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A doppio filo:
la moda fra italiano e lingue straniere

A Double Thread:
Fashion between Italian and Foreign Languages

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Hyphenated Phrasal Expressions in Fashion Journalism: A Diachronic Corpus-assisted Study of *Vogue* Magazine

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ABSTRACT

Following Barthes's seminal *Système de la Mode*, there have been relatively few studies focusing on fashion journalism from a linguistic perspective. This paper offers an in-depth analysis of hyphenated phrasal expressions (HPEs) of three or more constituents in the American edition of *Vogue*. The *Vogue* corpus covers a timeframe from 2003 to 2019 to provide diachronic insights. Corpus software was used to extract and analyse all hyphenated phrasal expressions. Results showed a general rise in usage over time, with most functioning as adjectives in line with the descriptive and evaluative purposes of fashion journalism. A wide range of structural patterns reflected richly detailed and striking mental images (i.e., *-and-*, *-meets-*), multiple roles (i.e., *-slash-*, NP-NP-NP), and novelty [(*)-of-the-moment, *-to-be]. Extensive clause-like HPEs offered a particularly interesting window on the writing talents of this discourse community. The study provides a useful benchmark for contrastive studies aiming to understand to what extent HPE usage in American *Vogue* may influence the writing style of journalists of other language backgrounds, with particular reference to Italian fashion journalism.

Keywords: corpus methodology; fashion journalism; hyphenated phrasal expressions; semantic tagging; *Vogue* magazine.

1. INTRODUCTION

From a conceptual standpoint, fashion has been defined from various perspectives that involve three disciplinary areas: psychology, sociology,

and marketing. The first two are aptly captured in Sproles's (1974, 464) definition of fashion as a "culturally endorsed form of expression, in a particular material or non-material phenomenon, which is discernible at any given time and changes over time within a social system or group of associated individuals". The latter instead emerges in King's (1964, 324) more process-oriented definition: "Fashion adoption is a process of social contagion by which a new style or product is adopted by the consumer after commercial introduction by the designer or manufacturer". The field of fashion studies is similarly considered to be interdisciplinary (Kaiser 2020), drawing from the social sciences as well as the arts and the humanities, as reflected its distinctive visual, symbolic, and communicative dimensions.

Focusing on the communicative aspects of fashion, alongside the capacity of clothing to non-verbally convey the values and attitudes of wearers (Barnard 2013), the key role of the language cannot be ignored. Moeran (2004) argues that "it is, indeed, the use of language that transforms clothing into *fashion*" (35; original emphasis). The importance of language is also seen in the verbal interactions of the fashion discourse community whose members use it to exchange ideas and express attitudes. Among the most prominent members of this community are fashion journalists, including professionals who write for traditional fashion magazines (e.g., *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*), as well as fashion bloggers who have become increasingly influential since they came onto the scene in the early 2000s (Engholm and Hansen-Hansen 2014). With the growing influence of the new media, fashion bloggers have now assumed a central position in providing news and information to the global fashion world (Rocamora 2012).

In line with the multifaceted conceptualization of fashion described above, fashion journalism, as a discipline, represents the integration of the themes and professional practices associated with it, namely, modernity, consumerism, communication, and the media (Wylie 2012). Broadly speaking, the overall purpose of fashion journalism is to describe, analyse, and review fashion-related entities, although (mock) critical and personalized commentary is also quite prevalent, particularly in the form of irony (König 2006; Lynge-Jorlén 2012).

Scholarly approaches to fashion journalism began with the seminal work *Système de la Mode* by Roland Barthes (1967), later translated into English as *The Fashion System* (1990). Barthes analysed editorials in women's fashion magazines such as *Elle*, *Vogue*, and *Jardin des Modes* from a semiotic perspective based on the Saussurian concepts of *signifier*

and *signified* to tease out ideological representations within the world of fashion. His analysis further highlighted expressive and rhetorical meanings which he described as “the poetics of clothing” (1990, 235).

In the years following Barthes’ work, English has largely surpassed French as the global language of fashion (Lorusso 2019), even if loanwords from other languages continue to be quite common (e.g., *prêt-à-porter*, *bouclé*, *chic*, *kimono*, *stiletto*, *sarong*). Similarly, English loanwords are prevalent in fashion discourse in other languages. For example, items such as *pullover*, *casual*, and *outfit* are frequently found in Italian fashion journalism and appear to be on the rise (Ondelli 2015; Sergio 2015; Lorusso 2019). Thus, such linguistic cross-fertilization enables the language of fashion to be “shared and enriched at an international level by a wide number of users” (Lopriore and Furiassi 2015, 200).

With particular reference to English language fashion magazines, some post-Barthes studies have also applied the semiotic approach to investigate emerging ideologies and underlying meanings (e.g., McCracken 1993; Hamenda 2012). However, as pointed out by Borrelli (1997) and König (2006), language-oriented analyses of English-language fashion magazines are relatively few. Indeed, König (2006) noted that after Barthes’ (1967) analysis that explored both semiotic and linguistic aspects of fashion writing, there was a shift towards prioritizing the semiotic interpretation of clothing items (e.g., Lurie 1981), while the features of the written text itself were largely overlooked. Two exceptions are studies by Borrelli (1997) and König (2006), both of a qualitative nature and lacking in systematic analytical procedures. Borrelli (1997) analysed the Point of View sections written by *Vogue’s* editors-in-chief from 1968 to 1993. She described “Vogue speak” in terms of four functions: visual (rich descriptions), oral (alliteration and rhyming), emphatic (hyperbole), and popular (references to pop culture). Interestingly, among the sporadic examples provided were two hyphenated phrasal expressions that are the object of the current study: *the knit-two-purl-two look* and *the have-it-your-way philosophy*. König (2006) studied the variation in the content, tone, and lexicon of British *Vogue* based on samples of text from the period 1980-2001, although the precise makeup of the samples or method of analysis are not clearly explained. She also commented on the presence of two hyphenated adjectival forms in the last year of the sample (i.e., *roll-in-a-bag*, *temperature-sensitive wardrobes* and *hot-pants-and-boob-tube stage outfits*), described as creating a “choppy, syncopated rhythm” (König 2006, 214). A later study with a strong linguistic focus was conducted by Vosper-Woghiren (2013) who

analysed the captions of images in the fashion magazines *Vogue* and *Lucky*. However, given the limited scope of the text analysed, the study does not offer interpretive insights into the linguistic choices of fashion journalists. Indeed, as the author points out, “using a series of adjectives and literary devices may create a rhythm-like reading but communicates no real meaning” (2013, 114). Nevertheless, the study revealed that after object nouns, descriptive adjectives were the most frequent word class contained in the captions, thus corroborating the key role of description in fashion journalism.

In the present study, I aim to contribute to closing the research gap explained above by providing an in-depth and systematic linguistic analysis of a corpus consisting of American *Vogue* magazine articles from 2003 to 2019, thus expanding on the timeframes of earlier work targeting this source. Building on previous exploratory research on fashion blogs (Crawford Camiciottoli 2019), I focus on multi-word lexical items consisting of three or more words joined together with hyphens (i.e., hyphenated phrasal expressions – hereafter HPEs) that were found to be richly descriptive and expressive linguistic features used frequently by fashion bloggers but to a lesser extent by professional fashion journalists. The overall objective is therefore to shed light on trends in the usage of HPEs by *Vogue* writers over time, which may also reflect cross-influence from fashion bloggers. The investigation was guided by the following research questions:

1. How frequently are HPEs used by *Vogue* writers and what trends emerge over the timeframe of the study?
2. What are the word classes of the HPEs used by *Vogue* writers?
3. Which recurring structural patterns of HPEs are used by *Vogue* writers?

Given the terminological and structural complexities associated with HPEs, in the following section, I explain my approach to their identification and analysis.

2. HYPHENATED PHRASAL EXPRESSIONS

On a structural level, HPEs are a type of multi-word item, described by Moon (1997, 43) as a combination of two or more words that “semantically and/or syntactically forms a meaningful and inseparable unit”. Specifically for multi-word items containing more than two words, a number of other terms and characterizations appear in the literature.

For example, *phrasal compound noun* (e.g., *right-of-way*) was used by Carter and McCarthy (2006, 321) and *phrasal structure* (e.g., *forget-me-not*) by Bauer and Renouf (2001, 104). The term *phrasal compound* has been adopted by various scholars but with different meanings. For Bauer *et al.* (2013, 437-438), phrasal compounds are items like *soon-to-be-divorced* and *circle-a-word*, and also for Štekauer (2002, 108), but they are considered “special cases” incorporating synsemantic words. Later, Bauer *et al.* (2013, 437) used *phrasal compound* to classify longer items or hapax legomena such as *I-keep-forgetting-you’re-watching-me smile*. For Scalise and Bisetto (2005, 47), *phrasal compound* refers to the syntactic properties of constituents before the head noun, ranging from coordinated NPs (*pipe and slipper husband*) to complete clauses (*God is dead theology*).

The above discussion and examples bring to light an issue that is particularly relevant to the present study, namely, the non-consistent use of hyphenation. Indeed, as noted by Lieber and Štekauer (2009, 7), there is “hardly a hard-and-fast rule” with respect to hyphenation. It is even possible to find both hyphenated and non-hyphenated versions of the same item in scholarly discussions: *floor-of-a-bird-cage taste* (Lieber 2009, 573) vs. *floor of a bird cage taste* (Lieber and Štekauer 2009, 5)¹. With specific reference to what Missud (2018) calls *phrasal compound adjectives*, while also recognizing the lack of consensus on the use and meaning of the term *phrasal compound*, the author makes the argument that items containing at least three distinct English words joined by multiple hyphens and used to qualify nouns (e.g., *get-out-of-bed bell*) can be considered standard English constructions as they substantially resemble typical compound adjectives (e.g., *wire-rimmed glasses*). This rationale is bolstered by Biber *et al.* (1999, 533) who consider the presence of hyphens a “clear objective indicator” of adjective status in compound adjectives. Similarly, Bauer *et al.* (2013) described hyphens as regularly occurring in compound adjectives.

For the present study, I will instead adopt the term hyphenated phrasal expressions (HPEs) as a way to reconcile the issues described above and to open the analysis to all different word classes, beyond adjectives. Specifically, HPEs in this study are intended as at least three words concatenated by hyphens and acting as a single and meaningful unit (Moon 1997). The requirement of hyphenation will obviously mean

¹ There is also little consistency in two-word compounds, for example, *coffee pot*, *coffee-pot*, and *coffeepot* (Bauer 2006).

that possible non-hyphenated forms of multi-word expressions used by *Vogue* writers will not be included in the analysis. However, this limitation can be compensated in several ways. First, the approach will allow for a systematic detection of all HPEs. Second, because adjectives are particularly prominent in fashion discourse (Borrelli 1997; König 2006; Vosper-Woghiren 2013; Crawford Camiciottoli 2016) and multi-word adjectives are routinely hyphenated (Biber *et al.* 1999; Bauer *et al.* 2013), this will further increase the chance of performing an exhaustive analysis of the data. Finally, following Giammarresi (2010), a writer's practice of inserting hyphens in a multi-word item is an indication that it is perceived (and should be interpreted) as a single unit. For these reasons, restricting the analysis to HPEs, while excluding any non-hyphenated multi-word expressions, appears to be a reasonable option.

The findings of this analysis of HPEs in American *Vogue* can be useful for contrastive studies involving fashion journalism in other languages, with particular reference to Italian. While hyphenated two-word compounds, for example, *latteo-marshmellow* (Corbucci 2008) and *moda-giorno* (Sergio 2015), were found in *Vogue Italia*, it is not known to what extent we may also find HPEs that are peculiar to languages such as English and German (Meibauer 2007). Therefore, this study can serve as a benchmark for understanding possible trends in HPE usage in Italian fashion journalism that may be influenced by English fashion writing.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. *The corpus*

The analysis of HPEs was based on texts collected from *Vogue* magazine, arguably the world's most well-known and influential fashion publication since it was founded in the United States in 1892 (Weiss 2014). Since 1905, *Vogue* has been owned by Condé Nast, now a global media company and is published in more than 20 international editions. *Vogue* currently describes itself as having a “unique role as a cultural barometer for a global audience”². The magazine's preeminent status, together with the availability of some previous scholarly research based on this source

² <https://www.condenast.com/brands/vogue> [14/12/2020].

(Borrelli 1997; König 2006; Ondelli 2015; Sergio 2015) allowing for comparative insights drove my decision to focus the analysis on *Vogue*.

In line with the research objectives, the *Vogue* corpus was compiled to represent three contemporary periods of fashion journalism spanning over a timeframe of 17 years: 2003-2004, 2013-2014, and 2018-2019. The texts were procured from the LexisNexis database³, an academic search engine that provides content from a vast array of news, business, and legal sources, including popular magazines such as *Vogue*. To more accurately select texts with descriptions and evaluations of fashion products and entities, I utilized the database’s options to narrow searches to articles in the American edition containing the words *fashion*, *trend*, *design*, or *collection*, which served to filter out less relevant articles of a more financial nature or simple lists of content. Once these texts had been identified, I performed a random selection across each of the three time frames to collect a small specialized corpus of 123,180 words that would be suitable for corpus-assisted discourse analysis (Partington, Duguid, and Taylor 2013). According to Flowerdew (2004), corpora that range from 100,000-500,000 tokens are ideal for this analytical approach as they can generate meaningful quantitative results, but are also manageable for extensive follow-up qualitative analysis to reveal trends and patterning. *Table 1* provides an overview of the *Vogue* corpus and its three temporal components roughly similar in size.

Table 1. – The “Vogue” corpus.

COMPONENT	TOKENS
2003-2004	40,607
2013-2014	41,825
2018-2019	40,748
TOTAL	123,180

3.2. *The analysis*

The analysis of HPEs in the *Vogue* corpus was undertaken in three phases. First, using the concordance tool of Wordsmith Tools (Scott 2020), I performed an initial query based on the wildcard string *-*-* to

³ <https://www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/products/nexis-uni.page> [14/12/2020].

retrieve all hyphenated items that contained at least three constituents. Among the various corpus software programs that offer basic concordancing functions, Wordsmith Tools (Scott 2010) was selected due to its ease of use during filtering of concordance lines for resorting and rapid deletion, which was essential in this case as there were large quantities of concordance lines that needed to be removed from the output for various reasons. First of all, there were many duplicate concordance lines that were generated whenever items contained more than three constituents. For example, the four-constituent item *973-outlets-and-counting* generated two identical lines but with the differing nodes based on the three-item constituents *973-outlets-and* and *outlets-and-counting* subsumed within it. The greater the number of constituents joined together by multiple hyphens (as many as seven), the more duplicates that were generated. Then, there were many items in which hyphens had been inserted but could not be considered HPEs. These included non-standard spellings (e.g., *tie-dye-y*, *un-self-conscious*, “*op*”-*art-ment*), as well as reduplicative-like items (e.g., *va-va-voom*, *ding-a-ling*) whose constituents do not carry independent meanings and therefore do not qualify as compound-like structures (Bauer 2006). Hyphens were also sometimes used as a form of punctuation similar to commas to set off parenthetical information (e.g., *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis-based on the brilliant semiautobiographical novel by Giorgio Bassani-stars Dominique Sanda*). Finally, I eliminated concordance lines with hyphenated numerical quantities (e.g., *24-year-old*, *320,000-square-foot*) and standard fashion industry-related terminology (e.g., *ready-to-wear*, *pret-a-porter*), both of which were present in relatively large quantities that would have considerably skewed the results, without offering much of interest from a linguistic perspective. *Figure 1* reproduces a sample of filtered and resorted concordance lines after the removal of those described above.

In the second phase, the filtered concordances containing HPEs were tallied for each corpus component and compared to determine any trends in terms of frequency of usage across the timeframe of the study. For further interpretive insights, each corpus component was also processed with the semantic tagger of Wmatrix (Rayson 2008) to identify and compare their key semantic domains, which could shed light on trends in usage of HPEs linked to possible changes in topical focus of *Vogue* over the period taken into consideration. Wmatrix automatically assigns each lexical item in a target corpus to a pre-established semantic domain and then calculates a keyness score to determine which domains are statistically more frequent when compared to a reference corpus.

N	Concordance
1	as she has said, "I'll never not do the one-of-a-kind stuff." Kerby Jean-RaymondPYER MOSS
2	with Cara Delevingne-that includes silky red-and-blue boxing shorts, color-blocked bomber
3	degree, regardless of whether they were an up-and-coming name or a global megabrand. Ralph
4	Patterns and textures range from a subtle heart-and-diamond motif to a crisscross rainbow plaid,
5	off. Unsurprisingly, Waller-Bridge is a big larks-and-diversions person. (Current favorite: the card
6	Though people will take the Perry-Swift burger-and-fries embrace in the "You Need to Calm
7	island archipelago. A jagged black laminate-and-glass coffee table designed by Robert
8	acknowledges the challenges facing brick-and-mortar outposts these days-which seem as
9	contains Haven, a new mandarin-spiked rose-and-peony fragrance inspired by the bloom-filled
10	uploaded onto the digital auction block by mom-and-pop sellers in the Midwest, fabrics that-Hay
11	shopper, but also a shameless serial buyer-and-returner, I find this idea particularly
12	is in a heavy lash and Christopher Kane's lace-and-satin gown, which she wore to this year's
13	lights to metamorphose onstage, playing a "hide-and-seek illusionist game" with her audience, as
14	"I think you probably have one too many gin-and-tonics and have all your friends take the
15	their local grocery store and spotted a tiny black-and-white photograph of a house they deemed

Figure 1. – Sample of resorted and filtered concordance lines (2018-2019).

Finally, the emerging HPEs were extensively analysed within their context of usage to identify their word classes, as well as their recurring structural patterns and underlying meanings linked to the fashion discourse community.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Overall frequencies

The original query based on the search string **-*-** retrieved 291 concordance lines with HPEs across the *Vogue* corpus. However, after the various filtering stages described in the previous section, a total of 157 HPEs remained in the output. Table 2 reports the frequency counts of HPEs across the *Vogue* corpus together with the normalized parameter based on number of occurrences per 10,000 words (pttw) to accurately account for the small differences in the number of tokens in the three corpus components.

As can be seen from *Table 2*, from 2003-2004 to 2013-2014, the use of HPEs almost doubled from 8.8 occurrences pttw to 16.2 occurrences

pttw, to then drop back somewhat to 13.1 occurrences per pttw in the period 2018-2019. On the whole, there was an overall rising trend in the use of HPEs among the *Vogue* writers.

Table 2. – Distribution of HPEs in the “Vogue” corpus.

COMPONENT	N	pttw
2003-2004	36	8.8
2013-2014	66	16.2
2018-2019	55	13.1

In an effort to interpret this trend in terms of potential shifts in topical focus, I analysed each corpus component with semantic tagger of Wmatrix (Rayson 2008) to identify and compare their key domains. The four semantic domains of *Clothes_and_personal_belongings*, *Arts_and_crafts*, *Judgement_of_appearance:_Positive*, and *Colour_and_colour_patterns* emerged as stably core across all three temporal periods, as demonstrated by their very high keyness scores when compared to the reference corpus of general American English already installed in the software. The threshold to establish keyness was set at the rigorous 99.9% level of confidence ($p < 0.001$), which corresponds to a score of 10.33 or higher. All four core domains had substantially higher keyness score ranges across the timeframe: 808.06-2182.95 (*Clothes_and_personal_belongings*), 212.56-632.69 (*Arts_and_crafts*), 79.77-204.87 (*Judgement_of_appearance:_Positive*), and 36.90-66.13 (*Colour_and_colour_patterns*). However, when the three temporal components of the *Vogue* corpus were compared with each other, an interesting difference emerged. In particular, the comparison between 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 (the period which experienced a peak in HPEs) revealed that the domain *People: Female* was significantly more frequent in 2013-2014 with a keyness score of 19.40. A closer examination of the concordance lines of the lexical items assigned to this domain revealed numerous instances of HPEs that offered rich characterizations of women, as shown in examples 1-5. It could be that an increased use of HPEs was triggered by this greater focus on women, thus emphasizing their key role in the fashion world, perhaps within a general trend towards women’s empowerment. This interpretation would be broadly in line with a study on the framing of feminism in *Vogue* by Sternadori and Hagseth (2014) that found textual references to feminism to be on the rise from 2008, which marked the

beginning of increased interest in women’s empowerment in American public discourse.

- (1) The latest prime example is Casey Legler. A 36-year-old artist and ex-Olympic swimmer with a *rock-star-confident* six-foot-two swagger. Legler recently became the first woman to be signed to Ford Models’ men’s division. (2013-2014)
- (2) Kloss dressed in her *model-off-duty* uniform of a Marc Jacobs trench, Rag & Bone jeans, and flat suede Jimmy Choo boots. (2013-2014)
- (3) Before a heady month of fashion globe-trotting, Elisabeth TNT⁴ indulges in a *spa-and-fitness* weekend to recharge and refresh. (2013-2014)
- (4) Palau spontaneously cut (and dyed deep brown) *model-of-the-moment* Edie Campbell’s hair at the request of photographer Steven Meisel. (2013-2014)
- (5) Also in the house today is Rina Ohta, an *actor-slash-singer* with a mysterious hauteur who bears a soft resemblance to Audrey Hepburn. (2013-2014)

4.2. Word classes

Each of the 157 HPEs reported in the overall frequency counts in *Table 2* was subsequently examined within its context of usage to determine its word class. As can be seen from *Table 3*, the HPEs function in the capacity of only three word classes (i.e., adjectives, nouns, and adverbs), with adjectives accounting for the vast majority of instances (roughly 90%). This result aligns with expectations at two levels. First, fashion discourse in general (Crawford Camiciottoli *et al.* 2014) and fashion journalism in particular (Borrelli 1997; König 2006; Lyng-Jorlén 2012) have a strong descriptive and evaluative thrust, which is most prototypically encoded by adjectives. Second, as noted by Biber *et al.* (1999, 533), hyphenated adjectives that “lend themselves to a compact and integrated expression of information” are common in news discourse, of which fashion reporting can be considered a specialized type. Thus, these two factors taken together provide a plausible explanation for the prominence of adjectival HPEs in the *Vogue* corpus.

⁴ The abbreviation TNT is the nickname of the German journalist and socialite Princess Elisabeth von Thurn und Taxis.

Table 3. – Distribution of word classes in the “Vogue” corpus.

WORD CLASS	2003-2004		2013-2014		2018-2019		TOTALS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Adjective	31	86.1	61	92.4	49	89.1	140	89.2
Noun	4	11.1	5	7.6	6	10.9	15	9.5
Adverb	1	2.8	–	–	–	–	2	1.3

Adjectival HPEs were almost exclusively in the attributive position, in line with Biber *et al.*'s (1999) findings. Among the many that can offer an idea of their extensive and varied usage are the following NPs found across of three corpus components: *a walnut-and-gold Seaman Schepps bracelet*, *laced-up-the-ankle ballet slippers*, *skating skirt-and-sweatshirt looks*, *a lighter-than-air formulation*, *his Hitler-by-way-of-Judy Garland star turn*, and *two of-the-moment Russian style stars*. Only two adjectival HPEs were not found in the attributive position. In one case, the HPE functioned as a predicative adjective or subject complement: *it's not black-and-white* / 2018-2019. In the other case, the HPE was a modifier in a gerund phrase acting as the subject: *Getting completely up-to-date will be impossible* / 2003-2004.

Although nominal HPEs were much less frequent, accounting for approximately 10% of the total, they nonetheless showed some interesting trends. When used to qualify people, they had positive (e.g., *man-around-town Alex Hitz*, *model-of-the-moment Edie Campbell*) and negative (*a shameless serial buyer-and-returner*) connotations, or figurative meanings, as in *her best friend and partner-in-crime Carmen Hawk*, to denote a close and affectionate relationship. In addition, nominal HPEs used to characterize people took the form of strings of nouns (e.g., *writer-director-producer*), and NPs that integrate the verbal representation of the punctuation mark / to indicate *and* or *or* (e.g., *actor-slash-singer*). These will be discussed more extensively in the next section dedicated to recurring structural patterns. Some relatively conventional expressions were also detected (e.g., *country house turned hotel-and-spa*, *your favorite this-or-that*, *out-of-towners had been flown in*, *her mum's hand-me-downs*), as well as the tongue-in-cheek expression *one too many gin-and-tonics*, corroborating König's (2006) findings in relation to the use of irony by *Vogue* writers.

Finally, there was only one adverbial HPE, specifically the adverbial form of the adjective *matter-of-fact* meaning unemotionally or noncha-

lantly: “I am obsessive-compulsive and a perfectionist’, she says matter-of-factly”.

4.3. Recurring structural patterns

Table 4 reports the results of the analysis of recurring structural patterns of HPEs.

Table 4. – Recurring structural patterns of HPEs in the “Vogue” corpus.

STRUCTURAL PATTERNS	2003-2004	2013-2014	2018-2019	EXAMPLES
	N	N	N	
-and-	8	21	17	python-and-leather, gold-and-crystal-embellished, rose-and-peony
-to-	7	6	3	head-to-toe, down-to-earth, direct-to-client
PP-the-*	–	7	4	over-the-top, off-the-runway, behind-the-scenes
*-of-	7	2	7	one-of-a-kind, out-of-the-way, coming-of-age
(*)-of-the-moment	–	4	–	of-the-moment, model-of-the-moment, hairstylist-of-the-moment,
-in-	1	2	–	partner-in-crime, frozen-in-time, stay-in-place
-on-	1	2	–	price-on-request-only, enormous-on-anyone, tan-on-brown
*- infinitive	–	2	–	easy-to-wear, well-to-do
-to-be-	–	2	–	soon-to-be, soon-to-be-launched
not*-*	1	2	–	not-yet-up-and-coming, not-so-good, not-quite-shoulder-length
-meets-	–	2	1	sporty-meets-couture, futurism-meets-classicism, Malibu-meets-Marrakech
NP-NP-NP	–	–	2	catwalk-designer-artist, writer-director-producer
-slash-	–	1	1	actor-slash-singer, field-slash-junkyard
clause-like forms	1	2	4	you’ve-got-to-be-kidding, so-limited-edition-they’re-actually-numbered, see-what-life-throws-at-you

Due to the wide range of forms with many occurring only once, to render the analysis feasible, I limited it only to those structural patterns that occurred at least twice across the three components of the *Vogue* corpus. Given the relatively low quantities involved, the results are reported in raw frequency counts only. However, it should be noted that the frequencies are largely in line with the overall quantitative results shown in *Table 2*, with a considerable rise from 2003-2004 to 2013-2014 and some levelling off in 2018-2019.

As can be seen, **-and-** was the most frequent structural pattern across all three components. Beyond widely used expressions such as *black-and-white* and *mom-and-pop*, there were also numerous novel combinations to describe fashion entities in highly nuanced ways (e.g., *puce-and-magenta, a limelight-and-spangles world, a big larks-and-diversions person*). Other relatively frequent structural patterns were **-to-**, *PP-the-**, **-of-*, and *(*)-of-the-moment*. In addition to a descriptive function, the former two sometimes reflected appreciative or critical evaluative meanings, for example, *down-to-earth person, bold new off-the-runway identity, on-the-beam training, and over-the-top beehive* (hairstyle). In the latter two, meanings emerge that are associated with exclusivity (*one-of-a-kind purse, out-of-the-way hotel, out-of-town design studio*), and youth and trendiness (e.g., *coming-of-age ceremony*), and particularly the expressions based on *of-the-moment* exemplified in the table. These results corroborate previous research that has identified values linked to modernity and exclusivity within the fashion discourse community (Heine 2010; Crawford Camiciottoli 2018).

Other less frequent structural patterns were also quite interesting and deserve further comment. The pattern *not-*-** seemed to be used to allow the fashion writers to express vaguely critical or ironic attitudes: *in a not-yet-up-and-coming neighborhood, a rather unpleasant not-so-good thing when scouting store locations, not-quite-shoulder-length bob put short hair back on the map*.

The **-meets-** pattern appears to be compact way of integrating two and often very diverse meanings to conjure elaborate and vivid mental imagery among readers: *Malibu-meets-Marrakech luxury surfwear, a genius stroke of minimal futurism-meets-classicism, lowered their prices to aim their sporty-meets-couture pieces at young girls*. Indeed, in such cases, the juxtaposition of starkly contrasting images is likely to have an appealing effect on readers⁵. The two structural patterns *NP-NP-NP* and **-slash-**

⁵ Sergio (2015, 109) observed an interesting non-hyphenated version of this structure in a code-switching episode in *Vogue Italia*: “Tra nuances tradizionali ed esplosioni

provided ways for fashion writers to highlight multiple roles and talents of people associated with the fashion world who excel at multitasking (e.g., *writer-director-producer*, *actor-slash-singer*), or who create novel work environments (*a dusty field-slash-junkyard* in Los Angeles).

Finally, although not particularly frequent, clause-like structures were present across the three components and showed an increasing trend over the years. These HPEs are especially interesting because they encapsulate the writer's individual style and expressive capacity when describing and/or evaluating objects or people within the context of fashion, as shown in examples 6-10. Such elaborate HPEs seem to be particularly useful when seeking to characterize complex abstract phenomena that encompass multifaceted attitudes and ideas, such as *thing* and *vibe* in examples 9 and 10.

- (6) To create her *so-limited-edition-they're-actually-numbered* dresses, Julie de Libran predominantly shops dead-stock fabrics. (In an article about designer Julie de Libran, 2018-2019)
- (7) But to hear him talk about using it against Andre Agassi, in one of his trademark *you've-got-to-be kidding* moments, is like hearing him nonchalantly describe the sunrise over his native Alps. (In an article about tennis champion Roger Federer, 2003-2004)
- (8) Before long, the ubiquitous cut had been named the chop, shorthand for its shaggy, *just-took-the-shears-to-my-own-ponytail* quality and a fashion phenomenon was born. (In an article about a model's hairstyle, 2013-2014)
- (9) It was a reintroduction of the hedonism of the '70s, of that sort of *louche*, highly sexualized, alcoholically lubricated, touchable, kissable, *slip-your-hand-into-the-blouse* thing that no one had seen on the runway in a long time. (In an article about fashion in the 1990s, 2018-2019)
- (10) Their bar was The Playwright, chosen less for its *booze-for-the-job-you-want* vibe than for what Waller-Bridge remembered as a relaxed door policy. (In an article about actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge, 2018-2019)

A final trend was noticed that is worth mentioning. In the 2013-2014 and 2018-2019 corpus components where HPEs were more frequent, there were some interesting instances in which more than one HPE or

di colore wild patterns meet classic shapes". The strong contrastive function is clearly maintained.

an HPE and two-word compounds were adjacent or in close proximity as shown in examples 11-14.

- (11) But the streamlined glass bottle with a sustainable wood topper that contains Haven, a new *mandarin-spiked rose-and-peony* fragrance inspired by the *bloom-filled* gardens at Aldridge's Nashville home, bears more than just her name. (2018-2019)
- (12) Ronald van der Kemp is quite expressive when it comes to the vintage fabrics that go into his *one-of-a-kind, direct-to-client* creations. (2018-2019)
- (13) I myself left London in the late 1970s, at odds with being defined by an accent or a parent, swapping the bounds of class and tradition for the *couldn't-care-less-where-you-came-from, anything-could-happen* excitement of New York. (2013-2014)
- (14) When Cate Blanchett turned up at the Rome premiere of *The Aviator*, another *Weinstein-backed* film, in a *cream-and-gold* version of the same dress, tongues began to wag. (2013-2014)

This concentration of hyphenated forms attracts the reader's attention thanks not only to the visual prominence of repeated multiple hyphens, but also the writer's skill in packing a multi-faceted message into a pleasing turn of phrase. This usage is similar to what Missud (2018) found in his analysis of phrasal compound adjectives in literary works which allowed writers to describe situations in precise and efficient but also personalized and entertaining ways. Moreover, the pragmatic function of summarizing a relatively complex notion into a compact device contributes to a greater conciseness (Bauer 2006). This can be a desirable characteristic in journalistic contexts where the need to save space may be an important issue. In fact, Bauer and Renouf (2001, 107) found evidence of what they call *phrasal structures* in a corpus of British newspapers (e.g., *dry-clean-only*), although hyphenation was not always consistent in such multi-word items. Thus, in addition to compactness, in the context of fashion journalism, the combination of hyphenated forms renders descriptions and evaluations contemporaneously particularized, meticulous, and creative.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has provided diachronic insights into the use of HPEs by *Vogue* writers as highly expressive and stylistically innovative devices for

describing and evaluating products, people, and phenomena associated with the fast-paced and value-laden world of fashion. Over the three periods taken into consideration (i.e., 2003-2004, 2013-2014, 2018-2019), there was a general rise in frequency of HPEs, with a particularly evident increase from the first to the second two-year period. Interestingly, the period from 2003 to 2014 largely coincides with the steep rise of fashion blogging (Engholm and Hansen-Hansen 2014; Bradford 2015). Previous research targeting HPEs in fashion blogs in a similar timeframe reported higher frequencies when compared to the traditional fashion press (Crawford Camiciottoli 2019). This suggests that the highly personalized style of fashion bloggers, as reflected also in their frequent use of HPEs, could be “spilling over” into the writings of professional fashion journalists. On this point, Pham (2011, 11) argues that fashion bloggers’ “impact on the fashion media complex and the larger fashion world is undeniable”. However, more research comparing fashion blogs and magazines would be needed for a clearer understanding of HPE usage. As Rocamora (2012, 103) points out, “new media borrow from and refashion old media, which in turn refashion new media to absorb some of their characteristics in their pages”.

In terms of the linguistic characteristics, the overwhelming majority of HPEs, not surprisingly, functioned as adjectives in line with the descriptive and evaluative purposes associated with fashion journalism (König 2006; Lyng-Jorlén 2012). Moreover, the inherently complex nature of HPEs allows fashion journalists to formulate richly nuanced depictions of the entities being discussed and to highlight their writing skills. The wide range of structural patterns of the HPEs also reflected detailed and striking imagery (i.e., *-and-*, *-meets-*), multiple roles (i.e., *-slash-*, NP-NP-NP), and novelty [(*)-of-the-moment, *-to-be]. Clause-like HPEs with up to seven constituents offered a particularly interesting window on the writing style of this discourse community. Additional research from a contrastive perspective could provide insights into whether HPEs remain largely confined to English fashion journalism or perhaps are migrating to other languages. For example, a preliminary exploration of a small text sample of roughly 10,000 tokens collected at the time of writing from the *Vogue Italia* website revealed only one HPE that incorporated a core English fashion term together with another English loanword: *i look di ready-to-wear*. This suggests that HPEs are infrequent in *Vogue Italia* and may primarily entail loan expressions, although a more extensive and systematic analysis would be needed to accurately identify any trends in usage.

Further research on HPEs in fashion journalism could also benefit from analyses that take into consideration cultural aspects. For example, it would be interesting to investigate hyphenated forms that may reflect the rising influence of Asian culture on the global fashion industry (Medvedev *et al.* 2010), beyond those linked to Western cultures traditionally associated with language of fashion, such as the French lingua-culture reflected in *prêt-à-porter* and *net-a-porter* (Crawford Camiciottoli 2019).

To conclude, the findings of this in-depth linguistic analysis of HPEs can be applied to develop teaching materials and methods for up-to-date journalism courses to alert aspiring writers to the expressive potential of HPEs and provide training for using them effectively on the grammatical and structural levels. These are important skills to acquire, especially in L2 contexts where the native languages of learners (e.g., Italian) are not characterized by extensive hyphenation.

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