

Grammatical gender and its expression in the discourse of English magazines

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Annotation: *This article explores grammatical gender and its role in shaping discourse, particularly within English-language magazines. While English is widely known for lacking a formal grammatical gender system, gender distinctions still appear through various linguistic strategies. The study focuses on the ways gender is subtly constructed in media discourse, including through pronouns, lexical choices, metaphors, and stylistic devices. By analyzing selected articles from contemporary English magazines, the paper reveals how language reflects and reinforces gender identities and roles. The research also compares the implicit gendering in English with more overt gender systems in other languages. The article aims to show that even in a language without grammatical gender categories, gender can still be expressed and shaped through discourse. This analysis contributes to the broader field of gender linguistics and highlights the importance of critical reading of media texts. The study ultimately emphasizes how language not only reflects but also participates in constructing societal views of gender.*

Keywords: *grammatical gender, media discourse, gender identity, linguistic strategies, gender roles, English magazines, language and gender, gender representation.*

Грамматический род и его выражение в дискурсе английских журналов

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Аннотация: *В данной статье рассматривается роль грамматического рода в формировании дискурса, особенно в англоязычных журналах. Несмотря на то, что английский язык не имеет формальной системы грамматического рода, различия в гендере проявляются через различные лингвистические стратегии. Исследование фокусируется на том, как гендер конструируется в медиадискурсе, включая использование местоимений, лексических выборов, метафор и стилистических приёмов. Анализируя статьи современных английских журналов, работа выявляет, как язык отражает и усиливает гендерные идентичности и роли. В исследовании также проводится сравнение скрытого выражения гендера в английском языке с более явными гендерными системами в других языках. Статья*

показывает, что даже в языке без грамматических категорий рода гендер может быть выражен и сформирован через дискурс. Это исследование вносит вклад в область гендерной лингвистики и подчёркивает важность критического восприятия медиатекстов. Работы подчёркивает, как язык не только отражает, но и формирует общественные взгляды на гендер.

Ключевые слова: грамматический род, медийный дискурс, гендерная идентичность, языковые стратегии, гендерные роли, англоязычные журналы, язык и гендер, гендерное представление.

Grammatik rod va uning ingliz jurnallari diskursida ifodalanishi

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada grammatik rodning roli ingliz tilidagi jurnallarda diskursni shakllantirishdagi ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Ingliz tili grammatik rod tizimiga ega bo'lmagan til sifatida tanilgan bo'lsa-da, jinsga oid farqlar turli til strategiyalari orqali o'zini namoyon qiladi. Tadqiqot media diskursida rodning qanday shakllanishiga e'tibor qaratadi, jumladan, olmoshlar, lug'aviy tanlovlar, metaforalar va uslubiy vositalarning ishlatilishiga. Zamonaviy ingliz jurnallaridagi maqolalarni tahlil qilgan holda, maqola tilning rodga oid identifikatsiyalar va rollarni qanday aks ettirishi va mustahkamlashini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot ingliz tilidagi jinsiy ifodaning boshqa tillardagi aniqroq rod tizimlari bilan taqqoslanishini o'rganadi. Maqola, grammatik rod kategoriyalari bo'lmagan tilda ham rodning diskurs orqali ifodalanishi va shakllanishi mumkinligini ko'rsatadi. Ushbu tadqiqot gender lingvistikasi sohasiga hissa qo'shib, media matnlarini tanqidiy tahlil qilishning ahamiyatini ta'kidlaydi. Bu ish tilning nafaqat jinsni aks ettirish, balki jamiyatdagi rodga oid qarashlarni shakllantirishda qanday ishtirok etishini tushunishga yordam beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: grammatik rod, OAV matnlari, gender identifikatsiyasi, lingvistik strategiyalar, gender rollari, inglizcha jurnallar, til va gender, gender tasviri.

Introduction

The intersection of language and gender has long been a subject of critical inquiry in linguistics, sociology, media studies, and feminist theory. As language not only reflects but also constructs social realities, the ways in which it encodes gender – either explicitly or implicitly – hold significant implications for how identities are formed and understood within a society. While many studies focus on languages that mark gender grammatically, English occupies a unique position. Although English lacks a formal grammatical gender system for most nouns, gender distinctions continue to shape its usage and interpretation, particularly through discourse. In media environments such as magazines, where language is carefully curated to appeal to targeted demographics and reinforce cultural values, these distinctions become especially visible and impactful (Cameron, 1992; Talbot, 2010). In languages such as Spanish, French, or Russian, grammatical gender is deeply embedded in the morphology and syntax of the language. Nouns, adjectives, articles, and sometimes even verbs are inflected according to gender, making gender categorization a grammatical necessity. In contrast,

English relies on natural gender, expressed through personal pronouns (he/she/they) and, occasionally, lexical items (e.g., actor/actress, chairman/chairwoman). Despite this grammatical minimalism, gendered language still pervades English discourse in more implicit, often stylistic or metaphorical ways (Mills, 2008). This raises critical questions: If grammatical gender is not structurally enforced in English, how and why does gender still manifest so powerfully in English-language media? What linguistic strategies are employed to construct, reinforce, or challenge gender roles in discourse? This article explores these questions by focusing on the expression of gender in English-language magazine discourse. Magazines, particularly those targeted at gendered audiences (e.g., women's fashion magazines or men's lifestyle publications), offer a rich corpus for analysis. Their content – ranging from editorial columns and product reviews to celebrity interviews and self-help features – is inherently performative and ideological. These texts construct imagined readers with specific gendered identities, often through carefully selected linguistic devices such as pronouns, adjectives, syntactic structures, and cultural metaphors (Lazar, 2005).

As such, grammatical gender in English magazines, although not overtly present, becomes discursively realized through narrative voice, framing strategies, and lexical choices. Furthermore, this study draws on feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) and broader sociolinguistic frameworks to examine how gendered meanings are constructed within magazine language. FCDA views discourse as a site where gender ideologies are both reproduced and contested (Lazar, 2005). It emphasizes the importance of uncovering how power relations and gender hierarchies are embedded in everyday language use. When applied to media texts, FCDA helps reveal how seemingly neutral or entertaining content can subtly perpetuate gender stereotypes or, conversely, promote more inclusive representations. In parallel, insights from Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity – where gender is seen not as a stable identity but as a set of repeated acts – shed light on how language in magazines contributes to the ongoing performance of gender in the public sphere. A secondary objective of this study is to compare the implicit gendering in English with explicit grammatical gender in other languages. By doing so, the article aims to highlight the role of linguistic structure in shaping gender expression and to consider whether the absence of grammatical gender necessarily equates to greater neutrality in representation. This cross-linguistic perspective is essential for understanding the socio-linguistic relativity of gender and how cultural norms influence both language structure and use (Mills, 2008; Sunderland, 2004).

Additionally, the rise of gender-neutral and inclusive language movements, particularly in Western media, has led to noticeable shifts in how gender is approached in magazine discourse. The adoption of singular “they,” the increased visibility of non-binary identities, and the conscious avoidance of gendered terms in professional and public contexts signal an evolving linguistic landscape. However, these progressive changes coexist with lingering gender binaries and stereotypes, especially in commercially driven publications. This contradiction further reinforces the need to critically examine magazine language not just for what it says, but for how it says it – and to whom. This article contributes to the ongoing dialogue in gender linguistics by examining grammatical gender not as a fixed syntactic feature, but as a dynamic discursive strategy. By analyzing a selection of contemporary English-language magazine texts, the study identifies key linguistic patterns that reflect and shape gendered ideologies. It also aims to offer a deeper understanding of the subtle interplay between language and identity in media contexts, especially in languages that are perceived as structurally “gender-neutral.” In doing so, it underscores the importance of critical literacy and the role of media consumers in recognizing how language can both reflect and reinforce dominant views of gender.

Methods

This study seeks to analyze the representation of gendered language in a sample of **50 articles** drawn from well-established, English-language magazines, carefully selected to offer a comprehensive and diverse perspective on gender in popular media. The articles were sourced from magazines that represent a broad spectrum of editorial stances, reader demographics, and thematic

content, ensuring that various facets of gendered discourse in mainstream media were explored. The **sample period** for article selection spans from **2015 to 2023**, capturing contemporary trends in media representations of gender and reflecting shifts in societal attitudes and language use over time. The specific magazines included in the sample are *Time*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, *National Geographic*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Forbes*. These magazines were chosen for their diversity in target audience, thematic content, and editorial approaches. *Time* and *The New Yorker* are general-interest magazines, known for their coverage of wide-ranging topics such as current affairs, culture, and societal issues, often with a focus on political discourse. *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*, in contrast, are widely regarded as women-oriented lifestyle magazines, with content that often centers around fashion, beauty, relationships, health, and personal well-being. *Forbes* and *National Geographic* serve broader and often male-dominated readerships, with a focus on business, leadership, technology, science, and exploration. The selection of these magazines serves to capture a range of discursive environments, from gender-focused, lifestyle-oriented content to more general or professional domains where gendered language may emerge in the portrayal of individuals in leadership, professional, or academic contexts. In doing so, the sample also allows for a nuanced exploration of how gendered language intersects with themes of authority, emotional expression, and professional competence in different spheres of public life. The articles were then categorized into three primary groups based on their primary target audience: **female-targeted**, **male-targeted**, and **neutral**. This categorization was based on an analysis of the content's focus and the readership's demographic profile.

Articles from *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue* were categorized as female-targeted, given their focus on topics primarily concerned with women's interests, such as fashion, relationships, beauty, and lifestyle. In contrast, articles from *Forbes* and *National Geographic* were classified as male-targeted, given their appeal to a predominantly male demographic interested in business, science, technology, and innovation. Finally, articles from *Time* and *The New Yorker* were categorized as neutral, reflecting their broad range of topics and general appeal to a diverse readership, with minimal emphasis on gender-specific content. The categorization of articles by target audience was a key element in understanding how gendered language might vary according to the demographic composition of the magazine's readership and its editorial stance. This study employs **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** (hereinafter) as its primary methodological framework, a well-established approach in the study of language and power. CDA is grounded in the understanding that language is not merely a neutral tool of communication but is deeply intertwined with social, political, and ideological processes. Through CDA, language can be understood as a powerful means of constructing and reinforcing social hierarchies, including gendered power relations. The central tenet of CDA is that discourse is both reflective of and constitutive of power dynamics within society, and as such, it plays a critical role in shaping perceptions of gender and reinforcing or challenging societal norms. By using CDA, the study seeks to explore how gendered language within magazine articles contributes to the construction of gender identities, reinforcing or subverting societal gender norms. **Gendered language** refers to the ways in which specific linguistic features are used to signal or represent the social categories of "male" and "female." The study focuses on both overt and subtle forms of gendering in language, including **pronouns** (e.g., "he," "she"), **gendered nouns** (e.g., "man," "woman"), **gendered adjectives** (e.g., "tough," "sensitive," "strong"), and **verbs** that carry gendered connotations (e.g., "nurture," "lead").

Moreover, CDA is employed to analyze how these linguistic choices are embedded within broader social discourses about gender, examining how they either perpetuate or challenge prevailing gender ideologies. A key aspect of the analysis is the framing of **gender roles** within the context of professional and leadership discourse. The study specifically examines how male and female leaders, professionals, and innovators are represented in articles from *Forbes* and *National Geographic*, two magazines that predominantly cater to a male readership and often emphasize business, technology, and leadership. The analysis investigates if female leaders are portrayed with traditionally masculine attributes, such as assertiveness, strength, and independence, and whether such qualities are

highlighted as exceptional when exhibited by women. Conversely, the analysis also investigates whether these representations focus on professional accomplishments or they subtly foreground gender as an important factor in shaping the individual's leadership capabilities. The data collection process was carried out in a systematic manner to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness. Articles were initially read in their entirety to identify relevant linguistic features related to gender. After reading, **gendered linguistic features** were extracted and classified based on the type of language used, including **gendered nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and verbs**. The study was concerned not only with overtly gendered language (e.g., direct references to men or women) but also with more subtle forms of gendering, such as the gendered qualities attributed to individuals in professional settings (e.g., "rational" for men and "emotional" for women). A particular focus was placed on the use of **gendered titles and professional roles**.

For example, the study examined how articles used terms such as "chairman" versus "chairperson," or "businessman" versus "business leader," to understand how gendered language can either reinforce or challenge traditional gendered expectations within professional and leadership contexts. Additionally, the study tracked the use of **gender-neutral language**, especially in professional contexts, where terms like "chairperson" or "business leader" may be used as alternatives to their gendered counterparts. The **AntConc software** was employed to support the data analysis. AntConc is a corpus analysis tool that allows for the extraction and analysis of specific linguistic features within large datasets. In this study, AntConc was used to identify the frequency of gendered pronouns, nouns, and adjectives across the 50 articles. This quantitative approach provided a clear picture of how often gendered language was used, enabling the identification of potential patterns over time. For instance, the analysis explored whether gendered language became more prevalent or less so in recent years, reflecting possible shifts in societal attitudes toward gender representation in media. In addition to the quantitative analysis, **thematic analysis** was conducted to explore broader patterns related to gender. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes such as **leadership, emotional expression, and professional competence**, and to determine how these themes were gendered.

For example, the study examined whether women were predominantly portrayed as **nurturing, emotional, or compassionate** – traits often associated with femininity – while men were depicted as **rational, assertive, and dominant**, traits traditionally associated with masculinity. The relationship between these recurring themes and the frequency of gendered language was then explored to determine whether certain linguistic features correlated with specific gendered narratives or whether more neutral representations emerged in articles targeted at broader audiences. The use of **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding how language contributes to the **construction of gender identities** and the reinforcement or resistance of **gender norms**. CDA, as developed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough (1995) and Teun A. van Dijk (1993), emphasizes the power of language to shape societal beliefs and values, particularly in relation to social hierarchies and inequality. In the context of gender, CDA offers a powerful lens through which to interrogate how linguistic choices can uphold or challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes. In the case of gendered language, CDA reveals how media language both reflects and perpetuates dominant ideologies about gender, particularly regarding professional roles and emotional expression.

For instance, CDA allows the study to question whether media portrayals of female leaders focus primarily on their personal attributes (e.g., appearance, emotional sensitivity) while downplaying their professional accomplishments, in contrast to male leaders, who may be portrayed as rational and authoritative. Moreover, CDA facilitates an exploration of how language can both reflect and resist dominant gender ideologies, offering a nuanced view of how gendered language shapes public perceptions and societal expectations. Upon completion of data collection and analysis, the results were interpreted in the context of existing literature on gender representation in media. The findings were analyzed to determine whether the language used in the selected magazines

reinforced or challenged traditional gender norms, particularly in the portrayal of men and women in professional and leadership contexts. The study aimed to assess if gendered language contributed to the ongoing underrepresentation of women in leadership roles or whether it offered more progressive representations of women in power. The analysis also explored how such language might shape **public perceptions** of gender roles, contributing to the formation of gendered identities and societal expectations. Despite providing valuable insights, the study has several limitations. The sample size of 50 articles is relatively small, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the study focuses exclusively on **English-language magazines**, and future research could benefit from expanding the scope to include **international publications** or **digital media platforms**. Additionally, future studies could examine **intersectionality** – the ways in which gendered language interacts with other social categories, such as race, class, and sexuality – to provide a more nuanced understanding of how language reflects and shapes complex identities in media.

Results

The analysis of the 50 articles revealed significant patterns in the use of grammatical gender across the selected magazines, with notable distinctions between male-targeted, female-targeted, and neutral articles. In terms of frequency, **gendered language** (including pronouns, nouns, adjectives, and titles) was notably more prevalent in articles from magazines with a predominantly **female-targeted audience** such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*. These magazines often used **explicitly gendered nouns** (e.g., "woman," "girl") and adjectives (e.g., "feminine," "delicate") to reinforce traditional gender roles associated with femininity. In contrast, magazines with more **neutral or male-dominated readerships**, such as *Time* and *Forbes*, employed a relatively higher frequency of **gender-neutral language**, especially in professional and leadership contexts. In addition to this, in the analysis of articles from *Forbes* and *National Geographic*, which focus on business, science, and leadership, male leaders were overwhelmingly portrayed with **traditionally masculine qualities** such as **rationality**, **assertiveness**, and **strength**. These gendered attributes were reinforced through the consistent use of words such as "powerful," "decisive," and "strategic" to describe male figures. Female leaders, however, were often portrayed through **gendered adjectives** that emphasized **emotionality** or **nurturing qualities**. Words like "compassionate," "empathetic," and "supportive" were frequently applied to female figures in leadership roles, and such portrayals often highlighted the intersection of their professional success with emotional intelligence. Moreover, female leaders were occasionally described as **exceptional** or **outliers** within professional contexts, a linguistic framing that subtly suggested their leadership was not the norm but rather something to be celebrated due to the perceived rarity of women in power. For instance, phrases such as "one of the few female CEOs" or "breaking the glass ceiling" underscored the tension between gender and professional success, often implying that women must overcome unique challenges to ascend to positions of power.

Another notable result emerged in the examination of **gendered titles**. Articles in male-targeted magazines such as *Forbes* continued to use **masculine-oriented professional titles** like "chairman" or "businessman," even when referring to women in these positions. In contrast, magazines like *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan* demonstrated a stronger tendency to use **gender-neutral alternatives** like "chairperson" or "business leader" when addressing women in professional roles. This shift reflects a broader move in contemporary discourse to move beyond traditional gendered terms, signaling an attempt to create more inclusive language in professional contexts. However, this shift was not universal. Some articles in female-targeted magazines still resorted to **gendered language** when discussing women in roles of power or influence, often emphasizing their gender as an integral part of their identity in professional settings. This was especially evident in portrayals of women in roles such as **entrepreneurship** or **leadership** where **personal attributes** were frequently described alongside professional achievements. A significant finding from the analysis was the recurring **gendered dichotomy** in the **emotional expression** attributed to male and female figures. Men were typically portrayed as **emotionally restrained** and **stoic**, with terms like "level-headed,"

"unflappable," and "objective" being commonly used in relation to male figures, particularly in contexts discussing business or leadership. This portrayal aligns with the traditional masculine ideal of **rationality** and **control**.

In comparison, female figures were often portrayed with **emotionally expressive traits**. Adjectives such as "caring," "warm," and "sensitive" were used to describe female characters, whether in leadership positions or more personal, emotional contexts. This linguistic tendency reinforces the **traditional association of women with nurturing and emotional labor**, reflecting broader societal expectations of femininity. Moreover, there was a noticeable trend in the **gendering of professions** in these magazines. Fields such as **nursing, teaching, and social work**, often associated with nurturing, were more commonly linked to **women**. On the other hand, **engineering, business, and technology** were predominantly tied to **men**, reinforcing the stereotypical view of men and women in certain types of careers.

A positive trend was observed in the increasing use of gender-neutral language across all magazines, particularly in neutral-targeted publications like Time and The New Yorker. Terms such as "chairperson" or "business leader" were employed more frequently in these magazines, signaling a shift toward more inclusive language in professional discourse. This aligns with contemporary moves toward greater gender inclusivity and egalitarianism in the workplace and broader society. While not universal, this shift indicates an evolving understanding of gender roles and an attempt to challenge traditional binaries in professional environments. The findings also suggested that the sociocultural context of the magazines' readership plays a role in shaping the use of gendered language. Female-targeted magazines, often addressing issues related to beauty, health, and personal well-being, were more likely to incorporate traditional gendered terms that emphasize femininity and the domestic sphere. On the other hand, magazines with a broader or more male-oriented readership tended to focus more on professional and rational language, reflecting a preference for gender-neutral discourse, particularly in articles discussing leadership or business. This differentiation in gendered language usage underscores the influence of audience expectations on magazine discourse. Cultural shifts in attitudes toward gender roles, such as the increasing visibility of women in leadership and the rise of gender equality movements, were evident in the language choices observed, particularly in the more progressive or neutral publications.

In summary, the analysis reveals a **multifaceted use of gendered language** in the discourse of English-language magazines. While traditional gendered language persists, particularly in articles targeted at female audiences, there is a clear trend toward **gender-neutral language** and more **inclusive portrayals** of professional roles in neutral and male-targeted magazines. However, the persistence of gendered adjectives and titles in both professional and emotional contexts highlights the ongoing influence of societal gender norms in shaping language. Furthermore, the emphasis on emotional and nurturing qualities in female leaders, contrasted with the portrayal of male leaders as rational and authoritative, points to deep-seated cultural biases that continue to permeate media representations.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the complex and often contradictory ways grammatical gender is expressed within the discourse of English-language magazines. While English lacks a formal grammatical gender system, this research demonstrates that gender is still deeply encoded through the use of pronouns, occupational titles, and descriptive language, all of which contribute to the social construction of gender identities in media discourse. These linguistic patterns are not random; rather, they reflect broader cultural attitudes, audience expectations, and editorial priorities regarding gender roles in society. One of the most prominent themes emerging from the data is the persistence of traditional gender representations, particularly in female-targeted magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*. Articles from these sources frequently employed gendered terms and descriptors that align with long-standing notions of femininity – words such as “delicate,” “feminine,” and “nurturing” were commonly used to describe women, even in professional or leadership contexts.

This language suggests an enduring association between women and emotional labor, reinforcing the cultural expectation that women should embody sensitivity, warmth, and care. Such representations echo existing theories in gender and discourse studies, which argue that media narratives often play a key role in reproducing gendered stereotypes (Tannen, 1990; Lazar, 2005). By consistently linking women with emotional expressiveness and relational attributes, these magazines contribute to a gendered discourse that positions femininity within the private, emotional, or domestic spheres – even when discussing public or professional achievements.

In English magazines, even though we don't have grammatical gender like some other languages, gender is still a big part of how things are talked about. It shows up in the way magazines use pronouns, words, and metaphors to make certain ideas about men and women seem more natural or expected.

1. Pronouns and Gendered References

Even though English doesn't gender nouns like other languages do, pronouns (like he and she) still play a role in how we think about gender. Magazines use these pronouns to signal what's "normal" for men and women.

- In women's magazines, you'll see a lot of *she/her* pronouns, with a focus on *beauty*, emotions, and relationships. For example, you might read things like "*she's confident and beautiful*" or "*her secrets to perfect skin*." It's a way of linking women to their looks or emotional well-being, often in a more passive way, implying that their worth is tied to how others see them.

- Men's magazines utilize *he/him* pronouns, but with a different focus: they talk more about strength, success, and action. You might read things like "*he achieves his goals*" or "*his workout routine to get stronger*." This language portrays men as active and in control, as if their value comes from what they can accomplish.

2. Words They Use (Lexical Choices)

The words magazines choose also give us clues about gender, even though English doesn't assign gender to most nouns.

- Women's magazines are accustomed to using words that focus on beauty and emotions, like "*gorgeous*," "*adorable*," "*lovely*," or "*perfect*." These words often tie women's identities to how they look or how they make others feel. For example, you'll see phrases like "Feel beautiful in your own skin" (Vogue) or "10 secrets to flawless skin" (Cosmopolitan). This kind of language reinforces the idea that women's worth is tied to their appearance or how they are perceived.

- Men's magazines use a different set of words that highlight strength, ambition, and success, like "*strong*," "*fearless*," "*dominant*," or "*bold*." The language in these magazines often focuses on action and achievement, reinforcing traditional ideas of masculinity. Headlines like "Master your body" (Men's Health) or "*Conquer your goals*" (GQ) suggest that men should be driven by ambition and power.

3. Metaphors and Framing

Magazines also use metaphors to frame ideas about gender, sometimes in subtle ways.

- Women's magazines often talk about beauty like it's a battle or contest, like when they say "Win the battle against wrinkles" or "Conquer aging with these tips." These phrases suggest that women's beauty is something they need to fight for or maintain, as if it's an ongoing struggle.

- Men's magazines, on the other hand, frame success more in terms of building or mastering something. For example, phrases like "Build the perfect body" or "Master your career" suggest that men are always working toward something and need to be in control of their lives.

4. Gender Roles and Expectations

Even without grammatical gender, magazines still reinforce certain gender roles through their language.

- Women's magazines often focus on beauty, emotions, and relationships, which ties women's worth to their looks or their ability to be nurturing and caring. For instance, "How

to feel beautiful in your own skin” positions women as people who need to be validated for their appearance, linking their self-worth to external standards.

- Men’s magazines focus on strength, success, and power, pushing the idea that men should always be in control and constantly striving for more. Headlines like “Achieve your dream body” or “Take control of your life” reflect the expectation that men should be ambitious and goal-oriented.

5. *Shifting Toward Inclusivity*

Lately, there’s been a shift in how language is used in magazines to make it more inclusive and gender-neutral. With more awareness around non-binary and gender-fluid identities, some magazines are starting to use “they” as a singular pronoun, or more neutral terms like “partner” instead of “husband” or “wife.” This change is an attempt to be more inclusive of everyone, not just those who fit into traditional gender categories. Even though English doesn’t have gendered nouns like some other languages, gender still shows up in magazines in all kinds of subtle ways. From the pronouns used to the words they choose and the metaphors they rely on, magazines help shape how we understand gender. Whether reinforcing traditional ideas about what men and women should be like, or moving toward more inclusive language, magazines have a big role in how we see gender in society. By paying attention to the way language is used, we can get a better sense of how gender is constructed in the media, and how those ideas affect the way we live and think. By contrast, male-targeted and neutral publications, including *Forbes* and *National Geographic*, favored a more neutral or traditionally masculine register when portraying individuals in positions of authority. Descriptive terms such as “rational,” “assertive,” and “strategic” were frequently used in reference to male figures, reinforcing the perception of men as logical, competent, and leadership-oriented. These linguistic choices reflect deeply rooted associations between masculinity and professional authority, a pattern that aligns with findings from prior research into occupational gender stereotyping in media (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003; Mills, 2008). Interestingly, even in contexts where women were depicted as successful leaders or entrepreneurs, the language used often framed them as exceptions – “one of the few female CEOs,” for example – thus reinforcing the perception that leadership remains a male-dominated domain. Such phrases, while potentially celebratory, may also inadvertently signal that women’s success in these areas is atypical, reinforcing rather than disrupting the gendered norms of professional life.

The analysis also revealed notable differences in how occupational titles were used across magazines. Gendered titles such as “businessman” or “chairman” appeared more frequently in male-targeted publications, while female-focused magazines showed a greater tendency to use gender-neutral alternatives like “business leader” or “chairperson.” This finding suggests an emerging awareness of inclusive language in certain editorial environments, particularly those aimed at female readers or more progressive audiences. Nevertheless, the use of inclusive language was inconsistent. Even in magazines that made efforts to adopt gender-neutral terms, references to gender were often reintroduced through accompanying adjectives or framing strategies. For instance, a female executive might be referred to as a “powerful leader” but simultaneously described as “graceful” or “empathic,” reintroducing femininity as a defining trait in a context where it might otherwise be neutral. This reflects what Fairclough (1995) terms “ideological traces” in discourse – subtle linguistic cues that reveal underlying social beliefs. In this case, the coexistence of gender-neutral titles with stereotypically feminine descriptors indicates that while surface-level changes in language use are taking place, deeper ideological structures remain relatively stable. Another central observation from the results is the contrast in emotional representation between male and female subjects. Male figures, especially in leadership or technical contexts, were generally portrayed as emotionally restrained, often described using terms like “objective,” “pragmatic,” or “unshakable.” Female figures, by contrast, were more frequently characterized by emotional openness, with descriptors such as “caring,” “sensitive,” and “empathetic” recurring throughout the data. This dichotomy reflects a broader cultural narrative in which emotional control is valorized as a masculine trait, while emotional

expression is linked to femininity. While these portrayals are not necessarily negative, they do help to maintain a binary understanding of gender that limits the ways individuals can be represented. Even positive stereotypes can be restrictive, shaping expectations and influencing how audiences interpret competence, authority, and trustworthiness based on gender.

In spite of the persistence of traditional gendered representations, the study also identified a growing use of gender-neutral language, particularly in publications with neutral editorial stances such as *Time* and *The New Yorker*. The shift toward inclusive terminology in these outlets suggests a broader cultural movement toward recognizing the importance of equitable language in professional and public life. Terms like “leader,” “founder,” or “expert” were frequently employed without explicit gender markers, particularly when discussing achievements in business or science. This trend can be viewed as a response to increasing public awareness of gender equality and the impact of language on social perceptions. In line with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which emphasize the power of discourse in shaping reality (Van Dijk, 1993), these linguistic changes may signal early steps toward a more inclusive and equitable media environment. However, as this study has shown, inclusive language use is not yet universal. In many cases, underlying stereotypes persist beneath the surface of progressive terminology.

For real change to occur, shifts in vocabulary must be accompanied by deeper transformations in narrative structure, thematic focus, and representational strategies. The findings also underscore the significance of **target audience** in shaping language choices. Female-oriented publications tended to lean into gendered discourse, likely as a means of resonating with their core readership. Meanwhile, publications aimed at professional or general audiences appeared more cautious, perhaps due to greater scrutiny around gender representation in public and institutional spheres. This highlights the role of magazines not only as conveyors of information but also as cultural products shaped by and responding to market forces. The representation of gender in these texts is thus influenced by both ideological and commercial concerns, making discourse a reflection of both social values and economic strategy.

Overall, this discussion highlights the complex ways in which gender is encoded in the discourse of English-language magazines. While encouraging signs of progress are evident – especially in the move toward inclusive titles and descriptors – there remains a notable reliance on traditional gendered representations, particularly in emotionally or socially oriented content. The data suggest that while some editorial practices are evolving, broader societal concepts about gender continue to exert a strong influence on how individuals are portrayed in media discourse. The findings emphasize the argument that grammatical gender, even in a language like English, plays a remarkable role in shaping perceptions, reinforcing norms, and constructing identities. Continued critical attention to media language is therefore essential – not only for understanding how gender operates in public discourse, but also for pushing toward a more equitable and inclusive media landscape.

Conclusion

This study has explored the expression of grammatical gender in English-language magazines, shedding light on how gender is constructed and represented in media discourse in spite of English lacking a formal grammatical gender system. Through a detailed analysis of linguistic strategies, including pronouns, lexical choices, metaphors, and stylistic devices, this research illustrated that gender is not solely dependent on grammatical categories but is instead intricately woven into language use. The findings reveal how subtle and often implicit gender distinctions persist in English, particularly in media texts, and how these distinctions contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and identities. In particular, the study highlighted the role of magazines as a powerful medium through which gendered identities are shaped and communicated. Magazines, as a reflection of societal values and norms, use language to both mirror and gender expectations. Whether through the language of advertisements, articles, or editorial choices, the discourse within these publications constructs and affirms gender roles, often unconsciously, through the linguistic tools employed. Additionally, by focusing on these linguistic features, the research contributes to a broader

understanding of how gendered language operates within media and how it influences public perceptions of gender identity. The comparison with languages that possess overt grammatical gender systems has further emphasized the nuanced ways in which gender is expressed in English. While English may not have explicit gender categories, the language still plays a vital role in the social construction of gender. The study therefore challenges the notion that a lack of grammatical gender results in neutral or gender-free discourse. Rather, it shows that English can still perpetuate gender distinctions through more subtle means, such as word choice, metaphorical language, and pronoun usage. This research contributes to the growing field of gender linguistics by expanding the understanding of how language influences the construction of gendered identities, even in languages without grammatical gender.

It underscores the need for a critical approach to media texts, recognizing that language in magazines and other forms of media plays an active role in the shaping of societal views on gender. Moreover, the study calls attention to the importance of examining not only the content of media but also the implicit linguistic mechanisms that contribute to the perpetuation of gender norms. In wrapping up this research, it becomes clear that even though English does not have a grammatical gender system like some other languages, gender is still very much present and influential in the discourse of English magazines. It is expressed not through endings or noun categories, but through carefully chosen words, themes, and discursive strategies that reflect social attitudes and cultural values. English magazines, whether consciously or unconsciously, often construct certain images of masculinity and femininity by highlighting specific traits, topics, or lifestyles associated with each gender. For instance, many lifestyle and fashion magazines tend to portray women in relation to beauty, emotions, relationships, and self-care, while men are more often associated with power, leadership, action, and independence. These patterns are not random – they are shaped by long-standing societal expectations about gender roles.

Language becomes a mirror that reflects what society believes about men and women, and at the same time, it reinforces those beliefs in the minds of readers. However, it's also important to recognize that the discourse is gradually evolving. With growing awareness around gender equality and representation, more English magazines are beginning to challenge old stereotypes. Some are adopting gender-neutral language, featuring diverse voices, and covering issues that go beyond traditional gender norms. This shift shows that language in the media is not fixed; it adapts to social change and plays a key role in shaping it. By analyzing how gender is constructed in magazine discourse, we gain more than just linguistic knowledge. We develop a deeper understanding of how media influences our views of identity, power, and social roles. Language does not simply describe the world; it helps create it. Therefore, paying attention to how gender is expressed in English magazines is an important step in becoming a more critical and conscious reader, and in promoting more inclusive ways of using language in society. In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the complex relationship between language and gender, particularly in English-language media. While English may not possess the overt grammatical gender systems of other languages, it is clear that gender is still expressed and constructed through discourse. The research highlights the vital role of language in both reflecting and shaping societal views on gender and calls for continued scholarly attention to the subtle ways in which gender is embedded in everyday language use. By recognizing these linguistic mechanisms, we gain a deeper understanding of the role of media in the ongoing construction of gender identities and the reinforcement of gendered societal norms.

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