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DISKURZIVNA KONSTRUKCIJA RODNIH IDENTITETA

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DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERED IDENTITIES

Graduation thesis

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Abstract

One's identity as a woman or a man is highly dependent on her or his language choices and the way in which people represent themselves and others through discourse(s) is a result of a complex relationship between society, knowledge, opinions and attitudes. The problem of gender differences in language use of women and men has been explored many times so far, but in different ways and from different perspectives (see Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1986; Tannen, 1990; Coates, 1996; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002). Most of these studies deal with identifying specific features of women's and men's writing styles, however, this study aims at examining whether and how gendered identities are constructed through discourse(s). By using both the qualitative and quantitative approach, the study investigates students' perceptions of gender differences in language use. The results show that gendered identities are constructed through discourses and that certain differences in discourse comprehension and identification of women's writing features do exist with respect to the students' sex and the faculty they attend.

Key words: *discourse(s), gender, identities*

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1. Introduction

The notion of ‘discourse’ has been discussed in many contexts across many different disciplines. It is widely believed that the idea that “underlies the word ‘discourse’ is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people’s utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life” (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002: 1). Undoubtedly, discourse plays an important role in giving meaning to how people see the world and others in it. Furthermore, people represent themselves and others through discourse(s) but the way in which they do that is often not obvious and is a result of a complex relationship between society, knowledge, opinions and attitudes. These representations, or rather constructions, are very subtle and typically rely on (often stereotypical) assumptions. Another concept that is examined in this thesis is the concept of identity or rather identities. The plural form of the term is used since it suggests that people’s sense of who they are is not fixed but fluid. Identities are individual and social at the same time since people make choices about themselves from the beliefs and assumptions available in their social contexts. However, one’s identity, such as ‘woman’ or ‘man’, is something that has long been challenged. According to Johnson, one’s gender identity is an “on-going social processes dependent upon systematic restatement” (1997: 22, as cited in Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002). In other words, one’s gender identity refers “to the degree to which women and men see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society” (Burke, Stets and Pirog-Good 1988; Spence 1985, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 997). Since it is believed that the self is constituted through processes of social interaction (Davies and Harré 1990, as cited in Versluys, 2007), it could be said that one’s identity as a woman or a man is, among other things, highly dependent on their different language choices. In situations where language use is the only thing that can indicate one’s identity, as in written discourses, these (stereotypical) assumptions come to light. Therefore, the main aim of this thesis is to examine whether gendered identities can indeed be constructed through discourse(s). More specifically, the aim is to determine how male and female students at two different study programs at Zagreb University make assumptions about one’s gendered identity while reading different texts on the basis of existing social assumptions about “male” and “female” writing. Studies such as this one emphasize the importance of being aware of the fact that people’s linguistic choices are often, if not always, influenced by different social practices and that their sense of who they are, their (gendered)

identity greatly depends upon the knowledge, opinions, and attitudes of others who interact with them.

2. Discourse and discourse comprehension

2.1. Discourse

'Discourse' is a term that is used across many academic disciplines, yet, its meaning¹ can often be vague and confusing. At a basic level, scholars usually see discourse as some stretch of connected sentences or utterances (Litosseliti, 2006); however, they all treat it differently, i.e. linguistically, as a text with patterns and rules of coherence; sociologically, as a conversational interaction with certain social functions; from a social and critical theory perspective, as the manifestation of cultural ways of thinking and doing (Antaki, 1994, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006); and, of course, many combine all these perspectives (Litosseliti, 2006).

Within the scope of linguistics, the predominantly used definition of discourse is a formal one, which derives from the organization of the discipline into levels of linguistic units, i.e. phonology, morphology, and syntax (Bucholtz, 2003). Since morphology is the level of language in which sounds are combined into words, and syntax the level in which words are combined into sentences, discourse is, according to this formal definition, the linguistic level in which sentences are combined into larger units (Bucholtz, 2003). The alternative definition of discourse, which focuses on function rather than on linguistic form, is that discourse is language in context or language as it is put to use in different social situations (Bucholtz, 2003).

Linguists tend to emphasize and use one of many approaches to discourse (Trappes-Lomex, 2004). For the purpose of this thesis, however, the emphasis was put on the theories and definitions of discourse that see it as something that is formed socially. The effects that the production of discourse can have are discussed in Fairclough's (1992) social theory of discourse. More precisely, Fairclough (1992) believes that discourse constructs social identities, helps its participants to set up social relationships, and that texts signify world processes and relations. The idea that "underlies the word 'discourse' is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life" (Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002: 1). Moreover, discourses have an important role in constructing or giving meaning to how people see the world, i.e. discourses "articulate, maintain, constitute, re-constitute, negotiate, and even resist some of these ways" (Litosseliti, 2006: 49).

¹ The usage of the term 'discourse' is highly dependent on the scientific field in which it is used as well as that particular context.

Discourse represents a potential site of struggle since participants are “neither helplessly controlled by dominant discourses, nor ‘rational’ individuals who make free choices” (Litosseliti, 2006: 49). By resisting dominant discourses imposed on people and all the assumptions embedded in them, people become a part of a great process of changing perceptions of experience, roles and also identities (Litosseliti, 2006). Therefore, discourses can be seen “as a web of social themes, voices, assumptions, and explanations – what Gee describes as ‘saying – (writing) – doing – being – valuing – believing – combinations’” (1989: 6–7, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006: 48).

2.2. Discourse comprehension

People encounter stereotypes – “relatively fixed and oversimplified generalizations about groups or classes of people” (Jones and Colman, 1996: 843) – on a daily basis. Their opinions and attitudes that are based on and represent these stereotypes greatly affect the way they observe and analyze the world around them. It is a vital part of who they are, a part of their identity, but not just theirs, since through their knowledge, beliefs, opinions and attitudes they attribute certain characteristics to others in that way confirming the idea of the collective creation of identity. People make similar assumptions about (gendered) discourses.

When people read and comprehend a text, their basic goal is to have a coherent understanding of what they are reading. Sparks says that discourse comprehension “involves building meaning from extended segments of language” (2012: 1713). Furthermore, successfully comprehending discourse “requires making inferences to connect ideas both within and across local and global discourse contexts” and “establishing such connections relies on the integration of information from prior discourse contents, as well as from prior knowledge, in order to build a coherent memory representation for the events and concepts the text describes” (Sparks, 2012: 1713). In other words, discourse comprehension is not something that depends only on an individual and his or her interpretation, but is rather a component in a complex process of interaction in different social contexts (van Dijk, 1982). Moreover, comprehension “not only needs representation formats and strategic principles for the use of knowledge, but also an important ‘doxastic’ component, featuring opinions, attitudes, and indirectly also norms, values and ideologies and their associated ‘emotions’” (van Dijk, 1982: 48).

Van Dijk (1982) says that one of the most important contributions to the study of discourse has been the recognition of the important role that knowledge plays in discourse processing.

He argues that “discourse understanding involves both bottom-up and top-down processing and that many inferences must be made in order to establish local and global coherence in textual representations” (1982: 35), which presuppose large amounts of world knowledge – besides all the textual and contextual information conveyed in different communicative situations (van Dijk, 1982). It is believed that, in order to access and use this knowledge in understanding and representing discourses effectively, it must be intelligently organized (van Dijk, 1982). Both the quantity and quality of a reader’s knowledge affect comprehension (Kendeou et al. 2003). One’s knowledge and the accuracy, flexibility and coherence of that knowledge affect discourse comprehension (Sparks, 2012).

However, knowledge is not the only important factor when it comes to discourse comprehension. Equally important are some other kinds of cognitive information, namely opinions, attitudes and beliefs (van Dijk, 1982). People’s opinions, attitudes, beliefs, attributions and perceptions “are not stable and enduring across contexts; rather they are constructed in accordance with historical and socio-cultural contexts of discourse and interpersonal interaction” (Adjei, 2013: 4). More precisely, in natural communicative situations people will not only use their knowledge about other people, objects, events, actions or episodes referred to by a text, but also their opinions, attitudes and beliefs, which does not only imply that people evaluate textual information, but also that the very process of comprehension is affected (van Dijk, 1982). In this way, “lexical search, the assignment of propositions to clauses, the establishment of local coherence between propositions and the derivation of semantic macrostructures (discourse topics) may take place under the control of a personal, subjective bias” (van Dijk, 1982: 35).

3. Society, identity and language

Society and language are inextricably linked and are both constantly growing. Language is considered as fluid, dynamic, prone to changes, and as such, according to Antaki (1994, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006), every time people use language, they make meaningful selections from the linguistic resources available to them. Antaki (1994, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006) adds that this is not a straightforward process since these selections are embedded in a local/immediate, broader/institutional and socio-cultural context. Language must be viewed “in the context of the particular social occasion (e.g. at school, in parliament, in the media); of the medium (e.g. spoken, written); of who argues (e.g. a doctor, a legislator, a campaigner); for what purpose(s) (e.g. to convince, to change a situation); and from what perspective” (Litosseliti, 2006: 10). These different perspectives, according to Litosseliti (2006), will then reflect and promote different assumptions or discourses around gender. i.e. assumptions about women’s and men’s position in a society, their power in terms of decision-making, the role of parenting, or a society’s views about sex. In order to understand the role that language plays in establishing and maintaining social relations, language has to be looked at and understood outside itself, or rather as a social process in which it plays an important role (Graddol and Swann, 1989, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006). To be more precise, language has the potential to establish and maintain social relationships and relationships of power, value, beliefs and identity, but it also has the potential to oppose prevailing social practices and contribute to social change.

3.1. (Social) identity

Djité states that “identity is the everyday word for people’s sense of who they are” (2006: 6, as cited in Versluys, 2007), which can be taken as a starting point to refine the definition of the concept (Versluys, 2007). Baggioni and Kasbarian (1996, as cited in Versluys, 2007), for instance, distinguish between two types of identity – the personal and the collective. In the majority of discourse analytical studies collective, or rather social, identity is privileged (Versluys, 2007). Duszak defines social identity as a “part of an individual’s self-concept that came from the knowledge of his/her membership in a social group, together with emotional significance attached to it” (2002: 2).

This concept of ‘sense’ that Djité mentions “turns into a more active concept when identity is seen as the product of an act of self-definition” (Versluys, 2007: 90). Castells says that “by a process of individuation people define themselves as belonging to certain entities” (2001, as

cited in Versluys, 2007: 90). This leads to the notion of ‘otherness’, or as Tajfel and Forgas put it: “We are what we are because they are not what we are” (1981: 124). Self-definition together with the social aspect is what makes an identity and when these two aspects of identity are taken into account, it can be easily seen that, according to Versluys (2007: 90), identity is not simply a “theoretical notion that is imposed upon people”. Castells continues by saying that the general interest in social identity has to do with a “universal human need to belong” and that ‘self-definition’ makes clear that identity is often an “instrument of agency and a source of meaning for the actors themselves” (2011, as cited in Versluys, 2007: 90). In other words, the sense of belonging together with the people’s ubiquitous need to define both themselves and others is what underlies the concept of identity (Versluys, 2007).

Even though there are many debates over the question of ‘identity’, something that the majority of scientists agree upon is the polyvalence/multiplicity of it (Davies and Harré, 1990; Geschiere and Meyer, 1998; Kroskrity, 1999; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004, as cited in Versluys, 2007) or the existence of ‘repertoires of identity’ people can choose from (Kroskrity, 1999, as cited in Versluys, 2007). Identity is then not something that is outside of a person but is actively constructed by him or her.

3.2. Gender(ed) identity

De Beauvoir (1956: 273) said: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 30) add that “as we age, we continue to learn new ways of being men and women” and Goffman (1981) mockingly states that even walking into a public toilet does gender.

As already mentioned, the notion of identity is something that is complex and not fixed. The same goes for ‘gender identity’. Jaworski and Coupland believe gender identity can be seen as: “the emergence and re-emergence of the self” (1999: 412-413). ‘Identity’, such as ‘woman’ or ‘man’, has long been challenged. According to Johnson, masculinity and femininity or rather one’s gender identity is an “on-going social processes dependent upon systematic restatement” (1997: 22, as cited in Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002). In other words, one’s gender identity refers “to the degree to which women and men see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society” (Burke, Stets and Pirog-Good 1988; Spence 1985, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 997). Stets and Burke (2000) say that femininity and masculinity are something that is deeply rooted in the social, i.e. one’s gender, rather than the biological, i.e. one’s sex.

Gender identity, from a sociological point of view, implies the variety of meanings people apply to themselves based on their gender identification (Stets and Burke, 2000), which are then a source of their gender-related behavior (Burke 1980, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000). From birth, these meanings, or rather self-meanings, “regarding one’s gender are formed in social situations, stemming from ongoing interaction with significant others such as parents, peers, and educators” (Katz, 1986, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 998). It is not uncommon for individuals influenced by institutions such as family, religion or the educational system to see themselves differently from the masculine or feminine cultural model (Stets and Burke, 2000). More precisely, even though a person labeled herself female, she could see herself in a stereotypically masculine fashion such as being instrumental, rational, and dominant, instead of seeing herself in a stereotypical female manner such as being expressive, warm, and submissive (Ashmore, Del Boca and Wohlers, 1986, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000). Seeing oneself as being more feminine, more masculine, or perhaps somewhere in between is what makes one’s gender identity which guides their behavior (Stets and Burke, 2000).

Stets and Burke (2000) also emphasize the importance of distinguishing gender identity from other gender-related concepts such as ‘gender roles’, ‘gender stereotypes’ and ‘gender attitudes’. Gender roles, they explain, are “shared expectations of behavior given one’s gender” (Stets and Burke, 2000: 997); gender stereotypes represent “shared views of personality traits often tied to one’s gender such as instrumentality in men and expressiveness in women” (Spence and Helmreich, 1978, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 997); while gender attitudes are “the views of others or situations commonly associated with one’s gender such as men thinking in terms of justice and women thinking in terms of care” (Gilligan, 1982, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 997). Even though these three concepts play a part in one’s gender identity, they are not synonymous (Katz 1986; Spence and Sawin 1985, as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000).

3.2.1. Establishment of (gendered) identity through (gendered) discourse(s)

Davies and Harré claim that the self is constituted through processes of social interaction, and as a consequence, they say, “who one is is always an open question with a shifting answer” (1990: 46, as cited in Versluys, 2007).

Litosseliti (2006) says that discourses are inherently ideological since they emphasize certain viewpoints and values at the expense of others and that ‘gendered discourses’, in

particular, are discourses that say something about females and males and their (gendered) actions, behaviors, positions, choices, relations, identities. It could then be said that gendered discourses “represent and (re)constitute, maintain, and contest gendered social practices” (Litosseliti, 2006: 58).

Litosseliti (2006) points out that gender discourses are articulated by both women and men, but in different ways and different situations, which means that women are as likely to produce sexist or anti-sexist discourses as men are. However, depending on their social positions and institutional structures, there are constraints on the discourses that women and men are allowed to articulate and participate in (Litosseliti, 2006). In that way, according to Litosseliti (2006), gendered discourses actually position women and men in certain ways, which causes them to take up certain gendered subject positions.

Simpson (1997, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006) says that from a feminist post-structuralist perspective, our sense of self (as women and men) depends on the different subject positions created through discourse. The construction of gendered identities refers to a two-way process: discourses constitute multiple identities; and people’s identities give rise to particular discourses (Litosseliti, 2006). Feminist linguists believe that people actually *become* gendered, or *do* gender through discourse (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1994; West and Fenstermaker, 1995; Coates, 1996; Cameron, 1997), which is described as a discursive ‘accomplishment’ of (gender) identities.

Lazar says that “accomplishment suggests that people, through their linguistic (and non-linguistic) behavior, produce rather than reflect *a priori* identities as ‘women’ and ‘men’ in particular historical and cultural locations” (2005: 12, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006). Litosseliti (2006) adds that accomplishment also suggests that becoming gendered, or rather doing gender, is a dynamic process where people are active agents, who can disrupt normative constructions of gender identity. She continues by saying that it helps people to see the connection between femaleness and femininity more clearly. Kiesling (2004, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006), for instance, argues that while the former is about what individuals do, the latter is about social constructs that individuals must deal with. He believes that the power that men as a group have over women as a group is not necessarily felt by men as individuals. Galazinski (2004, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006) also elaborates on a dual understanding of masculinity. More precisely, he states that “in the local context of interaction, individual men will construct themselves as men by taking on or resisting the normative social constructs or ideologies about what ‘makes’ a man more or less masculine” (Galazinski, 2004: 7, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006).

3.2.2. *The Internet and (gendered) identity*

Apart from the pervasiveness of the media as a form of mass communication that reaches very large audiences, there are other good reasons why the analysis of media language is a worthy enterprise. The way the media and the Internet represent women is a topic that has been discussed for many years. But, what about the way in which women and men represent themselves through the language they use on the Internet?

The problem of (gendered) identity is also present in the language of the Internet. Moreover, the Internet has become of great importance for all those who deal with the differences in the linguistic choices of women and men. Huffaker and Calvert (2005) believe that (biological) sex, for instance, does not play such an important role when it comes to language on the Internet. More precisely, even though body, biological sex, race, or age can have a great effect on self-definition and self-presentation (Collins and Kuczaj, 1991, as cited in Huffaker and Calvert, 2005), many of these physical constraints become flexible in online environments. In a virtual world, people can even construct their bodies (Huffaker and Calvert, 2005).

Crystal (2006) claims that people are in fact confused by the language of the Internet since it lacks certain identity markers that are present in other forms of communication. It is believed that some sort of 'Netspeak' exists – “a type of language displaying features that are unique to the Internet arising out of its character as a medium which is electronic, global, and interactive” (Crystal, 2006: 20). According to Crystal (2006), people have begun to sense that they are dealing with something new, something 'out there'. Crystal (2006) also stresses that many Netspeak usage dictionaries, guides, and rule books have appeared in recent years and the reason behind it is the uncertain linguistic identity of Netspeak. He continues by saying that the silent features of Netspeak can already be seen outside of computer-mediated communication and that its influence is mainly on vocabulary, with graphology affected in some written varieties.

According to Crystal (2006), people are starting to realize that the knowledge they have already established and which has helped them to succeed in spoken and written linguistic encounters until now, is no longer enough to guarantee success on the Internet. In other words, they may experience awkwardness, misunderstanding, misperception, or attack if they fail to notice the differences between the old and new medium of communication. Porter sums it up:

“There are words, but they often seem to be words stripped of context, words desperately burdened by the lack of the other familiar markers of identity in this strange, ethereal realm. It is no wonder that these digitalized words, flung about among strangers and strained beyond the limits of what written language in other contexts is called upon to do, are given to frequent misreading, or that they erupt as often they do into antagonistic ‘flames’. In a medium of disembodied voices and decontextualized points of view, a medium, furthermore, beholden to the fetishization of speed, the experience of ambiguity and misreading is bound to be less an exception than the norm.”

(1996: xi-xii, as cited in Crystal, 2006)

Defining language as fluid and complex proved to be very accurate once again. In a virtual world that is part of people’s everyday life, it is of utmost importance to be prepared for change and open to new challenges. Otherwise, people will find themselves in an unenviable position colored by ambiguity. It is not at all strange then that Internet users are trying to expand their vocabulary so that they could be better at describing their experiences, capturing the character of the electronic world, and consequently overcoming the communicative limitations of technology (Crystal, 2006).

Language is usually the only element which can indicate the identity of an Internet user, which once again confirms the importance of language in the construction of identity, or rather identities.

4. Gender differences in language use

Bing and Bergvall emphasize the need to:

“acknowledg[e] individual differences within and across groups [and] emphasise diversity rather than dichotomy. By refusing to accept dichotomy and by asking new questions, we can abandon the tired old question ‘How do men and women speak differently?’, remembering that every time we seek and find differences, we also reinforce gender polarization.”

(1998: 506)

Language reflects, records, and transmits social differences, thus we should not be surprised to find reflections of gender differences in language.

Many scholars are particularly interested in documenting gender differences in language use, but there are also those for whom the study of language represents a lens through which they observe the social and political in gender relations (Kendall and Tannen, 2001). Regardless of the point from which research emanates, studying gender and discourse does not only provide “a descriptive account of male/female discourse but also reveals how language functions as a symbolic resource to create and manage personal, social and cultural meanings and identities” (Kendall and Tannen, 2001: 548).

The assumption that gender affects discourse has been investigated by a great number of scholars (see Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1986; Tannen, 1990; Coates, 1996; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002). Coates believes that “learning to be male-female means among other things learning to use gender-appropriate language” (1993: 166, as cited in Alami, 2016). When speaking, people use linguistic resources to present themselves in a particular way, i.e. language helps them “to project on other’s attitude or stance, to change the flow of talk and to affect our interlocutor” (Alami, 2016: 248). Tone and pitch of voice, intonation patterns, choice of vocabulary, pronunciation and grammatical patterns can all be indicators of gendered aspects of the speaker’s self- presentation (Alami, 2016). Consequently, stereotypes about how women and men use language have been challenged through different aspects of language – “from different syntactical, phonological and lexical uses of language (Trudgill, 1998) to aspects of conversation analysis such as topic control, interruption (West and Zimmerman, 1983), minimal responses, tag question and hedges (Coates, 1993; Hillier, 2004; Maltz and Broker, 1982) and other interactional features” (Alami, 2016: 248).

Some researchers suggest that the differences in women’s and men’s language use are biological in nature (Bishop and Wahlsten, 1997; Baron-Cohen et al., 2005, as cited in Alami, 2016). However, the validity of these accounts is not verified by scientific evidence. Even though some studies on women/men brain size show that a man’s brain is 11% bigger than a

woman's (News, 2012, as cited in Alami, 2016), there is no exact evidence that women's and men's linguistic behavior depend on the size of their brain (Alami, 2016). There are also those who attribute the difference in women/men linguistic behavior to nurture, i.e. the effect of education, society and culture, as well as those who are convinced that differences are a matter of free choice, or rather selecting one speech style over the other (Alami, 2016).

The studies on the differences between women's and men's language use cover a wide range of areas in different languages. The year 1975 is very important for the question of language and gender since during the feminist movement of the 1970s scholars began to question the identification of male norms as human norms, the biological determination of women's and men's behavior, as well as the difference between biological sex and sociocultural constructs of gender (Kendall and Tannen, 2001). That year was marked by the publication of three influential books, namely Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place*, Mary Ritchie Key's *Male/Female Language*, and Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley's edited volume *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance* (Kendall and Tannen, 2001). These early language and gender research mainly focused on "(1) documenting empirical differences between women's and men's speech, especially in cross-sex interaction; (2) describing women's speech in particular; and, for many, (3) identifying the role of language in creating and maintaining social inequality between women and men" (Kendall and Tannen, 2001: 548).

Later works, however, suggest that features of women's language should be read in the context of real, mixed-sex interaction (Alami, 2016). Tannen's (1990) book *You Just Don't Understand* had a great impact on gender studies since it introduced a new trend of thinking, i.e. the powerful/powerless taxonomy is substituted by the competitive/co-operative dichotomy (Alami, 2016).

4.1. Lakoff's contribution to gender studies

Lakoff's *Language and Women's Place* influenced studies on language and gender in anthropology, communication studies, education, psychology and sociology (Alami, 2016). Her work argues that, because of their subordinate position in society, women have different ways of speaking from men (Alami, 2016). In her article, she suggests that women's speech typically displays a range of features such as (1975, 2004):

1. Hedges of various types ('well', 'y'know', 'kinda');
2. Super polite forms (women are the experts at using euphemism; they are the repositories of tact and do not use indelicate expressions);

3. Tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty;
4. Question intonation in declarative statements (raising the pitch of voice at the end);
5. Speaking in italics; intonational emphasis equal to underlining words;
6. Empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’;.
7. Hyper-corrected grammar and pronunciation;
8. Lack of sense of humor (women do not tell jokes well and often do not understand the punch-line of jokes);
9. Direct quotation
10. The use of intensive ‘so’.
11. Special lexicon (women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men for sports, cars).

Lakoff’s proposal was based on the preconception that women and men talk differently, and that the differences in women’s and men’s speech are the result of – and the support of – male dominance (Alami, 2016).

Lakoff’s description of female speech style was criticized as it was based on ‘introspective methods’ (Lakoff, 2004: 40, as cited in Alami, 2016), i.e. she used her personal intuitions in analyzing collected data rather than providing a systematic quantitative observation (Alami, 2016). Her exploration of women’s language was critically challenged by O’Barr and Atkins (1980, as cited in Alami, 2016) who examined the witnesses’ testimonies for the 10 basic speech features of women’s language proposed by Lakoff and argued that the differences that Lakoff and others have suggested are not necessarily the result of being a woman.

A great number of researchers were and still are inspired by Lakoff’s work whether they confirmed her observations or not. Nonetheless, as Bucholtz and Hall note, Lakoff’s description of gender-related language “continues to be accepted by diverse groups of speakers as a valid representation of their own discursive experiences” (1995: 6, as cited in Kendall and Tannen, 2001). Kendall and Tannen (2001) argue that even though her account of women’s language does not represent the way each woman speaks, it still represents the norms by which women are expected to speak and write, or what Bucholtz and Hall call “the precise hegemonic notions of gender-appropriate language use” which represents “the idealized language of middle-class European American women” (1995: 6, as cited in Kendall and Tannen, 2001).

Since her work is still valuable to linguists and is often used in language and gender studies, the features of women’s speech she emphasized will be included, although slightly adapted, in the analytical part of this thesis which examines student perceptions of gender differences in language use.

4.2. Previous research

The problem of gender differences in the language use of women and men has been explored many times so far, but in different ways and from different perspectives. The studies cited in this chapter prove this and were selected to show the diversity of research methods used to answer, or at least try to answer, this ever-burning question.

One interesting research that deals with the gender difference in language use is that of Miller and Durndell (2004). They examined the relationship between *Gender, language and computer-mediated communication* on the example of online discussion groups in campus-based education. In total, 197 students participated in an open-ended online discussion and their language use was analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A detailed coding scheme that incorporated various linguistic, stylistic, paralinguistic and task variables was also developed and 699 messages from four studies were coded in total. The results showed no significant gender differences in the frequency and length of the posts. It was also found that females were significantly more likely to choose a pseudonym or a numerical identification over their real name and that just over a fifth of the student postings contained references to their own emotions or self-disclosure. The computer-mediated discourse (CMC) also showed extensive first-person pronoun use and over a third of the postings expressed agreement or disagreement with other students. Males and females were just as likely to send messages containing both task-orientated and socioemotional content. Furthermore, although no gender differences were found in terms of the amount of participation, the qualitative content analysis revealed gender-related patterns in language use. In other words, females were more likely to make attenuated contributions and use only traditional female language features in their postings, whereas males were more likely to make authoritative postings and use only male language features. Females were also found to employ personal and emotional forms of language more than males, who in turn used more authoritative language. Gender-related patterns were found as males had a tendency to post negative responses, whereas females were more likely to respond positively to other participants in the online discussion. In conclusion, the results were positive for use of CMC in education in terms of equal participation; however, they also suggest that CMC does not guarantee a gender-free environment. Cues to gender were found to exist in the language used by CMC participants and CMC users may be able to identify gender based on these cues alone.

In their work *Gender, Identity, and Language Use in Teenage Blogs*, Huffaker and Calvert (2005) examined issues of online identity and language use (which were examined in terms of the disclosure of personal information, sexual identity, emotive features, and semantic themes) among male and female teenagers who created and maintained weblogs. The purpose of this study was to examine gender similarities and differences among these weblogs. They conducted a content analysis of randomly-selected blogs. Interestingly, the results showed the blogs created by young males and females are more alike than different. In other words, results showed that male and female teenagers presented themselves similarly in their blogs, often revealing personal information such as their real names, ages, and locations. The results also suggested that teenagers stay closer to reality in their online expressions of self than has previously been suggested. When it comes to language use, results suggested a tendency for adolescents to use language to create an anchor and a consistent public face as they engage in the very serious business of constructing a stable cohesive set of representations of who they are. Also, males, more so than females, used emoticons and employed an active and resolute style of language. Moreover, males did use language that was more active, inflexible, and resolute, which, however, does not mean that females used more passive, cooperative, or accommodating language. The latter findings support the concept of androgyny where masculinity and femininity are two separate dimensions rather than being polar opposites on a single continuum (Huston, 1983, as cited in Huffaker and Calvert, 2005).

In their project *Gender Differences in Language Use: An Analysis of 14,000 Text Samples*, Newman et al. (2008) explored gender differences in language use in a very large data set of written and spoken text samples using a computerized text analysis tool. Their analyses demonstrated small but systematic differences in the way that men and women use language, both in terms of what they say and how they choose to say it. For the women who contributed 8,353 text files to the study, the English language was more likely to be used for discussing people and what they were doing, as well as communicating internal processes to others, including doubts. Thoughts, emotions, senses, other peoples, negations, and verbs in present and past tense figured high on the list of words that women used more than men. Function words, such as pronouns, are used at much higher rates in conversation – especially by women. For the men who contributed 5,970 files, language was more likely to serve as a repository of labels for external events, objects, and processes. Along with discussion of occupation, money, and sports were technical linguistic features such as numbers, articles, prepositions, and long words. In addition, when given the freedom to talk about any topic,

men (but not women) elected to talk about concrete objects, which require nouns and, of course, articles. Swear words added emphasis to male language. Men's speech was characterized by more negative emotions and more references to the past relative to men's writing. Contrary to popular stereotypes, men and women were indistinguishable in their references to sexuality, anger, time, their use of the first-person plural, the number of words and question marks employed, and the insertion of qualifiers in the form of exclusion words.

5. Study of discursive construction of gendered identities

5.1. Aims

The aim of this quantitative-qualitative research is to examine whether (gendered) identities can indeed be constructed through discourse(s). More specifically, the aim is to examine students' perceptions on the gender differences in language use on the example of different online texts with regard to the assumptions about the specific features of women's/men's writing styles. Thus, the aim is to examine the differences and similarities in the perception of male and female students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb (M/F-FFZG), and male and female students of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing at the University of Zagreb (M/F-FER).

The relationship between language and gender is very complex so it is no wonder that it has been the subject of many extensive studies and discussions for many years now. The importance of this topic is also visible in the studies outlined in the theoretical part of this thesis. These studies prove that certain stereotypes about women's and men's linguistic choices are accurate, but also that women and men are two separate dimensions rather than polar opposites on a single continuum. Since language is an ever-changing entity, the need for studies like this one still exists.

5.2. Methodology

5.2.1. Participants

For the purpose of this study, 12 students attending two different faculties were chosen – 6 students (3 male and 3 female students) of FFZG, and 6 students (3 male and 3 female students) of FER.

5.2.2. Procedure

The study uses both a quantitative as well as a qualitative approach. Twelve (12) students were asked to fill out the questionnaires designed for this study (see Appendix A). After the students filled out the questionnaires, individual interviews were conducted in order to gather more detailed information regarding their perception of gender differences in language use, or rather women's and men's writing features.

The first part of the questionnaire consists of the students' personal information, namely their sex and the faculty² they attend. The second part consists of 5 different texts retrieved from the World Wide Web – music, film and gaming reviews – where the students had to decipher the sex (M or F) of the author based on the excerpt of the text provided to them. It is important to mention that the names of the authors of the texts can be found on the World Wide Web; however, because of the aim of this study their names were not disclosed. The third and the last part of the questionnaire consists of a Likert scale where the students had to decide whether they *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree* or *strongly agree* with 10 claims concerning women's writing features. These features, which are presented earlier in this thesis (see chapter 4.1.), were actually suggested by Lakoff (1975). However, for the purpose of this study they were slightly adapted, i.e. the features were described in more detail so that the participants could have better understanding of them and were translated to Croatian since most of the participants are not fluent in English, but also to make sure that they fully understand the features and give their honest answer (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, the interviews lasted from 5 to 15 minutes and took place in locations where the students felt more relaxed and ready for an open discussion. During the interviews, the students were asked to explain the reasoning behind their answers in the second part of the questionnaire, i.e. why they think that a certain text was written by a woman or a man, or rather what are the clues that lead them to that conclusion. The interviews were also conducted in the students' native language – Croatian, since most of them do not speak fluent English nor do they feel competent enough to give elaborate answers in English. It is also important to point out that all the interviews were recorded with prior consent from the participants.

Following the completion of the questionnaire and interviews, the recordings were transcribed, and the data analyzed.

The reason behind the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods as a data source is the fact that it enables a greater degree of understanding than if a single approach was adopted. Moreover, Greene believes that this approach provides researchers with opportunities to "... compensate for inherent method weaknesses, on inherent method

² 'Faculty' in Croatian is used in the meaning of a higher education institution, a constituent school or college of a university.

strengths, and offset inevitable method biases” (2007: xiii; endorsed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, as cited in Almalki, 2016).

5.3. Results

5.3.1. Women’s writing features – texts

The results in Table 1 show the number of correct answers of all 12 participants, or rather students, in the second part of the questionnaire, which consisted of 5 text excerpts where the students had to decide the sex of the author according to their comprehension of the text.

Table 1 Overall results

Texts	Number of correct answers		Number of correct answers	
	<i>Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG)</i>		<i>Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)</i>	
	M (3)	F (3)	M (3)	F (3)
1	1	2	2	2
2	0	3	1	2
3	3	3	3	2
4	3	3	2	3
5	1	3	1	2

The greatest number of correct answers possible for each text is 12, i.e. 6 for each faculty or 3 for each sex. The results show that the students of FFZG have a slightly greater overall result when compared to the students of FER – a total of 22 and 20 correct answers respectively.

If the results are compared in regard to the sex of the students, it can be seen that M-FFZG have a total of 8 correct answers, while M-FER have a total of 9 correct answers. However, when it comes to the female students, that difference is a bit greater, i.e. F-FFZG have a total of 14 correct answers, while F-FER have a total of 11 correct answers. Furthermore, the male students of both faculties have lower results (17) than the female students of both faculties (25).

The data for each of the texts will be further analyzed in the next chapters of this thesis and will include the results from the table as well as the transcribed interviews.

5.3.1.1. Text 1 - *Pedeset nijansi mračnji (2017) - Poslastica za pasionirane ljubitelje trasha*

Table 2 shows the results of the male and female students for the first text in the second part of the questionnaire, namely *Pedeset nijansi mračnji (2017) - Poslastica za pasionirane ljubitelje trasha*, which is a recent film review of a popular American erotic romantic drama film based on Erika Leonard James's novel of the same name. The text was written by a male author.

Table 2 Number of correct answers – text 1

Text	Number of correct answers		Number of correct answers	
	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG)		Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)	
	M (3)	F (3)	M (3)	F (3)
1	1	2	2	2

The results show that the students of FER did slightly better when it comes to this text. In other words, while the students of FFZG have a total of 3 correct answers, the students of FER have a total of 4 correct answers out of 6 possible.

The student's sex did not have a significant impact on their reasoning and discourse comprehension in this particular case. As it can be seen in Table 2, the female students of both faculties have the same number of correct answers (2), while M-FER have 1 correct answer more than the M-FFZG (2>1).

In order to further explain the students' comprehension of this specific text, some of the transcribed answers are provided as well (for more examples see Appendix B):

“I believe that the first text was written by a male author for several reasons. Firstly, words such as ‘trash’, ‘wtf’ etc. are used. These anglicisms and vulgarisms generally remind me of a male writing style, since men are freer when writing and expressing themselves. Also, the emoticon used at the end of the text makes it more playful, which I think is a feature of men's writing style. The text is very aggressive. I think a woman would be more politically correct and would use a more passive language.” (F-FFZG)

“So, I would say that the first text was written by a male author since he ridicules works typically popular works with females such as 50 shades of gray, darker. Whatever. And generally, some phrases like the ‘čudom ostale nevine’ and ‘idealna za očajne kućanice’.” (M-FER)

As illustrated by the examples above, both the male and female students of FFZG who answered correctly had similar explanations for their choice, i.e. aggressive tone, use of swear words, anglicisms, emoticons and writing style in general. The male and female students of FER, however, emphasized the mocking aspects of the text, as well as specific phrases.

On the other hand, the students who did not choose the correct answers have different explanations for it (for more examples see Appendix B). For instance:

“I believe that this text was written by a female author primarily because of the topic. I know that both the novel and the film are very popular among women. Also, because of phrases such as ‘poslastica za pasionirane ljubitelje trasha’. The word ‘pasionirane’ is way too fancy for a man.” (*M-FFZG*)

“I believe this text was written by a female author because women tend to criticize each other more.” (*F-FER*)

The students’ reasons for believing that the text was written by a female author pertain to the topic and the tendency women normally have to criticize each other. It is interesting to see that male students of both faculties based their decision on the same aspect of the text, i.e. the topic, while female students of both faculties chose their answers because they believe women tend to criticize each other.

5.3.1.2. Text 2 – *Sniper Ghost Warrior 3*

Table 3 shows the results of the male and female students for the second text in the second part of the questionnaire – *Sniper Ghost Warrior 3*, a tactical shooter video game. This text is a review found on a popular gaming website and is written by a female author.

Table 3 Number of correct answers – text 2

Text	Number of correct answers		Number of correct answers	
	<i>Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG)</i>		<i>Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)</i>	
	M (3)	F (3)	M (3)	F (3)
2	0	3	1	2

As can be seen in Table 3 the students of both faculties have the same total number of correct answers (3). However, the results are arranged differently when it comes to the sex of the students. It is interesting to note that while M-FFZG do not have any correct answers (0), F-FFZG have the maximum number of correct answers (3). That being said, M-FER achieved a slightly better result than M-FFZG (1>0), while F-FER achieved a slightly worse result than F-FFZG (2<3). Also, the result of the female students of both faculties is five times better than that of the male students of both faculties (5>1).

They all had an explanation of why they chose one answer rather than the other. Those who chose the correct answers said:

“The second text, even though gaming is a man thing, was written by a female author because it lacks certain anglicisms and phrases that men would use. She used standard Croatian language and the descriptions of the bullets and riffles are not detailed.” (F-FFZG)

“The second text lacks details so I think that it was written by a female author. Certain gaming phrases are missing as well.” (M-FER)

All the students who chose the correct answers, regardless of their sex or the faculty they attend, have similar, or rather the same reasoning behind them, i.e. the lack of details specific for the predominantly male gaming world (for more examples see Appendix B).

When it comes to the students who chose the wrong answers, they all, regardless of their sex and faculty, believe that the text was written by a male author because of the topic of the text (for more examples see Appendix B). For example:

“The second text. Oh, ok. That is the one with the weapons. I did not really think about it much and since I did find it aggressive, I assumed it was written by a man.” (M-FFZG)

“Considering what the text is about, I believe it was written by a man. It is also not very detailed. There is no depth to it.” (F-FER)

5.3.1.3. Text 3 – *Republika: Zih*

The third text was written by a male author. It is a review of a pop punk music album – *Republika: Zih*.

Table 4 Number of correct answers – text 3

Text	Number of correct answers		Number of correct answers	
	<i>Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG)</i>		<i>Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)</i>	
	M (3)	F (3)	M (3)	F (3)
3	3	3	3	2

The results show that almost all the students that participated in this study, i.e. 11 of them, were right in thinking that this text was written by a male author. While all the students of FFZG chose the correct answer, only one F-FER believed that this text is written by a female author.

This is how they explained their answers and comprehension of the text (for more examples see Appendix B):

“I would say that the third text was written by a man maybe just because of the fact that it is about punk. Maybe it is just me. Punk culture generally reminds me of a more aggressive male culture. Also, the word ‘zajebancija’ which indicates that a text was written in a relaxed manner. I think that a woman would not use vulgarisms because it is not socially acceptable. A woman would be condemned more than a man for using such a word.” (F-FFZG)

“The third text ... The text is very simple. If a woman... Maybe ... And the words that were used, for example, ‘ziheraški’. I do not know. ‘Zajebancija’ and all that. I think women would use more technical terms. And ‘i nije ništa više od toga’. Maybe that is why. A woman would use more complex sentences and grammatically correct ones ... So that is why I think the third text was written by a male author.” (M-FER)

The students of FFZG say that the reason behind their answer is the fact that the text is about pop punk, which they associate with men. The students of both faculties mentioned the swear word ‘zajebancija’ as an indicator of the author’s sex. Furthermore, the female students of both faculties mentioned that a text written in a relaxed manner is more likely to be written by a man.

There was one student, however, who believed that the text is written by a female author:

“I believe that the third text was written by a woman. I was not sure. But, I think that the text was written by a woman who wants to look cool, relaxed.” (F-FER)

This female student of FER believes that the author actually wants to portray herself in a certain way.

5.3.1.4. Text 4 – Irena Žilić: Haze

The fourth text, a review of an alternative pop/indie-folk album – *Irena Žilić Haze* – was written by a female author.

Table 5 Number of correct answers – text 4

Text	Number of correct answers		Number of correct answers	
	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG)		Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)	
	M (3)	F (3)	M (3)	F (3)
4	3	3	2	3

The results are very similar to those of the previous text. All 6 students of FFZG chose the correct answers. Only 1 M-FER believed that this text is written by a male author.

This is how they comprehended the text (for more examples see Appendix B):

“I went with the female author because I sense the admiration in this text. The way in which the text is presented. She praises her. I feel a woman’s solidarity. I would say that the person who wrote the text is thrilled with the album.” (M-FFZG)

“The fourth text... I think it was written by a woman because it was written in a serious manner. And the text is ... A lot of attributes were used: ‘zavodljiv’, ‘nježan’.” (F-FER)

The results show that the students of FFZG, regardless of their sex, have a range of explanations for their answers – from lacks of technical terms, a lot of attributes, and stereotypes, to women’s solidarity. The students of FER, on the other hand, say that the key to their answer is the use of attributes.

It can also be seen that the female students of both faculties believe that women use more adjectives when writing. Moreover, while M-FFZG had more explanations about why they believe this text was written by a woman than M-FER who only mention the use of attributes.

However, 1 M-FER believed that this text could have easily been written by a man.

“Men who talk about literature use words such as ‘osebujni senzibilitet’. I assume that if you read literature, you have a greater vocabulary.” (M-FER)

5.3.1.5. Text 5 – Snake Pass

Table 6 shows the results for the fifth and last text in the second part of the questionnaire – *Snake Pass*. This text, or rather this review of a video game, was written by a male author.

Table 6 Number of correct answers – text 5

Text	Number of correct answers		Number of correct answers	
	<i>Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG)</i>		<i>Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER)</i>	
	M (3)	F (3)	M (3)	F (3)
5	1	3	1	2

Table 6 shows that the overall results of the students of both faculties are very similar (3>2). However, the female students of both faculties achieved a better result – 5 out of 6 female students believe that this text was written by a man, while only 2 out of 6 male students believe the same.

While the male students of both faculties achieved the same result (2), F-FFZG are slightly better (3>2).

Here is some further information about their correct answers (for more examples see Appendix B):

“There is nothing here that makes me sure about my answer, but there is a dose of relaxation in the text and there are no adjectives that would indicate that the author is a woman. Perhaps, ‘priča je užasno generična i ubačena samo da se može reći da postoji’. Perhaps the indicator was this strong attitude.” (F-FFZG)

“This text was written by a man because of the phrases such as ‘užasno generična i ubačena čisto da se može reći da postoji’. At first, I thought it was written by a woman because of the word ‘oblačić’ and ‘kliknula’.” (M-FER)

All of the students provided a variety of explanations of their comprehension of the text: video games are mostly played by men, words like ‘kliknula’, ‘level’, and especially the phrase ‘užasno generična i ubačena čisto da se može reći da postoji’ which is mentioned by most of the students regardless of their sex and the faculty they attend. Moreover, the female students of both faculties mention the same reasons for choosing their answer, namely the lack of details and simplicity, while male students of both faculties mention certain phrases and the fact that the text is about a video game.

Those who did not chose the correct answer said:

“The last one. Well, I was not so sure here. Because of the topic of the text. But, I think that this text was written by a female author because of the vocabulary, the word ‘kliknula’ which is in italics and the word ‘uživancija’. It would not sound good if a man said that. And a complex vocabulary, for example ‘naratora shvatite sa zadržskom’. I would say ‘pripovjedač’.” (M-FFZG)

“I think this text is written by a woman because it is a simple game. This is not a pro game.” (M-FER)

Most of the reasons about why they chose the answer they did included vocabulary differences and their belief that simple games are made for and played by women (for more examples see Appendix B). There is no significant difference in the answers of male students of both faculties. The only incorrect answer provided by a female, i.e. F-FER, is that this whole text reminds her of an ad.

5.3.2. Women’s writing features – Likert scale

The Likert scale is the third and last part of the questionnaire which was used in order to better understand the students’ perception of women’s writing features and to compare their answers with what they said during the interview when explaining their answers in the second part of the questionnaire. Moreover, the results are expressed as percentages, i.e. the percentage of the students who *strongly disagree/disagree/neither agree nor disagree/agree/strongly agree* with certain feature(s) of women’s writing style.

5.3.2.1. Likert scale - overall results

Table 7 shows the results of all the students, regardless of their sex and faculty. The results that stand out will be discussed further in the text.

Table 7 Women’s writing features (overall results)

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	8.33%	50%	25%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	8.33%	16.66%	58.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	8.33%	8.33%	41.66%	41.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	16.66%	50%	25%	8.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	8.33%	41.66%	41.66%	8.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	16.66%	41.66%	41.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	8.33%	0%	25%	50%	16.6%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	8.33%	33.33%	25%	25%	8.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	16.66%	66.66%	16.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	33.33%	8.33%	25%	33.33%

Stereotypes about how women and men use language have been challenged through different aspects of language – “from different syntactical, phonological and lexical uses of language (Trudgill, 1998) to aspects of conversation analysis such as topic control, interruption (West and Zimmerman, 1983), minimal responses, tag question and hedges (Coates, 1993; Hillier, 2004; Maltz and Broker, 1982) and other interactional features” (Alami, 2016: 248). Regardless of the point from which research emanates, studying gender and discourse “reveals how language functions as a symbolic resource to create and manage personal, social and cultural meanings and identities” (Kendall and Tannen, 2001: 548). The overall results of this specific study support that claim. Moreover, the overall results show that most of the students *neither agree nor disagree, agree or strongly agree* with these features. The percentage of those who *strongly disagree* or *disagree* with a certain feature, however, is almost negligible. Even though the women’s writing features in question were suggested by Lakoff more than 40 years ago it seems that her description of gender-related language “continues to be accepted by diverse groups of speakers as a valid representation of their own discursive experiences” (Bucholtz and Hall, 1995: 6, as cited in Kendall and Tannen, 2001). Lakoff’s account of women’s language maybe does not represent the way each woman speaks or writes, but it still represents the norms by which women are expected to speak and write (Kendall and Tannen, 2001). These expectations, and in turn the reinforcement of gender polarization, are exactly the reason why this kind of studies should be done in the future as well.

5.3.2.2. *Likert scale – comparison of FFZG and FER*

Table 8 and Table 9 show the overall results of both faculties. The results that stand out will be discussed further in the text.

Table 8 Women’s writing features – *FFZG* (overall results)

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	16.66%	33.33%	16.66%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	16.66%	16.66%	50%	16.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	0%	83.33%	16.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	16.66%	0%	16.66%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	0%	33.33%	50%	16.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	16.66%	50%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	50%	0%	16.66%	33.33%

Table 9 Women’s writing features – *FER* (overall results)

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	0%	0%	83.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	33.33%	16.66%	33.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	16.66%	33.33%	0%	33.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	16.66%	83.33%	0%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	16.66%	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%

The results of the comparison of FFZG and FER show that there is a slight difference in the students' results when compared according to the faculties they attend. The students of FFZG mostly *neither agree nor disagree* with the women's writing features on the Likert scale, while the students of FER mostly *agree* with the women's writing features. The number of participants in this study is not great enough to make certain generalizations about the students' perceptions on women's writing styles. However, it could still be argued that certain differences in written discourse comprehension and perception do exist with respect to the faculty students attend.

Even though knowledge plays an important role in discourse processing and comprehension, the results show that not only education and knowledge, but also other factors influence discourse comprehension. In other words, in natural communicative situations people will not only use their knowledge about other people, objects, events, actions or episodes referred to by a text, but also opinions, attitudes, and indirectly also norms, values and ideologies and their associated 'emotions' (van Dijk, 1982).

5.3.2.3. *Likert scale – comparison of male students' results*

Table 10 and Table 11 show the results of the male students of both faculties. The results that stand out will be discussed further in the text.

Table 10 Women’s writing features – *M-FFZG*

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	33.33%	0%	33.33%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	0%	33%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	33.33%	0%	0%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	66.66%	0%	33.33%	0%

Table 11 Women’s writing features – *M-FER*

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	66.66%	0%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	0%	33.33%	0%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%

While M-FFZG mostly *neither agree nor disagree* or *agree* with women's writing features, M-FER mostly *agree* with these features.

Interestingly, the results also show that some of the M-FFZG *strongly disagree* with some features, while M-FER do not *strongly disagree* with any of the features of women's writing. When it comes to disagreeing with certain features, there is a greater percent of M-FFZG who *disagree* with some of the features than of M-FER.

The percentage of male students (regardless of the faculty they attend) who opted for *strongly agree* option for any of the features is almost negligible.

Also, there are two features that 100% of M-FER *agree* with, i.e. that women are more prone to using super polite forms than men and that women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as 'divine', 'charming', 'adorable' than men.

5.3.2.4. Likert scale – comparison of female students' results

Table 12 and Table 13 show the overall results of the female students of both faculties. The results that stand out will be discussed further in the text.

Table 12 Women’s writing features – *F-FFZG*

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree not disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	0%	66.66%	0%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	66.66%

Table 13 Women’s writing features – *F-FER*

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree not disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	0%	0%	66.66%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	33.33%	0%	33.33%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	0%	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	33.33%	33.33%	0%	0%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0%

The results of the comparison of F-FFZG and F-FER show that while F-FFZG mostly *neither agree nor disagree* or *agree* with these features, F-FER mostly *agree* or *strongly agree* with them.

F-FFZG do not *strongly disagree* with any of the women's writing features, while one F-FER *strongly disagrees* that women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men. Furthermore, both F-FFZG and F-FER *disagree* with the same features, i.e. that women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men and that women are more prone to using a special lexicon. It is also interesting to mention that, F-FER, i.e. 100% of F-FER, *strongly agree* that women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as 'divine', 'charming', 'adorable' than men, while only 33.33% of F-FFZG *strongly agree* with this feature.

5.3.2.5. Likert scale – comparison of all male and female students' results

Table 14 and Table 15 show the results of all the male and all female students of both faculties. The results that stand out will be discussed further in the text.

Table 14 Women’s writing features – all male students’ results

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	16.66%	16.66%	66.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	16.66%	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	33.33%	50%	16.6%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	16.66%	0%	33.33%	50%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	0%	33.33%	16.66%	50%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	33.33%	50%	16.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	33.33%	0%	33.33%	33.33%

Table 15 Women’s writing features – all female students’ results

Women’s writing features	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
In written texts, women are more prone to using hedges of various types than men, e.g. ‘well’, ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’.	0%	0%	66.66%	16.66%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using super polite forms (“Could you close the door, please?”) than men.	0%	0%	16.66%	50%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to using tag questions as the statement expressing uncertainty than men.	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using the intensive ‘so’ than men.	0%	0%	66.66%	16.66%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using italics to be sure that the person who is reading the text understands the message she wants to convey than men.	0%	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using empty adjectives such as ‘divine’, ‘charming’, ‘adorable’ than men.	0%	0%	0%	33.33%	66.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to hyper-correcting grammar than men.	0%	0%	16.66%	50%	33.33%
In written texts, women are more prone to avoiding using humor than men.	16.66%	33.33%	33.33%	0%	16.66%
In written texts, women are more prone to using direct quotations than men.	0%	0%	83.33%	16.66%	0%
In written texts, women are more prone to using a special lexicon, i.e. women use more words for things like colors, shopping, while men use more words for sports, cars etc.	0%	33.33%	16.66%	16.66%	33.33%

While the male students mostly *neither agree nor disagree* or *agree* with all of the features, the female students are equally thorn between *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree* and *strongly agree*.

Strangely, when it comes to strongly disagreeing and disagreeing, there is a greater percentage of male students who *strongly disagree* or *disagree* with some of the features than female students. The reason behind this could maybe be found in Coates' statement that "learning to be male-female means among other things learning to use gender-appropriate language" (1993: 166, as cited in Alami, 2016) which is presented to them through different socio-cultural contexts they live in. These norms of gender-appropriate language are something that Bucholtz and Hall call "the precise hegemonic notions of gender-appropriate language use" which represent "the idealized language of middle-class European American women" (1995: 6, as cited in Kendall and Tannen, 2001).

5.4. Discussion

People make assumptions and form opinions based on stereotypes on a daily basis, which in turn influences the way they observe and analyze the world around them. This constitutes their identity, but not just theirs, since through their knowledge, opinions and attitudes they attribute certain characteristics to others. People make similar assumptions and form opinions about (gendered) discourses as well. The assumption that gender affects discourse has been investigated by a great number of scholars (see Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1986; Tannen, 1990; Coates, 1996; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002).

As already mentioned, the aim of this research was to examine whether (gendered) identities are indeed constructed through discourse(s). More specifically, the aim was to examine students' perceptions on the gender differences in language use on the example of different online texts with regard to the assumptions about the specific features of women's/men's writing styles. Thus, the aim was to examine the differences and similarities in the perception of M/F-FFZG and M/F-FER.

The results of the second part of the questionnaire where the students had to decide whether the online text was written by a female or a male author support Crystal's (2006) claim that people are in fact confused by the language of the Internet since it lacks certain identity markers that are present in other forms of communication. People, according to Crystal (2006), are starting to realize that the knowledge they have already established and which has helped them to succeed in spoken and written linguistic encounters until now, is no

longer enough to guarantee success on the Internet. More precisely, even though body, biological sex, race, or age can have a great effect on self-definition and self-presentation (Collins and Kuczaj, 1991, as cited in Huffaker and Calvert, 2005), many of these physical constraints become flexible in online environments. This can best be seen in the cases of text 1, text 2 and text 5 where the students had the most difficulties in deciding the sex of the author. The students' further explained their answers in the interviews. The students had a variety of explanations for their comprehension of texts 1, 2 and 5. Most of their explanations included: the topic of the text (certain literary genres associated strictly with women, the gaming world as a predominantly men's world), writing style (women's passive, stiff and detailed style vs. men's aggressive, relaxed and simple style) and attitude (serious vs. playful, prone to mocking others and their actions). The result, or rather the number of correct answers, is greater when it comes to the other two texts, namely text 3 and 4 since the features they mostly associate with women's writing are the use of attributes, avoidance of vulgarisms and stiff but detailed writing style.

It is important to mention that there are no significant differences when it comes to the reasoning behind the students' answers and details of their explanations. The male and female students of both faculties have similar ideas (all of which are previously mentioned) of why a certain text was written by a female or a male author. The only slight difference in the explanations of the students is that the students of FFZG usually focus on different aspects of the text when explaining their answers, i.e. the topic, language use, tone, attitude, style, while the students of FER very often focus on just one of these aspects. The explanations of the incorrect answers are also presented in the study since the students' perception of women's/men's writing features can be seen through both correct and incorrect answers.

The results of the studies outlined in the theoretical part of this thesis (see chapter 4.2.) also prove that certain stereotypes about women's and men's linguistic choices really exist. Some of those results correspond with the results of this specific study, or rather some of the women's writing features identified in their study happened to be found in this one as well. More precisely, the features of women's writing the participants mentioned correspond with Miller's and Durdell's (2004), Huffaker's and Calvert's (2005) and Newman's et al. (2008) study results. Namely, Miller's and Durdell's (2004) study shows that women often employ personal, emotional, supportive forms of language more than men, who in turn used more authoritative, aggressive language, which corresponds with what the participants of this study said in their interviews. Another feature that the participants of this study mentioned in the interviews are the use of emoticons and more active, inflexible, and resolute language which

they believe is the feature of men's rather than women's writing style. The same result was found in Huffaker's and Calvert's (2005) study. Finally, in their study Newman et al. (2008) show that swear words and negative emotions are features of men's linguistic choices, which again corresponds with the answers of the participants who believe that men are more likely to use swear words and mock others than women.

Furthermore, the difference in the number of correct answers in the second part of the questionnaire is rather small when it comes to the students' education. More precisely, the students of FFZG have 22 correct answers, while the students of FER have 20 correct answers. The greater difference in the number of correct answers is with regard to the sex of the students, namely the female students of both faculties have 25 correct answers, while the male students of both faculties have 17. It is also worth mentioning that 2 F-FFZG were 100% correct in choosing the sex of the authors in the second part of the questionnaire.

These results support the claims that knowledge about other people, objects, events and actions (van Dijk, 1982) is not the only factor that influenced the participants' answers. The socio-cultural context they live in as well as their interpersonal interactions (Adjei, 2013) have been affecting the way they perceive not just gender differences in language use, but also gender differences in general. Language must be seen in the context of the particular social occasion, of the medium, of who argues, for what purpose(s), and from what perspective (Litosseliti, 2006). All these different perspectives then reflect and promote discourses around gender, i.e. assumptions about women's and men's position in a society, their power in terms of decision-making, the role of parenting, or a society's views about sex (Litosseliti, 2006). In order to understand the role that language plays in social relations, it has to be looked at and understood outside itself, as a social process in which it plays an important role (Graddol and Swann, 1989, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006). That being said, language has the potential to establish and maintain social relationships and relationships of power, value, beliefs and identity.

The existence of certain opinions and attitudes about women's and men's writing features are also confirmed with the results of the third part of the questionnaire, i.e. the Likert scale. More precisely, the students had to decide whether they *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree* or *strongly agree* with the women's writing features which were emphasized by Lakoff and adapted for the purpose of the study (see Appendix A).

The overall results show that most of the students *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree* or *strongly agree* with these features. The percentage of those who *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with a certain feature is negligible. This alone serves as evidence that all students have

(stereotypical) assumptions about women's and men's writing features and that those assumptions greatly influenced the way in which they perceive the linguistic aspect of one's identity.

Furthermore, the results of the Likert scale are also compared according to the students' sex and the faculty they attend.

The results show that the students' results are a bit different when compared only according to the faculties they attend. The students of FFZG mostly *neither agree nor disagree* with the women's writing feature on the Likert scale, while the students of FER mostly *agree* with the women's writing features. When compared to both their sex and the faculty they attend, M-FFZG mostly *neither agree nor disagree* or *agree* with women's writing features, while M-FER mostly *agree* with these features. In other words, the male students' education may have a slight influence on their answers. Furthermore, while F-FFZG also mostly *neither agree nor disagree* or *agree* with these features, F-FER dominantly *agree* or *strongly agree* with them, which also shows that education may play a role in female students' perception. Also, when compared only according to their sex, the male students of both faculties mostly *neither agree nor disagree* or *agree* with all of the features, while the female students of both faculties are equally torn between *neither agree nor disagree*, *agree* and *strongly agree*.

In spite of only the slight differences in the results gathered from the Likert scale with regard to the students' sex and the faculty they attend (since they all generally *agree* to a certain extent), these results show that the students' perception of women and men and their gender identity greatly depends on their linguistic choices. Identity is not simply a "theoretical notion that is imposed upon people" (Versluys, 2007: 90), but is actively constructed by themselves or others around them, through their socio-cultural contexts and also language, discourses. Discourses then represent a potential site of struggle since participants are "neither helplessly controlled by dominant discourses, nor 'rational' individuals who make free choices" (Litosseliti, 2006: 49).

Even though Lakoff's belief that because of their subordinate position in society, women have different ways of speaking from men was criticized as it was based on her personal intuitions in analyzing collected data (Alami, 2016), studies conducted 40 years after also show that certain writing features are typically connected to women/men. If we were to compare Lakoff's women's writing features and writing features presented in the results of Miller's and Durdell's (2004), Huffaker's and Calvert's (2005), Newman's et al. (2008) and this study, it could be said that these features are fairly similar, i.e. women use personal and

emotional forms of language more than men, who use more active, inflexible and resolute language. Even though the women's writing features in question were suggested by Lakoff more than 40 years ago, results show that her description of gender-related language "continues to be accepted by diverse groups of speakers as a valid representation of their own discursive experiences" (Bucholtz and Hall, 1995: 6, as cited in Kendall and Tannen, 2001). These features represent the norms by which women are expected to speak and write to this day (Kendall and Tannen, 2001). It seems like the quest for answers and equality has resulted in an even greater gap between women and men, and as Huston (1983, as cited in Huffaker and Calvert, 2005) says masculinity and femininity are nowadays seen as polar opposites on a single continuum rather than two separate dimensions.

However, the results of the Likert scale together with the results gathered in the second part of the questionnaire fulfill the main aim of the study which was to show that gendered identities are constructed through discourses and that people's views of genders depend on the complex relationship between society and knowledge, opinions and attitudes formed inside it. Studying gender and discourse in this way "reveals how language functions as a symbolic resource to create and manage personal, social and cultural meanings and identities" (Kendall and Tannen, 2001: 548).

Since language is an ever-changing entity, the need for studies such as this one is great. Even though the number of participants in this study is not big enough to make certain generalizations about these students' perceptions on women's and men's writing styles, it could still be argued that certain differences in written discourse comprehension and perception do exist with respect to the students' sex and the faculty they attend. Moreover, knowledge, opinions and attitudes, as well as the sex of the participants play a role in constructing the authors' gendered identity so the conclusions should not be based solely on just one of these variables. That is exactly what van Dijk (1982) emphasizes when he says that in natural communicative situations people will not only use their knowledge about other people, objects, events or actions referred to by a text, but also their opinions, attitudes and beliefs. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see what the results would be like if there was a greater number of participants from different faculties. Also, it would be interesting to examine the fact that even though more than 40 years have passed since Lakoff published *Language and Women's Place* and much has changed for women in the meantime, women, not just men, still classify themselves in certain categories, or rather attribute certain characteristics to themselves that differentiate them from men.

Katz (1986) states that from birth, certain self-meanings “regarding one’s gender are formed in social situations, stemming from ongoing interaction with significant others such as parents, peers, and educators” (as cited in Stets and Burke, 2000: 998). Moreover, Litosseliti (2006) says that these social interactions, or rather discourses are inherently ideological since they emphasize certain viewpoints and values at the expense of others. It could then be said that gendered discourses “represent and (re)constitute, maintain, and contest gendered social practices” (Litosseliti, 2006: 58). One’s sense of self (as women and men) depends on the different subject positions created through discourse (Simson, 1997, as cited in Litosseliti, 2006). More precisely, the construction of (gendered) identity is then an active process of affiliation and differentiation as well as attribution of identities by others and since one’s identity as a woman or a man is highly dependent on her or his language choices, it could easily be said that they become gendered through discourses.

6. Conclusion

In order to make sense of the world around them, people tend to classify events, objects and, of course, people. By doing so, they create certain simplified, reduced portraits. To put it differently, stereotypes, and events, objects and people become nothing more than an accumulation of such classificatory mechanisms. Since these assumptions about something or someone are deeply rooted in society and passed on through language it is not wrong to say that social reality influences the way in which people conceive and perceive others' identities through discourses, or rather how discourses set boundaries for identities and offer more or less obvious positioning of people in different contexts and situations.

The aim of this specific study was to show whether and how gendered identities are constructed through discourse(s). The results of the study show that people tend to make certain assumptions regarding the difference in women's and men's writing features. Furthermore, the results show that those (stereotypical) assumptions are a product of their knowledge, opinions and attitudes which are formed and articulated through different social contexts of which they are a part of. The participants of this study, or rather students, identified some features they believe are indicators of women's and men's writing style, i.e. the topic of the text (certain literary genres associated strictly with women, the gaming world as a predominantly men's world), writing style (women's passive, stiff and detailed style vs. men's aggressive, relaxed and simple style) and attitude (serious vs. playful, prone to mocking others and their actions). They also *neither agreed nor disagreed, agreed or strongly agreed* with most of the women's writing features proposed by Lakoff. Even though these features were identified in the 1970s, studies like this one prove that they are still prominent today. These features of women's language may not represent the way each woman uses language, but they still represent the norms by which women are expected to speak and write (Kendall and Tannen, 2001). Even though the number of participants is not big enough to make certain generalizations about the results, it could still be argued that gendered identities are constructed through discourse(s) and that, in this case, certain differences in discourse comprehension and identification of certain women's/men's writing features do exist with respect to the students' sex and the faculty they attend.

Regardless of the point from which research emanates, studying gender and discourse does not only provide "a descriptive account of male/female discourse but also reveals how language functions as a symbolic resource to create and manage personal, social and cultural meanings and identities" (Kendall and Tannen, 2001: 548). The problem of the role and position of women in society has always been a source of inspiration to many sciences,

including linguistics. This specific study, as well as other similar studies that deal with the relationship of language and gender, represents a source of inspiration for all much needed studies to come, and paves the way for new insights and better understanding of this complex subject.

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8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix A

ANKETNI UPITNIK

Poštovani/a,

pred Vama se nalazi anketni upitnik koji se provodi u svrhu izrade diplomskog rada te je tema, a ujedno i cilj ovoga diplomskog rada, istražiti percepciju studenata o rodnim razlikama autora s obzirom na pretpostavke o karakteristikama koje određeni autor ili autorica koriste pri pisanju tekstova.

Anketni upitnik sastoji se od 3 dijela. Prvi dio odnosi se na opće podatke i informacije o Vama kao studentu/ici. U drugom dijelu nalazi se 5 tekstova koje trebate pažljivo pročitati i nakon svakog teksta zaokružiti M ili Ž ovisno o tome mislite li da je tekst napisala muška ili ženska osoba. U trećem dijelu anketnog upitnika ispituju se Vaše percepcije o rodnim razlikama autora različitih tekstova s obzirom na pretpostavke o karakterističnom diskursu koji određeni rod koristi pri pisanju tekstova. Treći dio sastoji se od 10 tvrdnji kod kojih za svaku tvrdnju trebate zaokružiti jedan broj od 1 do 5, gdje je 1 – u potpunosti se ne slažem, dok je 5 – u potpunosti se slažem. Detaljnije upute za svaki od 3 dijela anketnog upitnika nalaze se još jednom prije svakog od navedenih dijelova.

Anketni upitnik je anonimn i dobrovoljan te u svakom trenutku od njega možete odustati.

Molim Vas da na pitanja u anketnom upitniku odgovarate u skladu s Vašim razmišljanjima.

Unaprijed zahvaljujem,

Željka Boduljak

Opći podaci i informacije

1. Spol: M Ž

2. Studij: _____

Pred Vama se nalazi 5 kratkih tekstova različite tematike. Molim Vas da pažljivo pročitate tekstove i nakon svakog zaokružite M ili Ž ovisno o tome mislite li da je tekst napisala muška ili ženska osoba.

Tekst 1

Pedeset nijansi mračniji (2017) - Poslastica za pasionirane ljubitelje trasha

Vrlo dobro se sjećam osvrta na prvi dio najvećeg bestselera nakon **Coelhovog 'Alkemičara'**, autorice **Erike Mitchell**. Kada čujete da je autorici uzor za ovo književno (ne)djelo bila **'Sumrak saga'** (WTF?!), ne trebate se previše začuditi konačnim rezultatom. Film je srušio sve platoe zarade i najbolja opisna rečenica bila je kako je idealan za 'očajne kućanice koje su nekim čudom ostale nevine'. I, što je najgore - moram priznati da je bio bolji od književnog predloška. 'Moja unutarnja boginja dahće', 'Uvukao mi se pod kožu...doslovno' i 'Gledam Christianovu četkicu za zube. To bi bilo kao da je on u mojim ustima. Hmmm...' samo su neki od antologijskih monologa i misli 'kinky' autorice koja ima ozbiljnih problema sa seksualnosti, stereotipima (koji je napaljuju), kompleksima i svim ostalim Freudovim terminima. 'Njezin dah putuje u moje prepone' definitivni je favorit, a ja moram stati s citatima. :D

Spol autora/ice: M Ž

Tekst 2

Sniper Ghost Warrior 3

No da se ne bi slučajno našli u neugodnoj situaciji City Interactive nudi vam širok raspon oružja i gadgeta. Osim drona i vjernog mu snajpera, Jon još može nositi primarno i sekundarno oružje, svakojake granate i ostale spravice poput alata za popravljanje prigušivača. Nemojte mi zamjeriti što se ne sjećam točnog broja, ali svaki dio opreme ima barem deset različitih stvari za ponuditi. Prilikom odabira oružja morate imati na umu koje ćete metke izabrati jer ne rade svi istu štetu. Jednostavnije rečeno, kada naiđete na oklopljenog neprijatelja njega obični metci neće samo tako srušiti na pod te će vrlo vjerojatno dići uzbunu, stoga je najmudrije da u svoj snajper stavite posebne metke koji bez problema

prolaze kroz razne materijale. Samu opremu možete kupovati/mijenjati/nadograđivati/izrađivati u skrovištima gdje započinjete i nove misije.

Spol autora/ice: M Ž

Tekst 3

Republika: Ziher

Možemo pričati da pop punk nikad nije trebao nastati jer nema veze s početnim ideologijama punkera, a kad vidimo i primjer ovih punkera iz Slavenskog Broda koji su se (ironije li) nazvali Republika, jasno je da ovo nema veze s punkom već je napravljena kao dobra zajebancija.

Ako stavimo ružičaste naočale, "Ziher" je ziheraški album za radijsku publiku koju moraš zaokupiti prvim riffom i nečim posebnim. Njihov trik su tekstovi, a pop punk je oduvijek imao zarazne melodije, pa se čini kao dobitna kombinacija. Da, to je dobitna kombinacija za zabavu i ništa više od tog.

Spol autora/ice: M Ž

Tekst 4

Irena Žilić: Haze

"Omega" je možda i najdoljmljivija stvar, jer osim elegantnog korištenja syntheva, zvuk je toliko dobro zaokružen, a vokal dovoljno zavodljiv i nježan, da ne bude premračan. Ova numera pokazuje da je Irena Žilić svjetska klasa jer bi "Omega" mogla komotno biti na albumu bilo koje svjetske indie folk glazbenice.

Ostatak albuma s motivima bodeža, večernjeg rumenila i vjetra, daje naznaku u kojem je smjeru glazbenica otišla s ovim albumom. Mračnija priča sa sablasnim i masivnijim zvukom, koji nije pretežak i sumoran, nego eteričan i umirujući, čini "Haze" kvalitetnim i smjelim

korakom u novi i uzbudljivi kontekst. Irena Žilić drugim je albumom potvrdila svoj status glazbenice osebnog senzibiliteta, iskrene emocije i nepatvorenoga talenta.

Spol autora/ice: M Ž

Tekst 5

Snake Pass

Ipak, nakon određenog vremena stvar je *kliknula* i tek je tada počela uživancija. Jednom kada shvatite princip, bez previše razmišljanja ćete se kretati poput zmije, penjati uz zidove, omotavati oko prepreka te pri tome uživati.

Inače, iznad spomenuta zmija je Noodle, a ona ima i svog kljunatog prijatelja Doodlea koji je glavni narator u pustolovini. Naratora shvatite sa zadržkom jer ćete od Doodlea čuti samo rečenicu-dvije svaki level i to napisane u oblačiću. Priča je užasno generična i ubačena čisto da se može reći da postoji.

Spol autora/ice: M Ž

Sljedeći niz pitanja sastoji se od 10 tvrdnji. Molim Vas da pažljivo pročitate svaku od navedenih 10 tvrdnji i zaokružite:

- broj 1 ako se s navedenom tvrdnjom **u potpunosti ne slažete**,
- broj 2 ako se s navedenom tvrdnjom **pretežno ne slažete**,
- broj 3 ako se s navedenom tvrdnjom **niti slažete, niti ne slažete**,
- broj 4 ako se s navedenom tvrdnjom **pretežno slažete**, i
- broj 5 ako se s navedenom tvrdnjom **u potpunosti slažete**.

Tvrđnja	U potpunosti se ne slažem	Pretežno se ne slažem	Niti se slažem, niti se ne slažem	Pretežno se slažem	U potpunosti se slažem
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije koristiti se oznakama/riječima koje se koriste u oklijevanju, odnosno ograđivanju od tvrdnje koja predstoji nego muškarci (npr. „navodno“, „skoro“ i sl.).	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije koristiti se izrazito uljudnim zahtjevima nego muškarci (npr. „Hoćeš li, molim te, zatvoriti vrata?“).	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije tražiti potvrdu, odnosno odobravanje za izneseno mišljenje nego muškarci.	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije koristiti se riječima „tako“, „toliko“ i sl. koje služe za pojačavanje pridjeva (npr. „tako dobro“, „toliko bolje“ i sl.).	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene se sklonije pisati riječi u kurzivu kako bi bile sigurne da je onaj/a koji/a čita razumio/la poruku koju ona želi prenijeti nego muškarci.	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije trivijaliziranju pridjeva (npr. „božanstveno“ umjesto „sjajno“) nego muškarci.	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije hiperkorekciji gramatike nego muškarci.	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije izbjegavati humor nego muškarci.	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su sklonije koristiti se direktnim citatima nego muškarci.	1	2	3	4	5
U pisanom tekstu, žene su u sklonije koristiti se posebnim vokabularom (npr. žene koriste više riječi za boje, šoping i sl.) nego muškarci (npr. muškarci koriste više riječi za sport, automobile i sl.).	1	2	3	4	5

8.2. Appendix B

8.2.1. Appendix B – text 1

Examples of the participants' explanations for the correct answer:

“This was very difficult. I was not sure which answer I should choose. In the end, I decided to choose M for male. The text is pretty aggressive. Words like ‘wtf’, ‘hmm’ and so on.” (*M-FFZG*)

“I believe that the first text is written by a male author because it seems to me that he is underestimating the film. For example: ‘ima ozbiljnih problema sa seksualnosti, stereotipima’. It seems to me that he mocks it”. (*F-FER*)

Examples of the participants' explanations for the incorrect answer:

“The author's strong attitude was what made me think this was written by a female author. I have a feeling that the author of this text strongly disagrees with the author of the book and believes that she has problems with sexuality and stereotypes.” (*F-FFZG*)

“When it comes to the first text, I believe it was written by a female author because of the topic of the text.” (*M-FER*)

8.2.2. Appendix B – text 2

Examples of the participants' explanations for the correct answer:

“In my opinion, the second text was written by a woman because the text is not detailed enough. This is something I would write. I play video games, but I do not know all the details.” (*F-FER*)

Examples of the participants' explanations for the incorrect answer:

“I think the second text was written by a man. I could not decide. Yes. It is a game. It is not detailed but I still believe that the game is only explained in a simple way. It is statistically more likely that the text was written by a man.” (*M-FER*)

8.2.3. Appendix B – text 3

Examples of the participants' explanations for the correct answer:

“The third text is about music, pop punk and I think that the author of the text is a man. I generally associate punk with men. Again, a stereotype. The matter in question is punk, concerts. When I picture somebody who writes passionately, I picture a long-haired guy who likes a particular band. People who glorify musicians are usually young girls or grown men.” (*M-FFZG*)

“This is a band. Since I know some male punk and rock band critics, I think the author is a male in this case. The things I read have... A lot of women have a strong vocabulary. It could be a woman as well, but maybe it is a man because the text was written in a relaxed manner.” (*F-FER*)

8.2.4. Appendix B – text 4

Examples of the participants' explanations for the correct answer:

“There are no short sentences. Examples like ‘vokal je zavodiljv i nježan’. I believe that a male author would use a more technical term. For example, when it comes to the vocal, he would maybe talk about a range or some other aspect, while in this review we have for example: ‘mračnija priča sa sablasnim i masivnijim zvukom koji nije pretežak i sumoran’. It gives me more of an impression that the author’s intent was to influence the readers emotionally.” (*M-FFZG*)

“The only reason behind my answer is that I associate indie and hipster music with women.” (*M-FFZG*)

“Somehow, it feels like the author wants Irena Žilić to succeed. She likes her album. Women’s solidarity.” (*F-FFZG*)

“I would say that the author of this text is a woman because of the use of attributes, empty adjectives. She uses ‘sablasni’, ‘masivni’, ‘sumoran’, ‘eteričan’ to describe the sound. And the word ‘komotno’. I have never heard a man use this word. The same goes with ‘senzibilitet’ i ‘nepatvoreni talent’.” (*F-FFZG*)

“The fourth text... The vocals are described in details. And also, here we can see words such as ‘osebujni senzibilitet’, ‘iskrene emocije’, ‘nepatvoreni talent’, ‘sumoran’, ‘eteričan’. This is something that a woman would use.” (*M-FER*)

8.2.5. Appendix B – text 5

Examples of the participants’ explanations for the correct answer:

“I do not know what to say about this text. Because video games are involved. Even though I know there are girls who play video games as well.” (*M-FFZG*)

“I would say the text was written by a man because of words like ‘kliknula’, ‘level’ etc. I also think the text is much more relaxed than it would be if a woman wrote it. And of course, the lack of details.” (*F-FFZG*)

“What caused me to say that this text was written by a man are phrases such as ‘užasno generična i ubačena čisto da se može reći da postoji’. When I watch YouTube videos about video games I hear men saying something like that.” (*F-FER*)

“I think this text is written by a man because it is very simple and concise.” (*F-FER*)

Examples of the participants’ explanations for the incorrect answer:

“Believing that the second text was written by a male author and that women usually write reviews for adventure games, rather than the ones including special forces and things like that, I concluded that the author of the text is a man.” (*M-FFZG*)

“I believe this was written by a woman because it sounds like an ad for a video game.” (*F-FER*)

Sažetak

Identitet pojedinca kao žene ili muškarca ovisi o njezinom ili njegovom načinu na koji koristi jezik, a način na koji ljudi predstavljaju sebe i druge kroz diskurs(e) rezultat je složenog odnosa između društva, znanja, mišljenja i stavova. Problem rodni razlika u upotrebi jezika žena i muškaraca već je mnogo puta istraživao, ali na različite načine i iz različitih perspektiva (vidi Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 1986; Tannen, 1990; Coates, 1996; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002). Većina tih istraživanja bavi se identificiranjem specifičnih obilježja ženskog i muškog stila pisanja, međutim, ovo istraživanje za cilj ima ispitati konstruiraju li se i na koji način rodni identiteti posredstvom diskursa. Korištenjem kvalitativnog i kvantitativnog pristupa, ovo istraživanje ispituje percepciju studenata o rodni razlikama u korištenju jezika. Rezultati ovoga istraživanja, pak, pokazuju da se rodni identiteti zaista konstruiraju kroz diskurs te da postoje određene razlike u razumijevanju diskursa i identifikaciji ženskih značajki pisanja u odnosu na spol studenata kao i fakultet koji pohađaju.

Ključne riječi: *diskurs, rod, identitet(i)*