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Persuasive language in fashion discourse: a corpus analysis of noun and verb phrases in clothing advertisements

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Introduction

This dissertation will focus on the analysis of noun and verb phrases in fashion magazines such as Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire. Nouns and verbs are essential elements of language, therefore their presence and role can have a great impact on the perception of a message.

This dissertation will be divided into three chapters. These chapters aim to present the potential effects some of the linguistic attributes of fashion discourse may have on readers. The first chapter offers a brief introduction on the importance of language and its role in people's lives. Language plays a crucial role in our perception and our understanding of the world, as it can have an impact on our actions. In the fashion industry, language is the means through which fashion is portrayed and advertised, which is why I chose to analyse it. Next, I will introduce the discourse analysis approach and its benefits in the examination of a text. The discourse analysis approach investigates the properties of language taking into consideration its cultural and societal aspect. Language is created within a community of people who belong to certain traditions and customs. Therefore, in my analysis of fashion discourse I will look at language in its connection with the cultural and societal expectations and rules. I will then present the role clothes can play in communication. Clothes are not just pieces of fabric to be worn, they can also be a means of communication among people. They can convey a person's ideologies and beliefs, they can convey a sense of belonging or exclusion from societal expectation, they can impact the way other people view and judge us. Consequently, the language used to portray and advertise clothing is important. That is why I will focus on the analysis of fashion discourse. The discourse of fashion does not just present clothes, it can reflect opinions and viewpoints, it can impact the way readers perceive the fashion world, it can influence the actions of those who engage with its content. Fashion discourse can avail itself of various linguistic methods to display clothes, that is why in my own analysis I will focus

on noun and verb phrases in fashion magazines. One of the means through which fashion discourse is broadcasted is the media, in particular online fashion magazines. They transmit information about the fashion world, they can have a pervasive and powerful influence on people. The discourse of online fashion magazines may have a specific audience in mind, therefore it can impact the way in which people interpret fashion and clothing. Fashion magazines present and publicize clothes, they give insight on the fashion world, they give suggestions and recommendation on certain trends and fashion styles. As a result, they act as an intermediary between fashion and ordinary people who may be interested in it. They may play a crucial role in the image and impression the public will have about fashion. For this reason, in my own analysis of fashion discourse I will analyse magazines such as Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire.

The second chapter of this dissertation will start with the discussion on the role of creativity in language. Creativity in language can have a great impact on individuals, as it has the ability to distort and twist the normal meaning of words, using imagination and inventiveness to convey a message. This way, the message may be more memorable and interesting as opposed to standard language. Fashion discourse also makes use of creative methods to portray clothing, therefore in my own analysis I will focus on the role creativity may have on readers of fashion magazines. Next I will introduce persuasion and the discourse of advertising. Persuasive language in ads tends to be evocative, attention-drawing and creative, as its aim is to convince individuals to purchase a certain product. Persuasive language can have the power to create desires and may therefore influence the decision-making process in people. The discourse of advertising is the effect of a calculated linguistic process whose intention is to sell a product. Fashion discourse not only offers information on fashion, it also aims to advertise and sell clothing items. Therefore, the discourse of fashion is often persuasive and alluring, making use of advertising strategies to publicize its products. In my own analysis, I will analyse the role noun and verb phrases can have on the advertising of clothing. To

do so, I will employ a corpus linguistics approach. Corpus linguistics studies language in use, it is an empirical approach that makes use of large collections of texts called corpora, that have been gathered in electronic form according to specific criteria. This method will allow me to analyse my own corpus of texts regarding fashion discourse. The final sections of the second chapter will introduce the role and importance of noun and verb phrases. Nouns are used to identify people, animals, things, places and abstract concepts, they help create the sense of a sentence, as they can shape various meanings. As a consequence, noun phrases in fashion discourse can have a certain impact in the portrayal and advertising of clothes. Verbs are required for effective communication, they frame present, past and future tense and place actions into a temporal context. In my own analysis, I will focus on modal verbs and imperative verbs in fashion discourse. Modal verbs seem to have an extensive presence in fashion discourse, for this reason I will analyse their role in advertising. Advertising language often employs imperative verbs in its ads, exhorting people to buy its products. Fashion discourse also makes use of imperatives, therefore I will examine their role in the advertising of clothes.

The third chapter will firstly begin with the methodology I will employ in my analysis. In my analysis of noun and verb phrases in fashion magazines, I will use the Sketch Engine and AntConc software tools to examine the frequency patterns and collocation of noun and verb phrases. For noun phrases, I will select a few of the most frequently used nouns in my corpus and I will analyse their connection with creativity. For verb phrases, I will select the most frequently used modal verbs and imperative verbs and I will analyse their relationship with advertising strategies. I will offer a few examples from the corpus for each noun and verb that I will examine, providing context for my study. I will also discuss the role of persuasion in the frequency patterns and collocation of noun and verb phrases from my corpus.

1. Language and fashion

This chapter aims to present a brief introduction of language and its potential impact on our thoughts and interactions. I will then discuss the discourse analysis approach and its functionality in the analysis of language from a societal and cultural perspective. Next, I will introduce fashion and clothes as a vehicle of communication and I will speak about their importance in our attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, I will look at fashion discourse and its possible effects on readers, giving some examples of linguistic analysis in fashion that explores linguistic features and their influence. Finally, I will examine media discourse and the role of fashion magazines in the portrayal of fashion.

1.1 The importance of language

Language can be used in various ways to convey numerous meanings. It can be used to communicate, to inform, to persuade, to express opinions or feelings. Volpintesta (2014:10) states that “language has always been a marvellous key that unlocks doors, worlds, and minds.” Language is a system that humans learn very early on in their lives, and for this reason it may seem that it has become automatic or mechanized. However, words can be a powerful device to connote meanings that can go beyond literal interpretation. Consequently, the language that people use to say something may not be a casual or unconscious choice. According to Fairclough (2001:94) “the meaning of a word is not an isolated and independent thing”. Since language is a system, it can be interpreted as a set of connections working together to form a rational meaning that can be used to exchange a message. In accordance with Fairclough (1992:185) “words typically have various meanings, and meanings are typically 'worded' in various ways”. Language can be interpreted in more than one way. That means that words may suggest more than

meets the eyes, as they can carry a double meaning or even imply a figurative or symbolic significance.

It is therefore relevant to introduce the concepts of denotation and connotation; Dyer (1982:101) defines denotation as “what is ‘objectively’ present and easily recognized or identified” and connotation as “a term used to refer to meanings which lie beyond denotation but are dependent on it”. While denotation is important to grasp the literal meaning of language, connotation can enhance the interpretation of it, by evoking positive or negative reactions and therefore affecting the understanding of language. That being the case, what we say and express could implicate beliefs and views that may not be comprehensible on the surface, which is why it is crucial to consider the implications that words may express.

Language may have effects and consequences which can influence our actions and our behaviour. In the opinion of Gee (1999:2) “Language allows us to do things. It allows us to engage in actions and activities”. Language does not only have a theoretical significance, it also permeates the physical and tangible world by validating, restricting or negating our actions. Without language, the human thought process would be difficult, as it allows us to make logical connections, to rationalize our ideas and to communicate them to the outward world. According to Dyer (1982:112) “Words can affect the beliefs and attitudes of other people”. Language has an impact on politics, the education system, religion, the media. Every aspect of human life is shaped by words. Language is the fundamental principle of laws, societal norms, culture, customs, belief systems. Jones (2018:39) says that “A language is much more than a set of structural parameters. It is the entirety of how speakers choose to express themselves, to package their ideas into words, sentences, and discourse to meet their communicative and social needs”. Language symbolizes our thoughts and viewpoints, and it gives them a material and substantial weight. Consequently, a detailed examination of language is useful to determine the repercussions it has on our perception of reality.

One field in which language could have particular importance is that of fashion. Fashion is displayed and publicized through language, therefore I think that an analysis of fashion discourse may be essential to shed light on the effects it may have on the people who engage with its content. Since language is created within a social context, it is important to analyse it in its connection to it, which is why I have decided to employ the discourse analysis approach as it looks at the language of fashion in its relationship with the social and cultural dimension.

1.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis places language in a framework that considers its background and underlying structure. Paltridge (2006:2) says that discourse analysis “looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used”. Therefore, discourse analysis is a broader study of language, which goes beyond the simple analysis of grammatical rules, as it reflects on the practical and active use of it. Discourse analysis is useful for an inclusive approach to language which looks at different perspectives and analyses them together to form a complete outlook of it. Paltridge (2006:9) argues that discourse analysis “also focuses on how people do things beyond language, and the ideas and beliefs that they communicate as they use language”. The technical aspect of language is important as it tells us how to use language efficiently to communicate, however understanding the intentions behind language may be a key factor to recognize the patterns that may be used to pass on certain ideas or purposes.

Discourse analysis can be useful to understand peoples’ intentions behind language. According to Paltridge (2006:9) “through the use of language, people achieve certain communicative goals, perform certain communicative acts, participate in certain communicative events and present themselves to others”.

That could mean that language is a system that aims to propose, convince, perpetuate or recommend certain ideas and beliefs, sometimes without the need to express them directly. To be able to unmask these structures, it is important to analyse language in its connection with the people that create it and speak it, with the society and culture in which it operates. That is why discourse analysis plays an important role.

Discourse is interactive, it is a dynamic network that affects the relationships between the people who operate it. In agreement with Fairclough (1992:63) “[...] discourse IS a mode of action, one form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other, as well as a mode of representation”. The physical world is framed through discourse. People do not only say things with discourse, they also actively participate in actions evoked by discourse itself. Discourse can create power relations, ideologies, identities, cultural values whose effects could influence and change societal norms. The mechanisms involved in discourse may have a greater influence on us than we may realize, as they may conditionate our decisions and choices. Discourse analysis aims explore these structures and to examine the intrinsic patterns that create and sustain them. Jones (2018:2) states that “discourse analysis is not just the study of language, but a way of looking at language that focuses on how people use it in real life to do things like joke and argue and persuade and flirt”. Discourse analysis offers a multifaceted review of discourse that studies the way human interactions and activities can be formed, shaped and controlled through language.

The method used by discourse analysis may be an effective way of analysing language because it cannot be separated from its societal and cultural context. Since discourse is produced by people who live in communities, it is inevitably situated in a certain frame of reference. Therefore, in my analysis of fashion discourse I will apply a discourse analysis approach in an effort to look at the implications and consequences fashion discourse may have on people. According to Guo (2020:64) “in a consumer society, "discourse" has become a way of

creation”. That means that through discourse, it may be possible to create certain structures and meanings concerning fashion. Guo (2020:64) says that “in the contemporary alienated consumer society, fashion consumption has become a kind of "discourse" consumption”. Fashion becomes materialized through discourse first, as it is the means through which it is presented and advertised. People can be influenced to buy clothes and fashion items due to the discourse through which they are portrayed. Guo (2020:65) argues that “fashion uses its own "discourse" to express its meaning. At the fashion conference, it is no longer just to show clothing, but to tell a story”. Since fashion uses its own discourse to tell something, its discourse should be analysed to understand the consequences and degree of involvement it has on the behaviour of the people fashion discourse is directed at.

One aim of this dissertation will be to analyse the impact advertisement and persuasion in fashion discourse could have on people. According to Fairclough (2001:198) the discourse of advertising is “*strategic* discourse, discourse oriented to instrumental goals, to getting results”. Therefore, advertisement in fashion discourse may be intentional and premeditated. Since language is created within a society of people and their culture, words do not only have a neutral meaning, as they can allude to certain cultural and societal features. Jones (2018:28) says that “meaning is transmitted not just through words, but through the ways words are embedded into social relationships, social goals and activities, histories, and the beliefs, values and ideologies of a particular cultural group”. This is why discourse analysis is right tool to analyse fashion discourse, as it does not only look at the way language works, but it also takes into consideration the social and cultural context in which it is reproduced. Paltridge (2006:2) argues that discourse analysis “considers the relationship between language and the context in which it is used”.

Discourse is used within a context; therefore, it may be useful to look at fashion discourse in connection with the situation in which it appears. Advertisement and persuasion are substantial factors in fashion discourse, as fashion is rarely presented as a mere description of clothes. In order to understand the implication

of advertising language in fashion, it may be crucial to acknowledge its interdependence to the societal and cultural circumstances in which it is generated. The second chapter of this dissertation will analyse in more detail the relationship between fashion discourse and advertisement.

1.3 Fashion as Communication: what do clothes say about us?

The Collins dictionary describes fashion as “the area of activity that involves styles of clothing and appearance”. For many people fashion may simply indicate the industry that deals with clothes, accessories, models, catwalk, looks. For some, fashion may be a synonym for shallowness, insubstantiality or triviality; for others fashion could mean style, trend, novelty. Whichever meaning a person attributes to fashion, it is undoubtedly something everybody has dealt with at some point in their lives, since television, magazines, blogs, billboards constantly talk about it. Although some people could feel like they do not participate in the fashion world, it may be difficult to avoid fashion completely, since everybody must wear clothes.

Clothes can say a lot about a person; as a matter of fact, sometimes we may form a good or bad opinion about someone just by looking at how they are dressed. To understand how important clothes are, it is sufficient to look into dress codes. Schools, workplaces, business meetings, trials and events all expect certain rules of attire for the people that take part in their activities. When trying to make a good impression of ourselves we often try to look our best, wearing clothes that are appropriate and suitable for the occasion and the people that we may encounter. According to Mair (2018:2) “our clothing, like other objects, becomes part of our identity”. Clothes can shape our sense of selves and our sense of belonging to a community. They can help build our identity by signaling to others our likeness or our dissimilarity to cultural or societal norms. Sometimes clothes can speak for us, as they can communicate our perspective and viewpoints of politics, religion,

societal conventions or even morals. Mair (2018:5) says that “as a cultural phenomenon, fashion is concerned with meanings and symbols which provide instant visual communication to be interpreted and responded to by those we interact with”.

Fashion can be considered as a visual vehicle through which people can express their personality, their social class, their heritage, their gender or even their age. Clothes are not just a piece of fabric to be worn, they are our business card through which we can communicate important information about ourselves to other people. In agreement with Mair (2018:55) “We cannot separate clothing from the self and identity because what we wear is an outward display of our self and our identity”. This is important because clothes may not have an intrinsic value, however people may feel a connection with them, as they could become a kind of second skin. They can provide a sense of comfort and familiarity for us, as they present us to the external world and reveal our individuality.

Clothes can also influence our own perception of ourselves, as they can build confidence or insecurity. According to Mair (2018:58) “Clothing and appearance play an important role in the development, maintenance and modification of the self and are part of the way we view and think about ourselves”. Clothes can have a great impact on the frame of mind of a person, as they can affect our emotions and our behaviour. To change our style of clothing could mean to change our own impression of ourselves, as clothes do not only express our own thoughts and values but also those of the community or society we live in. Mair (2018:70) says that “Clothing is significant in human experience, cultures and societies. Clothes reflect and symbolise the traditions, values, emotions and ideologies of the culture in which we are socialised”. Clothes can create a sense of belonging or isolation from a certain group, as they signal our affinity or adversity to it and our will to continue being a part of it or to distance ourselves from it. A person who adheres to social expectations of dress coding may communicate a desire for regularity, steadiness, correctness, as opposed to someone who chooses to detach themselves

from societal norms who may express a desire for rebelliousness, singularity or individuality through their clothing choices.

Clothes and fashion are not as trivial as they may seem, since fashion involves making rational decisions, evaluating ourselves and others, selecting pieces of fabrics and garments to convey a certain image of ourselves. According to Barthes (2013:39) “what is interesting in clothing is that it seems to participate to the greatest depth in the widest sociality”. Clothes can reveal essential elements about people and their goals, which is why I chose to study and analyse the discourse through which they are portrayed in this dissertation, with particular attention to the language used to display and advertise them.

1.4 Fashion discourse

As discussed above in the first section of this chapter, the words we use to say something are significant and influential. What we say and how we choose to say it has an impact on how other people perceive the message we want to communicate. There are various alternatives to convey a piece of information which may lead to different understanding of it. One area in which the use of language is of importance is that of fashion. As mentioned above, fashion can have a considerable effect on people which goes beyond the simple piece of material. Mair (2018:25) says that “fashion has the power to contribute to improving mental health, not only for its workers but also for its consumers”. Since clothes can influence the mind, the discourse around fashion can be a powerful tool to deliver certain topics. For this reason, an elaborate analysis of fashion discourse may be important to uncover them. According to Barthes (2013:79) fashion “is a language: through it, [...] our society—and not just that of women—exhibits, communicates its being, says what it thinks of the world”.

Fashion can communicate to people and it can reflect human interactions and societal and cultural changes. Therefore, fashion discourse does not only describe fabrics, materials and outfits, it may also mirror the historical period in which it occurs, the political and cultural climate of a certain community, the relationships between people's choices of attire and their thoughts, the values and moral principles of a society. Moeran (2004 in Crawford Camiciottoli 2020:138) "argues that "it is, indeed, the use of language that transforms clothing into fashion" [...]. The importance of language is also seen in the verbal interactions of the fashion discourse community whose members use it to exchange ideas and express attitudes". Fashion discourse does not only speak about clothes and fashion, it also speaks to people by suggesting what to wear in order to appear or be perceived in a certain way, by recommending or discouraging certain clothing styles, by alluding to some specific ideas or concepts.

Fashion discourse may not be as neutral as it may give the impression of being since it may have a purpose and an aim behind the description and exhibition of fashion items. Crawford Camiciottoli (2016:2) argues that "fashion discourse is typically richly expressive on the descriptive and evaluative levels". By being richly expressive and vivid, fashion discourse could have the power to evoke feelings in the people who engage with it, creating an emotional reaction that may lead to actions such as buying certain clothes or participating in certain fashion trends. Behind fashion discourse there are people, designers, producers, marketers, retailers who make and present products to the public; that is why fashion discourse may never be objective.

One effective example of fashion discourse is presented by Crawford Camiciottoli (2016), who analyses fashion discourse with particular focus on creative compounds in fashion blogging. According to Crawford "discourse about fashion revolves around products with an elaborate visual dimension based on colors, shapes, and textures that trigger well articulated descriptions" (Crawford 2014 et al. in Crawford 2016:2). That is why consumers may form an emotional attachment

to fashion brand (Rageh Ismail and Spinelli 2012 in Crawford 2016:2). Crawford chose to analyse fashion blogs because they have become “a central platform for the circulation of fashion-related news and information” (Crawford 2016:2). She argues that “compounds are a relatively prominent feature of fashion blogging” (2016:8). The analysis of compounds in their context “highlighted various functions linked to description, evaluation, amplification and mitigation, as well as meanings that reflect humor, irony and provocation” (Crawford 2016:8). This study also underlined the creative use of compounds, as “blog participants seemed to be particularly apt at inventing ad-hoc and complex phrasal compounds to evoke strong images that communicate a particular message in a clever compact format” (Crawford 2016:8). Therefore, Crawford deduces that an analysis of compounds and their creative use in fashion discourse can be useful for marketing strategies, since it gives insight into consumer behaviour and preference.

Fashion discourse may condition readers to perform certain actions. Papalas (2016:87) says that fashion discourse “always captures the reader in some way, undermining her freedom or ability to interpret at will”. The description of fashion articles may entail a degree of personal involvement on the transmitter’s end that could create biased or prejudiced ideas in the readers. Papalas (2016) studies fashion discourse with particular attention towards the rendition of Elsa Schiaparelli’s designs in the Vogue magazine in the years 1936-38. Elsa Schiaparelli was a fashion designer who “became famous for her experimental work defying conventional ideas about the female body and its role in society” (Papalas 2016:69). Her designs “challenge traditional notions of femininity and the objectified body” (Papalas 2016:70). Papalas argues however, that despite Schiaparelli’s attempt to present a feminist image of the female body, her designs, advertised in the Vogue magazine, contradicted that portrayal. Papalas examined the linguistic significance of Schiaparelli’s designs in the Vogue magazine, such as fragmented, illusive, simulated and transformative representation and came to the conclusion that “fashion language manipulates the consumer and performs a kind

of magic on the public, convincing it subtly to buy into its message” (Papalas 2016:71).

Nowadays fashion discourse has become popular and it permeates many areas of our lives thanks to rapid flow of information caused by television, the Internet and the media. As a result, fashion discourse does not only influence our fashion choice, as it may also have consequences on our decision-making autonomy. In the last few decades, fashion discourse has created its own cultural significance and it has impacted our society influencing our identity and our sense of belonging. According to Thompson and Haytko (1997:39) “to speak of fashion is then to employ a system of cultural discourses for making sense of the complexities of self-identity, social relationships, and the rapidly changing diffusion of styles, images, and meanings that employ consumer culture”. Therefore, it is important to analyse fashion discourse considering its context and connection to people and society, as it may engage an interdependent relationship with various areas of human reality.

Fashion discourse can communicate meanings which transcend fashion and clothes. Thompson and Haytko (1997) conducted a sample of 20 interviews on 20 participants “regarding their perceptions and experiences of fashion” (Thompson and Haytko 1997:18). Thompson and Haytko started from the assumption that “fashion as a cultural system of meanings has often been critiqued for being an oppressive ideological force that enmeshes consumers (particularly women) in disempowering, superficial, and materialistic concerns” (Thompson and Haytko 1997:20). However, their study demonstrated that fashion discourse carries a multitude of different meanings. As a matter of fact, they argue that “fashion discourses encode a nexus of countervailing meanings that oppose their supposedly predominant values of stylistic obsolescence, social conformity, and the aggrandizement of appearances”. That means that fashion discourse is not just about fashion itself, it is connected to various aspects of human life, as through fashion discourses “the participants gain concrete reference points from which to

understand more abstract issues of social-class dynamics, gender relations, and the tension between personal autonomy and social dependencies” (Thompson and Haytko 1997:35).

In my own analysis of fashion discourse, I will focus on noun phrases and verb phrases used to present and publicize clothes in fashion magazines. The second chapter of this dissertation will introduce the concept of noun and verb phrases; the third chapter will go through a more in-depth analysis of them in magazines such as *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle*. The media and fashion magazines are essential means through which fashion discourse is depicted and displayed to the public, subsequently in the next section I will focus on their role in the portrayal of fashion discourse.

1.5 Media discourse and fashion magazines

The media is a ubiquitous presence in our lives. Television, newspapers, the Internet, magazines, the radio, cellphones are all means through which various types of information travel. The media can inform, entertain, educate and communicate all sorts of facts, data or news. According to Paul and Rai (2021:2) “Media is used for the entertainment, communication and dissemination of information, advertising, marketing, and for expressing and sharing views, opinion, and ideas”. The media can be a powerful tool to exchange and shape various standpoints and frames of reference.

The media may not just inform people on certain topics, it may also be used to carry a specific scheme or purpose. Paul and Rai (2021:3) say that “Media possess a power to select issues and events in the world we got to know about, [...], they filter and frame issues, they contextualize the problem, they set the political agenda”. The selection and portrayal the media makes of the information it decides to acknowledge may outline a distorted version of reality that may become

radicalized in the minds of those that perceive it. The illusion of neutrality that the media often depicts may lead to a wrong or inaccurate vision of facts. In agreement with Sawant about the media (1998 in Paul and Rai 2021:3) “It can make and unmake individuals and institutions. It can also build and break societies”. The influence that the media has on people and modern society is extensive, as it can transform personal ideologies and beliefs into normal and common knowledge.

The discourse used by media to communicate these beliefs is important, since it is the means through which they are transmitted to the receivers. According to Fairclough (2001:54) “media discourse is able to exercise a pervasive and powerful influence in social reproduction because of the very scale of the modern mass media and the extremely high level of exposure of whole populations to a relatively homogeneous output”. The discourse of media is a one-way street, as it does not allow for a dialogue between the producers of media and the receivers of it. A small number of people deliver a big amount of information that will be received by a mass of disparate and dissimilar individuals who will perceive mediatic discourse according to their own interpretation of it. Fairclough (2001:49) argues that “Media discourse has built into it a subject position for an ideal subject, and actual viewers or listeners or readers have to negotiate a relationship with the ideal subject”. Since it may be impossible to address every single person in a mass, media discourse may be intentional and planned in its aim. Media discourse may have a specific audience in mind and may therefore adapt its discourse to appeal and attract it. Since fashion discourse has an important and extensive presence in the media, it may also be designed to captivate a target audience. One way through which this may be possible is through fashion magazines.

Fashion magazines are a key vehicle by which fashion is broadcasted and introduced to the public. They present fashion trends, give insight into the fashion industry, provide recommendations for the latest styles, point the way for what is considered fashionable. Moeran (2006:6) says that “without the magazines themselves, there would be no ‘fashion system’ as such”. Fashion magazines may

help portray a certain image of fashion that can impact the way readers view it, by choosing to feature specific designers, brands, collections and items and by depicting them in a positive or advantageous light through pictures and discourse. Moulin (1987 in Moeran 2006:12) says that fashion magazines “legitimate fashion and the fashion world in cultural terms”.

Fashion magazines can be viewed as an intermediary between the fashion world and the ordinary people who may seek to be informed about it. They approach fashion from an insider’s point of view and they offer designers’ perspective of it. According to Hauser (1982 in Moeran 2006:13) “If designers create the form of fashion items, therefore, fashion magazines create their legend”. Fashion magazines give a tangible shape to the fashion world. They can turn conceptual designs into actions by influencing and urging readers to conform to their interpretation of fashion. Entwistle (2000 in Moeran 2006:13) argues that “magazines help transform fashion as an abstract idea and aesthetic discourse into everyday dress”.

Fashion magazines may have the ability to affect readers’ behaviour by suggesting that following the fashion style or trend they propose will help them be perceived as more appealing, more desirable, more distinguished. To achieve this goal the choice of words fashion magazines make to present and describe their products may be crucial. Consequently, the language of fashion magazines may follow purposeful discourse patterns to draw the attention and influence the actions of potential readers. For this reason, the focus of this dissertation will be on fashion magazines and their depiction of clothing items, with particular attention to the Vogue magazine, the Elle magazine and the Marie Claire magazine.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed language and its importance in shaping our ideas and reality, then I described the discourse analysis approach and I explained how it can be a useful tool to apply when analysing language by taking into account its societal and cultural characteristics. Next, I introduced fashion as a means of communication and the significance of clothes in our perception of ourselves and others. I then spoke of fashion discourse, citing a few examples of linguistic features analysed in fashion. In the concluding section of this chapter, I discussed the function of the media in fashion discourse and the role of fashion magazines in the depiction of fashion. The next chapter will deal with creativity in language, persuasion and advertisement in fashion discourse. Then the concept of corpus analysis will be introduced and finally noun phrases and verb phrases will be presented.

2. Persuasion in the discourse of advertising: strategic language and its effect on fashion discourse

In this chapter I will briefly introduce creativity in its relationship with language and advertising. Next I will discuss the role of persuasive language in its aim to present and sell products. Furthermore, I will focus on the discourse of advertising and some of its linguistic characteristics, offering some examples of studies that examine the effects advertising language may have on people. I will then introduce the corpus linguistics approach and its benefits in the investigation of linguistic features in texts. Finally, I will examine some of the attributes of noun and verb phrases, in an attempt to shed light on the possible effects their presence and frequency may have on readers of fashion magazines.

2.1 Creativity in language

Creativity in language can be a powerful tool to express certain viewpoints and personal ideas. Creativity allows its users to manipulate words to convey specific meanings or symbols. According to Carter (2004 in Crawford Camiciottoli 2016:3) “creativity involves a marked breaking or bending of the rules and norms of language [...] including a deliberate play with its forms and potential for meaning”. Therefore, creative language can simplify language through the use of linguistic devices in order to communicate a message. Creativity can help make a point more firmly compared to standard language, as it can be playful and it can stand out, making it easier to remember the message delivered. Mahlberg (2007 in Crawford Camiciottoli 2016:3) says that “for language to be distinguished as creative, it must in some way “stand out”. Language that stands out can leave a positive mark on the receiver, who might be impressed by the use of rhetorical or

stylistic devices and may consequently find it simpler to internalize and memorize it.

Creative texts employ imagination, thoughtfulness, inventiveness in order to implement original and innovative ways to transmit information. They can combine various aspects of linguistic schemes to build interest and to attract attention. Fairclough (1992:187) argues that “Creative texts are characterized by ambiguities and ambivalences of meaning, and by rhetorical play with the meaning potentials of words”. In order to understand these linguistic devices, creative texts can require an intellectual effort on the reader’s side, and this mental work may amuse and captivate them and evoke fascination towards the message the text may intend to communicate. Fairclough (1992:187) goes on to say that “Creative texts necessarily use meaning potentials as a resource, but they contribute to deconstructing and restructuring them, including the shifting of boundaries and relations between meanings”. Linguistic creativity can help build a certain meaning, as it can encourage readers to explore language and its structure from a new or unconventional perspective. As a result, creativity in language can help influence the attitude of individuals towards a specific topic by presenting a unique approach that standard language may not be able to do.

Creativity operates within the structure of language, since it makes use of its linguistic properties to alter ordinary language and give it a peculiar significance. Jones (2015:27) says that “Creativity emerges [...] through the exploitation of the heteroglossic dynamics of language use. [...] speakers and writers may manipulate the intertextual connotations of particular words or phrases, or recontextualise voices from one context to another”. Creativity in texts can shape and dismantle meaning systems through its ability to distort and twist the content that it proposes. Using various linguistic techniques that allow writers to communicate feelings, thoughts and ideas, creative language can be considered as a gateway to ingenious thinking and emotional expression and as a means through which specific messages and topics can travel.

Creative language can be employed in fashion discourse. Advertising plays an important role in fashion discourse, as its aim is to present and advertise fashion items. Leech (1966:175) says that “No word is more often on the lips of the advertising specialist than ‘creative’. He ‘works creatively’ on ‘creative campaigns’; when he is not engaged in ‘creative planning’, he is thinking up ‘creative ideas’”. Creativity in fashion advertising is crucial, since it has to draw the attention of potential clients and it has to make fashion items seem original and innovative. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, the language used to display and publicize fashion is important, since it may determine the type of impression and opinion readers may form of it. Leech (1966:176) offers the example of a headline in an advertisement for flights to Mexico that said “!Sooner than mañana!”, as “here the impropriety consisted in using Spanish punctuation and a Spanish word in an advertisement which was otherwise in English” (Leech 1966:176). This type of advertisement is captivating and intriguing to the reader, who may be compelled to buy the product advertised. In the fashion world, creativity may act as a lighthouse for the consumers. Clothes are worn by everybody, they are obligatory items for people. Since currently there is a large variety of choice when it comes to clothing and fashion, it can become difficult for a brand to stand out among others. This is where creativity in the language used to advertise fashion comes into play.

Creative advertising is characterized by the application of imagination and linguistic technical skills to create a sense of a necessity for the reader, not just a commodity. According to Leech (1966:175) “What a copywriter means, if he calls his job creative, is [...] the imagination by which advertising ‘ideas’ are conceived in the first place, and by which they are later transformed into the tangible signals of speech, writing, and pictorial communication”. Fashion discourse may be characterized by a number of linguistic devices that operate according to creative models, intending to sell a product without making it obvious to the readers. That

is why in the next section I will analyse advertising language and its connection with fashion discourse and persuasion.

2.2 Persuasion in advertising

Advertising is present in many aspects of our lives. Food, drinks, essential goods, cars, clothes and accessories are all publicized and promoted in television, radio, magazines, social media. Thousands of ads are presented to us every day in various forms. Dyer (1982:2) says that advertising means “‘drawing attention to something’, or notifying or informing somebody of something”. The main purpose of advertising may be to attract attention to a specific product to tempt the viewer into buying it. Ads do not just inform or announce certain commodities, they also try to encourage people to purchase their goods. According to Dyer (1982:1), despite the fact that some ads can be funny and entertaining “we should not lose sight of their ideological function, which is linked to their economic function, nor of the real messages that lie behind their superficial gloss”. Ads may manipulate and conceal their real intention by using enticing and alluring language to make it seem like their only aim is to communicate a piece of information. Dyer (1982:4) argues that “Advertising’s central function is to create desires that previously did not exist. Thus advertising arouses our interests and emotions in favour of goods and more goods, and thereby actually creates the desires it seeks to satisfy. [...] It is thus the advertiser’s task to try to persuade rather than inform”. This is important, because it means that persuasion in advertising can have the power to convince a person into a certain belief or inclination. Ads can create desires that may pressure people into buying something, influencing the decision-making process of readers.

Advertisements are created and generated by people who have an interest in selling something. Cook (2001:222) says that “ads have no voice on their own [...], they are fluctuating and unstable mixture of the voices around them”. For this reason,

the language of advertising involves persuasion. Labrador et al. (2014:38) argue that promotional texts “have two main rhetorical moves: one for identifying the product and another one for describing it. The latter move is further divided into two steps: one including objective features (size, weight, etc.) and the other focusing on persuading the potential customer”. Persuasion has an important role in advertising, since it can convince people that they need or want a product even if they do not desire or wish to have it. Persuasive language can be appealing since it does not directly command or require people to buy something, as it makes use of gentle, charming and tactful words. According to Labrador et al. (2014:39) “An adequate selection of lexical items and a proper combination and distribution of objective and persuasive information are crucial for directing the reader towards taking the decision to purchase a particular item”. This is important because it means that every word we see and read in ads is purposeful, conscious and strategic. The discourse of advertising may use models of linguistic constructions, whose goal is to ingrain the illusion of necessity and desire for certain goods. Labrador et al. (2014:43) say that “Persuasive language therefore tends to be creative and attention-drawing, exploiting language resources to the maximum with catchphrases, emotive words, informal expressions and striking metaphors and comparisons to appeal to the readers”. Therefore, persuasion in the discourse of advertising allows for linguistic creativity, which as aforementioned in the first section of this chapter, has the ability to stand out and affect the reader, making the advertisement eccentric and memorable.

Advertising can use premeditated methods, making use of psychological and marketing strategies to induce people to purchase what they offer. Dyer (1982:1) says that “it could be argued that advertising nowadays fulfils a function traditionally met by art or religion”. Ads have a great presence for any person living our society, to the point where they could indoctrinate people with their suave words. The fact that ads are ever-present and all-pervasive can help shape the idea that an individual can only be acceptable, notable or attractive if they

purchase and use certain products or if they buy from a specific brand. According to Dyer (1982:9) “The purpose of creating advertisements is to persuade and convert potential consumers. Thus advertisements are deliberate and consciously articulated message”. Since advertisements are deliberate messages, they may never be objective and truthful. Ads may not only sell commodities, they might also sell prefabricated ideas that will be passed on and internalized by consumers. This process takes place using language, since it is the means through which a message is communicated. Fairclough (1992:214) says that “Under the influence of advertising as a prestigious model, the blending of information and persuasion is becoming naturalized”. Therefore, persuasion can be assimilated in the discourse of advertising, to the point where it becomes a natural part of it, making it easier for people to assimilate the message of advertising language and to standardize it. Consequently, the next section will deal with the discourse of advertising and some of its attributes.

2.3 The discourse of advertising

Ads circulate through language. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, language is an important channel through which any type of information and knowledge travels. Advertising not only makes use of language to advertise a product, it may also manipulate and distort it to impact the consumer in the way it intends. According to Dyer (1982:65) “Advertising in particular uses hypnotic and intimidatory language and imagery. Its propositions assume the form of suggestive commands, and at the same time the language is tinged with false familiarity which [...] is the result of skilfully managed popular directness and constant repetition”. The language of advertising is the effect of a calculated linguistic process that gives the illusion of choice to readers, making it seem like the ultimate decision is in their hands and that the advertisement was only a suggestion. The language used in ads is evocative and vivid, it uses words and

expressions that can elicit either negative or positive emotions which in turn could influence the decision of a person. Cook (2001:150) says that the discourse of advertising “is largely emotive, conative and phatic, using language to establish identity and differentiate that identity from others”. Language in advertising can make or break the ad. If the linguistic method through which a product is publicized is inappropriate or offensive, the image of the product or even that of the brand may be damaged, which is why the language used in ads is often attenuated and cunning. Dyer (1982:66) argues that “The language used by advertisers shows that they think of people as targets on which they wish to make an impact, rather than as human beings. In advertisements, they use a language which is subtle and cajoling”. The discourse of advertising has to leave a positive mark on the people who see and read its content, that is why it may aim more at coaxing and persuasion, rather than direct and truthful communication.

The context of the language of advertising plays an important role in the way ads are produced and displayed. In the “Discourse analysis” section of the first chapter of this dissertation, I stated that the discourse analysis approach is an effective tool to analyse language since it takes into consideration its cultural and societal aspect. Cook (2001:3) says that “discourse analysis [...] is not concerned with language alone. It also examines the context of communication: who is communicating with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation; through what medium; how different types and acts of communication evolved, and their relationship to each other”. This is important for the language of advertising, since it does not only involve using words to give a neutral description of products and items, it also implies making cultural references aimed at a specific community of people. According to Cook (2001:6) “An ad is not a tangible or stable entity; it is the dynamic synthesis of many components, and comes into being through them”. Advertising language takes place in a specific historical, cultural and societal context and it makes use of features from all these directions to make an ad appear in a certain way. Labrador et al. (2014:40) say that “The importance of the context,

the participants in the communicative event, and the field of discourse are all aspects of language variation which highlight the social function of language as the dominant feature of human communication”. The discourse of advertising is created within the borders of a community of people who share certain beliefs, ideologies and morals. Consequently, ads may adapt their language to be understood according to the rules and limitations of the culture in which they operate. Dyer (1982:62) argues that “Advertisements are part of a flow or pattern of culture”. To understand an ad, it is necessary to first understand the culture and standards of the society in which it is created.

In my analysis of the Vogue, Marie Claire and Elle magazines I will look at linguistic features such as noun and verb phrases in the description and advertising of clothing items. The articles I will analyse describe and publicize modern-day fashion items and present the latest fashion collections. The fashion items portrayed in these magazines may be influenced by modern beauty standards, dress codes and etiquettes or even the moral principles or expectations of the society in which they are created and may consequently use interconnected and interdependent terms and linguistic devices. Which is why it is important to take into consideration the cultural and societal sphere in which they are generated, since they may make use of specific cultural references or encode certain allusions that may not be understood otherwise.

2.3.1 The impact of advertising language

The reason why I decided to look into the discourse of advertising and persuasion is because in my analysis of fashion discourse I will take into account the relationship and implications between fashion discourse in magazines and their goal to advertise clothes. An interesting analysis of persuasion and advertising was carried out by Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001:1291), who study the “metadiscourse

devices typically used by copywriters to construct their slogans and/or headlines”. They started from the assumption that “advertising English should be represented as a continuum of text functions fluctuating between ‘informing’ and ‘manipulating’ in accordance with the idea that advertising is an example of covert communication” (Fuertes-Olivera et al 2001:1291). They selected a few examples of women’s magazine and came to the conclusion that “advertisers lure prospective consumers by means of verbal and non-verbal devices. [...] copywriters also use metadiscourse” and they convey “a persuasive message under an informative mask, so that the receiver gets a delusive impression of a referential message because of the fuzzy borders between ‘denomination’ (brand identity), ‘predication’ (product promotion) and ‘information’” (Fuertes-Olivera et al 2001:1305). That means that ads use persuasion and linguistic devices to attract people with the aim of selling a product.

Izquierdo and Pérez Blanco (2019) carried out a study regarding advertising and persuasion, with particular attention to promotional strategies in specialised discourse. They analysed “herbal tea promotional text (HTPT), in which an herbal tea is described and evaluated with persuasive purposes in mind” (Izquierdo and Pérez Blanco 2019:45). The aim of their study is to “assist Spanish professionals in writing such texts in English”. They adopted a move-analysis method to carry out “two English-Spanish contrastive analyses using ACTEaS_Promo, a purpose-built comparable corpus” (Izquierdo and Pérez Blanco 2019:45). They concluded that the English promotional text “seems to prefer emotion-laden strategies. This is mainly observed when the product is presented as an enjoyable experience or its aesthetic appeal is foregrounded” (Izquierdo and Pérez Blanco 2019:55). On the contrary, the Spanish promotional text “favours reason-driven strategies such as ‘praising the benefits’ of the herbal tea or referring to an authority figure who drinks it regularly enough for the customer to be persuaded to follow suit” (Izquierdo and Pérez Blanco 2019:55). In both cases, linguistic strategies were

employed to advertise and persuade the reader, with emphasis on the characteristics the addresser wanted the receiver to focus on.

Fashion discourse can make use of linguistic devices used in advertising language. Crawford Camiciottoli (2018) analyses web-based communications of fashion brands. This study aims to “determine which traits of brand personality emerge, which are the most frequent, and which nuances of meaning can be identified within them” (Crawford Camiciottoli 2018:141). This was accomplished “by means of text analysis software that identifies statistically significant semantic domains to which conceptually-related lexical items are assigned” (Crawford Camiciottoli 2018:141). Her analysis revealed that brands make use of web-based communications to convey brand personality; that allows them to stand out and attract consumers. (Crawford Camiciottoli 2018:153). Therefore, fashion brands use linguistic devices for their advertising, giving a personality to their brands that will make it easier for them to be fascinating and alluring. In the third chapter of this dissertation, I will analyse fashion magazines and their presentation of clothes, taking into consideration the advertising strategies that they may express through linguistic devices.

2.4 Corpus linguistics

Bowker and Pearson (2002:9) describe corpus linguistics as “an approach or a methodology for studying language use. It is an empirical approach that involves studying examples of what people have actually said, rather than hypothesizing about what they might or should say”. Corpus linguistics helps shed light on the language people use, offering real examples of their statements and expressions. This approach is useful because it provides for a throughout analysis of the language in use, making it easier to unmask the meanings and intentions that can lie behind words and sentences. Bowker and Pearson (2002:9) go on to say that a

corpus “can be described as a large collection of authentic texts that have been gathered in electronic form according to a specific set of criteria”. Corpus linguistics offers the possibility to select a collection of texts according to the goal of the study, so that they can be analysed or compared. Bowker and Pearson (2002:10) argue that “the texts in a corpus are selected according to explicit criteria in order to be used as a representative sample of a particular language or subset of that language”. That means that a corpus is a combination of specific texts belonging to a subject the researcher wants to study. Therefore, the use of a corpus of texts can sort out the criteria that the investigator sets in order to arrive to a certain conclusion. Paltridge (2006:156) says that “Corpus studies draw on collections of texts that are usually stored and analysed electronically. They look at the occurrence and reoccurrence of particular linguistic features to see how and where they occur in the discourse”. Corpus linguistics can help look at patterns of linguistic traits peculiar to a certain topic, analysing their occurrence, their frequency or their position in discourse.

An important aspect of corpus linguistics is its digital space. Lindquist (2009:3) says that “corpus is almost always synonymous with electronic corpus, i.e. a collection of texts which is stored on some kind of digital medium and used by linguists to retrieve linguistic items for research”. An electronic corpus allows for a more empirical and specialized research, as the data is stored in a computer and organized according to specific standards, making it easier and more reliable to retrieve the information needed. Bowker and Pearson (2002:21) argue that “their electronic form means that corpora can be larger and more up-to-date than printed resources, and they can be searched more easily”. Electronic corpora can offer the most recently developed data and materials and they can be updated with a multitude of texts from which any details can be consulted in a short period of time, allowing for a faster and more skilled research. According to Lindquist (2009:25) “The great advantage of computers over human beings is the speed and accuracy with which computers can search for material in huge databases and

collections of text, manipulate data and make calculations of various sorts”. A corpus analysis that makes use of digital assistance may be more precise and more objective, providing a neutral and unbiased perspective. In my analysis of my own corpus, I will also avail myself of digital assistance, as I will use Sketch Engine and AntConc to study linguistic devices.

Analysing a collection of texts using the corpus analysis approach may be more productive and effective as opposed to studying them manually. Lindquist (2009:9) presents some of the advantages of corpus linguistics according to Jan Svartvik, one of the founding fathers of ICAME (International Computer Archive of Modern English). He argued that “corpus data are more objective than data based on introspection”; “corpus data do not only provide illustrative examples, but are a theoretical resource”; “corpus data give essential information for a number of applied areas”. That means that the corpus linguistics approach can present data that looks inward and examines linguistic features from which the texts considered are composed of. In doing so, it is possible to analyse examples of linguistic samples that can not only be described but also theorized, since they can uncover patterns of linguistic behaviour that can reveal intentional sets of actions performed by the people who use a certain type of language. The information provided from a corpus linguistics study can give insight into models of discourse that may produce new viewpoints into the analysis of language. However, Svartvik also points out that corpus analysis may not be completely accurate, as it can contain mistakes and may not be large enough to contain all the information needed (Lindquist 2009:9-10). Therefore, it is important to be mindful of the weaknesses this type of approach may have and to consider the implications of its possible flaws.

A corpus can be general or specialized. According to Reppen and Simpson (2004 in Paltridge 2006:156) a general corpus “aims to present language in its broadest sense and to serve as a widely available resource for baseline or comparative studies of general linguistic features”. General corpora offer an extensive and

inclusive approach to corpus linguistics. A specialized corpus is “a corpus of texts of a particular type [...]. It aims to be representative of a given type of text. It is used to investigate a particular type of language” (Hunston 2002 in Paltridge 2006:157). Specialized corpora focus on a specific topic or subject matter and offer insight on its properties and characteristics. Therefore, they are useful for a detailed analysis of a certain discourse. A specialized corpus can be narrower and more condensed, allowing to concentrate only on the subject and to study its features. In the third chapter of this dissertation, I will build my own corpus from fashion articles taken from fashion magazines such as Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire. In doing so, I will adopt a specialized corpus, since I will focus on fashion discourse and the description of clothes. Fashion discourse in magazines mentioned above is situated within a cultural setting, which establishes certain expectations and values. Discourse analysis takes into consideration the cultural and societal background of language, which is why it is applicable in the analysis of fashion discourse. The corpus linguistics approach studies the language in use, offering large collections of texts and real examples of language collected according to specific criteria. Therefore, all the texts found in a corpus originate from a context that derives from a certain culture accompanied by its customs, traditions and habits. As a consequence, in my own study of my corpus of texts I will take into consideration the framework in which they develop and operate, taking into account the contextual relationship they may have with their context.

2.5 The noun phrase

Nouns indicate and are used to identify people, animals, things, places and abstract concepts. Nouns are an important part of a sentence, as without them the subject and topic would be erased and the sentence would not make sense. They offer clear and intelligible communication. A noun phrase is made up of words or group of words containing a noun. Biber et al. (1999:97) say that “A noun phrase in the

strict sense consists of a noun [...] as head, either alone or accompanied by determiners (which specify the reference of the noun; [...]) and modifiers (which describe or classify the entity denoted by the head noun)". Noun phrases can also "be followed by complements, which complete the meaning of the noun and typically take the form of that-clauses or infinitive clauses" (Biber et al. 1999:97). Noun phrases may have different syntactic roles, such as subject, direct or indirect object, prepositional object, adverbial, subject or object predicative, premodifier of noun, premodifier in adjective or adverb phrase (Biber et al. 1999:98-99). According to Biber et al. (1999:574) a "noun phrase can be used as a cover term for two major types of construction: noun-headed phrases and pronoun-headed phrases. It also sometimes has a wider sense for which we use the term nominal". The basic structure of noun-headed phrases consists of head and determiner and premodifiers and postmodifier. Premodifiers and postmodifier lack often and they can be omitted without disrupting the structure and basic meaning of the phrase. Head and determiner are normally required and they cannot be omitted without breaking up the structure of the noun phrase. While the head noun refers to a clear entity, the determiner specifies the instance we are talking about (Biber et al. 1999:240-241). The basic structure of the pronoun-headed phrase "is similar, except that it usually cannot include a determiner" (Biber et al. 1999:574). Noun phrases are not only headed by nouns or pronouns, they can also include "all constituents which appear in positions characteristic of noun-headed structures including, for example, phrases with adjectives used as noun phrase heads [...] and complement clauses", to which nominals refer (Biber et al. 1999:230).

Premodifiers primary include "adjectives, participial modifiers, and other nouns", while postmodifiers primary include "relative clauses, ing-clauses, ed-clauses, to-infinitive clauses, prepositional phrases, and noun phrases in apposition" (Biber et al. 1999:574-575). There are four major structural types of premodifiers: general adjective, ed-participial modifier, ing-participial modifier and noun. They differ from postmodifiers in two ways: premodifiers are more condensed than

postmodifiers, using fewer words to convey similar information, and they are less explicit in identifying the meaning relationship between the modifier and head noun (Biber et al. 1999:588). There are various types of postmodifiers, “including both clauses and phrases. Clausal postmodifiers can be either finite, referred to as relative clauses, or non-finite. Further, there are three different types of non-finite postmodifying clauses: to-clauses, ing-clauses, and ed-clauses” (Biber et al. 1999:604).

Noun phrases are therefore important elements of language, as they build sense into a sentence and define its identity. Their diverse structure allows them to create various arrangements and meaning models. As a consequence, their message could be perceived differently depending on their construct and position. Noun phrases are present in fashion discourse and their description of clothes in fashion magazines, as they feature several articles in which they display and advertise their clothing items. Noun phrases could complete or break the sense of a sentence, they may also recommend or refute a certain frame of reference. That is the reason why I will analyse them in my own corpus of fashion magazines in the third chapter of this dissertation.

2.6 The verb phrase

Verbs are essential in discourse as they are required for effective communication, but most importantly verbs frame present, past and future tense and place actions into a temporal context. According to Biber et al. (1999:358) verbs “can have one of two major roles in a verb phrase: main verb or auxiliary verb. Main verb [...], can stand alone as the entire verb phrase”, on the contrary auxiliary verbs “occur together with some main verb”. There are three major classes of verbs: lexical verbs, primary verbs and modal verbs (Biber et al. 1999:358). They (1999:360) argue that verbs have seven semantic domains: “activity verbs, communication

verbs, mental verbs, causative verbs, verbs of simple occurrence, verbs of existence or relationship, and aspectual verbs”. Biber et al. go on to say that this classification of verbs “is based on their core meanings (i.e. the meaning that speakers tend to think of first)” (Biber et al. 1999:361). Each verb can “occur with specific patterns of clause elements, called valency patterns. All such patterns contain a subject and can contain additional adverbials. They are therefore differentiated by the core clause elements that follow the verb in a basic clause” (Biber et al. 1999:380).

Verb phrases can be finite verb phrases, which begin with a finite verb and non-finite verb phrases, which contain only non-finite verbs. Finite verb phrases can have six structural distinctions: tense, aspect, voice, modality, negation and clause structure type (Biber et al. 1999:452). They focus mainly on the first four points. According to Biber et al. (1999:453) “From a structural point of view, English verbs are inflected for only two tenses: present and past”, though there are verb phrases that are not marked by tense, such as imperative clauses and non-finite clauses. Beyond that “finite clauses can be marked for either modality or tense, but not both” (Biber et al. 1999:453). Regarding aspect, “whereas tense refers primarily to past and present time orientation, aspect relates to considerations such as the completion or lack of completion of events or states described by a verb” (Biber et al. 1999:460). Active voice usually occurs with transitive verbs, while passive voice occurs in constructions formed with the auxiliary be followed by an ed-participle (Biber et al. 1999:475). There are nine central modal auxiliary verbs that can be used to express modality: can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, and must. They are “invariant forms taking the role of auxiliary, they precede the negative particle not in negation [...] and precede the subject in yes-no questions [...]. They are followed in the verb phrase by a bare infinitive verb (e.g. can see, would go)” (Biber et al. 1999:483). There are also marginal auxiliary verbs that “can behave like modals in taking auxiliary negation and yes-no question inversion” (Biber et al. 1999:484). There are also expressions called semi-

modals, whose functions are similar to those of modal verbs. Beyond this, there is a large number of other expressions with analogous features to the modal auxiliaries like want to, be able to, be obliged to, be likely to, be willing to (Biber et al. 1999:484).

2.6.1 The influence of modality

According to Portner, von Heusinger and Maienborn (2019:463) modality “is the category of meaning used to talk about possibilities and necessities, essentially, states of affairs beyond the actual”. Modal verbs offer additional information about the function of the verb, expressing attitudes of necessity, possibility, ability or permission. They can also be used to make requests, to communicate obligations and intentions, to make predictions for the future, to give advice. Biber et al. (1999:485) divide modal verbs into three categories: permission/possibility/ability regarding can, could, may and might; obligation/necessity regarding must, should, (had) better, have (got) to, need to, ought to, be supposed to; volition/prediction regarding will, would, shall, be going to. Portner, von Heusinger and Maienborn (2019:463) say that through modals, we are able to talk about hypothetical states of affairs. They argue that modals vary along two dimensions: force, as they express possibility or necessity and type of interpretation, or modal ‘flavor’. Possibility modals include may, might, can, and could. Necessity modals include should, must, would, and have to (Portner, von Heusinger and Maienborn 2019:464).

The modal ‘flavor’ refers to two interpretation of modality, epistemic and deontic. Epistemic modality “expresses possibilities and necessities given what is known, based on what the available evidence is”, while deontic modality expresses “possibilities and necessities given a body of laws or rules, i.e., permissions and obligations; abilitive modality, possibilities given the subject’s physical abilities;

teleological and bouletic modality, possibilities and necessities given particular goals and desires” (Portner, von Heusinger and Maienborn 2019:464). They (2019:465) go on to say that “epistemics deal with possibilities that follow from the speaker’s knowledge, whereas roots deal with possibilities that follow from the circumstances surrounding the main event and its participants; epistemics are taken to be speaker-oriented, roots subject-oriented”. That means that modals have both a subjective and an objective meaning. They can reflect on people’s opinions as well as express a factual reality.

Fairclough (1992:159) says that “in the case of subjective modality is clear that the speaker's own degree of affinity with a proposition is being expressed, whereas in the case of objective modality, it may not be clear whose perspective IS being represented”. That means that modality allows people to rapport or to distance themselves from what they are expressing, as they can help send a clear message of the addresser’s intentions behind language. Fairclough (1992:160) argues that “Modality is a point of intersection in discourse between the signification of reality and the enactment of social relations”. Modals may act as a bridge between a person’s individual point of view and the discourse in which they engage in social exchanges. This way, they can suggest, discourage, motivate, persuade or dissuade an individual from believing something or from doing a certain action. Modals may play a role in the presentation and advertising of clothes in fashion discourse. Due to their dynamic nature, modal verbs could have an influence on how the portrayal of clothes are perceived by the readers of fashion magazines. This is the reason why I will investigate the role modal verbs may have in the Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire magazines I will analyse in the third chapter of this dissertation.

2.6.2 The imperative in advertising language

Imperatives are “a class of verbs that are in the imperative mood and are generally used for commands or requests” (Morenberg 2010 in EL-Sakran and Maklai 2019:1). Imperatives are also used “in a myriad of other roles including giving orders, instructions, advising, issuing warnings and making invitations” (EL-Sakran and Maklai 2019:2). They argue that imperatives are a unique class of verbs, as they do not require a subject, since the subject ‘you’ is implied (EL-Sakran and Maklai 2019:2). Imperatives are often seen in advertising language, giving soft commands or orders to the receivers, tempting them to buy a certain product. EL-Sakran and Maklai (2019) conducted a study to investigate the use of imperatives in ads, looking for the effect they may have on advertising campaigns. They collected their data from weekly magazines, whose ads cover a wide range of products including clothes, jewellery and yoga sessions. They came to the conclusion that “individuals are partial to bold and snappy slogans, and that the use of the imperative form might proliferate chances of the slogan being remembered”; their study was also able to “ascertain the perception of imperatives amongst people, and found that it might be changing, albeit slowly, into a broader and more inclusive class that can be defined as more than just command” (EL-Sakran and Maklai 2019:11). That means that imperatives have an extensive presence which can have effects on readers. Imperatives may make ads memorable and catchy, motivating people to give into their persuasion.

Portner, von Heusinger and Maienborn (2019:495) argue that “imperatives share similarities with modals”, as imperatives “can receive the same flavors of interpretation as root modals (deontic, bouletic, teleological)”, since “a sentence such as *Have an apple!*, for instance, could be taken as an order or an invitation, depending on context” (Portner 2007 in Portner, von Heusinger and Maienborn 2019:495). Portner says that “imperatives and root modals (deontic) are intimately connected, in part because of the way the discourse evolves and affects context-sensitive modals”, as imperatives “affect the interpretation of subsequent root modals by helping determine their ordering source” (Portner 2007 in Portner, von

Heusinger and Maienborn 2019:495-496). That means that the interpretation of imperatives depends on the context in which they occur and that they can express multiple meanings. These varied meanings may originate from the intentions the addresser has to convey a specific message so that the reader will understand it how it was intended. Imperatives do not only order or command, they can also invite, persuade and exhort in a moderate and gentle way, so that the message will not sound harsh and brusque. These features may also appear in fashion discourse, since fashion magazines aim to depict clothes in a positive light that will promote their products and interest the readers. Therefore, in my analysis of my own corpus of fashion magazines in the third chapter, I will also look at imperatives and their function in fashion discourse and advertising language.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I focused my attention on creative language in its relationship with advertising language. I then examined persuasive language and some of its features in advertisement. Next, I elaborated on the discourse of advertisement and its consequences on people, giving some insight on a few studies of advertising and its effects. Moreover, I introduced the corpus linguistics approach and its advantages in the studying of a corpus. Lastly, I presented noun and verb phrases and some of their characteristics. The next chapter of this dissertation will deal with my own analysis of a corpus based on fashion magazines and their depiction of clothes. I will introduce my methodology and I will analyse noun and verb phrases and their role the portrayal and advertisement of clothing items.

3. Noun and verb phrases in Vogue, Marie Claire and Elle: frequency and collocation

This chapter will firstly introduce the methodology I will employ in my analysis. Then, I will briefly present Sketch Engine and AntConc, the two software tools I will use for my corpus analysis. Next, I will examine the potential relationship between noun phrases and creativity taking into account their frequency patterns and collocation. Furthermore, I will analyse verb phrases, particularly imperative verbs and modal verbs and their connection with advertising language. Lastly, I will investigate the possible relationship between noun and verb phrases and persuasion.

3.1 Methodology

For my analysis of noun and verb phrases in fashion discourse, I compiled my own corpus consisting of 307 articles taken from the Vogue, Marie Claire and Elle magazines. All the texts present clothing items of various types. The total number of words in my corpus is 361990. In the following table I will state how many articles per magazine and the average number of words per article I have compiled.

Vogue magazine	Elle magazine	Marie Claire magazine
101 articles	102 articles	104 articles
129630 words	102333 words	130027 words

I will employ a corpus linguistics approach for my study, that means using two software tools called Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) and AntConc (Anthony 2019) for my corpus analysis. The reason why I have decided to use both software tools is because I want to offer a broader perspective of my analysis and I want to

examine if both tools produce similar results. That way, my conclusions on my study may be more objective and unbiased. Sketch Engine seems to be practical in the investigation of frequency patterns, while AntConc is useful to provide context and examples for each noun and verb phrase I will take into consideration. In particular, I will use the Word List function in Sketch Engine which produces a frequency list of the nouns and verbs that I will examine. Then I will analyse the collocates of noun and verb phrases in AntConc, using the TagAnt tool (Anthony 2024). TagAnt is “a simple freeware tagging tool based around the TreeTagger engine (developed by Helmut Schmid) that takes either a input text or an input list of text files (UTF-8 encoded) and assigns Parts-Of-Speech (POS) tags to them” (Anthony 2015:1). The TagAnt tool will allow me to use its POS tagging function to tag my corpus and sort out nouns and verbs in AntConc. During the tagging process, I will choose among the tag set options in TagAnt, for example I will use NN for nouns, MD for modal verbs, VB and VV for imperative verbs, JJ for adjectives, RB for adverbs. The reason why I will focus on these tags is because they can help me sort out the nouns, verbs and collocates I chose to analyse. In my analysis, I will concentrate my attention on the most frequently used nouns, modal verbs and imperatives from my corpus. The tags are useful to identify them and to extract examples from the corpus. I will use the Concordancer Tool in AntConc to look at noun and verb phrases and their concordances, so that I will be able to provide examples for each feature I will analyse. I will also use the Concordance Hits option in AntConc which allows me to see total number of concordance lines generated from my corpus. I will take into consideration the frequency patterns and collocates of noun and verb phrases in order to examine their connection with creativity, advertising and persuasion. In my analysis of noun phrases, I will be looking at the frequency list produced by Sketch Engine to see which are the most frequently used nouns in my corpus Firstly, I will use the Word List option in Sketch Engine which allows me to see the most frequent nouns in my corpus. Then I will use AntConc and the Part-Of-Speech tagging function to analyse the nouns from the frequency list produced by Sketch Engine. By using the POS tagging

option from TagAnt, I will be able to look at nouns in their context in AntConc and examine their possible connection with creativity. I will select a few of the most frequently used nouns that refer to clothes in my corpus, I will provide a few examples for each of them from AntConc and I will analyse the potential relation nouns and their collocates may have in language creativity. In particular, I will be analysing the following nouns: dress, jacket, skirt, jean, pant, shirt, coat. I will first provide a few extracts from the corpus for each noun in order to present the context of each example, then I will analyse their collocates and frequency patterns. The reason why I have decided to examine these particular nouns is because of their frequency pattern. The nouns dress, jacket, skirt, jean, pant, shirt and coat appear to be the most frequently used. In the following table I will show the mentions for each of the above cited nouns.

Dress	Jacket	Skirt	Jean	Pant	Shirt	Coat
2,349	1,474	1,026	1,009	812	759	743
mentions	mentions	mentions	mentions	mentions	mentions	mentions

In my analysis of imperatives and modal verbs, I will be looking at the frequency list of verbs produced by Sketch Engine, next I will look into the concordances of these verbs and their collocates to analyse their role in the advertising of clothes. In doing so, I will be using both Sketch Engine and AntConc to examine the concordances. Firstly, I will start by analysing imperative verbs. For my frequency list, I will use the word list function on Sketch Engine, which allows me to see the most frequent verbs in my corpus. Then, I will use AntConc and the part-of-speech tagging option to analyse the verbs from the frequency list produced by Sketch Engine. By using the POS tagging option in AntConc, I will be able to sort out imperative verbs and examine them in their context. I will select some of the most frequently used imperatives in the corpus, I will then provide a few examples of these verbs from AntConc, I will investigate their collocates and I will analyse the relationship they may have in the advertising of clothes. More specifically, I will

analyse the following imperative verbs: wear, pair, consider, add, go, make and dress. I will provide a few extracts from my corpus as examples for each verb.

For my analysis of modal verbs, I will take into consideration can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, and must. I will use the POS tagging feature in AntConc to examine modal verbs in their context. Next I will look into the Concordance Hits option to see which modal verbs are the most used in my corpus. Then I will provide a few examples of each modal verb and I will analyse their collocates and their role in the advertising of clothes. The Concordance Hits feature refers to the “total number of concordance lines generated” which is “shown at the top of the tool window” (Anthony 2019:3). In the following table I will show the number of concordance hits generated by AntConc for the modal verbs mentioned above.

Will (‘ll)	Can	May	Would	Might	Could	Should	Must	Shall
934 hits	893 hits	442 hits	197 hits	151 hits	145 hits	139 hits	72 hits	2 hits

3.2 Sketch Engine and AntConc

As I have mentioned above, in my analysis of my own corpus of texts regarding fashion discourse and their portrayal of clothes, I will use Sketch and AntConc to examine some of the attributes and effects they may have on readers. Kunilovskaya (2017:503) says that Sketch Engine is “a set of software tools for corpus analysis developed by Lexical Computing Ltd. The system was created by a British lexicographer and corpus linguist, Adam Kilgarriff, and a Czech programmer, Pavel Rychlý”. Sketch Engine “allows users to analyze the linguistic properties of a range of pre-loaded corpora or to explore their own corpora using a set of in-built

tools” (Evans 2021:217). Moreover, it allows users to “create their own corpora to use in the system alongside the pre-loaded corpora” (Evans 2021:217). According to Kilgarriff et al. (2014 in Kunilovskaya 2017:503), Sketch Engine offers “a range of highly lexible functions to build and analyze KWIC concordances for items ranging from lemmas to CQL query strings. It also offers common statistical methods to produce frequency statistics, calculate co-occurrence patterns, visualize contrasts and to explore user and multilingual corpora”. According to Kunilovskaya (2017:503) some of the core system functions consist of concordance, which “searches a corpus for a word form, a lemma, a phrase, a part of speech tag, etc”; word list which “generates frequency lists of words, lemmas, n-grams or key words”; keywords and terms which “enables extraction of core lexis in a corpus using “keyness score”; collocations which “calculates words that are statistically associated with the query term. The system uses several measures to find collocation candidates: T-score, MI, log likelihood, logDice, etc; word sketch which “generates summaries of a word’s grammatical and collocational behaviour using “sketch grammar”. Evans (2021:220) says that the Sketch Engine interface “produces robust, statistically informed, and replicable information about the language of early modern texts”.

AntConc is “a freeware, multi-platform, multi-purpose corpus analysis toolkit, designed specifically for use in the classroom. It hosts a comprehensive set of tools including a powerful concordancer, word and keyword frequency generators, tools for cluster and lexical bundle analysis, and a word distribution plot” (Anthony 2011:7). The Concordancer Tool is “designed so that the most common operations are accessible directly on the main screen”, as “concordancers have been shown to be an effective aid in the acquisition of a second or foreign language, facilitating the learning of vocabulary, collocations, grammar and writing styles” (Anthony 2011:8). The main purpose of a Concordancer Tool is to “show how a search term is used in a target corpus” (Anthony 2011:9). The View Files Tool is used to “display the search term in the original file. However, the View Files Tool can be

used independently to search for any substring, word, phrase or regular expression in a target file, offering the user a very powerful text search engine” (Anthony 2011:9). Word lists are useful for “highlighting interesting areas in a corpus and suggesting problem areas” (Anthony 2011:9). They can also be used to “find the lemmas of words in a corpus, or families of related word forms” (Bowker and Pearson (2009 in Anthony 2011:9-10). AntConc also offers a Keyword List Tool, which “finds which words appear unusually frequently in a corpus compared with the same words in a reference corpus that is also specified by the user” (Anthony 2011:10). The Word Clusters Tool “displays clusters of words that surround a search term and orders them alphabetically or by frequency. The search term can be specified as a substring, word, phrase or regular expression as in the Concordancer, Plot and View File tools, and the number of additional words to the left and right of the search term can also be specified” (Anthony 2011:11). Noguchi (2004 in Anthony 2011:12) says that “AntConc is a lightweight, simple, and easy to use corpus analysis toolkit”.

3.3 Frequency and collocation of noun phrases and their relationship with creative language

Frequency and keyword lists “can be used as the basis for a preliminary survey of a text or corpus. They allow you to see which lexical words occur most frequently and give you some idea of what the text is about” (Bowker and Pearson 2002:119). Word lists can therefore be used to “familiarize yourself with the terminology of your corpus, to identify words which are related to each other or similar to each other in form and/or meaning, and to observe typical co-occurrence patterns in word clusters” (Bowker and Pearson 2002:119). Collocates are words which typically occur in the vicinity of the search pattern (Bowker and Pearson 2002:124). As I have mentioned in the “Methodology section” of this chapter, I

will analyse the following nouns: dress, jacket, skirt, jean, pant, shirt, coat. In that order, I will cite a few examples for each noun.

For the noun 'dress' the following were identified:

“For this outfit, be Rihanna. If that's not an option to you, you can also buy her Fenty RTW collection, which includes this sculptured denim **dress**”; “As patron saint of naked dressing Kate Moss has long exemplified, a pair of certified unsexy pants is all you need to pair with a minimal-coverage slip **dress**”; “Herein lies the resurgence of the mini-length party **dress**: a standout trend from recent collections, which can be chalked up to an inherently human yearning for fun”; “Reformation’s “tagliatelle” **dress** is aptly named; the lace-trimmed linen was made for a trip to the Italian countryside or coastline– but looks just as good at your local park”.

For the noun 'jacket' the following were identified:

“Khaite's studded Grizzo **jacket**, a coveted style that's nearly impossible to find in stock, in the wild”; “Make like Naomi Campbell at Alexander McQueen, with masses of tulle and a cropped smoking **jacket**, and you can have the best of both worlds”; “Every wardrobe needs a classic leather **jacket**, and you can't get more fundamental than this design from Dunst”; “You remember the moment, don't you: that November in 2019 when Kendall Jenner wore a chocolate brown puffer **jacket** and had us frantically searching 'North Face 1996 Retro Nuptse' on Depop”.

For the noun 'skirt' the following were identified:

“Boasting an ultra-low drop waist, secured at the side with a dainty bow, the double-layer **skirt**—a signature of the label's—adds a touch of feminine playfulness”; “One thing's for sure: a white poplin **skirt** adds an element of effortless charm to any spring outfit”; “The perfect balance between short and long, this **skirt** and suits for any occasion. Plus, it has pockets!”; “This mini **skirt** by Dion Lee is the perfect combination of girly and grunge”; “Lace is making a comeback for SS24, so this sexy slip **skirt** by Fleur Du Mal is bang on trend with its sheer eyelash trim and cutouts that frame the waist and hips”.

For the noun 'jean' the following were identified:

“Not only will a good high-rise **jean** accentuate your waistline and elongate your legs, they're the perfect denim companion for the warmer season's shrunken tees and bra-style crop tops”; “Besides the impeccably tailored, high rise on The Carlton, what sets this **jean** apart is the unique fabrication”; “The beauty of the Mom **jean** is that it does all of the talking for you, all that's required of you is to wear your favourite T-shirt, jumper, blazer, and slip your legs into your new favourite pair of jeans”; “H&M has delivered the ultimate everyday **jean** with a gently tapered leg”.

For the noun 'pant' the following were identified:

“With nearly 3,300 five-star reviews on Amazon, they're an undeniable fan favorite. A true cropped **pant**, they're great if you're on the petite side or are just looking to show your ankles this summer”; “After a classic black **pant** that will work for just about every winter occasion out there? Try these Sir trousers on for size”; “Look effortlessly cool with a vertical striped **pant** that elongates the legs”; “The split-hem **pant** is akin to your favorite leggings but infinitely more polished for work”; “Fit for spring, Everlane's offwhite **pant** is cheery as it is charming; and same goes for Etro's checkered khaki choice”.

For the noun 'shirt' the following were identified:

“The alt version—a cropped button-down—is the shirt you need for when you're not in meetings with the boss”; “If you don't have a white V-neck T-**shirt** in your closet, here's a reminder to buy one”; “The exposed seams elevate this from your average T-shirt. The blue wash also serves as a neutral. You won't feel like you're wearing a bright color, but you won't feel like you're in black or white”; “Known for its cult-favorite Whisper Cotton **shirts**, Madewell delivers again with this crewneck”; “Any T-**shirt** with a built-in bra (with removable padding) is an immediate yes”; “Mango's boyfriend-fit **shirt** will be one of the most versatile pieces in your wardrobe”.

For the noun ‘coat’ the following were identified:

“The Laura Brown x Sézane collection is precisely that: floral tops, vintage-inspired flares, and one very cozy-looking leopard-print **coat**”; “One for the minimalists out there, Khaite's cotton-blend, deep camel-hued Minnie **coat** is as versatile as it is sleek”; “Never forget your scarf with this minimal swing **coat** that packs a punch thanks to its tacked-on scarf”; “Lift a page from this street styler and sport The Row’s lightweight trench **coat** with a cashmere crewneck, like this sleeveless version from Christopher Esber”.

3.3.1 Noun phrases and creative language

The noun phrases from the extracts I have provided above often employ premodification. Biber et al. (1999:588) say that there are four major structural types of premodification: general adjective, ed-participial modifier, ing-participial modifier and noun. All four types seem to appear in my corpus, for example “offwhite pant” and “mini skirt” are general adjectives, “sculptured denim dress” or “true cropped pant” are ed-participial modifiers, “very cozy-looking leopard-print coat” or “cropped smoking jacket” are ing-participial modifiers, “classic leather jacket” and “Mom jean” are nouns. Many of the noun phrases I mentioned in the extracts above contain multiple premodifiers, for example two-word premodification which occurs in “double-layer skirt”, three-word premodification which occurs in “good high-rise jean” and “mini-length party dress”.

The nouns cited in the examples above often collocate with adjectives. Adjectives typically “describe qualities of people, things, and states of affairs” (Biber et al. 1999:64), and they “are gradable in meaning, that is, they can denote degrees of a given quality” (Biber et al. 1999:506). The nouns I chose to analyse often collocate with adjectives such as minimal-coverage, mini-length, ‘tagliatelle’, studded, cropped, smoking, classic, chocolate brown, double-layer, white, mini, sexy, high-

rise, ultimate, every-day, cropped, black, vertical striped, split, offwhite, button down, V-neck, cozy-looking, leopard-print, cotton-blend, deep camel-hued, lightwear, minimal swing, cult-favorite, good. All these adjectives have an attributive syntactic role. According to Biber et al. (1999:505) “Adjectives in an attributive role modify nominal expressions, occurring as constituents of the noun phrase and typically preceding the head noun”. Biber et al. (1999:506) go on to say that “Many of the most common adjectives are central adjectives” and they are “descriptive, typically characterizing the referent of a nominal expression”. The adjectives cited above are central adjectives, as they describe and characterize the nouns they refer to. Some of the adjectives are participial adjectives in the ed- and ing-participle form, as they can be derived from verb. In some cases nouns can provide the base form (Biber et al. 1999:530). Many of the above-mentioned adjectives are compound adjectives, as “Compounds used as adjectives lend themselves to a compact and integrated expression of information” (Biber et al. 1999:533). Compound adjectives can be composed of many elements, including participial forms (Biber et al. 1999:533). Some examples of compound adjectives from my corpus are “cozy-looking”, “leopard-print”, “cotton-blend”, “deep camel-hued”, “boyfriend-fit”, “cult-favorite”, “mini-length”, “minimal-coverage”.

In the “Creativity in language” section of the second chapter of this dissertation, I mentioned that creative language is an important part of advertising, as it helps make ads more interesting and memorable. Creative language is often evocative and expressive, using linguistic devices to captivate and fascinate the reader. The noun phrases I have analysed above often contain premodifying adjectives which describe and advertise clothing items. Some of them employ creative strategies which may engage the readers, such as compounding. A compound adjective is formed when two or more elements of a sentence are joined together to modify the meaning of a noun. For example, “cult-favorite” is a noun + adjective compound. What could make it creative is the use of the word ‘cult’, which has generally a negative connotation, paired with ‘favorite’, which is appreciative. Another

example is “boyfriend-fit”, referring to a shirt, which is also a noun + adjective compound. The word ‘boyfriend’ is not typically used to describe a shirt, which makes the ad catchy and creative. Another example of creative writing may be “deep camel-hued”, referring to a coat. According to the Collins dictionary, hued means “having some (specified) shade or intensity of color or (a specified number of) colors”. ‘Hued’ refers to the color intensity of the coat, but since it is not a very frequently used word, it may catch the attention of the reader.

Adjectives can also be ‘borrowed’ from another language to make an impact. According to Sabir (2017:1) “As a result of language contact, different linguistic outcomes are resulted such as borrowing, interference, language shift, code mixing and code switching”. One example of borrowing is “tagliatelle dress”. Tagliatelle is an Italian word which refers to food, however in this instance it is used to describe a clothing piece. Sabir (2017:2) says that “Language mixture is considered as a creative, rule-governed process”. Therefore it is a creative strategy employed to attract attention and make the ad more striking. The “Mom jean” is another example of creative writing, as the word ‘mom’ is a noun that refers to a person, while here it is used to describe a type of jean. In all the instances I have cited, different types of creative patterns are used to present clothes to readers. Creativity in language offers the possibility to surprise the reader with original words and expressions that may typically not be used in fashion contexts. That helps to make an ad innovative and catchy, enticing the reader to purchase the product presented.

3.4 Frequency and collocation of imperatives and modal verbs and their effects on the advertising of clothes

As I have already mentioned above, frequency and keyword lists are used to analyse the most frequently occurring lexical words (Bowker and Pearson

2002:119). Word lists identify words which are related or similar to each other and allow to observe typical co-occurrence patterns in word clusters (Bowker and Pearson 2002:119). Collocates are words that typically occur in the vicinity of the search pattern (Bowker and Pearson 2002:124). As I have already mentioned in the “Methodology” section of this chapter, I will analyse the following imperative verbs: wear, pair, consider, add, go, make and dress. In that order, I will provide a few examples from my corpus for each verb.

For the verb ‘wear’ the following were identified:

“**Wear** a tank top beneath your hoodie in case you need to shed a layer”; “As for how to style this piece, take notes from the model pictured and **wear** a fitted white shirt and tan straight-leg pants”; “So of course anything goes: **wear** boxers, **wear** a skirt, **wear** a feather boa, wear dad jeans, **wear** it all at once!”; “Play with dimension by opting for some wide-leg or flared pants, and **wear** a pair of chunky combat boots to nod to the jacket’s roots”; “**Wear** Aligne’s double breasted Gilda style over dark indigo denim for a crisp new season look”; “**Wear** (sweater vest) alone, unbuttoned a la Kendall Jenner or layered”.

For the verb ‘pair’ the following were identified:

“ For a vintage vibe, **pair** a silk scarf in a colorful, psychedelic print with a crisp, cropped, tweed jacket”; “Seamlessly **pair** a minimalist style linen dress with a breezy blazer and slides for sleek office wear”; “**Pair** a grandpa-style knit with a casual wear or offset the long silhouette with a feminine mini dress”; “**Pair** a dense knit with flare wool trousers and ankle boots or layer an oversized version over a turtleneck or button-down”; “If your jumper is a simmer fit, **pair** it with a straight-leg trouser or a baggy jean to ensure you’re not pairing two wider-cut pieces”; “**Pair** with a pleated maxi skirt and classic sneakers for a casual take on workwear”.

For the verb ‘consider’ the following were identified:

“Did someone say date night? **Consider** a black dress with a striking silhouette”; “For when summer whites feel like too much, **consider** a gentle pinstriped jean instead”; “High-waisted jeans might be the obvious match for a cocooning cropped cardigan, but **consider** a low-rise, wide-legged tailored trouser instead”; “**Consider** a polo sweater as a preppy piece with an inherent summer feel”; “For a chic under-100\$ tennis dress that embodies the sporty aesthetics, **consider** Adidas’s classic tennis dress that features the brand’s iconic three stripes along each side”; “**Consider** ditching the layers and wearing your unbuttoned at both ends”.

For the verb ‘add’ the following were identified:

“**Add** a little zing to your spring with Whistles’s new collection: we can count the zesty, lime, green Kori dress as one of our five-a-day, right?”; “**Add** a touch of texture to your denim arsenal with these studded Carys”; “ Alternatively, **add** a box-fresh ribbed tank top, like those that were trending in the autumn-winter shows”; “**Add** a pop of pink to neutral separates with this double-breasted style that will accentuate your waist”; “**Add** a pop of color with a lightweight fitted blazer or sweet peter pan collar button-up underneath”; “**Add** a pair of wide-leg trousers and some sunglasses to complete the look”; “**Add** a red dress to your wardrobe and you’re not just wearing a frock, but participating in and nodding to a legacy”.

For the verb ‘go’ the following were identified:

“**Go** ahead and play dress-up with this puffy outerwear, which can simply be worn as a blouse too”; “**Go** big with solid shirts in bold hues, which we originally spotted at Valentino in Kelly Green”; “**Go** bold in this roomy shirtdress in a can’t-miss-me shade of pink”; “**Go** bold in embellished midskirts from Rotate and Zara or opt for timeless black and white styles from J.Crew and Banana Republic”; “If you’re tired of wearing sweats, go for a tailored yet cozy knit set”; “**Go** for the matching

hoodie, and congratulations—you've found your new favorite work-from-home (and, let's be honest, weekend) outfit”.

For the verb ‘make’ the following were identified:

“Or, if maximalism is more your thing, **make** a statement with Ganni’s silver colourway and combine them with clashing patterns like leopard print and stripes”; “The silky look makes sense for formal events, but **make** it work for an average day at the office with a button-down shirt”; “**Make** it (slip skirt) work outside of the bedroom with a cropped cashmere jumper”; “**Make** layering easy this winter with the Signature Long Sleeve Top”; “Not all jeans should look the same. **Make** room in your collection for options that feature distressing or a trendy design detail to show off your fashion know-how”.

For the verb ‘dress’ the following were identified:

“Wear to work with oversized knitwear, or **dress** it up for date night with a camisole and pointed-toe pumps”; “Pair it with a comfy sweatpants on the weekends for an elevated casual moment, or **dress** it up with your favorite little black dress for a fail-proof sophisticated ensemble”; “**Dress** like you mean business in a tailored pantsuit or coat”; “Here, Vogue presents you with a series of the best work-appropriate spring dresses to invest in for 2022, from midi dresses, to floral dresses, to herald of the warmer weather and longer days to come. **Dress** them up or down—it’s up to you”; “Even biker shorts naysayers can’t argue with their comfort and versatility. **Dress** them up with a blazer and a fab kitten heel, or pair them down with a dependable sneaker and your favorite graphic tee”.

3.4.1 Imperative verbs and their role in the advertising of clothes

The imperative verbs mentioned above often collocate with noun phrases which refer to clothing and styling. As I have already stated in the ‘Noun phrase’ section

of the second chapter of this dissertation, nouns are an important part of a sentence. They are the foundation of the language, since they allow us to indicate and refer to other people, to animals, to places and to abstract concepts. Most of the noun phrases imperative verbs collocate with involve clothes and directions on how to wear and style them. Most of them are premodifying noun phrases, for example: “wear a fitted white shirt and tan straight-leg pants”, “pair a minimalist style linen dress with a breezy blazer”, “consider a low-rise, wide-legged tailored trouser instead”. In other cases, imperative verbs collocate with postmodifying noun phrases, for example: “Add a pair of wide-leg trousers”, “Add a touch of texture to your denim arsenal”. In some instances, imperative verbs collocate with adverbs, for example: “Go ahead and play dress-up with this puffy outerwear”, “Go bold in this roomy shirtdress”, “Go big with solid shirts in bold hues”. Adverbs usually “specify the circumstances under which an action, process, or state takes place” and “convey the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the information” (Biber et al. 1999:65). In these cases, the adverbs imperative verbs collocate with are expressive and vibrant, they highlight the outcome a certain piece of clothing will have on the reader. The imperative verb ‘make’ often collocates with nouns that do not have an immediate connection with clothes, as they first provide an introduction for the clothing that will be presented afterwards, for example: “make a statement with Ganni’s silver colourway”, “Make room in your collection for options that feature distressing or a trendy design detail”, “Make layering easy this winter with the Signature Long Sleeve Top”. In the last example, nominalization is used for ‘layering’, employing a verb as a noun. Lastly, imperative verb ‘dress’ often collocates with personal pronouns, for example: “dress it up for date night with a camisole”, “Dress them up with a blazer and a fab kitten heel”, “Dress them up or down—it’s up to you”. That seems to be because they refer to clothing already mentioned before, giving instructions and guide on how to wear and pair them. Therefore, the collocates of imperative verbs can express important information that can enrich the meaning of their message. It may be possible for

the addresser to communicate their own opinions about clothes and fashion, and that may influence the reader in their decision-making process.

As aforementioned in the 'The imperative in advertising language' section of the second chapter of this dissertation, imperative verbs do not just give commands, they can also encourage or discourage a certain behaviour or action. In the examples I have provided above, imperative verbs generally give orders and directions. For example: "Add a touch of texture to your denim arsenal with these studded Carys" or "Wear Aligne's double breasted Gilda style over dark indigo denim for a crisp new season look". In these cases, imperatives tell the reader what to wear and how to wear it, however they soften the command by alluding that it will improve their outfit and appearance. Imperative verbs can also give soft commands often disguised as benevolent suggestions that will help the reader make the right choice. For example: "If you're tired of wearing sweats, go for a tailored yet cozy knit set"; or "Or, if maximalism is more your thing, make a statement with Ganni's silver colourway and combine them with clashing patterns like leopard print and stripes". In these instances it seems like the addresser has the reader's best interest in mind, as they seem to take into account their preference and simply propose an option. Imperatives also take the form of gentle recommendation, for example: "Did someone say date night? Consider a black dress with a striking silhouette" or "If your jumper is a simmer fit, pair it with a straight-leg trouser or a baggy jean to ensure you're not pairing two wider-cut pieces". In these examples it seems like the addresser is concerned about the reader and wishes to assist them in selecting the best clothing items for the occasion. In some cases, imperative verbs seem to imply that the ultimate decision is up to the reader, while they are only advising, for example: "Here, Vogue presents you with a series of the best work-appropriate spring dresses to invest in for 2022, from midi dresses, to floral dresses, to herald of the warmer weather and longer days to come. Dress them up or down—it's up to you" or "High-waisted jeans might be the obvious match for a cocooning cropped cardigan, but consider a low-rise, wide-

legged tailored trouser instead”. Here the imperatives give the impression of being almost unnoticeable, as they do not impose something, rather they approve of a certain style of clothing and present it to the reader in an appealing way.

As I have already discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, advertising has the task to introduce and sell a product. Language is the means through which advertising presents the products to the public. The discourse of advertising is often emotive and evocative, trying to positively impress the reader to convince them to buy the product. In the case of clothes in fashion magazines, imperative verbs may be one of the methods used to tempt the readers. As referenced by the above quoted examples, imperatives can play different roles in the depiction and advertising of clothes, as they can order, suggest, direct, recommend. Consequently, they may imply that the best choice the reader can make is to buy the items proposed by them. That way, the reader will keep up with the latest fashion and will stay informed about the newest collections. In the current culture, there is a lot of pressure to look good, to dress fashionably, to impress other people with our outfit choices whether at work, at school, during social outings or during romantic dates. Therefore, fashion magazines and their clothing ads adapt to the circumstances and advertise clothes in a way that will be appealing to the public that belongs to the culture and society they operate into. This is the reason why in the “Discourse analysis” section of the first chapter of this dissertation I mentioned that I would employ a discourse analysis approach, as it examines language and its attributes taking into consideration the cultural and societal background in which it operates. In the examples mentioned above the use of imperative verbs might make it easier to convince and persuade the reader into purchasing the clothes advertised, as they do not just suggest but also direct and guide the reader, making it seem like their products will make the reader more attractive, fascinating and engaging in their interactions. Imperative verbs and their collocates help put clothing advertisements into a real-life context and they hint that their offer will be the finest people can choose.

3.5 Modal verbs and collocation

As I have mentioned in the “Methodology” section of this chapter, I will analyse the following modal verbs: can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, and must. I will provide a few examples for each modal verb and then I will analyse their collocation.

For the verb ‘will’ the following were identified:

“Not only **will** a good high-rise jean accentuate your waistline and elongate your legs, they're the perfect denim companion for the warmer season's shrunken tees and bra-style crop tops”; This lavender blazer captured our attentions with its empire smocked midsection that **will** accentuate any waistline”; “Everlane perfected the length on this, hitting right at your hips. The neckline on the cutaway is a wide racerback, which **will** flatter both narrow and broad shoulders”; “The name of this pair from CRZ YOGA says it all: You'll feel like you have nothing on (in a good way) while you wear them”; “A refreshing take on the little black dress, this one guarantees you'll look effortlessly stylish all evening”.

For the verb ‘can’ the following were identified:

“With the right fit (or lack thereof) baggy jeans **can** actually be flattering and give you an air of effortless cool”; “The best part about this boatneck long-sleeve floral dress? It **can** also be worn out to dinner with girlfriends”; “Originally designed as a military coat, the trench coat has since become a staple item, which **can** both dress up a casual outfit and dress down a formal one”; “There are also raincoats that **can** conquer multiple needs at once. Some outdoors-based brands like The North Face create rain jackets that **can** be worn in three different types of weather”; “When you find a good denim skirt, whether it be true blue or a daring white, you **can** count on wearing it for seasons to come”.

For the verb ‘may’ the following were identified:

“The clothes also had the uncanny ability to seamlessly fit into a range of wardrobes, even proposing new ways to wear things you **may** already own”; “While it **may** be the ultimate summer shirt for throwing over swimmers post-dip, don’t be fooled—this papaya-hued number would do double duty thrown over a turtleneck to brighten up the chilliest of winter days”, “A linen shirt **may** be one of the easiest, most low-maintenance garments one could have in their wardrobe”; “Complete with three pockets, this PJ set **may** be the last one you ever buy”; “Step outside of your "neutrals only" zone this season and try a minty green jacket. You **may** find yourself loving the pop of color more than you thought”.

For the verb ‘would’ the following were identified:

“Made from organic cotton, this Nobody's Child dark wash denim skirt **would** work well with heels and a black bodysuit”; “Combining a couple of biggest denim trends around, cargo plus skirt, Whistles' utility skirt **would** work really well with a white shirt and kitten heeled mules”, “Dark wash denim has an elevated feel to it, and this Tibi skirt, in a stylish A-line, **would** work as well in the office or at a bar”; “The lace pattern on this dress is eye-catching in the best possible way. While it **would** work for any environment, this would be particularly beautiful in a setting along the water”; “Perfect for work and play, this cotton-poplin style **would** look just as good worn with distressed denim as it would with a classic black blazer”.

For the verb ‘might’ the following were identified:

“Play with contrast by pairing this with a slim-fitting top, or lean into the oversized silhouette with a loose tank - **might** we suggest, though, that you choose a kitten heel, with the pointed vamp peeking out from under the hem”; “You’ll want to cover your shoulders with a trusty layer—**might** we suggest an oversized denim jacket? This one from GRLFRND features stitched front pockets, silver buttons, and a structured collar”; “If you're wanting a bit more coverage, **might** we suggest a racerback option like this one from L'Academie”; “If your rehearsal dinner is a

more casual affair, you **might** want a lighter fabric like cotton. This stunning bustier-style dress from Staud is perfect for a warm-weather setting (and for those who want a dress they can wear again”.

For the verb ‘could’ the following were identified:

“You **could** add in a vest and make a threepiece suit your next power move and swap in a T-shirt (or, nothing!) under a blazer to keep things breezy”; “If you’re already in possession of a white or black shirt, this caramel buttonup **could** add the interest your collection might be missing”; “A slouchy suit is a great way to wear a suit without feeling too stiff but you **could** also pair a skinny pant with a longer-line blazer for an interesting silhouette”; “The cami **could** also serve a dual purpose when worn beneath a blazer for a sultry street style-approved ensemble”; “The humble slip dress **could** be the most versatile dress you own”; “If you’re after a minimalist look but still want to make a statement, these cream M.N.G trousers **could** be the way to go”.

For the verb ‘should’ the following were identified:

“Here, a Vogue editor brings you the red dresses you **should** add to cart this season”; “You **should** also look out for jumpers made using Merino wool sheared from, you guessed it, Merino sheep, which offers fine fibre, a super-soft feel and a durable nature”; “Abercrombie & Fitch is beloved across the internet for its range of affordable denim styles, but these vegan leather pants, which retail for \$110, **should** also be on your wish list this fall”; “This design detail looks great as a skirt, but a pleated dress **should** also be in your repertoire of sportswear”; “On your list of closet essentials **should** be a striped shirt, whether it’s a classic stripe button-down or a Brenton stripe top (a favorite of Kate Middleton’s)”.

For the verb ‘must’ the following were identified:

“However, when it comes to the full look, there are a few more pieces that you **must** consider as well. Denim tops and midi skirt, cowboy hats, studded belts are all on your list”; “Not just for brides: why a white dress is this summer’s **must**

have”; “Comfortable, trans-seasonal and always on trend, their versatility makes them an absolute **must**-have”; “Yes, indeed, you're well aware that a leather jacket is a **must**-have in all wardrobes—but so, too, is a leather shacket”.

For the verb ‘shall’ the following were identified:

“**Shall** I compare these Pleats Please trousers to a summer’s day? They are far cooler and more temperate”; “We hereby declare that scarf/tube/handkerchief/halter tops **shall** never go out of style”.

3.5.1. Modal verbs and their role in the advertising of clothes

The modal verbs mentioned above often collocate with other verbs. For example, will often collocates with accentuate and flatter: “Not only will a good high-rise jean accentuate your waistline”, “The neckline on the cutaway is a wide racerback, which will flatter both narrow and broad shoulders”. Can often collocates with wear: “The best part about this boatneck long-sleeve floral dress? It can also be worn out to dinner with girlfriends”, “Some outdoors-based brands like The North Face create rain jackets that can be worn in three different types of weather”. May collocates with the verb be: “A linen shirt may be one of the easiest, most low-maintenance garments one could have in their wardrobe”, “this PJ set may be the last one you ever buy”. Would often collocates with work and look: “Whistles' utility skirt would work really well with a white shirt and kitten heeled mules”, “this cotton-poplin style would look just as good worn with distressed denim as it would with a classic black blazer”. Might collocates with suggest and want: “might we suggest an oversized denim jacket?”, “If your rehearsal dinner is a more casual affair, you might want a lighter fabric like cotton”. Could often collocates with add and pair: “You could add in a vest and make a threepiece suit your next power move”, “you could also pair a skinny pant with a longer-line blazer for an interesting silhouette”. Should collocates with add and be: “a Vogue editor brings

you the red dresses you should add to cart this season”, “a pleated dress should also be in your repertoire of sportswear”. Must collocates with consider: “there are a few more pieces that you must consider as well” and shall collocates with compare and go: “Shall I compare these Pleats Please trousers to a summer’s day?”, “scarf/tube/handkerchief/halter tops shall never go out of style”. As I have already discussed in the “The verb phrase” section of the second chapter of this dissertation, verbs frame present, past and future tense and they place actions into a temporal context. In the examples cited above, modals often collocate with suggestive and evocative verbs that offer advice to look more appealing, that refer to physical appearance and to matching outfits. Verb such as accentuate, flatter, wear, look, add, pair, want, together with modal verbs may create the desire to follow with the directions given by the magazine. That means that modal verbs and their collocates could have an influence on how reader perceive clothes in fashion magazines, as they are promised that their look will improve if they take into consideration the magazine’s exhortation.

Modal verbs may play an important role in the advertising of clothes in fashion magazines. As I have already mentioned in the second chapter of this dissertation, advertising language employs various linguistic strategies to present and sell a product. Modal verbs can have an epistemic or deontic meaning. Epistemic modality expresses subjective meaning, while deontic modality expresses an objective meaning. For this reason, modal verbs can be used in advertising language, as they can convey different interpretations. The modal verb will is “strongly connected to future meaning”, as “futurity is often connected to promises, agreements, hopes, desires, intention or plans” (Imre 2017:102). Would “is considered the remote pair of will” (Imre 2017:42). It introduces an element of psychological remoteness into what the speaker is saying, thus would combines inevitability associated with will and remoteness at the same time (Lewis 1986 in Imre 2017:43). Can is “associated with objective *possibility* or perceiving the existence of possibility, within which we can highlight *ability*” (Lewis 1986 in

Imre 2017:132). Could is the remote pair of can regarding time possibility and impossibility (less probability, more tentative and hypothetical, unfulfilled conditionals), criticism for not fulfilling expectations volition, and social relationship (polite formulations) (Lewis 1986 in Imre 2017:136). May and might are primarily used to express subjective, epistemic possibility, yet it is knowledge-based supposition, with certain evidence for assumptions, as they express the speaker's volitional involvement in the creation of a possibility (Lewis 1986 in Imre 2017:65). Must expresses "internal obligation, personal feelings" (Murphy 1994 in Imre 2017:91). It can also express reproach, hidden admonition, past unfulfilled actions resulting in something negative (failure, remorse, etc.). Should offers advice without forcing the subject. It expresses duty and moral obligation concerning the realization of an action (Kakzhanova 2013: 2531). Shall forces a person to realize an action without giving an alternative solution. It strictly organizes actions (Kakzhanova 2013: 2534).

Modal verbs communicate a variety of meanings that can be used in advertising language. As referenced by the examples cited above from my corpus, will often promises that if the reader will wear the clothing item proposed by the addresser, it is almost guaranteed that they will be more attractive and that the clothes will flatter their appearance. Can offers a possibility in the choice of clothes, which gives the impression of being an honest suggestion to improve the reader's outfit. May implies a degree of uncertainty, which makes it seem like the addresser is politely recommending certain clothes, while leaving the ultimate decision to the reader. Would gives a sense of remoteness and a hint of impartiality that makes the addresser's involvement almost unnoticeable. Might seems to take the shape of polite and considerate suggestions to help the reader make the best choice according to their preference. Could often provides advice on how to pair certain outfits, while giving the impression of being friendly and discreet directions. Should appears to be more daring in giving advice, as it makes it seem like the choice proposed by the addresser is the best one, making it look like almost an

obligation to adhere to. Must expresses a sense of obligation only in one of the examples I cited, while in the majority of the other cases, it is mostly used as a noun or adjective. Shall expresses determination and the intent to present clothes in direct and straightforward manner.

Modal verbs can have a great impact on how readers perceive the advertising of clothes in fashion magazines. Due to their dual nature, modal verbs can not only provide a portrayal of clothes, but they can also communicate the addresser's subjective viewpoint. That way, the information depicted may become partial or preferential. Readers may therefore be influenced in their choice and make a biased decision based on the suggestions and guidance provided by the writer. If the reader is promised that a certain piece of clothing can embellish their appearance and that it will make them more good-looking and attractive, they might be prone to buy it. Consequently, advertising language may avail itself of modal verbs to give requests and order the readers to buy the clothes advertised in the magazine in the form of harmless recommendations and suggestions. Some modal verbs are more direct, giving a sense of obligation and requirement, others are more implicit and subtle, making it seem like they offer benign advice. This dynamic nature allows modality to balance discretion and tactfulness with boldness and enterprising, giving readers the impression that they are being helped to choose the best alternative.

3.6 Discussion

Persuasion is an important and prevailing feature of advertising language. As indicated previously in the "Persuasion in advertising" section of the second chapter of this dissertation, persuasive language has the ability to convince readers that they want or need a certain product. In the *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle* magazines, persuasion seems to be an essential aspect in the advertising of clothes.

In my analysis of my corpus of texts, I chose to examine the concordances of noun and verb phrases, particularly their frequency patterns and their collocates. Both noun and verb phrases seem to employ persuasive language to present and advertise their clothing items. For example ““Every wardrobe needs a classic leather jacket, and you can’t get more fundamental than this design from Dunst”, “Not only will a good high-rise jean accentuate your waistline and elongate your legs, they're the perfect denim companion for the warmer season's shrunken tees and bra-style crop tops”, “Mango's boyfriend-fit shirt will be one of the most versatile pieces in your wardrobe”, “High-waisted jeans might be the obvious match for a cocooning cropped cardigan, but consider a low-rise, wide-legged tailored trouser instead”, “A refreshing take on the little black dress, this one guarantees you'll look effortlessly stylish all evening”, “A linen shirt may be one of the easiest, most low-maintenance garments one could have in their wardrobe”, “Here, a Vogue editor brings you the red dresses you should add to cart this season”.

Persuasive language is often evocative, appealing, vividly expressive and suggestive. Its purpose is to present a product in a favourable light so to influence the reader into making the choice to buy it. In all the instances above, noun and verb phrases present clothes in an inviting and tempting way. They highlight the advantages of the clothes, emphasizing the benefits the reader will have if they purchase them. They promise and guarantee that the reader will be pleased with the clothing, as it will flatter their appearance and enhance their outfits. The focus is put on the potential profit the reader would gain if they purchased the clothes advertised. Therefore, the noun and verb phrases in my corpus may contribute to the persuasion and coaxing of readers, as they play a crucial in the structure of the sentence. Nouns and verbs are fundamental elements that allow us to refer to people, objects, situation, they set the general framework of a sentence and give sense to what is being expressed. Consequently, if they employ linguistic models

like persuasion in the advertising of clothes, they can have a great influence on how readers will perceive the content presented.

3.7 Conclusion

In the third and final chapter of this dissertation I presented my methodology, then I introduced the two software tools I have used in the study of my corpus, Sketch Engine and AntConc. Then I analysed the relationship between noun phrases, their frequency patterns and collocates and their relationship with creative language. The noun phrases employ creative strategies such as compounding adjectives and borrowing in their portrayal of clothes. I then examined the relationship between imperative and modal verbs and advertising language in their connection with frequency and collocates. It follows that both imperative and modal verbs depict clothing items with the aim of advertising and selling them. Finally, I analysed the connection between the concordances of the noun and verb phrases I examined and persuasion, concluding that advertisers present clothes to persuade and convince readers to purchase them.

Conclusion

This dissertation focused on fashion discourse and the analysis of noun and verb phrases in the Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire magazines. In the first chapter, I introduced the importance of language and its potential effects on people. Language is the means through which fashion is presented, therefore it is important to acknowledge its role. I then introduced the discourse analysis approach and its benefits in the studying of language, as it also takes into consideration the cultural and societal aspect of language. In my analysis of noun and verb phrases, I also took into account the background and the circumstances in which they are created. I then introduced clothes and their role in communication. Clothes can communicate opinions, viewpoints, ideologies. They are our business card through which we present ourselves to the world. That is why the language used to display and advertise them is crucial. Fashion discourse plays an important role in the way clothes are perceived by individuals, as it does not just display clothes, but it also speaks to readers and gives insight and instructions on what to wear and how to wear it. The means through which fashion discourse travels is the media. The discourse of the media is often intentional, it selects words and expression that will target a specific audience, as it helps shape the way people understand and consider fashion. Fashion magazines facilitate this process, as they act as a medium between the fashion world and readers. Fashion magazines present clothing items, but they also offer advice and instructions on fashion trends and styles; they offer the designers' point of view and help depict their products in a positive light. That is why in my own analysis I examined the Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire magazines.

In the second chapter, I introduced the role of creativity in language. Creative language makes use of unconventional and unique words and expressions to convey a message. That way, the message will seem more interesting and may become more easily memorable by readers. Creativity plays an important part in fashion discourse, as it makes the description and advertising of clothes stand out.

I then presented persuasion and advertising language. Persuasion makes use of linguistic strategies in its aim to sell a product. It uses evocative and expressive language to advertise an item. Advertising language is alluring and convincing, it presents products in an advantageous light, enticing readers to give into its exhortation. Advertising strategies are often present in the discourse of fashion, as it not only informs, but it also aims to sell clothes. Noun and verb phrases are one of the strategies used to sell clothing, for this reason I chose to analyse them. I then introduced the corpus linguistics approach, which is the study of the language in use, it is an empirical approach that makes use of a large collection of texts called corpus, that has been gathered in electronic form according to certain criteria. This method helped me build and analyse my own corpus of texts taken from the Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire magazines. The last sections of the second chapter dealt with noun and verb phrases. Noun and verb phrases are crucial parts of a sentence. They help create sense and they build a temporal frame. In my analysis of my own corpus, I focused particularly on modal verbs and imperative verbs. Modal verbs can be used to make requests, to communicate obligations and intentions, to make predictions for the future, to give advice. Imperative verbs are generally used for commands or requests, but they can also be used to give orders, instructions, advising, issue warnings and make invitations. Both noun and verb phrases create significance and identity in a sentence. They are the pillars on which sentences are built. Therefore, their function and position can make or break the sense of the sentence. In fashion discourse there is a numerous amount of noun and verb phrases used to portray and advertise clothes. They can therefore have a great impact on the perception and interpretation readers have of clothing items.

The third chapter began with the methodology I employed in my analysis of noun and verb phrases. Using a corpus linguistics approach, I used the Sketch Engine and AntConc software tools that helped me build my corpus of 307 articles on fashion taken from the Vogue, Elle and Marie Claire magazines. I decided to focus on frequency patterns and collocation, selecting a few of the most used nouns and

verbs. Firstly, I analysed the connection between noun phrases and creative language. Noun phrases often employ premodification and they often collocate with adjectives. They used creative strategies such as compound adjectives and borrowing in their portrayal of clothes. For verb phrases, I focused on imperative verbs and modal verbs and their relationship with advertising strategies. Imperative verbs often collocate with premodifying noun phrases; they play different roles in the depiction and advertising of clothes, as they order, suggest, direct, recommend what clothes to wear and how to style them. Modal verbs often collocate with other verbs that are suggestive and evocative and that offer advice to look more appealing, that refer to physical appearance and to matching outfits. Both modal and imperative verbs portray clothing with the aim of advertising and selling them. Lastly, I discussed the role of persuasion in the noun and verb phrases I examined. It follows that they emphasize the advantages of the clothes depicted, highlighting the benefits the reader will have if they purchase them. They promise that the clothes advertised will flatter and please the reader, that they will make them more attractive and that they will enhance their appearance. Finally, as a result of my analysis of noun and verb phrases in the *Vogue*, *Elle* and *Marie Claire* magazines, I came to the conclusion that in all three magazines, noun and verb phrases may have been used to advertise their products with the goal of selling them. They employed various linguistic strategies to attract readers and tempt them to purchase their clothing. In doing so, they used creative methods and advertising schemes to display and publicize their fashion items.

The study of my own corpus of texts from the *Vogue*, *Marie Claire* and *Elle* magazines was moderately conclusive. With the help from Sketch Engine and AntConc, I was able to consider 307 texts and to examine some of their linguistic patterns. The purpose of this study was to examine the role noun and verb phrases have in fashion magazines, specifically in the advertising of clothing. It follows that both noun and verb phrases use creative strategies like compound adjectives and borrowing to persuade readers in their advertisements. The *Vogue*, *Elle* and

Marie Claire magazines use evocative, expressive and convincing language to portray and publicize their clothing items. Consequently, readers may be influenced to purchase their products. However, one of the weak points of my study was the small number of examples considered, as I was not able to analyse an extensive quantity of them. Because I analysed fashion magazines, it would also be useful to study the texts together with the images and pictures, as they can provide important information. In conclusion, my analysis offered some input on a few linguistic characteristics of advertising language in fashion discourse, in an attempt to demonstrate that fashion magazines may employ linguistic strategies to portray their clothing items and to influence readers into purchasing them.

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Summary in Italian

Questa tesina tratta di linguaggio e discorso sulla moda, in particolare si sofferma sull'analisi dei sintagmi nominali e verbali nel linguaggio della moda in riviste come Vogue, Elle e Marie Claire, ed è divisa in tre capitoli. Il primo capitolo espone l'importanza del linguaggio e gli effetti che esso può produrre sulle persone, ed è anche il mezzo attraverso il quale la moda viene esposta e pubblicizzata. In seguito, ho presentato l'approccio dell'analisi del discorso, che studia il linguaggio prendendo in considerazione anche l'aspetto culturale e sociale in cui viene prodotto. Il linguaggio della moda è situato in un certo contesto collettivo, di conseguenza è importante analizzare le circostanze in cui viene generato. Successivamente, ho discusso della rilevanza dei vestiti e del loro ruolo nella comunicazione. Gli abiti che usiamo possono comunicare opinioni, ideologie, rappresentazioni mentali. I vestiti fungono da biglietto da visita attraverso il quale ci presentiamo alle altre persone. Per questo motivo, il linguaggio utilizzato per descriverli e pubblicizzarli è fondamentale. Il discorso sulla moda non solo informa riguardo all'abbigliamento e alle ultime tendenze, ma offre anche una panoramica del mondo della moda. Esso può esporre le idee dei designer, può dare indicazioni su cosa e su come indossare un capo di abbigliamento. I media sono uno dei mezzi attraverso i quali il linguaggio della moda viene trasmesso. I media possono avere in mente un pubblico preciso a cui rivolgersi, quindi possono selezionare parole ed espressioni intente a formare una certa idea rispetto alla moda. Le riviste di moda sono uno dei media che presentano la moda al pubblico. Possono quindi agire da intermediario, scegliendo consciamente di usare un certo tipo di linguaggio che renderà i prodotti da loro esposti più interessanti e stimolanti.

Il secondo capitolo introduce il ruolo della creatività nel linguaggio. Il linguaggio creativo spesso usa metodi non convenzionali e originali per trasmettere un certo messaggio. Così facendo, il messaggio può risultare più intrigante e piacevole. Nel

linguaggio della moda, la creatività è spesso fondamentale nell'esposizione e nella pubblicità dei vestiti. Successivamente, ho affrontato i temi della persuasione e del linguaggio della pubblicità. La persuasione è uno strumento molto efficace che può essere usato nella pubblicità. Il linguaggio persuasivo è spesso evocativo, espressivo, vivido, convincente. Lo scopo della pubblicità è di vendere un certo prodotto, per cui il linguaggio usato per presentarlo al pubblico è spesso finalizzato a influenzare le persone a comperarlo. Anche il linguaggio della moda è spesso persuasivo, in quanto non ha come scopo solo condividere informazioni riguardo la moda, ma mira anche alla vendita di abiti. In seguito, ho esposto l'approccio della linguistica dei corpora, ovvero lo studio del linguaggio in uso; è un approccio empirico che si avvale di grandi raccolte di testi chiamate corpora, che sono stati raccolti in formato elettronico secondo criteri specifici. Questo metodo mi consente di analizzare il mio corpus di testi riguardanti il discorso sulla moda. Infine, ho introdotto i sintagmi nominali e verbali. I sintagmi nominali e verbali sono parti cruciali di una frase. Aiutano a creare senso, indicano persone, cose, concetti astratti, costruiscono una cornice temporale. La struttura di base delle frasi con intestazione nominale è costituita da testa e determinante, premodificatori e postmodificatori; i sintagmi verbali possono essere frasi verbali finite e frasi verbali indefinite. In particolare, mi sono soffermata sui verbi modali e sugli imperativi. I verbi modali possono essere usati per avanzare richieste, per comunicare obblighi e intenzioni, per fare previsioni per il futuro, per dare consigli. Possono anche essere interpretati in due modi diversi, poiché possono esprimere sia un significato epistemico (soggettivo) che deontico (oggettivo). I verbi imperativi sono generalmente usati per comandi o richieste, ma possono anche essere usati per dare ordini, istruzioni, consigliare, fare inviti. Sia i sintagmi nominali che quelli verbali costruiscono la base e il senso di una frase. Di conseguenza, la loro presenza può determinare il modo in cui il significato e il messaggio della frase viene esposto e compreso. Nel linguaggio della moda, i sintagmi nominali e i sintagmi verbali sono presenti in grande numero, per questo

motivo ho scelto di analizzarli e di esaminare gli effetti che possono creare sui lettori di riviste di moda come Vogue, Elle e Marie Claire.

Il terzo capitolo inizia con la metodologia che ho usato nell'analisi dei sintagmi nominali e verbali estratti dalle riviste Vogue, Elle e Marie Claire. Per il mio studio ho usato Sketch Engine e AntConc, due strumenti software che mi hanno permesso di costruire il mio corpus di 307 testi sul linguaggio della moda. Mi sono soffermata sui modelli di frequenza e sulla collocazione dei sintagmi nominali e verbali, selezionando alcuni dei nomi e dei verbi più frequentemente usati nel mio corpus. In particolare, mi sono soffermata sulla relazione tra sintagmi nominali e linguaggio creativo e sintagmi verbali e il loro rapporto con il linguaggio della pubblicità. I sintagmi nominali impiegano la premodificazione e spesso si collocano con gli aggettivi. Sono soliti usare strategie creative come aggettivi composti e prestiti nella loro rappresentazione dei capi di abbigliamento. Per quanto riguarda i sintagmi verbali, mi sono concentrata sui verbi imperativi e sui verbi modali. I verbi imperativi spesso si collocano con frasi nominali premodificanti, svolgono ruoli diversi nella rappresentazione e nella pubblicità dei vestiti, poiché ordinano, suggeriscono, dirigono, consigliano quali vestiti indossare e come abbinarli. I verbi modali spesso si collocano con altri verbi che offrono consigli per apparire più attraenti, che si riferiscono all'aspetto fisico e all'abbinamento degli abiti. Sia i verbi modali che quelli imperativi descrivono abiti con lo scopo di pubblicizzarli e venderli. Infine, ho esaminato il rapporto tra sintagmi nominali e verbali e la persuasione. Ne ho dedotto che sia i sintagmi nominali che quelli verbali raffigurano ed enfatizzano i benefici e i vantaggi degli abiti da loro proposti. Promettono che se acquistati, renderanno il cliente più attraente, più sofisticato, più affascinante. In ultima analisi, la mia ricerca è stata moderatamente conclusiva. Grazie a Sketch Engine e AntConc mi è stato possibile analizzare alcune caratteristiche di 307 testi riguardanti il linguaggio della moda. Ne consegue che i sintagmi nominali e i sintagmi verbali presenti nei testi prelevati dalle riviste di moda Vogue, Elle e Marie Claire spesso utilizzano vari strumenti

linguistici per pubblicizzare e vendere i propri prodotti, facendo per esempio uso di linguaggio creativo, aggettivi composti, prestiti, verbi modali e verbi imperativi.