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The transmission of multimodality and its relationship with gender
stereotypes in “If I were a boy” by Beyonce

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze how a renowned song can cover different mode strategies; textually and visually. To observe this, Beyoncé's "If I were a boy" (2008) will be studied. By relying on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the song is going to be investigated under the approach which emphasizes the critical aspects of the discourse analysis. Moreover, by means of the use of some linguistic categories as modality, deictic expressions and hypothesizing -together with- the use of key markers of the visual modality as the size of frame, perspective and social distance, we will be able to state if multimodality, "a theory which looks at the many modes that people use to communicate not just through writing but also through speaking, gesture, gaze and visual forms," (Kress 2015) contributes or not to spreading of sexist stereotypes

Keywords: mode, CDA, multimodality, sexism, gender stereotypes, music and Beyoncé.

El propósito de este trabajo es analizar cómo una canción conocida puede abarcar diferentes estrategias de modo; a nivel textual y a nivel visual. Para observar esto, la canción "If I were a boy" de Beyoncé del año 2008 va a ser el texto a estudiar. Apoyándonos en el Análisis Crítico del Discurso (ACD), la canción va a ser estudiada teniendo en cuenta este enfoque ya que enfatiza el aspecto crítico del Análisis del Discurso. Además, utilizando algunas categorías lingüísticas como la modalidad, expresiones deícticas e hipótesis, -junto con- el uso de marcadores visuales de modalidad como el tamaño de la pantalla, la perspectiva y la distancia social, seremos capaces de exponer si la multimodalidad, una teoría que analiza cómo las personas se comunican e interactúan entre sí, no solo a través de la escritura, sino también a través del habla, los gestos, la mirada y las formas visuales, (Kress 2015) contribuyen o no a la difusión de estereotipos sexistas.

Palabras clave: modo, ACD, multimodalidad, sexismo, estereotipos de género, música y Beyoncé.

Introduction

Music has a relevant role in today's society because it affects how humans think and act due to the fact that music functions as a “container of emotion.” For this reason, music can be considered a “powerful medium because it facilitates communication which goes beyond words, enables meanings to be shared and promotes the developments and maintenance of individual group, cultural and national identities.” (Francis 2008)

Because of the impact and the importance of music, in this research paper the text studied is going to be a song. Through “If I were a boy,” one of the hits of Beyoncé's album *I am...Sasha Fierce*, released in 2008, we are going to develop a detailed analysis under two different perspectives; linguistically and visually.

On the one hand, we will try to read between lines in order to reveal the ideology that the song conceals using some linguistic devices as modality or deixis; two fundamental categories to achieve persuasive goals because we must not forget that through music, apart from feelings, emotions or apparently neutral ideas, ideological messages are transmitted. Nowadays, songs can be tools as powerful as speeches are, containing ideological information. For this reason, it is common to find a great variety of groups which through music express, among different things, some kind of ideology. In order to discover these beliefs, Critical Discourse Analysis allows us to emphasize these critical aspects of the song which we consider important. Moreover, in the process of analysis, it is possible to find some other linguistic structures -hypothesizing or negating- which are probably used for some reason. In this essay, we have the aim of showing which are the linguistic categories used in “If I were a boy,” and, above all, the meanings or effects that these structures produce in society because in many cases we are unaware of them.

On the other hand, dealing with a song allows us to analyze how the lyrics have been performed and to make an analysis of the video image at a visual level because, as it is usually said, a picture is worth a thousand words and it complements the lyrics and it increases the impact and success of the song. In this part, by means of visual modality markers and taking into account, above all, the linguistic analysis, we hypothesize if by means of multimodality, the spreading of sexist beliefs and its relationship with gender stereotypes is possible.

Context

As it is known, Beyoncé Knowles or 'Queen B.', is considered a powerful woman and a kind of heroine who reflects most of her beliefs in her professional career. For these reasons, “If I were a boy” can be analyzed in different mode strategies; textually and visually, making it to be a prolific piece of material because of its persuasive goals.

She [Beyoncé] has especially shined a light on women's power: The power to perform in a male-dominated music industry; the power to acquire fame and fortune; the power to delight in one's beauty and sexuality; the power to cross over into mainstream media while championing a "girl power" anthem. Yet when women like Beyoncé proudly proclaim feminism, they tend to invite more debates than affirmation. (Hobson 2015)

Dealing with the importance of persuasive strategies and with the impact that music has in nowadays' society, the number of linguistic studies have increased in order to analyze the role and meaning of these strategies, and, its relevance is greater. The subject of Linguistics allows us a scientific study of language and, more precisely, this essay concerns an specific aspect of language, which is possible to an area called Applied Linguistics. These types of researches in which Applied Linguistics are involved about a particular aspect of language has been an issue of study in different courses of the Degree in English Studies.

"If I were a boy" is a song by Beyoncé, a Texan singer and songwriter. It is included in her third studio album *I am...Sasha Fierce*, and it was released in 2008. Through it, Beyoncé emphasizes the vulnerability of a woman and reflects on how things would be different if men and woman shared social conceptions about gender.

The song displays a woman in an unhappy relationship where the man does anything he pleases and puts no thought in his girlfriends' emotions. She expresses that if she were the man in the relationship she would be attentive, understanding, loving and overall a better man. (Capone 2012)

This idea is linked with gender stereotypes because although each one of the couple changes their role for a day, it can be seen how, in their daily life the wife has a gender job, an stereotypical way of wearing and behaviour. This idea is repeated in the same way with the husband. According to the United Nations Human Rights, gender stereotypes can be defined as:

A generalised view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by women and men. Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women and men. (United Nations Human Rights Organization 1996)

After analyzing some aspects that influences the song, it is remarkable to add the effect that "If I were a boy" has among the media. According to *Los Angeles Times*, the song "is not just another breakup song; it is an elegy for female empowerment, Beyoncé's admission that no amount of money, fame or skill can solve the basic inequity between her man's heart and her own." (Emma 2011) This newspaper portraits a positive image about the reception of the song because it means, as the author of the song tries to express, more than a simple lack of attention story because behind it, there are serious reasons for the unhappiness of the wife.

Following the idea of how the media reacted to Beyoncé's song, an important editorial goes a step further because it frames the song in a feminist landmark. The song is “a perfect example of the new kind of Girl Power”; a movement developed in the Third Wave Feminism. It consists on the idea of “reviving the public debate of power dynamics, gendered violence, social and political inequality and double standards with a different approach to pop culture. The song transmits the importance of knowing how strong women are” (Shmoop Editorial Team 2008). By means of “If I were a boy,” Beyoncé is in part trying to “keep Girl Power alive in the mainstream although it is still needed.” (Shmoop Editorial Team 2008)

In agreement with an American musical television program “If I were a boy” can be read as a potent critique of gender equality being part of American mythology because the song highlights transparent privileges that men enjoy simply because they are men. Beyoncé suggests that when women attempt to do the same things men do, they are castigated and ostracized.” (Daniels 2014)

In short, after taking into account these three different media -a newspaper, a virtual platform made up of PhDs and masters from top universities and a television program- we can state that Beyoncé's “If I were a boy” has a considerable and effective impact because, as *LA Times* raved, it is more than a love and breakup song, with feminist features because it claims for the empowerment and independence of women. Although the song tries to encourage women to let her husband go and to start thinking in one's self, it is contradictory the inclusion of gender stereotypes because it crashes with the feminist landmark. However, it is undeniable that the success of this song, apart from which it enforces, is due to the fact that it is addressed both to male and female people from different ages: above all, “female aging from around thirteen to forty years old” (Gray 2014) because women can feel sympathy for the woman who represents the role of the wife in the couple. And, by means of the use of exhibitionist techniques in Beyoncé's video “it would attract a great number of male viewers.” (Gray 2014)

Methodology

Bearing this in mind, and starting with the textual study, it is important to introduce the concept of Critical Discourse Analysis, a visual and textual approach which aim is to emphasize the critical aspect of the analysis of discourse in order to “reveal connections between language, power and ideology” (Fairclough 1989: 5) that are out of sight from people.

Regarding one of the linguistic categories influential in the analysis, we are going to introduce Halliday's notion of transitivity because it represents the real world through linguistic structures.

“It is a set of grammatical system which construes the world of experience into a manageable set of Process Types” (Halliday 1994: 106). Halliday states that “the concepts of process (verbal groups), participant (nominal group) and circumstance (adverbial groups or prepositional phrases) are semantic categories which explain in the most general way how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structure” (Halliday 1994: 109). There are indeed six different process types: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential.

Material processes indicate activities or events, which happen in the outside world of human beings (Saragih 2010: 7). Halliday states that material processes are processes of ‘doing’. These are concrete actions that have a material result/consequence (1994: 110). The second type is behavioural process, processes of physiological and psychological behaviour (Gerot & Wignell 1994: 60) and they are in a part about action without a sense of a goal and beneficiary. Mental processes refer to verbs indicating perception, cognition, affection, and desire (Saragih 2010: 7). “It enables language users to express opinion, thoughts and tastes that help to identify their definitions of reality. It involves sense, which is inside the human or conscious being. Mental process is related to psychological matters“ (Alfiana 2012: 55). According to Saragih (2010: 8) verbal processes show activities related to information which includes verbs of saying and its many synonyms. In a different view, relational processes construes being and relation among entities through identification, attribution, and possession (Saragih 2010: 8). They encode meanings about states of being, where things are stated to exist in relation to other things (Machin & Mayr 2013: 110). Finally, about the last type of processes, existential ones are processes of existence. “These represent that something exists or happens” (Yuni 2012: 57).

Likewise it is important for the textual analysis, to describe the fundamental features of time and space upon which a text is built as they are the parameters that describe the social world on which participants are located. The term which alludes it is deixis which “applies to the use of expressions in which the meaning can be traced directly to features of the act of utterance- when and where it takes place, and who is involved as speaker and as addressee.” (Huddleston & Pullum 2006: 101)

Bearing this in mind, Anderson & Keenan (1985: 259) consider as “deictic expressions those linguistic elements whose interpretation in simple sentences makes essential reference to properties of the extralinguistic context of the utterance in which they occur.” Anderson & Keenan (1985: 259) distinguish three major categories of deixis: person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis.

Person deictic are expressions which make essential reference to the speaker or the addressee of the utterance. Spatial deictics are items which specify the spatial location of an object relative to the location of the speaker or the addressee, and temporal deictics, are expressions which identify the time of an event or state relative to the time at which the utterance occurs. (Anderson & Keenan 1985: 259)

Leaving behind deixis, we move to another important concept to define, which is modality:

Modality is a category of linguistic meaning having to do with the expression of possibility and necessity. A modalized sentence locates an underlying proposition in the space of possibilities. The counterpart of modality in the temporal domain should be called "temporality", but it is more common to talk of tense and aspect, the prototypical verbal expressions of temporality. There are numerous kinds of expression that have modal meanings: (1) modal auxiliaries, (2) semi-modal Verbs, (3) adverbs, (4) nouns, (5) adjectives and (6) conditionals (Kai von Fintel 2006: 1).

Taking into account the definition, modality is a powerful tool because it expresses the speaker's personal opinion. And depending on the meaning, there are three types of modality in language; epistemic, deontic and dynamic modalities, although not all authors agree on the third type.

Following Machin and Mayr (2012: 187), epistemic modality (meaning 'knowledge) refers to the speaker's or author's judgement of the truth of any proposition. It shows the speaker's certainty about something. Deontic modality (meaning 'duty') influences people and events. It compels and instructs others. "It concerns what is possible, necessary, permissible, or obligatory, given a body of law or a set of moral principles or the like." (Kai von Fintel 2006: 2) The last type of modality -dynamic- expresses possibility and ability. "It concerns what is possible or necessary, given a particular set of circumstances." (Kai von Fintel 2006: 2)

Following the same idea, hypothesizing contributes to the idea of modality introducing alternative versions of reality as it frequently encodes the speaker's own personal viewpoint. In order to express it, and taking into account the different types of modality, we are dealing with epistemic modality because it "concerns what is possible or necessary given what is known and what the available evidence is." (Kai von Fintel 2006: 2) "Its main effect textually is to construct a potential view of the world that the reader may adopt or be influenced by." (Jeffries 2009: 154)

Moving to an under-examined area for ideological influence on readers is equating and contrasting because if we accept the view that no language is ideology-free, it is decisive to consider how the world is structured in terms of equivalence and opposition.

In terms of equivalence, it can be got by means of the use of noun phrases appositions, parallel structures, metaphors and similes. These are possible linguistic mechanisms but then, in the analysis, we will be able to analyze which of them is used in the song.

In a different view, in terms of opposition, “there are a number of possible subcategories of opposition which can be identified by relying on lexical semantics: complementaries, gradable antonymy, converses and directional or reversible opposition.” (Jeffries 2009: 56-58) But, in that case, complementaries is the single subcategory which we are going to focus our attention in the analysis.

Changing drastically to the perspective of the analysis, we are going to deal with the second part of the analysis; the visual study of Beyoncé's “If I were a boy.” It is advisable to follow an illustrative manual in order to develop the methodology of this part. For this reason, this analysis is based on Kress and Leeuwen's *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2006) where the authors try to present a descriptive framework that can be used as a tool for visual analysis with practical and critical purposes.

In agreement with Kress & Leeuwen (2006: 79-119), there are different types of conceptual representations in order to design social constructions: classificational processes, analytical processes, symbolic processes, embedding and conceptual structures in language.

Classificational processes relate participants to each other in terms of a 'kind of relation', a taxonomy: at least one set of participants will play the role of subordinates with respect to at least one other participant, the Superordinate (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 79). In a different view, analytical processes which relate participants in terms of a part-whole structure. It involves one Carrier, the whole, and any number of Possessive Attributes, the parts (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 89). Symbolic processes are about what a participant means or is. It involves two participants: the Carrier, participant whose meaning or identity is established in relation and the Symbolic Attribute, the participant which represents the meaning or identity itself (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 108). Embedding is about if images or pictures are simple or complex. This conception in visuals is determined by the relative size and conspicuousness of the elements (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 112). Finally, conceptual structures in language represent the world in terms of more or less permanent states of affairs or general truths. (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 114)

In order to develop the visual analysis and applying Kress & Leeuwen's methodology about how designing social constructions can create different types of conceptual representations and taking into account the meaning of the song and the visual representation of it, we can point out that the video image is a symbolic process because the videoclip is about “what a participant means or is.”

In addition, the number of represented participants is two (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 108). On the one hand, the *Carrier*, “the participant whose meaning or identity is established in relation”: This role is developed by the husband because his identity is established in relation to his wife because from his wife's laments and sufferings, the portrait of the husband is created. On the other hand, the *Symbolic Attribute*, “the participant which represents the meaning or identity itself” is illustrated by the wife because things are expressed by her personal point of view, under her perspective and following her principles and conventions. (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 108)

In short, regarding the methodology, a detailed explanation about the most important concepts about we are going to deal have been exposed. This section is important because it collects an introduction about relevant notions and why these concepts are important in order to apply them in the next section.

Analysis

The most extended part of the research paper is gathered in the analysis because it contains two different studies about one of the richest songs of Beyoncé, “If I were a boy”, in terms of content, form and visual representation. Both the textual and the visual analysis are communication mechanisms but expressed in different ways. The textual analysis conveys how lyrics are transmitted using linguistic categories and the visual analysis of the video image of Beyoncé' song performs the what the lyrics state but adding more details with the use of specific visual techniques.

Without cultural background and having no idea about Beyoncé's song “If I were a boy,” just analyzing the title, it expresses a hypothetical situation in which a comparison between men and women is established: the fact that the author of the song is a woman, Beyoncé, and the pronoun *I* makes reference to her, and the other person, to whom she is compared, a man. Then, if we investigate about it, the song provides multiple linguistic features; through writing and through other semiotic modes to work with and above all, under a feminist perspective.

The first part is related to the textual analysis of the song: Making reference to CDA, the approach that aims at uncovering how hidden ideologies are spread via language, we have decided to analyze some linguistic categories in order to reveal the feminist approach of Beyoncé's song.

Taking into account the explanation of Halliday's transitivity concept (1994: 106), it is important because it allows us to investigate how things are told and to discover who plays a decisive role in a particular clause and who receives the consequences of that action. After identifying the participants in a clause, it is advisable to refresh the types of processes that Halliday introduces, explained in methodology.

That is why we can state that the lyrics of the song concern, a mental process, and, more specifically, about cognition because the singer has used verbs of thinking, knowing and understanding in order to express her feelings. With these verbs, the speaker is creating her precise point of view; portraying her thoughts and opinions about reality.

- (1) I think I could understand
- (2) Because I know how it hurts
- (2) So they would think that I was sleeping alone
- (3) Because I know that she'd be faithful
- (3) Think I'd forgive you like that
- (4) If you thought I would wait for you
- (5) You thought wrong
- (6) You don't understand

Another important part of the analysis is deixis, a relevant linguistic category related to time, space and society. "It states that several of the pronouns are predominantly used deictically, with *I* and *we* referring to the speaker and a group including the speaker, *you* to the addressee(s) or a set including the addressee(s)." (Huddleston & Pullum 2006: 101)

Applying this to the analysis, first (*I*) and second (*you*) person pronouns are the ones that appear, making reference to the speech-participants because one of the levels of the context is a conversation between a couple. At the beginning of the song, the personal pronoun used is *I* because the author is expressing her attitude to the reality she is living in, emphasizing the idea of how things would have been if the speaker, a girl, would have been a boy.

Moreover, we have to consider that the song belongs to a lyrical genre and its aim is to endear the audience, and to achieve it, the personal pronoun *I* is the most proximal one in relation to the audience.

It is curious how mixing the use of the pronoun *I* together with conditional structures the effect is a hypothesis about the speaker's another possible world. However, there is a change in the use of the pronoun while the song advances. At the beginning, *I* is the transmitter and *you* functions as the addressee. However, at the middle of the song, instances of the personal pronoun *you* are found as the transmitter and the audience is supposedly the addressee.

- (1) Think I'd forgive you like that
- (2) If you thought I would wait for you

In these two examples, we can illustrate previous idea in which *I* is the personal pronoun which refers to the transmitter and functions as a hypothesis and *you* is the addressee.

With these lines, we can remark that the personal pronoun *I* disappears in order to emphasize that the one who has made things bad is represented by *you*, that is, it is the addressee: her husband. It has an effect of blaming the husband for his wrong behaviour and a portraying the wife as the “victim.”

- (1) You thought wrong
- (2) You are just a boy
- (1) Someday you wish you were a better man
- (2) You don't listen to her
- (3) You don't care how it hurts
- (4) Until you lose the one you wanted
- (5) Because you're taking her for granted
- (6) And everything you had got destroyed
- (7) But you're just a boy!

The construction of equivalence can be got through the use of noun phrases appositions, parallel structures, metaphors and similes. Dealing with the construction of equivalence and taking into account in the type of text we are working on, the song is divided into six stanzas and sentences have similar structures because the majority of them follow an SVO pattern, because of the fact that most of the verbs are transitive ones, and the chorus is constantly repeated. These mechanisms together with the repetition of the title of the song, “If I were a boy,” in almost every stanza, create a particular parallel structure which works as an equating link.

As noted by Lesley Jeffries (2009: 56-57), “complementaries are perhaps the prototypical opposite in the sense that they are mutually exclusive in logical terms, so that if you are not X, you must be Y.”

This kind of opposition presents the world in a simple way ideologically. In order to illustrate the idea of complementaries, *boy* and *girl* are two instances extracted from the text which perfectly alludes to it because one possibility is incompatible with the other: If you are not a boy, you must be a girl.

Moreover, the song roughly describes the behaviour of the husband and emphasizes how it hurts the feelings and life of the wife. For this reason, the actions of the man are presented through the use of negative evaluative words which reinforce the concept of equating and help us to describe the structure of the song:

- (1) When you lose the one you wanted
- (2) And everything you had got destroyed
- (3) Say it's just a mistake
- (4) If you thought I would wait for you, you thought wrong

Moving to a different aspect, negation is another technical tool used to help the audience discover ideological content because it allows proposing a different view of reality. It appears with the intention of provoking a reaction saying that if he would make things better, another reality could have been possible because negation allows conceptualizing hypothetical situations: “It is the pragmatic force of negation which is significant in making the reader aware of scenarios that are not taking place, but presumably might have done in other circumstances.” (Jeffries 2009: 106)

Negation is typically seen as a grammatical phenomenon in the addition of a negative particle to the verb phrase. This particle is added to the first item of the verb phrase which will be an auxiliary or if there are no auxiliaries, then it will be the auxiliary verb *do*. It can be linguistically marked by morphology, semantic, syntactic, intonation and body language signs. (Jeffries 2009: 108)

There are four instances of negation extracted from the text:

- (1) I'd kick it who I wanted
- (2) And I'd never get confronted for it

In this case, by the *Collins Dictionary* “the negation is expressed by means of an adverb which can be used instead of *not* with the simple past tenses of certain verbs.” The negative adverb tries to emphasize that under any condition the husband is going to give explanations to his wife, expressing a great degree of conviction about it. This second example will serve us to illustrate as well the idea of modality.

- (1) You don't understand
- (2) You don't listen to her
- (3) You don't care how it hurts

In these three examples, in agreement with the *Collins Dictionary* “negation is the consequence of adding the adverb *not* to the auxiliary verb *do*. It appears as an abbreviation *don't* instead of *do not* because we are dealing with an informal text.” Probably, the effect in these cases is to reproach and accentuate the wrong things that the husband does.

Regarding modality and according to Fairclough (1992, 2003):

Modality includes any unit of language that expresses the speaker's or writer's personal opinion of or commitment to what they say, such as hedging (I believe/think/suppose), modal verbs, modal adjectives and their adverbials equivalents. There is 'high' modality and 'low' modality. We use these language structures all the time when we speak and write. These indicate our judgement of probabilities and obligations, signal factuality, certainty and doubt. (Machin & Mayr 2013: 186)

By means of different components of grammar, language is able to conceal and hide levels of truth, commitment, obligation and permission: Regarding modal and lexical verbs, it is very common to find the use of verbs as *would* and *could* or a lexical verb with modal meaning as *wish* because they express the certainty about how life would be if the wife would behave in the same way as the husband does. The song itself symbolizes a whole hypothesis and that is why the use of modal verbs, adverbs and approximators are necessary. Concerning adverbs, we can find:

- (1) If I were a boy even just for a day
- (2) And I'd never get confronted for it
- (3) And make the rules as I go
- (4) You know when you act like that
- (5) I don't think you realize how it makes me look or feel
- (6) Act like what? and why are you so jealous?

Adverbs are typical examples to express modality and according to the type of adverb, its meaning is different: some express precision, other comparison or manner. Together with it, approximators (someday you wish you were a better man) add the idea of vagueness which emphasize something that could happen or not because it is not fixed. Linked to the lack of precision, *think* which besides expressing a mental process, it is a non-factive verb repeats the aforementioned sense of vagueness.

About connectors, it is remarkable the simple and concrete use of linkers because the ones used are *and*, *because* and *but*: *and* and *but* probably because they are coordinating conjunctions which, the first one is used for adding information and enumerating: (1) Drink beer with the guys (2) And chase after girls. The second connector *but* is used for contrasting ideas: (3) But you're just a boy. With this example, the singer tries to explain that all the things that she proposes are not possible because her husband is just a boy. If if she were a man, things would be different. However, *because* is a causal conjunction which gives arguments and explanations about something proposed. In addition, it helps us to connect ideas and to establish relationships between sentences. In the song, *because* appears as an extra argument explaining what things she would not do in order to avoid negative consequences for the couple: (4) Because he is taking you for granted, or (5) Because I know how it hurts are some remarkable examples.

We use *could* to say that "somebody had the general ability or permission to do something. It is also used to talk about possible actions and especially to make suggestions." (Murphy 2004: 52-54) Taking this into account, the examples (1) If I were a boy (2) I think I could understand and (3) how it feels to love a girl reflect the idea of possibility. If we reconsider the context of the song, the speaker tries to explain that if she were a boy, she would had the capacity of understanding how the other feels and try to avoid doing those things which probably hurt the other.

With this example, the speaker is suggesting these painful things for the couple: (4) I would turn off my phone, (5) I would put myself first, (6) you don't listen to her and (7) you don't care how it hurts. Closely related to *could*, "*would*, is used when we imagine a situation or an action; something that is not real. We can also use it when we talk about things that happened regularly in the past" (Murphy 2004: 72). This is probably the most common modality expression in the song, as we can see in the following examples which represent regular actions that occur in the past.

- (8) I would roll out of bed in the morning
- (9) I would kick it with who I wanted
- (10) And I would never get confronted for it
- (11) I would turn off my phone
- (12) So they would think that I was sleeping alone

However, from (13) to (16) all index unreal situations because they represent actions that men normally do not do and the speaker criticizes because by means of her song, she changes the roles to show how the husband behaves, hurting her feelings and she positions herself in the place of her husband stating that if she were a boy, she would make things better.

- (13) I swear I would be a better man
- (14) I would listen to her
- (15) Think I would forgive you like that
- (16) I would wait for you

Apart from modal auxiliary verbs, *wish* is a modal lexical verb that can be found in the song: *Someday you wish you were a better man*. According to the *Collins Dictionary*, "wish is to feel or express a desire or hope concerning the future or fortune of something." In this context, the wife expects that everything will change. By means of the song, the author tries to call the attention of her couple in order to solve the situation and to avoid the split.

Finally, it is relevant to include the what conditional sentences are and some examples taken out from the text to illustrate it:

Conditional sentences are also known as Conditionals Clauses or If-Clauses. They consist of a condition (or protasis) clause designating a hypothesis, and a consequence (or apodosis) clause designating what follows from that condition. Syntactically, the condition is the subordinate clause, and the consequence is the main clause. However, the properties of the entire sentence are primarily determined by the properties of the conditions. (Galina 2013: 7)

- (1) If I were a boy even just for a day, I'd roll out of bed in the morning
- (2) If I were a boy, I think I could understand how it feels to love a girl
- (3) If I were a boy, I would turn off my phone
- (4) If you thought I would wait for you, you thought wrong

These four cases can be classified as second-type conditionals because they are constructed following the pattern: If + Simple Past, would + infinitive. These structures are used to think about a specific estate in the future, and the result of this condition, which is presented as an unreal, but not impossible. It is used to talk about dreams or hypothetical situations due to the fact that the modal verbs *would* and *could* appear in the construction of these conditional sentences. As a final remark, we can state that the song contains linguistic modal markers, modal verbs (*could*, *would* and *wish*), conditional structures and modal adverbs which “draw hypothetical worlds and speaker’s certainties creating ambiguous scenarios.” (Jeffries 2009: 123)

The second part of the analysis deals with the visual analysis of the song. Firstly, if we take into account the contextualization of the song, it has a feminist approach and because of that, gender stereotypes are involved. For instance, in the video image, we can appreciate how the man develops the work of policeman; representing strength, authority, power and security while the woman works as secretary which involves beauty, elegance and submission to the boss because she receives orders. It is remarkable how the video image represents this inequality clothes they wear: the man wears the typical policeman uniform while, in the majority of the cases, the woman dresses with sexy clothes, normally, tight skirts and shirts and high-heeled shoes.

Departing from the notion of gender stereotypes, we present below some of the most common stereotypes that can be found in the song.

Regarding female gender stereotypes and analyzing the song -textually and visually, we can highlight some instances:

- “Women are supposed to have *clean* jobs” (Brewer 2015): The role of jobs appear as something interchangeable because the song exposes, at first, the husband's behaviour represented by Beyoncé, and then, the situation she is really living. For that reason, at the beginning of the video, Beyoncé develops her husband's job and he, his wife's job.

As the lyrics continues, readers understand what is happening. With this initial idea, Beyoncé is trying to portrait an hypothetical situation because she is developing a work that does not belong to her and acting in the way that her husband behaves. If we analyze the message of the song, although at the beginning she works as policewoman, in her “real” life Beyoncé works as secretary-, which is considered a clean job because it is out of risk and a stereotypical female job. This gender stereotype is exclusively related to the visual field because in the lyrics there are not instances of it.

- “Women are supposed to look pretty and be looked at” (Brewer 2015): In the lyrics of the song there are not examples about it. It is another visual gender stereotype because working as secretary, it is remarkable the way she dresses because she wears sexy and elegant clothes, high-heeled shoes with the intention of be looked at. Moreover, at first, when she acts as her husband, wearing the police officer uniform she shows off her cleavage.
- “Women stay at home while men go out” (Brewer 2015): In order to illustrate this gender stereotype, we need to make a textual reference. These lines leads us to believe that while the husband is out drinking beer with the guys and chasing after girls, her faithful wife is waiting for him at home.
 - (1) I'd put myself first
 - (2) And make the rules as I go
 - (3) Because I know that she'd be faithful
 - (4) Waiting for me to come home
 - (5) To come home

Regarding male gender stereotypes, we can remark these two examples:

- “From the beginning boys are taught to be tough, to be protective, and to defend themselves” (Brewer 2015): In the same case as in previous example, at the beginning the husband works as secretary but at the end, we realize that the real job of the husband is policeman. It represents the idea of authority, protection and strength, which can illustrate the idea of “superiority.”
- “Men do *dirty* jobs” (Brewer 2015): It is related to the previous stereotype because working as a policeman is considered a male or dirty job because it implies violence, street situations and in some cases blood feuds.

Secondly, it is important to count the number of participants in order to identify the role of each of them. We need to clarify what represented participants means according to Kress and Leeuwen and according to this specific context:

Instead of objects or elements, we will, from now on, the technical term 'participants,' or more precisely 'represented participants'. The term has two advantages: it points to the relational characteristics of participants in something; and it draws attention to the fact that there are two kinds of participants involved in every semiotic act, the interactive participants and the represented participants. (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 46)

Bearing this in mind, there are two represented participants, participants who are the subject of the communication, about whom or which we are producing images. They are the main characters in the videoclip: the couple. At first, the video image shows the change of role inside the couple and how the wife, for a day, illustrates what her husband normally does and the husband is positioning in the viewpoint of his wife. As the videoclip continues, the story is showing why things are in a way at the beginning and then, there is a change in which everything turns to the real situation.

The author of the song is portrayed as the victim and the husband as the one who causes his wife's sufferings although at the beginning their roles were completely different. Apart from these participants, there are other interactive ones, participants which are included in the development of the videoclip and influence the couple, which would be the workmates and friends. The appearance of this "secondary characters" is relevant because in real word, couples do not live in isolation and because it reflects in a more realistic way society is and it can affect the relationship.

Linked with the types of participants involved in the performance of the videoclip, there are three main roles: the Actor, the Goal and the Transaction. According to the functional-semiotic theory, "the Actor is the participant from which the vector emanates, the Goal is the participant at which the vector points, and the Transaction is the structure that represents the relation." (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 48)

If we apply this to the analysis of the video image, the actor would be the wife because she is the author of the song and she is the one who is complaining about the reality she is living in. If the wife is the one who starts the situation, she points the husband, the goal because he functions as the receiver of the the situation they are living. And finally, the transaction would reflect typical ups and downs in a love relationship. This idea is not seen overtly in the videoclip because there is not enough cultural background to assume it. However, we can guesss that at the beginning of their relationship things were different, probably better, and she published the song in the moment that things were worse.

Continuing with the previous idea, the video image is formed by a chain of detailed naturalistic images because it reflects a reality; an everyday situation in the life of a couple. A situation which a common people can experience in their everyday life. Participants are from real life and the story of the song is based on real facts with the sense of representing a typical situation of the life of a couple.

Taking into account that visual communication constitutes the interaction between the producer and the viewer of the image, it is important to represent the design of the viewer and to analyze two related functions of the visual communication:

Regarding the first function: demanding; "images in which participant's gaze demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enters into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her" (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 122). Offering is the second function: "images that do not contain human or quasi-human participants looking directly at the viewer are an offer because it offers the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally." (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 122) If we put it into practice, the video image is composed by offering images because they do not look directly to the audience.

Analyzing in a deeper way the internal details of the composition of the video image, the size of frame and social distance are crucial features. For example, the choice of distance can suggest different relations between represented participants and the viewers: close shots, medium shots and medium long shots. These three sizes are constantly used through the videoclip because depending on the situation, the size of the shot changes. Moreover, it depends on what the author wants to focus on: Sometimes, the emphasis is on the main character and the close shot is used to show the head and the shoulders of the subject which concentrates the whole attention in the represented participant. In other situations, the couple is speaking or arguing and the frame is bigger, a medium shot, which cuts off the subject approximately at the waist. Or, in other cases, when what is happening is more important than who appears, the frame is medium long shot in which the full figure is represented. Social distance is a decisive feature because it can determine how distance influences the way of representing how the story is going to be told: non-intimate relations, far personal distance, close social distance, close personal distance or public distance.

In the video image, we are analyzing the life of a couple, “an intimate relation under a close personal distance in which one can hold or grasp the other person.” (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 130) The use of images and this type of social distance “allows us to imaginarily come as close to public figures as if they were our friends and neighbours.” (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 132)

Bound up with the size of frame and social distance is perspective, another feature in the composition of the video image. “Perspective establishes relations between represented participants and the viewer.” “By means of the point of view, there is the possibility of expressing subjective attitudes towards represented participants.” (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 135) Beyoncé's “If I were a boy” is totally told under the point of view of the singer, who as a woman, is suffering the inappropriate behaviour of her husband. Her song works as an experiment which consists on changing the roles of the couple just for a day. With it, under a feminist perspective, she demonstrates how her husband was hurting her and how a love relationship can wallow in misery. For this reason, we can state that the videoclip is formed by subjectives images because the image does not reveal everything about the represented participants and the viewer can see what there is to see only from a particular point of view; the wife's personal viewpoint.

In the same way as modality is crucial in the textual analysis of the song, and taking into account what has been mentioned, it is as well important in the visual analysis because it designs models of reality. “Modality is the truth value or credibility of (linguistically realized) statements about the world.” That system is important for our analysis because “people communicate and accord degrees of truth and untruth to the values and beliefs of other groups.” (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 158) Hereinafter, we are going to describe some modality markers which influence Beyoncé's visual analysis.

Colour as a marker of naturalistic modality. In this case, we have black and white images. This means that the less colour is reduced, the lower modality is because images get closer to reality. This is expressed through illumination and brightness as well because there are just two degrees: black and white. However, by means of contextualization and depth highest modality is achieved. As the song goes, hearers improve their level of detailed background and they are aware about what the song is communicating. In addition, depth contributes to this idea with the use of central perspective.

As a final remark and not less important, texts encode reading paths to different degrees and we need to clarify these compositions and models of readings: According to Kress & Leeuwen (2006: 218), reading paths can be linear or non-linear. "Linear texts describe the sequence of and the connection between elements." In these compositions, viewers have no choice but to see the images in an order that has been decided from them.

"Non-linear texts in which viewers can select their own images and view them in an order of their own choosing" (Kress & Leeuwen 2006: 218) We are dealing with a linear and horizontal composition; firstly because we have no choice in the way of seeing things, and secondly, because the song expresses progression, the song explains the origin of things and it moves towards the future.

As a final remark of this section, we can state that regarding the linguistic analysis, deixis and modality help to the construction of the speaker's point of view, through equivalence and opposition the structure of the song is described and, hypothesis together with the use of conditions gives the song a sense of hypothesis which covers the whole text. In addition, the role of negation has proposed a different view of the reality. Regarding the visual analysis, modal visual markers define how the song has been performed and emphasizes some points, as gender stereotypes which at the textual analysis have been not easily recognizable. In this section, the use of colours, perspective and illumination have played an important role.

Conclusion

The analysis of Beyoncé's famous song "If I were a boy" shows how through the combination of linguistic and visual devices, apart from telling a story, the transmission of ideological beliefs has been possible. More specifically, regarding the linguistic study, each of the categories which we have included in the analysis gives an effect or adds a meaning in the appropriate comprehension of the song.

Regarding the content, by means of the transitivity system and the types of verb processes, we have analyzed how the story is told; the types of verbs used and what it can mean. As for form, a pattern of equivalence and opposition helps us to understand the structure of the song because it provides repetitions, parallel structures or antonyms which facilitate us to discover these internal relationships which create the whole composition. In a more abstract way and related to the content, negating and hypothesizing are two mechanisms used to propose and present another possible reality, one of the aims of the singer with the creation of "If I were a boy." Beyoncé with the use of negative forms is trying to provoke a reaction, saying indirectly which things should not be done instead of enumerating them overtly. The same effect is caused by the use of conditionals in which she suggests hypothetical situations with the intention of not being totally clear but making people to think about that situation, evoking controversy. Finally, deictic expressions and modality helps the author to create and to transmit speaker's point of view. They construct the uncertain situation which she, as other many people nowadays, is living and supplement it with the feminist landmark in which she sets up the song.

Regarding visual techniques, the notion of gender stereotypes is reinforced through the video image because it overtly illustrates the types of work they develop and how they wear. In the videoclip we can identify who are the main participants and what is the role assigned to each one, which is closely related to stereotyping. Moreover, the type of images, the size of frame and social relations determine the distance, together with perspective which sustains the author's point of view. All these features are connected with visual modality, which find the reliability of the message by means of these visual modality markers as illumination, depth, scale of colours and brightness.

Taking into account linguistic and visual categories, the purpose of the author is to offer another possible reality for those woman who are living a similar situation and they need encouragement to stop bearing it. Under this message, Beyoncé is appealing the necessity of equality between sexes and, above all, the cultural phenomenon of the girl power, which struggles for the empowerment and independence of women.

Thanks to the significance and the evolution of mass media, the impact of music has been bigger because the song has been known over the world. Apart from Beyoncé's voice, the quality of the lyrics, the covert feminist point of view and the staging have done "If I were a boy" to be part of the Grammy Awards 2010 winners list. Moreover, its success has been possible because mass media has supplemented the song through newspapers as *Los Angeles Times*, musical television programs as *Soul Train* or visual platforms as *Shmoop Editorial Team*. We should not forget that the song can be directed to a large audience; because both teenagers and adults can feel sympathy and be identified with the lyrics of the song.

Finally, this study shows that the song is portrayed under a feminist landmark although we have seen how the transmission of modality is related to gender stereotypes. Thanks to multimodality linguistic mechanisms and other semiotic modes are combined. Probably unconsciously but the command of linguistic techniques influences everyday issues and it is taken into advantage for commercial purposes because of its peculiar performance and its attractive exhibitionist techniques addresses a great number of male hearers.

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