationship existing between an individual and their self“ (Filipović, 2009: 127). Gender identity „is formed in accordance with personal needs and interests, and predominant cultural models of the community in which an individual grows up“ (ibid.).

Gender ideology refers to attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights and responsibilities of men and women in society. Gender ideology also refers to societal beliefs that legitimize gender inequality. It can be full of stereotypes, which are pervasive and carry relatively well-defined prescriptions for typical male and female behaviour (qtd. in Cameron & Lalonde, 2001: 59). There are three types of gender ideology: traditional, egalitarian and transitional (Hochschild, 1989: 11□22). In traditional gender ideology, there is a clear distinction between what is assumed to be men’s job and women’s duty. In egalitarian ideology, women and men are to be taken equally, while transitional gender ideologies focus on accepting the values and tendencies of people as part of their identity, and not as belonging to a particular gender. Hand in hand with gender ideology goes gender socialization. It can be defined as a process during which individuals learn how to behave as male or female in the society, i.e. to acquire their gender roles with all their advantages and disadvantages, as well as how to define themselves in terms of their gender.

The ideologies of gender served as basis for gendered marketing. Gender marketing refers to the marketing strategies directed towards gender target groups for the purpose of increase in profit. It combines with market segmentation, which represents a marketing strategy that involves dividing a broad target market into subsets of consumers who have common needs and priorities and then designing and implementing strategies to target them. Market segmentation strategies may be used to identify the target customers, and provide supporting data for positioning to achieve a marketing plan objective (Investopedia, n.d.).

In advertisements, language serves as the medium for conveying the intended message and inducing people to a certain action, i.e. into purchasing products or services. Since this paper deals with the gendered ideology in fragrance advertising,

the emphasis will be placed on how the language is used as a means for both reflection of gender categories and construction and perseverance of the existing gender categories (Filipović, 2009: 134). Moreover, gender identity is portrayed and imposed by means of language, either verbal or non-verbal (qtd. in Filipović, 2009: 126□128).

3. Previous Research

An interesting approach to ideological dimension in fragrance advertising has been found in Michelle Lazar's study on the postfeminist identity in beauty-advertisements. In the article „Entitled to consume: postfeminist femininity and a culture of post-critique“ (2009: 371□400), the authoress analyses beauty advertisements dealing with „entitled femininity“ defined as a global postfeminist identity. She identifies three major discursive themes: „It's all about me“, „Celebrating femininity“ and „Girling Women“, discovering that feminine entitlement is characterized by emphasis on „pampering and pleasuring the self“, „being confident in one's gender identity and embracing youthfulness as an attitude“ (ibid.).

In another study, „Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis“, Lazar (2007: 141□164) suggested CDA from a feminist perspective as an approach to the study of gendered social practices, believing that this approach may ultimately affect social transformation.

Kaur et al. (2013: 61□71) have also used CDA to examine beauty advertisements. Their study focused on the use of language and strategies in beauty advertisements as the means of manipulation and influence on customers, i.e. as the means of power. By buying a product, women do not only purchase a product, but a way of life it brings with it. They argue that the beauty product advertisements in their study are ideologically contested, providing the model of ideal appearance for women. They put an emphasis on the power and importance of language as a mediating tool that shapes and constructs customers' realities and identities.

4. Methodology of Research

This research has been conducted from the perspective of qualitative studies because they allow for a much closer interpretation of how discourse in advertisements affects people's gender identity and gender socialization.

Critical discourse analysis served as the methodological framework for research and within it, the corpus samples were analysed and then discussed. The advantages of CDA are that it focuses on social problems □ gender being one of them, is multidisciplinary, and tries to explain discourse structures rather than describe them (Van Dijk, 2001:352).

The corpus included written advertisements in English found on ten official perfume producers' websites and gathered over the period of three months (January

to March, 2014). Included in the corpus were the advertisements of those producers who were listed among the top selling ones on the perfume market, in both categories of perfumes, i.e. male and female perfumes.

5. Corpus Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Corpus Analysis

The corpus analysis was conducted in three stages. As already stated, in the first stage, the aim was to specify which of the linguistic means were conventionally attributed to feminine and which to the masculine side of the scale. In the second stage, it was specified how these attributes and epithets work together to portray a desirable role model in the society, and in the third stage gender ideologies were observed, the traces of which were found in the corpus samples.

5.1.1. First stage results

The first stage of the analysis relied on a binary system, with two assigned values □ feminine and masculine. First to be analysed were the male perfume advertisements found on official webpages. The gathered samples were grouped according to the parts of speech and the type of phrase in which they occur. The same procedure was carried out for female perfumes as well. To describe the language used for men and women, the gathered samples were grouped again into semantic fields.

The analysis of the samples, gathered from male perfume advertisements, has shown that their description is characterized by the language means that denote strength or power, competition, contest, hedonism and chivalry and gentility. The instances from the corpus are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

THE LANGUAGE OF FLESH (THE LANGUAGE OF MALE PERFUME ADS)	
strength/power	<i>to defy, to master, virility, boldness, daring, tough, strong, potent, forceful, rugged, etc.</i>
competition	<i>to achieve, to capture, to push boundaries, sport, playground, workout, determined, unrelenting, etc.</i>
hedonism	<i>ecstasy, addiction, seduction, provocation, passionate, seductive, mysterious, etc.</i>
chivalry and gentility	<i>tenderness, nobility, sophistication, refinement, courteous, cultivated, refined, attentive, sophisticated, distinguished, etc.</i>

On the other hand, women are described in terms of light, care, hedonism, creativity, flora and empowerment. The corresponding instances from the corpus are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

THE LANGUAGE OF ROSES (THE LANGUAGE OF FEMALE MALE PERFUME ADS)	
light	<i>radiate, light up, irradiate, gleaming, luminous, radiance, etc.</i>
care	<i>to love, tender, genuine, etc.</i>
magic	<i>bewitching, enchanting, charming, etc.</i>
hedonism	<i>glamour, allure, seduction, temptation, sensuality, vanity, flirty, voluptuous, sumptuous, passionate, sensual, carnal, etc.</i>
creativity	<i>to inspire, creative, etc.</i>
flora	<i>to blossom, exquisite, delicate, etc.</i>
empowerment	<i>audacity, virility, boldness, uncompromising, empowering, daring, confident, etc.</i>

5.1.2. Second stage results

In the second stage was specified how these attributes work together to portray a desirable role model in the society.

The „desirable“ men in contemporary Western society are a gentleman, a hero or a warrior, a rebel and a modern man/man of today. Descriptions related to these role models are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

ROLE MODELS IN MALE PERFUME ADS	
Gentleman	<i>A distinguished man with unequalled charm, elegant and authentic, a real gentleman. / the timeless casual charm of a white shirt / For the man who is courteous, considered, with an instinctive feel for chivalry</i>
Hero/Warrior	<i>achieving history / Lean, lithe and potent just like its Greek hero namesake / For the man who is unafraid to take risks and push boundaries</i>
Rebel	<i>With irreverent and an rebellious attitude./ for the man who defies convention, and resists the ordinary every day, finding satisfaction in the unexpected. Be unexpected</i>
„Man of today“/ Modern man	<i>A tough guy with a tender heart symbolizing the absolute expression of freedom. / The character of the man of today: knowledgeable and self-confident, he has the ability to live his life in a harmonious relationship with the natural world. dynamic and entrepreneurial, the Versace pour homme man communicates his forceful and passionate character through a decidedly masculine fragrance / today's man: sensitive yet masculine, refined yet strong with a modern vitality and confidence</i>

The role models for women are celebrities, ladies, seductresses, and modern women. The descriptions are provided in table 4.

Table 4

ROLE MODELS IN FEMALE PERFUME ADS	
Celebrity/Star	<i>Bursting with glamour/ She embodies all that women dream of becoming and whom every man dreams of seducing./ She wants a sumptuous fragrance, the olfactory equivalent of a long train on a fabulous evening dress. It must be a "red carpet" fragrance, multi-faceted like a diamond./ For a sexy woman who fantasies being a Rock star.</i>
Lady	<i>embodies happiness and sophistication / the ultimate power of femininity and sophistication / Desire is to be kept hidden like a precious jewel</i>
Seductress	<i>Absolute: sensuality, transparency, brightness, temptation/ mysterious, bewitching and flamboyant/ the woman who embraces Rose The One is a mischievously beguiling yet tender coquette./Catch my heart if you can</i>
Modern woman	<i>The man's equal without losing an ounce of femininity / The traditional and the contemporary, the passionate and the maternal, the spiritual and the sensual: this is a world where all converge with a perfect synthesis - values in their most potent form/The woman who is strong and confident yet feminine, sensual</i>

5.1.3. Third stage results

In the third stage, gender ideologies were observed based on the traces found in the corpus samples. The Hochschild's division of ideologies into traditional, egalitarian and traditional (1989: 11 □ 22) had been applied.

The role models of „Gentleman“, „Hero/Warrior“, „Lady“, and „Seductress“ clearly reflect the influence of traditional gender ideology on perfume advertising strategies.

The egalitarian values are found in some „for him“ and „for her“ advertisements, such is for example that of „Million“ by Paco Rabanne, which portrays women as „the man's equal without losing the ounce of femininity“.

As far as transitional ideology is concerned, its „traces“ were found in the role models of „Modern Man“ or „Man of today“ and „Modern Woman“. Namely, the identity of a woman represents the blend of „the traditional and the contemporary, the passionate and the maternal, the spiritual and the sensual“, while man's identity is no longer restricted to purely masculine traits, i.e. he is allowed to be „sensitive yet masculine, refined yet strong with a modern vitality and confidence“.

5.2. Discussion

According to Lakoff (1990: 202), „gender related differences have a strong psychological component related to the judgments of members of culture how to be and think as a good woman or man“. Language observed and examined at a discursive level „speaks about the social construction of gender“ (Weatherall, 2002: 75) as well as about the preservation of gender ideologies.

Gender ideologies are so deeply ingrained in society that they serve as frameworks by which we define ourselves. Namely, they proved to be fertile soil for planting various

strategies to increase the income. One of them being *gendered marketing*. According to this strategy, we should use only products with „women“ or „male“ only tag. In perfume advertisements, this tagging is quite explicit and is usually found on perfume descriptions or below the name of the perfume printed on the bottle:

Black XS L'Excess For Her (Paco Rabanne)
 CK Red Edition for him/for her (Calvin Klein)
 CK free for men (Calvin Klein)
 Versace pour femme (for women)
 Versace pour home (for men)

To use it otherwise raises eyebrows. It is simply considered inappropriate.

Perfume industry is just a piece in the market-puzzle. It is trivial and seemingly unimportant. However, if we consider the fact that an individual buys perfumes often, and that this is a routine that is directly linked with our intimacy and personal appearance in society, we see how gender, or any kind of ideology delivered to consumers, in perfume advertisements can affect the construction of one's identity.

How these advertisements work? Their primary aim is to make consumers buy more. In order to accomplish this, the ad writers address men and women respectively, relying on multidisciplinary research or cultural stereotypes, or market research to get them closer to the target audience by addressing their needs and insecurities i.e. they rely on the search for identity and the true self to promote their products.

An illuminating explanation of this process can be provided by turning to Foucault (1997: 330–336) and his study „Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias“, where he proposes that we live in the „era of space“. One of the fundamental divisions is that between the external and the internal space, i.e. between the social and the private. Foucault's claim is that we live „in a set of relationships that define positions which cannot be equated or in any way superimposed“ (1997: 332). Spaces are thus arrangements of these sets of relationships. He emphasizes two such arrangements: *utopias*, arrangements with no real spaces, and *heterotopias*, arrangements that represent the mirror of utopias „in real, effective spaces“ (ibid). One of the characteristic heterotopias include, in relation to the space itself, is a function they perform and that is situated in between two spaces; the space of illusion and the another „real“ space which is perfect, meticulous, and well-arranged, as the world of reality in which we live in is „disordered, ill-conceived, and in a sketchy state“ (ibid.). This type can be referred to as the heterotopia of compensation.

The world of advertising, perfume advertising included, is one such heterotopia. The advertisements offer a space, „another real space“ in Foucault terms, in which by purchasing a perfume, a ritual of initiation, the customer achieves the feeling of completeness. The product, i.e. the perfume compensates for weaknesses, or for whatever is missing in the life or identity of the consumer as perceived by him or her and in comparison to the role-model promoted by mainstream ideologies. The language is the medium, where words serve as foundation and building blocks of this new space. To illustrate:

She has presence. She walks with her head held high, and she has that certain smile. She has an innate ability to always be sexy and confident. She has a sure sense of fashion and elegance, and she loves the lavishness, eccentricity and glamour of haute couture spirit. She's a Versace woman. She wants a sumptuous fragrance, the olfactory equivalent of a long train on a fabulous evening dress. It must be a „red carpet“ fragrance, multi-faceted like a diamond. It is a unique fragrance inspired by the virtuosity and creativity of Versace and its modern interpretation of luxury. (Crystal Noir, Versace)

This advertisement tells its female consumer what she has- presence, what kind of smile, what ability, what kind of style; what she wants, what she loves and what she is. The way to achieve this is to buy the perfume.

The sophisticated scent from Dolce & Gabbana The One Gentleman, is a bottled homage to the modern gentleman. This is a scent for the man who is courteous, considered, with an instinctive feel for chivalry. Refined elegance and cultivated ease allow him to effortlessly master any given situation. This is a man who knows who he is, hence he has nothing to prove. He is the Dolce & Gabbana gentleman. (The One Gentleman, Dolce & Gabbana)

The implication goes as follow: if you use this product, you will be able to do, be and behave as and live the life of the role model it promotes.

This is how the construction of consumer's identity is controlled by the media ISA (Althusser, 1970). Not only does it control how and which identity we construct, but it also controls how we construct that identity using language as the medium. It is not only the perfume that is sold, but also a way of life, way of thinking, and way of acting. Namely, advertisements provide descriptions of behavioural patterns, habits, rituals, and actions to be taken. The consumers are instructed what to do, how to do it, step by step, one of which is buying. It seems so effortless, unnoticeable, easy. Regardless of being a daily or a special-occasion routine, it becomes an indispensable part of consumers' lives, bringing the ideological practices and beliefs from the *external* social space into the *internal*, intimate space of people's lives.

The role of language in this interactive process is that of a medium. The language used in the advertisements is highly descriptive. Parts of speech that dominate the discourse are, as expected, adjectives and nouns. A phenomenon that was noticed in the first stage of the analysis was overlexicalization of adjectives and nouns with the same meaning within one advertisement, which served to promote a certain role model. To illustrate, in perfume advertisements that promote seductress or seducer/player as a role model, the use of seduce, seductive, seducing is quite common.

Verbs are not so numerous and they usually take present simple tense form, which only puts more emphasize on the habitual nature (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973: 41) of the actions expressed in the advertisements.

Sentences are mostly simple, often imperatives or declaratives. Imperatives usually come in the form of „be + participle/ adjective“, e.g. „*Be unexpected*“, „*Be iconic*“. Declaratives serve more the purpose of giving statement about the personality of the role model promoted.



Dynamic and entrepreneurial, the Versace pour homme man communicates his forceful and passionate character through a decidedly masculine fragrance.

There are also verbless sentences, being adjective phrases, noun phrases, prepositional phrases or adverbial phrases. The verbless sentences, namely NPs, AdjPs, PPs, and AdvPs, are usually short, function on their own, and are used for giving a statement of attitude.

Unexpected. Unpredictable. Irresistible. (Chanel)

An expression of a sophisticated and creative world. (Paco Rabanne)

Frequently found in corpus are prepositional phrases with „for“ as the headword and they usually state the recipient of the action, who has a choice either to join the exclusive club and become one of those described by a NP after „for“, or not. The membership to this exclusive group is granted by product purchase.

For mischievous femininity.

For a sexy woman who fantasies being a Rock star.

For the man who is unafraid to take risks and push boundaries.

6. Possibilities for Implementation in Teaching Practice

The topics such as the one examined in this paper are interdisciplinary by nature. Therefore, the findings from similar studies could be used as material for teaching courses related to cultures, narratives, creative writing, and the like.

In addition, as the need for specialized professionals in the society arises, philological departments should consider the possibility of introducing the courses that would help young students become specialized writers and acknowledged experts in the new industry. In the new world of information era, philologists should defend their area of expertise by providing such education that would allow their students an effortless entrance into the informational society.

Courses dealing with cultural content, advertising and language strategies could support this. Faculties of languages should strive to keep their place and become more active in instigating the change in social environment.

7. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the corpus, it can be concluded that there is strong gender segmentation in language use in perfume advertisements, which is a direct consequence of gender ideologies deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness and sub-consciousness of the society.

The changes in gender perception brought about by movements in the last century are reflected in those commercials that rely on transitional gender ideologies, one of them being the third wave of feminism. However, the purpose of the ads is

still consumerist in nature □ „sell more“ being their motto. The gendered marketing, market segmentation, and blending of spaces prove to be such powerful mechanisms of control when relying on ideologies that are accepted as natural and that go unnoticed in society.

Further research on seemingly trivial, everyday products could shed more light on the paradox of fighting gender stereotypes and ideological prejudices: on the one side, there are movements raising awareness, while on the other products which we buy as women or men with the tag „man“ □ or „woman“ □ only.

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**JEZIK MIŠIĆA I JEZIK RUŽA U REKLAMIRANJU PARFEMA –
ANALIZA DISKURSA PISANIH REKLAMA PARFEMA**

Rezime

Već vekovima se mirisi dele na muške i ženske iako ništa u samom mirisu nije muškog ili ženskog pola, već je ova podela posledica kulturnih konvencija i ideologija. Svrha ovog rada je da prikaže na koji način se polne ideologije promovišu i podstiču kroz reklame za muške i ženske parfeme koristeći jezik kao medijum za uspostavljanje polne segregacije i održavanja polne socijalizacije. U istraživanju je primenjena metodologija kritičke analize diskursa u okviru koje se analiziralo kakav se jezik vezuje za ženski, a kakav za muški pol, koji ideološki uzori se promovišu i koje ideologije oni oslikavaju.

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