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Research Article

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Genderlect Aspects in Country Songs: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

A song can be sung by both female and male singers, but some are not. It depends on how the songwriter creates the music lyrics. The songwriter's gender can also influence the use of communication style of the lyrics. It is because the way communication between males and females are as different as a culture, appropriates with the term of Genderlect. The goal of this study is to determine the influence of genderlect and the indication of the gendered song in country songs. The data used are country song nominees of Grammy Music Awards 2020. The data are analyzed by the presupposition analysis and this study uses purposive sampling and non-participant observation methods for collecting the data. The result of the study shows that genderlect influences the gender of the songwriter, on producing the language of the lyrics. Meanwhile for the gendered song, it is indicated by the singer who sings the lyrics or the language of the song.

Keywords: genderlect; gendered country song; presupposition analysis

1. Introduction

A song can be sung by both female and male singers, but some are not. Some of the song topics or themes are too gendered, meaning that some songs must be sung by female or male singers only. It usually depends on how the songwriter creates the music lyrics. But, how if a male songwriter creates a song lyric for a female singer or perhaps a song that talks about female things, or vice versa?

William & Best in Owen and Padron [1] state that females are emotionally oriented, alleviate cooperation, social compatibility, and affiliate with others, meanwhile, males affirm dominance, independence, and emotional reserve. We all know that music is universal. A female songwriter could create music for a male singer, or perhaps she could also create music about male things. Tannen [2] and the other linguists stated various theories about genderlect which differentiate the way of communicating between males and females. She sees that the way communication between males and females is as different as a culture.

There are two major purposes of this study, they are (1) to explain the gendered aspects of the song lyrics using presuppositional triggers, and (2) to find out what aspect of the gendered song indicates it. This study, especially, is trying to find out the influence of genderlect theory by Tannen [2] by classifying the differentiation of the gender of the songwriters and the singers. The finding of the study is genderlect influences a lot on the songwriters' gender. A songwriter as the one who creates the language of the song is producing song lyrics appropriate to his gender communication style. Then, for the indication of the gendered song, it is based on the gender of the singers who sing the song.

The findings of this study will become a study on understanding the readers about how genderlect by Tannen [2] influences a speaker who creates utterances based on his gender. Through the chosen data, in this term song lyrics from different genders of songwriters, this study is expected to be able to enlighten the readers on how someone has his style for creating an utterance. The findings of this study will also provide some examples of gendered language shown in the song lyrics.

To recognize the term *genderlect*, we can refer to Tannen in Tenorio [2], she states *genderlect* is to recapitulate the way that the conversation between male and female are different. She also proposes there are six differences in genderlect styles: (1) status & connection; when men tend to more focused on establishing status, dominance, and power while women tend to making connections, creating interaction, seek control, and understanding, (2) report & rapport; men tend to reporting progress, doing activities/physical oriented, focused on the result and goal, meanwhile women tend to do face-to-face conversation, talk about feelings, and emotional elements, (3) public & private; when communicating, men tend to communicate in public and have a competitive feeling, however women tend to create intimacy in private area of communication, (4) interrupting & listening; men tend to take control of the conversation, grab attention, often to jump to different topics, and do not ask questions too often, for women, they tend to show support and ask a question for better understanding, (5) jokes & stories; men tend to act as heroes when they start to joking or deliver a story, they put themselves as intellectuals, solving complex problems, and put others down to gain status. Meanwhile, women pretend to be the foolish ones, as the victim more often and talk other as heroes. They also have a strong empathetic connection. (5) Conflict; when an encounter with conflict, men tend to use it as a shortcut to gaining status, less likely to hold themselves back, and quickly move to dismiss the problems if necessary. They also offer solutions more than women. Different from women, women tend to avoid conflict and expect men to react to something as same as women do.

To identify the various types of specific words, we use presupposition by Karttunen cited in Levinson in Khaleel [3] and Yule [4] that there are three major types of

presupposition triggers. There are (1) existential presupposition or definite descriptions, (2) lexical including implicative verbs, factive verbs, change of state verbs, verbs of judging, counterfactual verbs, conventional items, and iterative, and (3) structural which has cleft constructions, Wh-questions, adverbial clauses, comparative constructions, counterfactual conditionals, and non-restrictive clauses. According to Yule [4] a presupposition itself is something the speaker has or assumes to be the case prior to making utterances. It is based on the speaker, not the sentence of the utterance.

2. Methods

The data are taken from the music lyrics of the country song nominees of Grammy Music Awards 2020. The researcher takes 2 country songs with details: (1) a song produced by female songwriters only and sung by a female singer and (2) a song produced by male songwriters only and sung by a male singer. The method of analyzing the data is the identity method. The data are analyzed by using the referential method with note-taking techniques. The researcher looks at some major aspects to analyze: (a) classifying the data into four orientations: woman – woman oriented song and man – man oriented song, (b) classifying the genderlect classification on each clause, (c) analyzing the type of presupposition for strengthening the genderlect classification, and (d) finally indicating the gendered songs in the data.

3. Finding and Discussion

3.1. Woman – Woman Oriented

Woman singer and woman songwriters. The example of the song is *Always Remember Us This Way*, sung by Lady Gaga. It was written by : Lori McKenna, Hillary Lindsey, Natalie Hemby, and Lady Gaga.

The genderlect aspect: Woman – Woman Oriented song is characterized by woman communication styles. The aspects are:

Rapport:

1. Face-to-face conversation:

That Arizona Sky burnin' in your eyes.

Type of presupposition: existential – definite description; *That Arizona Sky* is a definite Noun Phrase because it is committed to the existence of entities named

and the presupposition of having face-to-face conversation occurs in the phrase *your eyes* and it is strengthened by the next lyrics, *you look at me*.

2. Feeling and emotional elements:

It's buried in my soul like California gold.

Type of presupposition: structural – it-cleft; there is something exist in the soul of the subject **I**, and she talks about it which actually is in her feeling.

I'll always remember us this way

Type of presupposition: lexical – implicative verb; it can be assumed that **I** would not remember **us** in another way.

I don't wanna be just a memory

Type of presupposition: lexical – conventional items; It has a presupposition as **I** have already become just a memory.

Delivering stories:

1. Talk others as heroes:

You found the light in me that I couldn't find.

Type of presupposition: lexical – change of state verb; it presents an unstated concept as **me did not find the light in myself**, but then the clause *that I couldn't find* explains that only **you** who can find the light in **me**.

2. As the foolish ones:

So when I'm all choked up and I can't find the words.

Type of presupposition: structural – adverbial clause; it has an unstated concept that **I** is a careless person and it is depicted in the next clause as *I can't find the words*.

Connections:

1. Making connections:

We don't know how to rhyme, but damn, we try.

Type of presupposition: lexical – factive verb; it indicates that **we** are trying to make a connection between each other, in this term, relationship.

But all I really know you're where I wanna go.

Type of presupposition: lexical – factive verb; the subject **I** is trying to make a connection to the subject **you** by realizing that **you** as a place to go for, in a relationship way.

2. Intimacy:

The part of me that's you will never die.

Type of presupposition: existential – definite description; it can be assumed that *the part of me* exists in **you**.

No.	Genderlect Aspects	Details
1	Rapport	1. Face-to-face conversation

		2. Feeling and emotional elements
2.	Delivering stories	1. Talk others as heroes 2. As the foolish ones
3.	Connections	1. Making connection 2. Creating intimacy

3.2. Man - Man Oriented

Man singer and Man songwriters. The example of the song is *Some Of It* sung by Eric Church (M), written by: Eric Church, Clint Daniels, Jeff Hyde, and Bobby Pinson.

The genderlect aspect: Man – Man Oriented song is characterized by man communication styles. They are:

Delivering Stories:

1. Intellectuals:

Money ain't rich...

Type of presupposition: existential – definite description; it is kind of general truth statement. It talks about life matters.

Some of it you learn the hard way.

Type of presupposition: existential – definite description; *Some of it* refers to the life matters mentioned in [verse 1].

Girls like to laugh, tears don't last, and scared's what prayings for.

Type of presupposition: existential – definite description; it refers to the general truth statement.

2. Put others down to gain status:

When you can take it slow, 'cause time sure won't.

Type of presupposition: structural – adverbial clause; it shows that **you** cannot take it slow, because time sure won't too.

What really makes you a man is being true to her 'til your glass runs out of sand.

Type of presupposition: lexical – change of state verb; it can be assumed that **you** were not a man before.

Report:

1. Reporting progress:

I know I don't probably know what I think I do.

Type of presupposition: lexical – factive verb; the verb 'know' indicates the subject **I** don't probably know what he thinks he does.

'Til it breaks, go for broke.

Type of presupposition: lexical – change of state verb; it can be assumed that **It** was not broke before.

2. Result-focused:

But *there's something to some of it.*

Type of presupposition: existential – definite description; it can be assumed that *something* is in *some of it*.

3. Do activity:

When you dance, hold her close.

Type of presupposition: structural – adverbial clause; the clause *when you dance* indicates that **You** used to not dance.

Conflict:

1. Offer solutions:

If it's close, swing the bat.

Type of presupposition: structural – counterfactual conditional; it can be assumed that **it** is not close, so the bat cannot be swung.

2. Quickly moved to dismiss the problem:

Everybody's gotta past and love's worth living for.

Type of presupposition: lexical – change of state verb; it can be assumed that everybody is going to past the life matters mentioned above to find a better living.

Public:

1. Competitive

Be the first to reach for her hand.

Type of presupposition: lexical – change of state verb; it indicates that the subject **I** suggests **you** to move, to be the first to reach for **her hand**.

Interrupting:

1. Take control of the conversation:

No, you don't get to do some things again.

Type of presupposition: lexical – iterative; the subject **I** interrupts in such conversation and asks **you** to not do the same things again.

No.	Genderlect Aspects	Details
1	Delivering stories	1. Intellectuals 2. Put others down to gain status
2.	Report	1. Reporting progress 2. Result-focused 3. Do activity
3.	Conflict	1. Offer solutions 2. Quickly move to dismiss the problems

4.	Public	1. Competitive
5.	Interrupting	1. Take control of the conversation

For both data orientation (women-women oriented and men-men oriented), the songwriters use only specific genderlect style on their song. They write woman genderlect style for a song sung by woman singer and man genderlect style for a song sung by man singer. Later, the identification dive into the indication of gendered song that does not appear in both songs.

The indication of the gendered song only could be found in *Some Of It* by Eric Church (M). The indication of the gendered song is seen from the gender of the singer as the first point of view of the song and the story of the song itself. It can be said that the use of pronouns in the song lyrics becomes strong evidence of the indication of the gendered song.

Always Remember Us This Way (F)	Some Of It (M)
-	1. When you dance, <u>hold her close</u> 2. Be the first to reach for <u>her hand</u> 3. What really <u>makes you a man is being true to her</u>

4. Conclusions

All of the data have been analyzed. They can be classified into the whole classification of genderlect by Tannen [2]. In accordance to the method of analysis mentioned before, the data need to be classified into some orientations, such as; (1) woman singer – woman songwriters oriented song and (2) man singer – man songwriters oriented song. Then, it intended to be classified into the genderlect classification by Tannen [2] through its words and it is strengthened by the presupposition analysis by Yule [4] and Karttunen.

In the conclusion, we can see that on the songs with woman singer – woman songwriters oriented song (3.1) and man singer – man songwriters oriented song (3.2) have a strict result, it appropriates to the gender of the songwriters. If the songwriters are men, it turns out as a men’s communication style in the whole lyrics or vice versa. It can be said that genderlect influences a lot the songwriters on producing their language. The highlight for this finding turns into the songwriters who produced the language of the song lyrics, not the singers who sing the songs.

Also, we can see the gendered songs by the use of the language in it. They are (1) “*When you dance, hold her close*”, (2) “*Be the first to reach for her hand*”, and (3) “*What really makes you a man is being true to her*”, in *Some Of It*. The use of referential pronoun ‘her’ in the data shows us the aspect used for indicating the gendered song. It also can be said that a gendered song occurred based on who deliver the utterance, or in this finding, we can conclude that they are the singers who sing the songs. The singers as the main character of the song story.

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Appendix A

(1) *Always Remember Us This Way – Lady Gaga*

[Verse 1]

That Arizona sky

Burnin' in your eyes

You look at me and babe, I wanna catch on fire

It's buried in my soul

Like California gold

You found the light in me that I couldn't find

[Outro]

Oooh, oooh, hm

Oooh, oooh, hm

(2) *Some Of It – Eric Church*

[Verse 1]

Beer don't keep

Love's not cheap

And trucks don't wreck themselves

Mama ain't a shrink

Daddy ain't a bank

And God ain't a wishin' well

Money ain't rich

Everybody sins

And nobody wins in a fight

And sometimes wrong is right

[Chorus]

Some of it you learn the hard way

Some of it you read on a page

Some of it comes from heartbreak

Most of it comes with age

And none of it ever comes easy

A bunch of it you maybe can't use

I know I don't probably know what I think I do

But there's something to some of it

[Verse 2]

Girls like to laugh

Tears don't last

And scared's what praying's for

If it's close, swing the bat

Everybody's got a past

And love's worth living for

When you dance, hold her close

'Til it breaks, go for broke

Be the first to reach for her hand

No, you don't get to do some things again

[Chorus]

*Some of it you learn the hard way
Some of it you read on a page
Some of it comes from heartbreak
Most of it comes with age
And none of it ever comes easy
A bunch of it you maybe can't use
I know I don't probably know what I think I do
But there's something to some of it*

[Bridge]

*When you can take it slow
'Cause time sure won't
What really makes you a man
Is being true to her 'til your glass runs out of sand*

[Chorus]

*Some of it you learn the hard way
Some of it you read on a page
Some of it comes from heartbreak
Most of it comes with age
And none of it ever comes easy
A bunch of it you maybe can't use
I know I don't probably know what I think I do
But there's something to some of it
Some of it*