

## ЛІНГВІСТИКА ТЕКСТУ. ДИСКУРСОЛОГІЯ

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### EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE AND GENDER FRAMING IN CELEBRITY TALK SHOWS

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This paper examines gender differences in employing linguistic expressive means in celebrity talk show interviews on The Ellen DeGeneres Show. It aims to investigate how female and male celebrities use phonetic, morphological, lexical, semantic, and syntactic means to construct gender identities in media discourse. Framing theory and media discourse analysis approaches were used as a methodological basis of this research. Ninety-eight examples taken from 20 interviews were qualitatively analysed. The results show that both genders tend to use semantic strategies. Still, males prefer phonetic and syntactic structure, and females prefer lexical means, which testifies to the attempt to conform to the created gender expectations of the public. The study contributes to the general research on the role of expressive language in creating gendered public selves within the intersection of linguistics, gender, and media.

*Key words:* expressive means, gender discourse analysis, framing theory, media linguistics, celebrity talk shows, public persona construction.

**Introduction.** In today's media-powered world, where public identity is manufactured through performative speech, talk shows are a privileged site for examining how language represents, replicates, and often dictates gendered communication norms. Celebrity interviews are both entertainment and implied socio-cultural critique, in which speakers draw upon strategic linguistic expressive resources to construct identity, address publics, and narrate their lives. In such highly stylised media performances, gendered communicative practices not only are performed but also shaped in the moment, giving the 'default' template of gender performance to the audience. What effect does it have? This question requires substantial research and observation.

Linguistic expressive resources such as metaphors, lexical repetition, and syntactic organisation contribute to how speakers build meaning and position themselves relative to their audience [12]. Such choices perform more than ornamental roles, since they are tools of framing personal histories, emotional responses, and social positions in gendered language. Discourse analysis of media, therefore, provides a window for studying the construction of gender identity and the role of language in this everyday social process [17; 18].

Despite expanding studies of media framing and gender, more systematic linguistic analyses of celebrity talk shows are still required, where public performance intersects with

everyday language. Such shows, moulding public and private discourse, are apt to build upon societal expectations of femininity and masculinity [6]. Through the discourse analysis of expressive linguistic features used by male and female stars on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, this study aims to investigate how gender is framed through linguistic expressive means and what these trends indicate about evolving gender representation in contemporary media.

**Previous Research in the Area.** The intersection of language, gender, and media has been the focus of sociolinguistic interest for decades and remains a vibrant and evolving study area. Scholars have long since acknowledged that language is not a neutral medium of communication but a highly effective means by which “identities are constructed, recreated, and overthrown” [4, p.76]. In communication through the media, particularly in the interactive medium of talk shows, language is employed to entertain and to perform and shape gendered roles. Expressive devices such as metaphor, repetition, intonation, and syntactic structure are significant in these performances, for all are “rhetorical framing” [16, p. 24].

Initiated talk shows offer fertile grounds for such study, as they are hybrid genres that blend personal narrative, institutional discourse, and entertainment. Ilie identifies talk shows as “quasi-institutional communicative occasions” [13, p. 490] that break down distinctions between public and private, scripted and improvised talk. Celebrities in this context perform self-presentation strategies that are strongly connected with gendered expectations. However, expressive linguistic strategies employed by women and men to contextualise their accounts in these settings remain under-researched.

Research in gender and language has shown that women use affiliative, emotionally expressive, and polite speaking methods, whereas men are typically associated with assertive and status speech [5; 11]. These tendencies often manifest through visible framing styles in the media: women might adopt vulnerability or relationship orientation, and men frame their speech in the ways that allow for authority or individuality. Yet even these trends are transmuted in celebrity interviews, their identity and public profile focus, into more complicated or hybridised gender performances.

**Framing theory** provides a valuable lens for analysing how “means of expression affect interpretation on the part of the audience” [8, p. 53]. Within celebrity media discourse, framing is essential in negotiating gendered expectations, relatability, and authenticity. Despite a serious amount of current literature on universalised gendered language use, little research has directly linked expressive linguistic strategies and the framing of gendered identities within talk show interviews.

This study addresses these limitations by offering a gender-sensitive interpretation of expressive language in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. Through categorising and interpreting linguistic means in male and female celebrity interviews, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how language and performance generate gendered meaning in media contexts.

**Methodology.** This research applies qualitative content analysis to examine the use of linguistic expressive means in celebrity media talk, focusing on gendered communication strategies. The data consists of 98 examples of linguistic expressive means extracted from 20 interviews featured on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* from 2015 to 2022. The sample includes a balance of transcripts of male and female celebrity guests’ speeches, which allows for

comparative gender-based analysis. A mixed qualitative-quantitative approach was adopted. Firstly, we coded every expressive linguistic device according to semantic, lexical, syntactic, morphological, and phonetic categories. Frequency was calculated separately for women and men.

To ensure methodological rigour and replicability, the analysis drew upon the principles of *discourse analysis* [9] and *media linguistics* [15]. *Framing theory* [8] provided the theoretical lens for interpreting how expressive language shapes gendered identities. The classification of expressive means was guided by linguistic typologies [1] and supported by a close reading strategy informed by gender and communication research [5; 16]. The analysis attempted to quantify the frequency of each type of expressive means and examined how gendered identities are negotiated through language use.

**Results and Discussion. Expressive language of male celebrities.** Among the variety of expressive language resources, phonetic, morphological, lexical, semantic, and syntactic features have a unique role in how speakers shape meaning and identity. Among them, *semantic expressive resources* seemed the most prominently utilised in male guests in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, revealing a strong tendency for metaphorical and symbolic construction of ideas. Semantic devices such as *metaphors* and *similes* enable speakers to express complex emotional and relational states succinctly and with resonance. For instance, Adam Levine's words in "... *it's amazing to see how our fans and our music have grown with us*" and "*My kids are my world*" illustrate how metaphoric language can frame personal and professional growth. These constructions are not simply stylistic but also function as framing devices, projecting narratives of growth, loyalty, and emotional depth. Media communication routinely uses these qualities to soften or humanise public male images. Semantic means accounted for 39% of 46 instances of male speakers using expressive means.

*Morphological expressive means* were used in 20% of the cases. Morphological devices, such as compounding and reduplication, were used to reinforce emotional intensity or stress stylistic expressiveness. Consider Jason Momoa's utterance: "*I instantly get very, very anxious*". Here, the repetition of "*very*" intensifies the emotional charge of the statement, signalling vulnerability, which is a trait that male speakers might strategically frame to foster relatability. Similarly, Bruno Mars uses compounding: "*It's all part of the showmanship*". The term *showmanship* points to a persona rooted in performance and charisma, aligning with masculine-coded professionalism in entertainment.

*Syntactic structures* like *anaphora* and *parallelism* also featured in male discourse, with 17% of the males' samples, adding emphasis and rhythm. In Adam Levine's repeated clause: "*We've evolved so much as a band, I've evolved, our music has evolved,*" the frequently used structure signifies progression and transformation, while Bill Gates' structured *repetition* in "*Reading gives me a chance to explore new ideas... gives me a chance to understand different perspectives...*" demonstrates the use of syntax to frame intellectual engagement and openness as an image often cultivated in male public figures to blend authority with reflection.

*Lexical expressive means*, comprising 13% of the examples, were used less frequently but still served essential expressive and framing functions. These involved set phrases or emotionally charged vocabulary, such as Jason Momoa's statement: "*There's something about pushing your limits and being in nature that's just exhilarating*". This line takes common

masculine themes such as nature, resilience, and danger and applies descriptive language to introduce the speaker as bold and emotionally close to the body experience.

Finally, *phonetic expressive means* like intonation, rhythm, and stress through sound were least utilised at 11% of the total. This would then infer relative usage of vocal modulations in male speakers' expressiveness. However, in exceptional cases, as in the relaxed narration: *"I love hearing her just like, slurp on a drink, I love hearing her munch on something... just hearing him bark makes me happy"*. The sensory lexicon creates intimacy and unvarnished affection. Though less common, these types of phonetic choices provide a glimpse of a more private, emotionally close masculine voice in media environments.

The findings demonstrate that male speakers employ semantic means most often to build identity and personal experience, followed by occasional usage of morphological and syntactic means. Lexical means enrich emotion and theme, and variation at a phonetic level is employed sparingly, primarily in more relational or casual contexts. These patterns reflect how male celebrities use expressive means within a performance-based environment to negotiate public gender visibility and emotional address.

*Expressive language of female celebrities.* Female speakers on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* often used *semantic expressive means*, creating easily comprehensible, emotional, and socially attuned identities. Of 52 instances extracted from the database of female speakers' speeches, 40% belonged to this category, reflecting a strong preference for meaning-laden language that encourages narrative richness and personal construal. These semantics techniques, such as simile, metaphor, and exaggeration, were specifically employed. For example, Jennifer Aniston jokingly referenced an earlier fashion choice with the following statement: *"I think it was the ugliest haircut I've ever seen"*.

Hillary Clinton used **comparisons** to align herself with the general public: *"I'm just like anybody else"*. Such an expression puts the female speaker in accessible and humble contexts.

*Lexical expressive devices* were used in 34% of instances, with a strong preference for vivid, emotive words. These fixed expressions make personal identification and fan identification. For instance: *"It [Instagram] is a way for me to connect with my fans and share what's going on in my world,"* – Kim Kardashian. *"My fans are everything to me. They understand me and support me through thick and thin,"* – Billie Eilish. These types of expressions convey belonging, community, and emotional investment in the other, and they function as discursive tools to create the speaker as authentic, appreciative, and emotionally present. By itself, such self-representation is historically required of women in public media.

*Morphological expressive means* constituted approximately 13%. Reduplication, interjection, and compounding contributed to the speech's emotive force and affective depth. Katy Perry exemplifies this in her strong phrasing: *"It's so, so important to me to use my platform to shine a light on issues that matter..."* The "so" echoes the emotion and *shine a light on*, which is one instance of metaphorical compounding that puts the speaker into a morally engaged and mission-oriented stance.

*Syntactic expressive devices* were less frequent, occurring only in 7% of the total number, but still helped to form emphasis and narrative flow. Parallelism was also a good syntactic device, such as Hillary Clinton's saying: *"... I like spending time with my family, I like to watch*

good TV shows, and I love to read. It's important to find time for yourself". This structure supports a balanced personality and presents a distinct set of values.

Finally, *phonetic expressive means* were the least frequent, employed only in 6% of instances extracted from females' speeches. However, sporadic instances are sufficient evidence of conscious stylistic decisions. Jennifer Lawrence's line: "They probably should not come over here knock-knocking ..." uses onomatopoeia for dramatic or comic effect. Here, sound-based expression creates a light-hearted atmosphere, which adds to the casual and spontaneous image often projected in female celebrity interviews.

Female speakers use primarily semantic and lexical expressive devices to construct communicative identities rooted in emotional openness, interpersonal connection, and social awareness. Expressive devices create richer linguistic topography and facilitate the construction of femininity in talk show media discourse.

**Comparative analysis of male and female speeches.** Comparative analysis of data indicates strong patterns in male and female speakers' usage of expressive linguistic means in celebrity talk show interviews. While both men and women use a wide variety of expressive strategies, the distribution and frequency of specific types reveal nuanced differences in framing gender-influenced choices of communicative style.

Table 1 illustrates the gender-specific tendencies in the distribution of expressive means, i.e., the number of instances and their percentage in regard to the 100% of gender-related sample data. While semantic strategies are universally applied across genders, males are more inclined toward delivery-structuring devices (phonetic and syntactic) and females toward affective strategies (lexical and semantic).

Table 1

**Comparative frequency of expressive linguistic means used by male and female speakers in celebrity talk show interviews**

Type of Expressive Means	Male Speakers (number of instances/percentage)	Female Speakers (number of instances/percentage)	Key Observations
Phonetic	5 / 11%	3 / 6%	Male speakers rely more on vocal modulation to convey emphasis.
Morphological	9 / 20%	7 / 13%	Both genders use these devices to enhance expressiveness.
Lexical	6 / 13%	18 / 34%	Female speakers favour affective vocabulary to emphasise emotional connection.
Semantic	18 / 39%	20 / 40%	High and nearly equal use across genders to support one's own media-shaped gender identity.
Syntactic	8 / 17%	4 / 7%	Male speakers use more devices to add assertiveness through rhetorical weight.
Total	46 / 100%	52 / 100%	

The first notable difference is phonetic expressive devices: male speakers tend to use more of them, which might indicate that male celebrities employ more prosodic devices such as intonation, pitch variation, or vocal emphasis to infuse speech with an emotional implication. Such differences may occur due to the larger sociocultural demands of male speech performance in public settings, where being assertive or controlling one's voice is equated with charisma. Morphological expressive devices were used at nearly identical rates among males and females, indicating that both groups try to enhance expressiveness with their linguistic choices.

A greater contrast exists in lexical expressive devices, e.g., metaphoric and idiomatic expressions, and emotionally charged vocabulary. Female speakers used them more than twice as often as men, indicating a strong gendered preference for rich, affective vocabulary. This statement aligns with previous research hypothesising that “women tend to prioritise relational communication style, using language strategically to build rapport and affective bond with the audience” [13, p. 28].

Semantic expressive means appeared with similar frequency in both groups, suggesting a general trend towards elaborating concepts through symbolic or metaphorical expression. The fact that it seems so frequently across both groups provides further evidence of the cross-gender acceptability and rhetorical power of semantic approaches within media discourse.

In contrast, syntactic expressive features (e.g., inversions, parallelisms, or ellipses) were more characteristic of male speech. This may indicate that men who speak within talk show contexts tend to use sentence-level structuring to add rhetorical weight to control the pacing or stylistic impact of their speech.

The findings point to different distribution peculiarities of applying communicative strategies by male and female speakers, which gendered discourse norms of media performance could moderate. Various linguistic expressive means (i.e., semantic, lexical, syntactic, morphological, and phonetic) contribute to constructing gender identity in a media-powered discourse. The results show that female and male speakers similarly use metaphors, similes, and hyperbole to produce a stronger emotional appeal. This confirms previous studies suggesting that “figurative language is an across-gender device used to construct self-presentation” [10, p. 114]. However, how such devices are created and interpreted varies based on social and cultural expectations [5].

The greater use of lexical expressive devices by female speakers supports earlier claims that their communication is more affiliative, audience-centred [11; 16] and is rooted in relational engagement, typically socially associated with femininity [7]. In celebrity media discourse, such strategies create a more acceptable version of femininity on screen.

Conversely, male celebrity speakers' higher use of phonetic and syntactic expressive means signals their attempt to display more control and salience, at least on the screen, which aligns with gender and media study research, which shows that male speech is more assertive and performative, to some extent, even showing vulnerability [4; 14]. Their use of syntactic devices can be interpreted as an attempt to maintain discursive power as an accepted norm of masculine communication in the public sphere.

Importantly, these linguistic choices are not merely a matter of style but carry significant framing implications. Framing theory posits that selecting some language frames impacts

audience interpretation and social meaning. In celebrity talk shows, evocative language is a tool for constructing and negotiating gender identities. Moreover, celebrities' linguistically predetermined self-positioning resonates with a broader cultural trend toward more fluid and intersectional understandings of identity [2]. This research contributes to the wider body of literature recognising the performative, discursive, and socially determined nature of gender [3]. In studying expressive means in celebrity talk show discourse, we gain insight into how media reflect and construct public understandings of femininity and masculinity.

**Conclusions.** This study has explored the use of expressive linguistic resources by male and female celebrities in television interviews, and their role in constructing gendered identities in *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*. The results indicate that while both genders use various expressive devices, clear tendencies can be seen: semantic devices are used by both groups. Still, they are used more by female speakers, while male speakers prefer syntactic and phonetic devices. These results reveal gendered communication style preferences and show how media performances display traditional gender norms.

The originality of this study lies in bringing together linguistic expressive means and media framing theory in a gender-focused approach, experimented on celebrity talk shows as a specific, real-life media genre. The scientific contribution of the study is both methodological and conceptual: it provides a reproducible example of how to analyse gendered discourse in audiovisual media and contributes to sociolinguistics and media studies by demonstrating that expressive means frame public knowledge about gender.

Despite these strengths, the research has several limitations. First, the study focuses on a single talk show, and therefore the generalizability of findings to other media genres or cultural contexts might be restricted. Second, the male/female binary emphasis does not allow for non-binary or queer identities, which, in contemporary gender discourse, are significantly increasing.

Future research could explore how expressive language frames social phenomena such as mental health, ethnicity or political identity in celebrity interviews. Additionally, comparative studies across different media genres or cross-cultural talk shows could shed light on how gendered framing shifts in response to diverse sociocultural narratives.

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## ЕКСПРЕСИВНЕ МОВЛЕННЯ ЯК ЗАСІБ ГЕНДЕРНОГО ФРЕЙМУВАННЯ У ТЕЛЕВІЗІЙНИХ ТОК-ШОУ ЗІ ЗНАМЕНИТОСТЯМИ

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У статті розглянуто специфіку гендерних відмінностей у використанні лінгвістичних експресивних засобів в інтерв'ю зі знаменитостями в ток-шоу Еллен Дедженерес. Мета дослідження – виявити особливості використання фонетичних, морфологічних, лексичних, семантичних та синтаксичних засобів знаменитостями жіночої та чоловічої статі для конструювання гендерної ідентичності в медіадискурсі. Як методологічну основу цього дослідження було використано підходи теорії фреймінгу та аналізу медіадискурсу. Якісно проаналізовано 98 прикладів, взятих з 20 інтерв'ю. Результати показують, що обидві статі схильні використовувати семантичні стратегії, але чоловіки віддають перевагу фонетичній та синтаксичній структурі, а жінки – лексичним засобам, що свідчить про спробу підтвердити сформовані громадськістю гендерні очікування. Дослідження робить внесок у загальне вивчення ролі мовних засобів експресивності у створенні гендерно означених публічних ‘я’ на перетині лінгвістики, гендеру та медіа.

*Ключові слова:* експресивні засоби, гендерно-дискурсний аналіз, теорія фреймінгу, медіалінгвістика, ток-шоу знаменитостей, конструювання публічного образу.