

Gender Differences in Lexical Selection of Online Perfume Advertisement Descriptions: A Study of Adjectives and Nouns

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Abstract

In the digital age, online advertising has become a dominant marketing tool, enabling brands to reach global audiences. Perfume advertising presents a unique challenge because scents cannot be directly conveyed through visual or textual media. Gender remains a salient factor in perfume marketing, as fragrances are often positioned within a binary male–female framework. This study investigates gender differences in the lexical selection of adjectives and nouns in online perfume advertisement descriptions, employing both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data were collected from five globally recognized brands, including Dior, Gucci, Bvlgari, Chanel, and YSL, comprising 20 advertisements (10 male-oriented, 10 female-oriented). The adapted lexical selection framework integrated the Lexical Selection Theory, Sensory Integration Theory, and Synaesthetic Metaphors in Thai. The findings reveal five main lexical selection strategies, with “ingredients of perfume” being the most frequently used and “time” the least in both genders. Male advertisements tend to emphasize identity-related terms, while female advertisements more frequently use sensory and emotional descriptors. Adjective usage was equivalent across genders, whereas noun usage was slightly higher in female-oriented texts. Although overt gender discrimination was not strongly evident, certain lexical choices reinforced traditional gender stereotypes, particularly in visual and emotional representations. This study fills a gap in applied linguistics by examining gendered lexical strategies in online perfume marketing, a domain previously underexplored compared to print media. The findings provide practical implications for linguists, marketers, and advertisers

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seeking to craft gender-targeted yet stereotype-conscious promotional texts, and they offer a foundation for future cross-cultural and multimodal research in fragrance communication.

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1. Introduction

In contemporary society, advertising is disseminated through multiple media, including television, radio, social platforms, and celebrity sponsorships. While diverse in form, its primary function remains the persuasion and marketing of products and services. Worakullattanee and Sampattavanija (2008) categorize advertisements into four types: broadcast, print, supporting, and interactive media.

With the rapid growth of digital communication technologies, online advertising has emerged as one of the most influential platforms for global marketing. Within these digital platforms, consumer behavior has shifted significantly from traditional formats to online promotion, prompting many industries to adapt their marketing strategies to suit fast-paced, visually driven, and linguistically condensed online environments.

Products are often marketed by gender, male, female, or unisex, with strategies adapted to appeal to specific audiences. Beyond visual and auditory cues, language plays a central role. Gender has long been linked to language use; Old English retained three Indo-European categories, including masculine, feminine, and neuter. Coates (2004) highlighted approaches that range from viewing women's language as disadvantaged to emphasizing patriarchy, to treating men and women as distinct subcultures, and finally to conceptualizing gender as socially constructed and performed.

Perfume provides a particularly relevant case for examining gendered advertising language. Although worn by both men and women, fragrances are typically marketed along gendered lines. As an abstract olfactory product, perfume cannot be directly perceived through media and must therefore be described in language that evokes sensory imagery. According to Bunnag (2002), product descriptions enable consumers to "perceive" scent through words, making lexical strategies, especially the choice of adjectives and nouns, crucial for communication.

Although previous studies have examined gendered language in perfume advertising, most existing research has focused on print media such as magazines, fliers, and promotional leaflets (Yang, 2011; Raktaprichit, 2012; Khueankaew, 2018). Far fewer studies have explored the online environment, despite its dominant role in contemporary marketing. Online

perfume descriptions, which often appear on brand websites and e-commerce platforms, differ from print texts in terms of structure, length, interactivity, and multimodality. This creates a clear research gap regarding how lexical choices, especially adjectives and nouns, are used to construct gendered representations in online perfume advertising.

The purpose of this study is therefore to describe and compare the use of adjectives and nouns in male- and female-oriented fragrance descriptions through both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Specifically, it investigates whether male or female advertisements employ these word classes more frequently, identifies the lexical selection strategies most often used for each gender, and explores the distinctive features of adjectives and nouns that characterize gendered perfume advertising in the online environment.

2. Background

Research on gender and language has evolved considerably over the past decades. Lakoff's (1975) early work characterized women's speech as deficient compared with men's, reflecting wider social inequalities. Later perspectives became more nuanced. Coates (2004) outlined four major approaches: the deficit model, the dominance model, the difference model, and the dynamic model that views gender as socially constructed and context-dependent. As West and Zimmerman (1987, as cited in Coates, 2004) argued, speakers should be understood as "doing gender" rather than statically "being" a particular gender. These perspectives collectively highlighted the importance of examining how linguistic choices construct gendered meanings in real communicative contexts such as advertising.

Advertising provided a rich context for such investigation. Beyond promoting products, it communicated cultural values and reinforced social ideologies. Gender-targeted advertising remains prominent; beauty and domestic goods commonly target women, whereas products associated with strength, luxury, or technology are often framed for men (Ademola, 2009; Birknerová et al., 2018). With the expansion of digital platforms, such gendered messages increasingly appeared in online environments, where audiences encountered advertisements on brand websites, e-commerce platforms, and social media. Digital communication was inherently multimodal and visually structured, making it necessary to consider how images, layout, and textual choices work together to shape meaning. Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) emphasized that multimodal design, such as color, composition, and visual grammar, played a central role in contemporary communication. In contrast, Page (2022) highlighted how digital discourse introduced new forms of interaction, narrative framing, and user engagement.

In the context of perfume advertising, language became even more critical because fragrance could not be directly perceived through the media. Advertisers relied on vivid lexical choices, especially adjectives and nouns, to evoke sensory imagery and align scents with

gendered identities (Bunnag, 2002). Previous studies have shown that female-oriented descriptions often highlighted romance, emotion, and sensuality, while male-oriented texts emphasized identity, strength, and status (Nemčoková et al., 2021; Yang, 2011; Raktaprarachit, 2012). Thai studies similarly revealed frequent use of smell-related, feeling-related, and identity-related vocabulary in perfume promotion (Khueankaew, 2018).

In addition to Thai scholarship, international studies have also highlighted gendered lexical tendencies in fragrance advertising. Yang (2011) found that female-oriented print magazine advertisements contained a higher frequency of adjectives and nouns than male-oriented ones, suggesting a tendency toward more elaborate or sensory-rich descriptions in feminine ads. Similarly, Willemsen (1998) reported that teenage girls' magazines relied heavily on adjectives, reinforcing femininity through descriptive and emotionally loaded language. These influential studies provided important insights into gendered lexical patterns; however, they were conducted exclusively on print media, which differed substantially from online perfume descriptions in structure, multimodality, and discursive function.

However, a clear research gap remains. Most existing studies have focused on print media, including magazines, fliers, and promotional leaflets, which differ significantly from online formats in terms of textual density, multimodal features, and caption-writing conventions. Online perfume descriptions often employed shorter, more stylized text accompanied by images, icons, and clickable elements. These multimodal characteristics influenced how lexical items were selected, particularly adjectives and nouns that must convey scent efficiently in a compact online space. Machin and Mayr (2012) emphasized that multimodal discourse analysis was essential for understanding how text and visuals collaboratively constructed meaning, while Zeng and Li (2022) demonstrated how multimodal strategies shaped consumer perception in e-commerce product descriptions.

Despite the dominance of online marketing in the fragrance industry, few studies have analyzed lexical selection strategies in online perfume advertising, and even fewer have systematically compared gender differences within this digital environment. Therefore, the present study fills this research gap by extending the analysis of gendered language from print-based studies to online perfume descriptions, where linguistic choices play a crucial role in constructing sensory and gendered meanings in digital spaces.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data Source and Collection

The data for this study consisted of online perfume advertisements for both female- and male-oriented fragrances. A total of 20 texts were selected: 10 targeting female consumers and 10 targeting male consumers. These advertisements were drawn from five internationally recognized luxury brands, which included Dior, Gucci, Bvlgari, Chanel, and YSL, consistently

ranked among the top in the global perfume market according to Brand Finance (n.d.). Rankings were determined based on annual sales volume published on the Brand Finance website.

There were three main reasons for focusing on online perfume advertisements. First, online advertising is easily accessible to all consumers, including non-binary audiences, although this study limits its scope to male and female categories. Second, online sources provide convenience and efficiency in data collection. Third, perfumes are products closely associated with individual taste and identity, and their advertisements typically highlight descriptive language to convey scents for both genders (Raktaprachit, 2012).

Because online content is continuously updated, the precise data collection period was specified. All advertisements were retrieved from the official English-language websites of the selected brands between January and March 2024. Stating this period enhances reproducibility and helps contextualize the data within prevailing marketing and socioeconomic conditions during that timeframe.

For each brand, two male-targeted and two female-targeted descriptions were collected, resulting in the final sample of 20 texts. Each description ranged between 50 and 80 words. This length range was selected for two reasons. First, it reflects the typical size of official online perfume descriptions, which are concise and optimized for digital reading. Second, it ensures comparability across brands and genders: texts shorter than 50 words often contain insufficient lexical detail for strategy coding, while texts longer than 80 words commonly include extended storytelling that departs from standard product description style.

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify eligible advertisements that met the criteria of (1) official brand source, (2) English-language description, (3) explicit male or female targeting, and (4) a word length within 50–80 words. When more than two eligible advertisements existed for a given gender within the same brand, simple random selection was applied to minimize researcher bias.

3.2 Data Collection

Analytical Framework

This study adopted and adapted the framework from *Lexical Selection of Perfume Advertising Words in Fliers* (Khueankaew, 2018), which was based on three key sources: the Lexical Selection Theory (Angkapanichkit, 2018), the Sensory Integration Theory (Gunstream, 2006), and *Synaesthetic Metaphors in Thai: A Cognitive Linguistic Study* (Wongthai, 2009). The framework categorized lexical items into five lexical selection strategies, defined as follows:

1. Lexical selection strategy to show scents through sensation
 - 1.1 Sensation of pressure and touch (e.g., fresh, soft, warm)
 - 1.2 Sensation of vision (e.g., young, clear, sparkling)
 - 1.3 Sensation of taste (e.g., sweet, spicy)
2. Lexical selection strategy to show the feelings (e.g., happy, surprised, thirsty)
3. Lexical selection strategy to show the ingredients of perfume (e.g., wood, leather, fruity)
4. Lexical selection strategy to show the identities (e.g., masculine, unique, universal)
5. Lexical selection strategy to show the time (e.g., timeless, endless)

Rationale for Focusing on Adjectives and Nouns

The analysis concentrated on adjectives and nouns because these word classes carry the primary semantic load in perfume advertising. Adjectives are central to evoking sensory impressions, affect, and evaluation, while nouns typically denote ingredients, scent identities, and abstract brand qualities. Prior research on perfume and advertising discourse has similarly identified nouns and adjectives as the most frequent and meaning-bearing categories for constructing gendered fragrance imagery (e.g., Yang, 2011; Nemčoková et al., 2021; Khueankaew, 2018). Limiting the analysis to these two categories therefore allows for systematic comparison across genders and aligns with lexical selection theory.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed these steps:

1. The program OneNote was used to automatically identify and categorize parts of speech in each advertisement.
2. Only nouns and adjectives identified by the program were selected for further analysis.
3. Manual verification was conducted for accuracy using the Collins Cobuild Advanced Learner's Dictionary.
4. Identified adjectives and nouns were classified according to the five lexical selection strategies.
5. Frequencies of adjectives and nouns in each category were calculated and expressed as percentages.
6. Results were compared between male- and female-targeted advertisements.
7. The dominance approach to gender and language served as the interpretive framework for describing patterns and differences in lexical usage.

Reliability and Validity of Coding

To ensure the reliability of the coding process, the analytical framework was adapted from established studies (Khueankaew, 2018; Angkapanichkit, 2018; Gunstream, 2006; Wongthai, 2009) and refined through a pilot test on a small subset of the data. All coding

decisions were cross-checked with the research advisor to verify accuracy and consistency. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus. Although statistical inter-rater reliability measures, such as Cohen's Kappa, were not calculated due to the absence of a second independent coder, the above procedures were undertaken to minimize subjectivity and ensure the dependability of the findings. The study acknowledges this limitation and positions the analysis as a focused qualitative-quantitative investigation.

4. Results

The findings showed (1) the frequency of adjective and noun usage in online perfume advertisements for male and female products, (2) the frequency of lexical selection strategies in male- and female-targeted advertisements, and (3) the characteristics of adjectives and nouns used in these advertisements based on a gendered approach. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Which gender—male or female—uses adjectives and nouns more frequently in online perfume advertisements?
2. Which lexical selection strategies are most frequently employed in online perfume advertisements for each gender?
3. What are the distinctive characteristics of adjectives and nouns used in online perfume advertisements for each gender?

4.1 Results of Noun and Adjective Frequency

Table 1 Nouns and Adjectives Percentages

Gender	Nouns	Adjectives	Total
Male	21.93 %	27.51 %	49.44 %
Female	23.05 %	27.51 %	50.56 %

As shown in Table 1, the result reveals the percentages of the adjectives and nouns of both males and females in perfume descriptions. The results showed that the usage of nouns in male online perfume advertisements is 21.93%, but in females, nouns are used 23.05%. However, the use of adjectives is equal in both genders, 27.51%. In online perfume advertisements, nouns and adjectives are used 49.44% in male and 50.56% in female online perfume advertisements.

4.2 Results of Lexical Selection Strategy Frequency

In response to the second research question aimed at indicate frequency of Lexical selection strategy in male and female online advertisements for perfume products, 10 texts of male's perfume descriptions and 10 texts of female's, were categorized into 5 categories by using the adapted framework from the '*Lexical Selection of Perfume Advertising Words in Fliers*' (Khueankaew, 2018) which developed from the '*Lexical Selection theory*'

(Angkapanichkit, 2018), ‘*Sensory Integration theory*’ (Gunstream, 2006) and ‘*Synaesthetic Metaphors in Thai : A Cognitive Linguistic Study*’ (Wongthai, 2009). Table 2 shows the percentages of Lexical selection strategies and the number of words used in both male and female online perfume advertisements.

Table 2 Lexical Selection Strategies

Male			Female	
Lexical selection strategies	Percentage	Word Number	Percentage	Word Number
1. Lexical selection strategy to show scents through sensation	21.05%	28	24.26%	33
1.1 Lexical selection strategy to show scents through sensation of pressure and touch	15.04%	20	11.03%	15
1.2 Lexical selection strategy to show scents through sensation of visual	3.01%	4	8.82%	12
1.3 Lexical selection strategy to show scents through sensation of taste	3.01%	4	4.41%	6
2. Lexical selection strategy to show the feelings	19.55%	26	24.26%	33
3. Lexical selection strategy to show the ingredients of perfume	30.08%	40	35.29%	48
4. Lexical selection strategy to show the identities	23.31%	31	13.97%	19
5. Lexical selection strategy to show the time	6.02%	8	2.21%	3
Total	100 %	133	100 %	136

As shown in Table 2, the result reveals the percentages and number of words used in male and female online perfume advertisements based on lexical selection strategies. The lexical strategies in each selection are described in depth, respectively, according to Table 2 in the sections below.

1. Lexical selection strategy to show scents through sensation

Define lexical selection strategies in advertising and describe a scent that is intended to characterize the scent of a perfume through the primary sense of smell, which has a sensory organ located in the nose. Often appearing in conjunction with the term “smell,” it is also used to express smell through the senses in combination with other senses. The senses can be divided into 3 types as follows:

1.1 Lexical selection strategy to show scents through the sensation of pressure and touch

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 15.04%. The result found the usage of words, for example, freshness, warm, aromatic, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands as follows:

(1) “An *aromatic freshness* opens, lingering on the *warm*, addictive fullness of Cedar and Sandalwood from New Caledonia that sweeps throughout the intense, woody fragrance.” (Chanel—BLEU DE CHANEL)

(2) “Profound and *warm*, Bvlgari Le Gemme Azaran is the olfactory expression of Red Aventurine.” (Bvlgari—LE GEMME AZARAN EAU DE PARFUM)

(3) “An *Aromatic* Fougère, the original Gucci Guilty Pour Homme eau de toilette enters a new chapter, embodying the free spirit of a new generation of scent lovers.” (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Pour Homme)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 11.03%. The result found the usage of words, for example, softness, freshness, smoothness, and light, as in the example sentences of perfume brands, as follows

(4) “A Lily of the Valley3 accord brings *freshness* and *lightness* to the spicy burst of a Grasse Rose note.” (Dior—MISS DIOR Eau de toilette)

(5) “A green and fruity Grapefruit-Quince accord intertwines with the *softness* of Jasmine and the *smoothness* of White Musks for an intoxicatingly light, floral trail.” (Chanel—CHANCE EAU TENDRE)

1.2 Lexical selection strategy to show scents through the sensation of visual

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 3.01%. The result found the usage of words, for example, elegant, smoky, and fullness, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands, as follows:

(6) “A strong sensation decked out in an *elegant*, next-generation bottle you can take anywhere.” (Dior—DIOR HOMME SPORT)

(7) “A powerful burst of juniper berry and cypress evolves into a warm vetiver accord with earthy undertones and *smoky* accents, for a warm-yet-surprisingly-fresh scent.” (Chanel—PARIS-ÉDIMBOURG)

(8) “An aromatic freshness opens, lingering on the warm, addictive *fullness* of Cedar and Sandalwood from New Caledonia that sweeps throughout the intense, woody fragrance.” (Chanel—BLEU DE CHANEL)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 8.82%. The result found the usage of words, for example, beautiful, voluptuous, and sparkling, in the example sentences of perfume brands as follows:

(9) “Finely crafted down to the last detail, like a custom-made flower, J’adore is a bouquet of the most *beautiful* flowers from around the world.” (Dior—J’ADORE Eau de parfum)

(10) “An extreme, luminous and deep concentration of patchouli infuses COCO MADEMOISELLE Eau de Parfum Intense with a *voluptuous* dimension.” (Chanel—COCO MADEMOISELLE)

(11) “*Sparkling* zests of Blood Orange and Mandarin illuminate the top notes.” (Dior—MISS DIOR Eau de toilette)

1.3 Lexical selection strategy to show scents through the sensation of taste

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 3.01%, showing the usage of words, in a few numbers, which are spicy and bitter, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands, as follows:

(12) “Saffron is the most precious spice in the world and Bvlgari Le Gemme Azaran is inspired by this wonderful scent: multifaceted, fresh, *spicy*, warm and leathery.” (Bvlgari—LE GEMME AZARAN EAU DE PARFUM)

(13) “François Demachy lightened the Citron top note slightly to render it less *bitter* and gave more prominence to the round and fruity Blood Orange.” (Dior —DIOR HOMME SPORT)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 4.41%. The result found the usage of words, for example, spicy, sweet and zest in the example sentences of perfume brands as follows:

(14) “Mon Paris Eau de Parfum is a *sweet* floral women's fragrance.” (YSL— MON PARIS EAU DE PARFUM)

(15) “At the heart, a Lily of the Valley accord brings freshness and lightness to the *spicy* burst of a Grasse Rose note.” (Dior —MISS DIOR Eau de toilette)

(16) “*Sparkling* *zests* of Blood Orange and Mandarin illuminate the top notes.” (Dior —MISS DIOR Eau de toilette)

2. Lexical selection strategy to show the feelings

Words belonging to this lexical selection strategy describe scents of perfume that are intended to represent the characteristics of a perfume, causing the changes in emotional feelings of the receivers according to the represented feelings that the deliverer wants the receiver to perceive.

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 19.55%. The result found the usage of words, for example, powerful, intense, and seductive, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands, as follows:

(17) “*Powerful* and refined, BLEU DE CHANEL Parfum for men reveals the essence of determination”. (Chanel—BLEU DE CHANEL)

(18) “The intense colour of the red Aventurine is the starting point of the creation, blending saffron with bergamot and red cedarwood to create a very sophisticated and powerful fragrance leaving a luxurious woody signature in its trail.” (Bvlgari—LE GEMME AZARAN EAU DE PARFUM)

(19) “A seductive perfume for men, this masculine scent is a fragrant interpretation of the iconic Yves Saint Laurent white T-shirt and black jacket”. (YSL—Y EAU DE PARFUM)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 24.26%. The result found the usage of words, for example, sensuous, love, intense, and romance, in the example sentences of perfume brands as follows

(20) “Inspired by Paris, this sensuous women's perfume reflects the intense passion found in the city of love.” (YSL— MON PARIS EAU DE PARFUM)

(21) “BULGARI Allegra immerses you in the romance of Italy, a wellspring of iconic love affairs.” (Bvlgari—BVLGARI ALLEGRA BACIAMI EAU DE PARFUM)

3. Lexical selection strategy to show the ingredients of perfume

Define lexical selection strategies in an advertisement describing a perfume with the intent to show the characteristics of a perfume that make the receiver know the ingredients of that perfume, to signify to consumers to smell and go along with it, as it is a scent of those ingredients.

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 30.08%. The result found the usage of words, for example, woody, vetiver, and cedarwood, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands, as follows:

(22) “The celebration of freedom expressed by the statement #ForeverGuilty continues with Gucci Guilty Pour Homme Eau de Parfum, a Woody Aromatic Spicy fragrance created to provoke.” (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Pour Homme)

(23) “An abundance impeccably translated through a contemporary and original vetiver interpretation, combined with an exclusive masculine smoky Terrae accord.” (Bvlgari— BVLGARI MAN TERRAE ESSENCE EAU DE PARFUM)

(24) “The sharpness of lemon is enhanced by a subtle note of geranium and grounded by cedarwood, forming a fragrance that radiates coolness.” (YSL—Y EAU FRAÎCHE)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 25.29%. The result found the usage of words, for example, floral, fruity, and vanilla, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands as follows:

(25) “The delicate and unexpected fruity-floral fragrance for women creates a soft whirlwind of happiness, fantasy and radiance.” (Chanel—CHANCE EAU TENDRE)

(26) “Goldenwood is complemented with a mysterious note of blackberry, creating a non-traditional chypre fruity fragrance for a contemporary woman.” (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Absolute Pour Femme)

(27) "...and exalts Italian seduction in an irresistible *floral amber* uniting in a headlong rush of *gardenia* accord and *vanilla*, a token of indelible Italian love." (Bvlgari—BVLGARI ALLEGRA BACIAMI EAU DE PARFUM)

4. Lexical selection strategy to show the identities

Define lexical selection strategies in an advertisement describing a perfume with the intent to express the unique scent of a perfume, unlike the other, be a brand-new scent that has never been discovered before.

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 23.31%. The result showed the usage of words, for example, masculine, iconic, unique, and signature, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands, as follows:

(28) "An abundance impeccably translated through a contemporary and original vetiver interpretation, combined with an exclusive *masculine* smoky Terraee accord." (Bvlgari—BVLGARI MAN TERRAE ESSENCE EAU DE PARFUM)

(29) "A contemporary take on two *iconic* perfumery ingredients popular..." (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Pour Homme)

(30) "A *unique*,* contrasting olfactory *signature* with a powerful, lingering trail." (Dior—FAHRENHEIT Eau de toilette)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 13.97%. The result showed the usage of words, for example, feminine, iconic, chypre, and personality as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands as follows:

(31) "An iconic fragrance, J'adore Eau de Parfum is the grand *feminine* floral by the House of Dior." (Dior—J'ADORE Eau de parfum)

(32) "BULGARI Allegra immerses you in the romance of Italy, a wellspring of *iconic* love affairs." (Bvlgari—BVLGARI ALLEGRA BACIAMI EAU DE PARFUM)

(33) "Goldenwood is complemented with a mysterious note of blackberry, creating a non-traditional *chypre* fruity fragrance for a contemporary woman." (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Absolute Pour Femme)

(34) "An intense facet of the COCO MADEMOISELLE *personality* emerges to forge a powerful, deep floral-woody fragrance that is irresistible in every way." (Chanel—COCO MADEMOISELLE)

5. lexical selection strategy to show the time

Define lexical selection strategies in an advertisement describing the scent of a perfume. The intention is to express the scent characteristics of a perfume with an extended period, time period, or point of time.

In this strategy of the male section, the percentage is displayed at 6.02%. The result found the usage of words, for example, timeless, generation, and contemporary, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands as follows:

(35) “Timeless and universal, Fahrenheit is a fragrance that transcends time and trends to forge its own territory.” (Dior—FAHRENHEIT Eau de toilette)

(36) “An Aromatic Fougère, the original Gucci Guilty Pour Homme eau de toilette enters a new chapter, embodying the free spirit of a new generation of scent lovers.” (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Pour Homme)

(37) “A contemporary take on two iconic perfumery ingredients popular in the '70s...” (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Pour Homme)

In this strategy of the female section, the percentage is displayed at 2.21%. The result showed the usage of words, in a small amount, which are endless, modern, and unchanged, as in the example sentences of description of perfume brands, as follows:

(38) “The base of a clear Patchouli accord brings these happy notes together in an endless round.” (Dior—MISS DIOR Eau de toilette)

(39) “The opening notes of adrenaline-rich coffee and the sweet sensuality of vanilla recline into the softness of white flowers for a young, modern scent.” (YSL—BLACK OPIUM EAU DE PARFUM)

(40) “...Gucci Guilty Absolute Pour Femme is created using a particular blend with a structure that remains unchanged from the first time it is applied to the skin.” (Gucci—Gucci Guilty Absolute Pour Femme)

Before interpreting the findings, it is important to note that the coding results presented in the tables have been verified through repeated checks against the original advertisement texts. This verification process, conducted by the researcher and cross-checked by the research advisor, aimed to ensure the accuracy of the categorization of lexical items into the defined strategies.

4.3 Gender Descriptive Analysis

Although the social constructionist approach is widely adopted in contemporary discourse analysis, perfume advertisements remain firmly rooted in binary gender representation—male and female. Consequently, this study adopts the dominance approach as the primary lens for examining how perfume brands represent and portray gender. The analysis of lexical selection strategies also sheds light on the presence, absence, or subtlety of gender discrimination in advertising discourse.

In the category of scents through sensation, general descriptors such as *warm*, *fresh*, and *freshness* were found in both male- and female-targeted advertisements. However, *softness*, *smoothness*, and *beautiful* appeared exclusively in female descriptions, whereas *sharpness* and *coolness* were unique to male descriptions. This pattern suggests that gender stereotypes remain embedded in the language of contemporary advertising. Furthermore, within the subcategory of taste-related terms, the adjective *sweet* was consistently present

only in female descriptions, reinforcing a traditional association of sweetness with femininity and reflecting gendered expectations.

Interestingly, while certain stereotypical traits were linked to female representations, the analysis presented fewer overtly stereotypical markers in male descriptions. Nevertheless, in the visual sensation subcategory, the adjective *voluptuous* occurred exclusively in female descriptions. This term carries connotations of a woman's body shape and physical attractiveness, often invoking sexual desirability. The presence of such language reflects the continued sexualization of women in advertising. In contrast, no equivalent terms describing the male body in a sexualized manner were found, indicating an asymmetry in how physicality is linguistically constructed across genders.

In the category of feelings, sensuality-related terms such as *sexuality* and *seductive* appeared in both male and female descriptions, suggesting that attractiveness is a desirable quality across genders. However, emotional terms such as *love*, *love affair*, *romance*, and *passion* occurred exclusively in female descriptions, reinforcing a stereotype that associates women with romantic attachment. Male descriptions, on the other hand, more frequently included the adjective *powerful*, a term often associated with authority, influence, and control. While both male and female descriptions exhibited distinctive gendered tendencies, the findings do not indicate a clear linguistic hierarchy privileging one gender over the other.

For the ingredients category, the data show clear distinctions in the types of components highlighted. Male perfumes frequently featured ingredients such as *wood*, *leather*, and *cedarwood*, while female perfumes emphasized *floral*, *fruity*, and *vanilla* notes. Although both genders referenced a variety of ingredients, the repetition of *floral* in female descriptions, with no equivalent usage in male descriptions, points to a continued association of flowers with femininity. Nonetheless, this difference does not overtly convey subordination or inequality between genders.

Within the identities category, general descriptors such as *iconic*, *personality*, *signature*, and *unique* appeared in both male and female advertisements. However, gender-specific terms such as *feminine* and *masculine* reinforce binary distinctions. While these terms clearly delineate gender categories, their function here is classificatory rather than hierarchical, serving to differentiate rather than to imply superiority or inferiority.

Finally, in the time category, differences between male and female advertisements were minimal in both frequency and semantic content. Although distinct lexical items were used, *modern* for female-targeted products and *contemporary* for male-targeted products, both terms convey the same concept of belonging to the present time. This suggests that temporal descriptors in perfume advertising are largely neutral with respect to gender.

In sum, while gendered patterns and certain stereotypical associations are evident in the lexical choices of perfume advertisements, explicit linguistic subordination of one gender

over the other is not strongly present in the data. Instead, the discourse reflects a continuation of binary categorization and selective reinforcement of traditional gender associations.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study investigated lexical selection strategies in online perfume advertisements targeting male and female consumers, with particular emphasis on the use of adjectives and nouns. Drawing on 20 official product descriptions from five internationally recognized fragrance brands, the analysis combined quantitative frequency patterns with qualitative interpretation to examine how gender is linguistically constructed within digital perfume marketing discourse.

Quantitative findings revealed that the proportion of adjectives was identical across male- and female-oriented advertisements, while nouns occurred slightly more frequently in female-oriented texts. This result partially contrasts with earlier print-based studies, such as Yang (2011) and Willemse (1998), which reported greater adjective and noun usage in feminine advertisements. The discrepancy is likely attributable to contextual and methodological differences, as the present study focused on official online product descriptions, whereas previous research examined print magazines. Online advertising environments typically favor standardized, concise formats, which may constrain stylistic variation and result in more uniform lexical distributions across gender categories.

Across both male- and female-oriented advertisements, the lexical selection strategy most frequently employed was the strategy to show the ingredients of perfume. This finding underscored the central role of ingredient-based descriptions in online fragrance marketing, where consumers were unable to experience scent directly. By referencing recognizable ingredients, advertisers enabled audiences to imagine olfactory qualities efficiently while also facilitating comparison across products in digital contexts. The prominence of this strategy reflected the communicative demands of online platforms, where clarity, accessibility, and semantic efficiency are prioritized.

Despite the dominance of ingredient-based strategies across genders, qualitative analysis revealed systematic gendered differences in the types of ingredients highlighted. Female-oriented advertisements frequently emphasized floral, fruity, and sweet components, whereas male-oriented advertisements favored woody, leathery, and earthy notes. These patterns align with conventional gender associations, whereby femininity is linked with delicacy, emotional expressiveness, and sensuality, while masculinity is associated with strength, stability, and authority. In this respect, ingredient selection functions not only as a descriptive device but also as a means of reinforcing socially constructed gender ideologies through ostensibly neutral lexical choices.

Although the findings do not indicate strong or explicit linguistic subordination of one gender over the other, they demonstrate the persistence of binary gender representation within online perfume advertising. The repeated alignment of specific ingredients, emotional descriptors, and identity-related terms with particular gender categories suggests that digital marketing environments do not eliminate gender stereotyping but rather reproduce it in more standardized and subtle forms.

By extending prior print-based research into the online domain, this study contributes to a growing body of work on gendered language in digital advertising. Nevertheless, the study is subject to certain limitations, including its relatively small dataset and its exclusive focus on textual elements. Future research could expand the scope by incorporating larger datasets, applying inferential statistical testing, or integrating multimodal analysis to examine how visual design and linguistic choices jointly construct gendered meanings in online perfume advertising.

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