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How the name of your lipstick reflects society's notion of who you are: A linguistic analysis of cosmetic colour names

Major Research Paper

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

The topic for this paper was inspired from frequent visits to cosmetic retail outlets which prompted an inquiry about colour names driven by two primary observations. The first was that the colour names displayed for the products rarely described their ascribed colour. The second was that these colour names were often abstract in nature, indexing an abstract concept rather than anything directly related to the properties of colour. This pattern varied some between brands and products, but the general observations remained the same. The question arises, if most colour names can have no descriptive qualities, then what is their intended purpose? Thus, this paper focuses on the themes and entities that colour names index, why brands choose to index these themes, how these colour naming conventions relate to the linguistic anthropologic discussions of colour terms, and how this affects the scope of linguistic landscapes.

This paper is comprised of both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of cosmetic colour names. The quantitative section analyzes a selection of cosmetics products (lipstick, lip gloss, lip balm, lip oil, eyeliner, eyeshadow, mascara, eyebrow pencils, highlighter, blush, setting powder, and nail polish) and tallies their colour names into four distinct colour categories. These categories are determined by the semantic content of the colour name, one category for colour names with basic colour terms, one for colour names whose reference has distinct colour properties, one for colours with an abstract referent, and one that is just letter and number codes with no referent or colour terms. The results of this section show that the majority of colour names index abstract themes and the products with the most abstract colour

names have the most product entries and are significantly affected by price. The products with the most entries having the highest number of abstract colour names suggests that the limitless potential of abstract colour names is required due to the volume of products that need names. Additionally, the products are only distinguished by their colour and are otherwise identical. Taking the price ranges and separating them into three price classes as representations of social class shows that the middle price class has the highest number of abstract colour names while the low-price and high-price classes have more colour names with basic colour terms. These results suggest that the middle price class products require the most indexing of abstract themes to sell these products.

The qualitative discussion section examines the specific themes that are indexed by the abstract colour names. While the range of these themes is limitless, the themes that appear most often or have the most relevance for constructing social identities are *pseudo-feminism, sexual proclivity, social deviance, ameliorative affirmation,* and *community identity*. Additionally, this section briefly discusses some of the rhetorical strategies used in colour names, focusing on puns and parallelism. These themes reflect the qualities that consumers are most keen are indexing in the construction of their own identities. Subsequently, the rhetorical strategies do not necessarily index any particular identities (though the relative nature of indexicality can never rule this out fully), however their linguistic construction is appealing to parts of the brain that involve problem solving and memory. This discussion reveals that cosmetic colour names as a collective need not describe their respective colours to an effective product. On the contrary, abstract colour names allows for indexicality with any aspect of a social the brand deems favorable for its clientele. The results are colour names that purely

reflect a marketing ideology and have no descriptive properties, a phenomenon not seen in colour language studies from a language-to-language perspective.

2.0 Background

2.1 Colour Terms

The linguistics of colour terms is a focal point of linguistic anthropology. While there is a universal color spectrum and a universal human anatomy for perceiving it, what develops in language are culture-specific categorizations and culture-specific subdivisions of the continuous color spectrum. While human anatomy in this regard is universal across all cultures, this leads to the dilemma of explaining how languages develop colour terms differently. This concept is not unique to language and colour, as there are many physical phenomena that humans parse into linguistic segments. One of the most famous examples is voice onset time (VOT), where stop articulations exist within a range of voicing times on a continuous spectrum. These voicing ranges can vary between individuals and across languages, meaning that stop sounds represent finite segments of a continuous voicing spectrum (Lisker & Abramson 1967). The significant difference between colour terms and a phenomenon like VOT is the cultural factor. VOT likely has no cultural significance or bearing on a language because nothing about VOT is indexical outside of the language itself, however colour terms do hold distinct cultural relevance. The significance culture has on colour terminology is debated, ranging from having little impact on colour term development to serving as the principal motivator for colour term development. Work on colour terms in linguistic anthropology started from a place of universality, with little emphasis placed on the cultural underpinnings of individual languages.

Colour terms have been a prominent topic of linguistic anthropology for decades. Though the evolution and distribution of colour terms in languages may seem of minimal consequence, colour terms have sparked a major debate among linguists and linguistic anthropologists. One of the most influential texts about colour terms is Berlin and Kay (1969) who argue that all languages have a finite set of basic colour terms and follow a universal pattern of basic colour term development. Berlin and Kay's work represents a cornerstone of the subject which has spawned much of the contemporary research and debate about basic colour terms. This universal model of basic colour terms has been discussed in relation to linguistic relativity and has informed research on aspects of semiotics (Sutrop 2011) and language and culture (Lotman 1992). The basis for colour terms in modern scholarship thus revolves around concepts of universality, culture, visual perception, and subcultural requirements for supplementary colour terms. This section of the paper will focus on Berlin and Kay's preliminary research but will also explore the different approaches to developing basic colour terms and the concepts that influence their development.

There is a debate as to whether perception influences our language or if language influences our perception. Perception influencing language would be represented by Berlin and Kay's (1969) study on universal colour terms, where universal categories of basic colour terms are viewed as deriving from the universal human perception of the physical colour spectrum. Each language undergoes then the same colour term development, and their differences are reflective of where they are in that development. By contrast, the notion of language influencing perception is representative of a strong, deterministic version of the theory of linguistic relativity attributed to Sapir and Whorf, where basic colour terms are language

dependent, and their colour term development is relative to other languages, as each language differs in how it subdivides the colour spectrum. There are arguments for both theories, and it seems likely that both exist in tandem (Kay 2000, p. 32). Universalists and Relativists have gone back and forth for decades, using evidence from neurophysiological studies done by De Valois that shows the disconcert between macaque colour receptors and recognized hue points, to Eleanor Ruch's 1972 study examining how the Dani of New Guinea use universal perception to influence both linguistic and non-linguistic cognitive variables that distinguish colour (Kay 2000, 33-34). The evidence from colour studies like these continue to reflect the incompatibility of the universalist approach and the relativist approach without one outright disproving the other. For the purposes of this study, I will be focusing on Berlin and Kay's Universalist approach for determining basic colour terms in English, due to the significance of their research, their primary analysis focussing on English (the language of focus in this paper) and because this study is not concerned with the development of colour terms from a universalist or relativist position.

The criteria for defining a basic colour term in a language is thus subject to debate. For this paper I used Berlin and Kay's (1969) analysis which posits that English's basic colour terms are *white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange*, and *grey* (Berlin & Kay 1969, p. 4). Berlin and Kay compile a set of requirements that distinguish these colour terms from non-basic colour terms such as *crimson*, *scarlet*, *blond*, etc. These criteria include being monolexemic, being significant to any other colour term, being applicable to any class of object, and being psychologically salient for informants (Berlin & Kay 1969, p. 6). A significant factor in this analysis is separating basic colour terms from other conventional colour terms that are

associated with distinct objects, such as *gold, silver*, and *ash*. While these colour terms have distinct physical referents, the basic colour terms outlined by Berlin and Kay have no prototypical referent but rather an array of referents. Berlin and Kay classify languages based on how many basic color terms they have and English belongs to the class that has the most basic colour terms possible, thus it should be possible to use a basic colour term to describe the colour of any object. An occurrence of using a non-basic colour term to describe the colour properties of an object must be made in service of a descriptive or stylistic choice. Recent work on modern colour semantics has elaborated further on these developments.

English demonstrates a range of options for constructing non basic colour terms. These options can be examined by reverse engineering Berlin and Kay's requirements for determining basic colour terms. These include more descriptive simplex terms like *scarlet* or *aqua*, compound terms such as *sky-blue* or *rose-red*, or phrases such as *dead leaf colour* or *the colour of a tropical sea* (Biggam 2012, p. 44). These terms become increasingly specialized in activities or occupations where colour terms are involved. This is observed in horse husbandry, where casual spectators of horse related activities are content to use basic colour terms like *brown*, *black*, and *white*, experienced horse aficionados will use terms like *chestnut*, *roan*, and *bay*, and horse experts will exude the widest range of colour terms for horses combining strategies to produce *reddish bay*, *light chestnut*, *dark roan*, ect. (Biggam 2012, p. 46-48). Additionally, the use of these latter terms will index the speaker as an expert in horse husbandry, a potentially valuable trait in the construction of one's social identity. These combinations are consistent with Ronald Casson's (1994) analysis of non basic colour terms. Casson separates non basic colour terms into two categories, 'novel' (creative) and 'conventional'. Conventional colour

terms are commonly indexed as colour terms for English speakers (*rose, lilac, gold, cream*, and *navy*) (Casson 1994, p.8) whereas novel colour terms are more stylized and often exists as a one-off description by their author (*desert dusk, Arabian night, gold coin* and *burnt sand* (Casson 1994, p. 5-6). This latter category is often employed in poetry and advertising to allow for more salient descriptions, but often do not last beyond these uses. The use of both basic and non-basic colour terms in cultural expressions informs our understanding of the semantics of colour terms.

The implementation of different levels of colour terms in each language is nothing novel in colour semantics. However, the distribution of basic colour terms across languages may not be universally structured. While Berlin & Kay's theory works well for English basic colour terms, there are disputes about whether other languages universally follow the same model (Sutrop 2011, p. 42). The source of this criticism is the over-reliance on a technical definition of basic colour terms over analysing linguistic distribution. The analysis by semiotician Juri Lotman's involves two modelling systems, visual semiotics, and culture (Lotman 1967). This latter cultural element is what is missing from universalist colour term theories like that of Berlin & Kay. Lotman highlights this necessity by conceptualizing how comprehensibility alone does not adequately describe language, as two interlocuters who are equally proficient in a communication system but are invariable between each other would have nothing to discuss (Lotman 1992, p. 13). In short, language is more then code, but the combination of code and history. By solely focusing on defining colour terms technically, it is easy to overgeneralise the distribution of colour terms as being universally structured rather then culturally relative. Thus, colour terms can be described with respect to the historical and cultural idiosyncrasies of a

language in addition to their linguistic use (Sutrop 2011, p. 42). For example, in the 19th century a cheaper method for producing dyes was discovered and German merchants brought the new dye products to Estonia with the names *roosa* "pink" and *lilla* "purple" (coming from the German *rosa* and *lila*, respectively) (Sutrop 2011, p. 45). At that time, neither of these terms were basic colour terms, but in the present, they satisfy the technological requirements to become basic colour terms in Estonian. The question is then raised, did these colour concepts not exist in Estonian prior to the introduction of new dyes, or did these borrowed terms fill an existing gap in the Estonian basic colour term system? Universalist systems like that of Berlin and Kay do not factor in such historiographies. The implementation of new colour terms and the cultural significance of both basic and non basic colour terms can thus be applied to a 21st century contemporary capitalistic society.

2.2 Language in Brand Advertising

Language in advertising goes beyond a single modality and encompasses multiple different elements. The components of an ad work to craft the most persuasive message from advertiser to a particular group of consumers. Though the text of an ad is the central focus, the discourse of advertising often incorporates notions such as *participants, function, substance, pictures, music, society, paralanguage, language, a situation, reference to other ads, other discourse*, ect. (Cook 1992, p. 3). Many aspects of a brand's image (including colour names for cosmetic products) balance these elements in discourses that may not be regarded as an overt advertisement. For example, ads come in two different flavours, hard-shell and soft-shell ads. While hard shell ads are overtly addressing the consumer with a directed message of conviction as to why the consumer should engage with the brand, soft-shell ads focus more on creating a

positive association with the consumer, with the subtext that this feeling can be achieved by engaging with the brand without directly saying so (Cook 1992, p. 7). Therefore, cosmetic colour names are akin to a soft-shell ad since the purpose of the colour name is to appeal to an aspect of the consumer that allows them to identify or form positive associations with the product without explicitly addressing the consumer to purchase the product. The layered discourse around advertising language and the imbalance of power between brand and consumer means that advertising language is unlike other typical forms of communication.

The language used in advertising is an exercise in persuasion that is divorced from the natural evolution of language. Beyond strictly goals of communication or sociological identity, modern advertising is tasked with enticing the unconscious mind of consumers in ways that relate to all levels of linguistic analysis. Sedivy & Carlson (2011) discuss at length the various methods by which advertisers use language to sell commodities. Their remarks regarding the volume of advertisements experienced by consumers and the competition for cognitive attention contextualises the evolution of advertising language (p. 59-61). A key component of this attentional arms race is the importance of branding. Branding, at its core, is the process of distinguishing products that otherwise have little or no significant differences (Cortese 1999, p. 4). Evidence shows that branding has a significant impact on the consumer's perception of a product, disconnected from the product's effectiveness or even the consumer's evaluation of the product itself (Sedivy & Carlson 2011, p. 21). This use of language is reflective of an ideology that runs deeper than just communicating information or aligning with a social demographic, rather the language contains a covert agenda that reveals an underlying ideology about

consumerism in our contemporary society. This can be extended to the rhetoric of language observed in advertising practices.

In the scope of branding language, text sources are often overlooked compared to oral sources. Texts sources in this case only include static (i.e., print advertisement, but not pop-up ads) visual information with no auditory linguistic content. One of the distinct advantages of non-digital text advertising is the absence of invasive persuasion techniques. Thus, the consumer's interaction with the advertising content is largely voluntary, there are few negative associations should the text be ignored but the benefits can be significant if the consumer engages with the rhetoric (McQuarrie & Mick 1996, p. 435). These rhetorical strategies include puns, alliterations, parallelisms, metaphor, and others. One of the most prolific of these strategies in print advertising are puns. Consumers have varying attitudes towards puns given that their use may not overtly appeal to everyone as it may be considered superficial humour. Nevertheless, puns feed on your subconscious and will inadvertently linger in your memory as double meanings light up the decision-making part of your brain while it ponders the multiple meanings (Sedivy & Carlson 2011, p. 73). Other prominent examples in print advertising are metaphors. Novel metaphors overtly violate communicative conventions by making unexpected comparisons and creating new associations, leading consumers to recognize the figurative tools and invest time in searching for the hidden meaning (McQuarrie & Mick 1996, p. 425-426). These rhetorical strategies have a subtle but significant impact on the unconscious minds of consumers, and the text medium specifically has the advantage of being non-invasive thus not inconveniencing consumers and creating negative associations. Beyond print advertising that actively persuades

consumers to purchase their products, such rhetorical strategies are present in the cosmetic colour names themselves.

Colour names go beyond referencing abstract concepts to employing rhetorical linguistic structures. Lipstick colour names specifically employ the most elaborate of naming conventions. The most common of these strategies include *Repetition, Rhyme and Rhythm, Personification, Hyperbole*, and *Metaphor* (Pratiwi 2017, p. 47-48). Any of these rhetorical strategies can be used to elevate a colour name into achieving a level of positive association between the consumer and the product, names like "…Glam Diva will attract consumer who wants appearance like a Diva. Artful Amethyst will give an effect that the user looks like wearing expensive accessories. Nude in Paradise will make the user feels like she is in heaven and uses such a luxurious product. Raisin Plum will attract consumer who wants lips color and shape as beautiful as plum and raisin" (Pratiwi 2017, p. 48). Advertising in the cosmetics industry makes use of these strategies in calculated ways.

Marketing is an integral part of the cosmetics industry. There are dozens of cosmetic brands, both independently owned or incorporated into a larger conglomerate company making competition fierce and coveting nearly every possible niche of the consumer market. This knowledge is not lost on cosmetics company's marketing executives. In the Eighties, Goldman (1987, p. 697) claimed that "…only 8 cents of the cosmetics sales dollar goes to pay for ingredients; the rest goes to packaging, promotion, and marketing". Cosmetics branding is not developed as an afterthought but calculated to maximize profits, thus every element about a brand's image (including their colour names) is meticulously planned. Consumers worldwide spent $330 billion dollars on fragrances, cosmetics, and toiletries, this figure grew to over $382

billion in 2013, a nearly 1.2% increase in 5 years (Ringrow 2016, p. 3). A key component to this sustained growth is the exercise of branding and marketing campaigns which have propelled the industry into new markets. Whether brands broadly market to the entire consumer base, market to distinct groups of consumers, or rely on the quality associated with a trusted brand name, it all gets reflected in the brand's image and label. Regardless of marketing strategy, make-up (and specifically colour names) have become intrinsically associated with the identity of the consumer.

The competition among cosmetic companies and the money invested in advertising has raised the stakes in persuading consumers. As such, cosmetic brands have molded make-up products into an expression of identity. The discourse around make-up is that a change in appearance can have a positivity impact on self confidence, affirm (or transform) one's personal identity, and will improve other aspects of the consumer's life (Benwell & Stokoe 2006, p. 176). This strategy has had the intended effect in that brands have even begun fostering emotional investment from the consumer into their products. One ad from Rimmel London proclaims

> "When I was little, I used to sit on my mom's bed, and watch her put on her lipstick. And I thought – I want to look like that one day. A bold lip for me is everything. It transforms me. It makes me feel more confident… and it makes me feel like – me. When you find your color, and it suits you, it almost becomes part of your personality. You become invincible. It's the power of the lip. Stay Matte Liquid Lip Color. Boldness that stays on. From Rimmel London" (Forjan 2018, p. 32).

Cosmetic products are not seen as products to strictly alter or enhance one's appearance but are now markers of identity. The result is that a brand's image and its colour names are tasked with indexing a significant amount of information to be competitive with other brands. If a brand is not already established or cost efficient, it is difficult to thrive without fulfilling an identity role for consumers. This role will often encompass creating the illusion of identifying with the consumer themselves.

Advertising discourse in cosmetics can be more nuanced than convincing a consumer to purchase a product, as it can also try to persuade a consumer to become unconsciously connected to other consumers. Though the addressee for any advertisement is non-specific, marketers have developed methods of persuading each consumer that they are the targeted recipient. The brand did not craft a message intended for any one specific consumer, yet each individual consumer may feel that the message is directed towards themself. These techniques reduce the distance between the advertiser and the addressee, manipulating the interpersonal relationship between the two parties (Talbot 2007, p. 48). Fairclough has termed this phenomenon as 'synthetic personalisation' as a method of manufacturing intimacy between two otherwise distant or unrelated parties (Fairclough 2001, p. 52). This relationship is prevalent in the marketing of cosmetics. Advertisers often employ the use of shared feminine solidarity by means of a 'synthetic sisterhood' (Talbot 2007, p. 48). In cosmetics advertising, the approach may even be multifaceted. The consumer may feel that the advertiser is not only targeting them specifically but implying that the product is used by a community the consumer deems desirable or aspires to join, thus implying that the consumer is included within this community (Talbot 2007, p. 49). This suggests that these impressions are reflective of

something akin to imagined communities (Anderson 1983) rather than a tangible community though which the consumer could gain pragmatic membership. Beyond sociological influences, there is evidence that cosmetic colour names have psychological effects as well, having semantic priming effects that influence a consumer's behaviour.

A significant factor to consider for this paper are the effects of semantic priming. The significance of colour name semantics is deeper than one would imagine. Essentially, simply reading the colour names might have unconscious effects on one's behaviour. A 1996 psycholinguistics study by Bargh, Chen, and Burrows showed that written word cues can elicit automatic social behaviour in participants. The researchers concluded that the results indicate a sense of a self-fulfilling prophecy, convincing themselves of the qualities they have been exposed to. This study has direct implications for branding purposes as marketing teams have used this association to their advantage, subconsciously altering a consumer's behaviour without their knowledge of the matter (Sedivy & Carlson 2011, p. 49-50). Thus, reading a colour name that elicits a positive emotion or aspirational quality will make the customer more likely to purchase that cosmetic item. Another experiment shows how arbitrary connections between visual identifiers and a product's conception do not devalue a consumer's perception of said brand or product. Labroo, Dhar & Schwarz (2007) conducted three experiments and their results show that visual identifiers and the concept of a brand need not match for consumers to make a meaningful connection. This connection may be achieved in 2 ways, either perceptual priming or semantic priming. The former requires an exact visual target for a consumer to create a positive evaluation, the latter without a visual stimulus. This study demonstrates how an arbitrary connection between visual and semantic concepts can exist and register in people's

minds. These effects of semantic priming specifically help explain why brands can get away with using abstract colour names which has an arbitrary connection to the colour itself. Though not exclusively, this semantic priming often targets themes of female identity and empowerment.

2.3 Gender and Indexicality

Before discussing gender and indexicality, it's pertinent to discuss indexicality itself. Indexicality is a central component in linking language with social identity. Expressing overt declarations of our social memberships (or disavowing other social memberships) are not our primary means of constructing a social persona, rather the bulk of our identity is comprised of smaller acts that index aspects of our identity layered on top of each other (Eckert 2008, p. 463). These smaller acts are flexible in a way that broad category membership is not and can change as individuals evolve in constructing identities. The layering of these small social acts not only reflect social meaning but produce and reproduce it through each occurrence. Indexicality thus operates as a relative constellation of identity traits that are ideologically linked, an indexical field (Eckert 2008, p. 464), a structure that itself is not fixed, but is subject to interpretation and reinterpretation as variables change. Indexicality takes multiple forms, including aesthetic choices and various linguistic elements. Multiple avenues for indexicality are significant here because it either doubles down on indexing social identities closely linked in the indexical field, or it allows for the flexibility to index something else as well. The social act of using cosmetics products is indexical of a feminine social identity (though again, this is changing with time), so brands may be efficient by having colour names that index the same identity, or they may have names that index a different identity within the indexical field thereby covering all their bases.

With any product whose marketability is connected to identity, this identity is indexed linguistically. This is evident in *wine talk,* where wine evolves from a commodity to an entire lifestyle, complete with its own genre-specific discourse (Silverstein 2006, p. 484). The options for indexicality as a wine aficionado are extensive, as consumers may demonstrate their knowledge of wine at every level of the manufacturing process, including *fruit, agricultural processes, distillation processes, geography, age, distribution, retail availability, aromatics, flavour notes*, and many others. Thus, one can not only demonstrate their knowledge by identifying and commenting on any of these variables, indexing their intimate relationship with the product, but can fine tune their social identity by indexing one or more of these variables as specifically meaningful ("I commend any wine from the Loire Valley region of France"). Advertisements for wine subsequently evocate how wine is a lifestyle choice, and commitment to the lifestyle, or authentic membership with the social identity, is indexed by the purchase of wine accessories and the same investment into wine as other hobby foci (Silverstein 2006, p. 492-493). The potent combination of *wine talk*, intimate knowledge of wine, demonstration of wine as the nucleus of one's social identity, monetary commitment to wine, and comparative discussion with other wine aficionados serve to index wine as an identity marker in a way that is psychologically validating to the individual. Similarly, indexicality as a means of identity construction in relation to a commodified variable that is already indexical of gender creates a perfect storm of gender performativity. Colours already have indexical relationships with gender, for example in North American society, blue is indexical of masculinity and pink is indexical of femininity. This relationship is most salient in products related to infants or young

children and can been seen in baby clothes and many toys. However, gendered indexicality is prevalent in products past these life stages as well.

Not all cosmetic colours specifically index gender themes, however, the industry is still heavily focused on female and feminine identity and markets many of their products accordingly. It is estimated that women are responsible for roughly 85% of worldwide cosmetics purchases (Ringrow 2016, p. 3). Thus, colour names can be a vehicle for gender performativity because they exist within an act of feminine gender performance. Judith Butler's notion of the metaphysical substance of gender outlines how gender is performative, something an individual does and only exists within that act of doing (Butler 1990, p. 34). By this account, one's gender identity is subject to the choices made by the individual, whether conscious or unconscious. Since cosmetic companies still market primarily to individuals who identify as female or feminine, and the practice of wearing makeup indexes this gender identity, colour names provide a key element to the performative process. The link between engaging in cosmetic practices and indexing femininity is invariably constructed in the eyes of both consumers and advertisers, thus the company gains more mileage by creating colour names that index other aspects of female identity. It is difficult to index anything out of *red, blue, green*, etc., whereas colour names such as *high heels, girl crush*, and *goddess* benefit from doubling down on indexing female gender indexicality, by referencing ameliorative (for some) female ideals on a product that enables gender performativity. This diversification in colour name choice is reflective of choice feminism (the phenomenon wherein freedom of choice is the mark of female liberation, Hirshman 2006), as discussed below.

The onslaught of different and evermore diverging colour names may have philosophically feminist motivations at least as feminism is understood by so-called 'choice feminists.' It is no secret that the power of choice embodies consumerist philosophies. And, in reference to products marketed towards women, colour names may be reflective of choice feminism (Hirshman 2006). The defining element of choice feminism is that the option of choice is both inherently powerful and inherently feminist (Hirshman 2006, Zeisler 2008). This is consistent with the belief that the power to choose must be indicative of self-empowerment. Therefore, the choice of female beauty expression and beautification is evidence of an emancipated female character (Ringrow 2016, p. 22). The principle of choice feminism can be seen in the way advertisers market cosmetic colour names. The first is that advertisers provide an array of interesting and enticing colour names, thereby marketing the colour names to reflect positive feminine ideals. The second is that basic colour terms do not exemplify the principles of choice feminism, as the selection of "choice" is too superficial.

Though not every cosmetics brand indexes themes of sexuality, its pervasiveness in relation to the other themes is worth mentioning. In accordance with choice feminism and female empowerment, the sexual themes of colour names deal largely with female sexual freedom. While this practice is not unique to cosmetics, the notion of sexual desire or portrayal is a long-running motif in advertising. Advertisers have long since capitalized on consumers' draw to sexual arousal, though it traditionally targeted men (Cortese 1999, p. 26-27). However, cosmetic companies have followed the discourse that embracing sexual empowerment is not exclusive to masculine characters. Lipstick specifically has been used as a marketing icon of sexual suggestion thanks to its phallic shape and oral application. Advertisements have often

utilized cosmetic products to commodify sexual liberation for women. Additionally, consumers will unconsciously be drawn to and remember brands that prompt subliminal stimulation (Cortese 1999, p. 27-28). Combined with the unconscious semantic priming data mentioned prior, it is no surprise that colour names with sexually suggestive iterations or unhindered declarations would be impressionable on consumers. Every ideological representation in cosmetic colour names contributes to shaping our linguistic landscapes and contributes to semiotic relationships.

2.4 Semiotics and Linguistic Landscapes

The display of cosmetic colour names in brick-and-mortar retail stores contributes to our contemporary linguistic landscapes. In each space, the language visually modeled around us does not exist in vacuum isolates disconnected from each other. Rather, the concept of linguistic landscapes is a representational way of seeing the external world that reflects a visual ideology (Cosgrove 1984, p. 46-47). Thus, a linguistic landscape is more then the sum of its parts as each individual piece of the landscape comes together to inform consumers about that society's values and beliefs. While much of the focus in linguistic landscape studies is on how these landscapes inform our art and literature, the ideological motivations reflect the values and current circumstances of our society. Aspects pertaining to gender relations, class differences, aesthetical judgments and other phenomena are not only present in linguistic landscapes but reinforced by their cyclical reproduction (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010, p. 3). Most landscapes exhibit a nuanced representation of that world crafted by the people who live in it. Thus, there exists a relationship between the pseudo-organic existence of the landscape and the social constructions behind its existence, both shaping the people within the landscape and

existing as a product of said people's motivations (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010, p. 6). However, advertising poses its own unique circumstances as there is a disconnect between the creators of the landscape and the actors within it. The reflection of cultural values is present; however, its purpose can be debated whether it is there as a reflection of progressive values or to persuade consumers.

The relationship between colour names, the colours themselves, the social meaning associated with colours, and the ideology behind these name choices forms the pathway for semiotic connections. Semiotics is the interplay between language, culture, ideology, and visual discourse within a spatial practice (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010, p. 1). This methodology is ideal for the analysis of this paper since cosmetic colour names are a text/discourse, their construction is rooted in ideology and reflects contemporary social norms regarding aspects of gender, capitalistic practices, and other processes. The indexical meaning of colours contributes to this semiosis, such as red used in advertising for exuberance, black and white for a traditional or 'classic' vibe, and blues, greens, and yellows to symbolize elements of nature (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010, p. 207). Additionally, the colour names are displayed in a physical space constituting a niche linguistic landscape targeted to a specific imagined community of consumers. This space differs from the online space, not only in its physical construction, but also in that cosmetic colours online offer a physical description of that colour itself (e.g. Color: Proud To Be Canadian - true red), which also points to the indexical meaning of colors, independent of the terms used to describe them. This latter description of the colour is notably absent in physical retail spaces. Just as semiosis has been used in marketing to target

individuals from linguistic minorities (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010, p. 93), so too can the semantics of colour names target consumers of cosmetics and cosmetic culture.

3.0 Methodology

I analyzed 165 cosmetic brands looking at 13 different types of cosmetic products. These products include lipstick, lip gloss (lacquer, crème, colour, plump), lip balm, lip oil, eyeliner, eyeshadow, mascara, eyebrow pencils, highlighter, blush, setting powder, and nail polish. There are two major cosmetic types that are not included in this analysis. The first is foundation and this is due to the volume of products and colour names as well as the lack of distinction between foundation and concealer naming practices. The data collected from concealer colour names is largely representative of foundation, due to the function of both products. The second is eyeshadow palettes. The eyeshadow colour names included in this analysis are from single compact eyeshadows and not from palettes. This is because determining price brackets for eyeshadow palettes is difficult due to the size and number of colours included in the palette. The price of the product is not accurately indicative of the brand's target class demographic but may just be due to the size of the palette. Any other cosmetic products not included in the analysis are either due to a small quantity of data for the product or because it is already represented by another product. Colour names that appeared multiple times in multiple products were counted multiple times since this reflects the linguistic landscape. However products that are multipurpose (i.e. blush + highlighter) were categorized under the first product type listed in the title. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of color terms in the cosmetics industry and the way that the indexical meanings evoked by them relate to gender and social class (using product price as a proxy for economic differentiation in society).

The products analysed were ones that can be commonly found in retail spaces in the Canadian market. The products were collected from three different online retail sources: *Sephora, Credo Beauty*, and *Shoppers Drug Mart*. These three retail settings provide the largest representation of cosmetic products in Canada across all major price points. While these three retail settings are not strictly divided into low end, mid range, and high-end establishments, this range is representative across each of these settings, with Sephora containing products of every price point, Credo Beauty primarily carrying mid range and luxury brands, and Shoppers Drug Mart primarily carrying cost effective and mid range brands. By separating the products by price, it will illustrate the linguistic differences in colour names between products marketed to consumers of different social classes. The stratification of low-price, medium price, and high price are inspired by Labov's 1960s New York City department store study, where social classes were represented by a low-end store, a medium end store, and a high-end store. The retail source of the brand is not included in the analysis since many of the brands analyzed are present in multiple of the three retail settings. Only products that are available in multiple colours were eligible for analysis, so if a product of a cosmetic type was only available in one colour and thus only has one colour name, it was not included in this analysis. Limited edition product lines were included in the analysis as they still contribute to the linguistic landscape. While the data is representative of colour names found in physical retail settings, data collection occurred online for the sake of efficiency.

I surveyed each of these websites and looked up their products through their brands alphabetically. Any brand that has a product or multiple products that come in multiple colours was eligible for analysis. The products were compiled into a spreadsheet that contained the

brand name, product name, price of the product, and the colour names. Only the standard size of products was included. No mini, travel, or jumbo sizes were included since they have the same colour names as the standard size; however due to the size difference the price point changes. All information extracted from the website was implemented into the matrix verbatim, with nothing abbreviated or condensed. Each product was recorded with its full retail price, no sale or clearance prices, in Canadian Dollars. Any product that has multiple cosmetic types within a single product (i.e. a dual ended pencil) was still considered a single product for the purposes of this analysis. The data collected from the websites compiled into the matrix was then utilized in tables where their division of price classes could be determined.

Each cosmetic product type was extracted from the spreadsheet and organized into their corresponding product type tables. The tables had three different classes for product price based on the prices of the products in the table. The price classes were determined by taking the lowest price point and the highest price point (removing any significant outliers) and dividing the difference between them by either three to create three distinct price classes or divided by four with the middle price class consisted of the middle half of the difference. The lower price class consisted of the lower quarter and the higher price class consisted of the higher quarter. Dividing the price range into three or four was dependent on the data distribution and was decided based on how representative it was of the data. The distribution of data was not always identical across each price class because some products are overrepresented or underrepresented in certain price classes then in others. The brand name of the products was not included in the table so each product that fits into a price class is

indiscriminately mixed with the other products of its class. The other component to the product tables was the colour category to which each colour name belongs.

The colour names were tallied into four distinct categories, based on their semantic content. The first two categories are reflective of Berlin and Kay's 1969 analysis, where the first category include colour names with basic colour terms, and the second category use colour terms that were primarily objects before they were used to describe colour or have a prototypical referent rather than being monolexemic (one of Berlin and Kay's criterion principles for qualifying basic colour terms). The last two categories are not reflective of Berlin and Kay's work but rather describe the naming conventions found in cosmetic colour names specifically. The first category (Category I) includes any colour names with a basic colour term. The terms include *white, black, red, green, yellow, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange*, and *grey*. A colour name is included in this category if it contains any of these terms, regardless of supplementary linguistic content (i.e., *Russian Red, Bombshell Pink, Brave Blue*, ect.). Common compound nouns that contain a basic colour term (i.e., *Blueberry, Black Cherry*, ect.) were not included in this category since they are not referencing the colour but a distinct referent that has that colour term in its name. Colour names that form more complex linguistic structures (i.e., *Against the Grey-in, I Pink I Love You*, ect.) were included in this category since these constructions are not common in English vernacular and distinctly reference the colour of the product. There were categories of colour names that had to be included in this category based on their distribution and multilingual nature.

An addition to Category I are colour names that reference physical properties of light and tone. These colour names included *light, medium, neutral, deep, dark, rich, and*

translucent. These terms do not reference specific entities, and their abstract qualities are not ideological or concurrent with anything other than a descriptive property of light. Therefore, these colour names were included under basic colour terms, considering their distribution within the cosmetics industry functions the same as the distribution of basic colour terms. However, unlike basic colour terms, their colour name was only counted as Category I if one of these terms was the only semantic content of the name; supplementary content outside of these terms would change the category membership. Where *Russian Red, Bombshell Pink,* and *Brave Blue* still count as Category I, the light and tone terms only count as Category I if the name is *light, medium, neutral, deep, dark, rich*, or *translucent,* or a combination of these terms. For example, *light, medium, dark, light medium, medium dark*, would all count as Category I colour names, however *light golden* or *dark amber* would not count as Category I colour names. The majority of these names, especially in products dealing with skin tone and hair colour, necessitated them belonging with basic colour terms. The other category were basic colour terms that were not in English.

Many of the colour names analyzed were not of English origin. This extends to basic colour terms as well, with French being strongly represented. While basic colour terms are different in different languages, this paper will not analyze the basic colour term properties of other languages, since the products analyzed were marketed primarily to an English-speaking audience. With French the only source of non-English basic colour terms, there were four colour names that occurred: *rouge, brun, noir*, and *rose*. The majority of English speakers in Canada will recognize these terms as the French equivalent of the English basic colour terms, thus they were considered basic colour terms for the purposes of this study. Special

consideration is paid to *rose* as it could index either the French word for pink or the flower; which would change its category membership. To account for this, the other colours in that product's line were analyzed: if their colour names were in English then *rose* was coded with the flower, if they were primarily French then *rose* was coded with the French colour term. This significant difference is reflected in the second colour category.

The second category (Category II) includes any colour name which references a physical identity that has specific colour properties. These colour names contain no basic colour terms unless they are part of certain compounds (i.e., *Blueberry, Black Cherry*, ect.). This category also includes many colour names whose physical referent is either etymologically obscure (i.e., *Beige*, *Mauve*, ect.) or colour names that do not have a physical referent but are invariably linked to a specific colour (i.e., *Scarlet*, *Magenta*, ect.). The object of this category is to collect colour terms that lack basic colour terms but still reference a prototypical colour in consumer's minds upon reading it. Like Category I, this category includes any colour term that fits these requirements regardless of supplementary information (i.e., *Golden Shimmer, Margaret Ruby*, ect.). The referent must index a specific colour to be in Category II, which excludes colour names that reference a physical entity with no prototypical colour (e.g., any colour name that is an individual's name) or is a class of referents whose colours can vary (e.g., *Candy, Petal*, ect.). Any of these colour names would subsequently belong to Category III.

The third category (Category III) includes any colour name whose reference is an abstract concept or has no prototypical colour quality. The purpose of this category is to analyze each colour term where the colour of the product would be unclear to the average consumer. Colour names that require a priori knowledge on the part of the consumer (colour

names that would only make sense to individuals who are familiar with cosmetic products, otherwise the perceptual connection between colour name and colour would be unclear) also belong to this category (i.e., *Universal, Original, Natural*, ect.). Category III colour names are significant because they index other themes that are likely meaningful to some consumer. These could represent aspects of advertisers' understanding of feminism (*Feminist, Queen, Goddess*), sexual proclivity (*Orgasm, Dominatrix, Nympho*), social deviance (*Damned, Rebel, Dangerous*), ameliorative affirmation (*Beloved, Visionary, Icon*), community identity (*City Girl, Pure Hollywood, So 90s*), and infinitely more. Finally, the fourth category (Category IV) includes any colour names that are just letter and number codes. These can include just numbers (e.g., 1, 01, 2, 02, ect.), just letters (i.e., W, N, C, ect.) or a combination of both. These colour names have virtually no linguistic content as they serve more as organisational code. Products that deal with skin tones often use W, N, and C followed by a number to represent Warm, Neutral, and Cool, or L, M, D followed by a number to represent Light, Medium, and Dark, respectively. However, without the explicit labels, they still belong to Category IV as it again requires a priori knowledge on the part of the consumer. Additionally, if the brand specifically labels their products with this convention, the analysis should reflect that.

Category I Examples	Category II Examples	Category III Examples	Category IV Examples
Black, Noir Doux, White, 2 Satin Blanc, Relentlessly Red, Rouge Isolent, Green Goddess, Pale Yellow, Jaune, Waterloo Blue, Train Bleu, Brown, Brun Impres, Purple Prism, Pink Dynasty, 14 Rose	Black Cherry, Rose Celestial, Eadie Scarlet, Sublime Magenta, 112 Chic Brick, 208 Fierce Flamingo, Dolce Latte – 520, Beige, 560 Saucy Mauve, Ballerina Shoes	Kristen, CANDY ADDICT, Moonlight, Dragon Girl, Aphrodisiac, Gladiator, Rebel, Trust, Brave, Hollywood Calling, 1990, Universal, Original, Natural	L045, C12, 4, 0CR

Boisé, Pop Orange, Magnetite Grey, Gris, Light, Medium, Dark, Light Medium, Medium Dark, Dark			

Table 1: Examples of colour names in each colour category

The data for each product was divided into three price classes and four colour categories. Once the price categories were determined based on the cosmetic type, each product was sorted into the appropriate price class and the colour names were tallied into the four colour categories. In section 4 below, each table displays the total number of colour names within each color category and the percentage of that category's representation within each price class. The colour names were tallied by hand as opposed to an automated calculation program due to the specific requirements of each category.

4.0 Results

Table 2 shows the total number of colour names analyzed, the number of colour names in each colour category, and the percentage of colour names in each colour category compared to the total.

Colour Names (Total)	I (Basic Colour Terms)	II (Specific Colour Referent)	III (Abstract Referent)	IV (Letter and Number Codes)
6,672	1,125 (16.9%)	2,400 (36%)	2,945 (44.1%)	202 (3%)

Table 2: Overview of Results

There was a total of 6,672 colour names analyzed for all products combined. The majority of tokens fall into Category III with 44.1%, then Category II with 36%, then Category I with 16.9%, and finally, Category IV has the lowest number of colour names with 3%. Category III being the most represented may initially seem surprising, as categories III and IV are the least descriptive of colour properties. Furthermore, Category I is significantly underrepresented in the data,

indicating that basic colour terms are of little importance in the schema of cosmetic colour names. These results signify that cosmetic colour names serve less of a descriptive function and therefore their primary purpose lies elsewhere. Part of this purpose is reflected in the distribution of category III colour names across different product types, as shown in table 3.

Product Type	Total	Category I	Category II	Category III	Category IV
Lipstick	2,333	197 (8.4%)	618 (26.5%)	1,427 (61.2%)	91 (3.9%)
Blush	297	16 (5.4%)	111 (37.4%)	170 (57.2%)	0 (0%)
Lip Gloss, Plump, Crème	905	59 (6.5%)	329 (36.4%)	497 (54.9%)	20 (2.2%)
Highlighter	318	15 (4.7%)	119 (37.4%)	163 (51.3%)	21 (6.6%)
Nail Polish, Colour, Lacquer	623	80 (12.8%)	283 (45.4%)	260 (41.7%)	0 (0%)
Lip Balm	359	25 (7.0%)	204 (56.8%)	130 (36.2%)	0 (0%)
Eyeshadow	472	48 (10.2%)	241 (51.1%)	160 (34.0%)	23 (4.9%)
Lip Oil	108	10 (9.3%)	69 (63.9%)	29 (26.9%)	0 (0%)
Eyeliner	557	242 (43.4%)	224 (40.2%)	91 (16.3%)	0 (0%)
Setting Powder	170	58 (34.1%)	81 (47.6%)	12 (7.1%)	19 (11.2%)
Mascara	235	217 (92.3%)	12 (5.1%)	6 (2.6%)	0 (0%)
Eyebrow Pencil	295	158 (53.6%)	109 (36.9%)	0 (0%)	28 (9.5%)
Total	6,672	1,125 (16.9%)	2,400 (36%)	2,945 (44.1%)	202 (3%)

Table 3: Overview of colour terms per product category

Table 3 shows the data for each product, giving both the total number of colour names and the distribution by category for each product. The table has been sorted by frequency of Category III in descending order. Based on this, the product types can be generally divided into three groups. The first group includes products where Category III colour names constitute the highest percentage of colour names (lipstick, blush, lip gloss, and highlighter). The second group includes products where Category III colour names constitute the second highest percentage of colour names (nail polish, lip balm, eyeshadow, and lip oil). The third group includes products

where Category III constitutes the lowest percentage of colour names (eyeliner, setting powder, mascara, and eyebrow pencil). Each group contains products that either serve a similar function, have a similar colour range, or follow a similar colour naming convention. For example, the groups that have primarily Categories III and II have significantly wider colour ranges compared to products that have primarily Category I, which are often limited to three or four colour options. While the other colour categories inform patterns in the data, the primary focus of this analysis will be on the Category III numbers.

Products that have a majority of Category III colour names have the highest quantity of colour names compared to a majority of Category I names or Category II names. This is in no small part to lipstick, which has the highest number of colour names of any product by a significant margin, and the highest percentage of colour names belonging to Category III at 61.2%. Nevertheless, if lipstick were removed from the analysis, the total number of colour names would be 1,520 which is comparable to the totals of the other subsections. Nevertheless, the product types with the most entries follow a pattern of having increasingly more Category III colour names. The reason behind this is likely that the sheer volume of products requires more colour names. Category I and Category II are limited in their variation, an issue Category III names do not face, and thus Category III colour names are required to simply differentiate the colours. The products, lipstick, blush, lip gloss, and highlighter, have two major shared features. The first is the area of application, being the lips and primarily cheek area. The second is range of colours, as all four products come in the widest range of colour options possible on the cosmetics market. However, there is a proliferation of red and pink products, colours that are commonly desired for the lips and cheeks. Because of this, red

and pink colour names are the most likely to run out of Category I and Category II names leading to a proliferation of Category III names. One significant aspect about Category III colour names is that the references available to index are theoretically limitless, where the other three colour categories are much more limited in what their names can index. Therefore, it is important to understand what is being indexed with these colour names and how it corresponds to different price categories.

Price Class*	Colour Name	I	II	III	IV
Low	1,269	114 (9.0%)	513 (40.4%)	621 (48.9%)	21 (1.6%)
Middle	2,028	100 (4.9%)	463 (22.8%)	1,354 (66.8%)	111 (5.5%)
High	556	73 (13.1%)	201 (36.1%)	282 (50.7%)	0 (0%)
Total	3,853	287	1,177	2,257	132

Table 4: Majority Category III colour names analyzed by price point.

*The price classes were determined by the price range of each product individually. These products have different price ranges and so this table is an amalgamation of different price ranges. These price ranges are all measured in CAD. The price range for lipstick was <16.75 for the low-price class, 16.75-50 for the middle price class, and >50 for the high-price class. The price range for blush was <24 for the low-price class, 24-44 for the middle price class, and >44 for the high price class. The price range for lip gloss was <19.33 for the low-price class, 19.33-34.67 for the middle price class, and >34.67 for the high price class. Finally, the price range for highlighter was <26 for the low-price class, 26-46 for the middle price class, and >46 for the high-price class.

The analysis with price classes illustrates the general distribution of category colour names across each price class. The percentage in each table denotes the percentage of that colour category within its price class. Category III represents the highest proportion of colour names in each price class, with the middle price class having the highest proportion of Category III colour names. Subsequently, the middle price class has the smallest proportion of both Category I and Category II colour names. This pattern results in the low-price class and the high-price class having a closer distribution of colour category names across all four colour

categories, while the middle price class is the most divergent. These relationships change when Category III is not the dominant category for a group of products.

Products that have a majority Category II colour names have the second highest number of colour names, but a significant reduction compared to products with a majority Category III. The number of products in each product type is on average less compared to the products that are primarily Category III, reinforcing the observation that products with more entries proliferate with Category III to differentiate themselves. The product location use includes nails, lips, and eyes, while the colour range of each product is as encompassing as the products from majority Category III. One significant observation is that while Category II colour names constitute 51% of the total, Category III colour names constitute 37.1% of the total, the highest proportion of second highest colour name category. This signifies that Category III colour names are still a significant portion of the data. The product where this observation is most relevant is nail polish, which has the highest number of colour names in majority Category II where the difference between Category II and Category III is only 3.7%. Another observation to note is the data for lip oil, which is significant for two reasons. The first is that lip oil has the lowest number of colour names of any product at only 108. The second is that lip oil is the most recently developed product of those analyzed, not becoming widely used on the cosmetics market until the 1990s (Lam-Phaure 2022). Due to the novelty of this product, lip oil may not have ingrained the colour naming conventions of products like lipstick or lip gloss. While there is great overlap in product properties between majority Category II and Category III products, the same cannot be said for majority Category I.

Products that have a majority Category I colour names have the least amount of total colour names. Though the total is comparable to products that are majority Category II, the products that are majority Category I have significant differences from the other products. The location of use encompasses eyes, face, eyebrows, and eyelashes. The significant difference comes from two factors, the colour range, and the purpose of the product. The colour range for eyeliner and mascara is significantly smaller than the products from previous subsections. Most colour names for these products are just *black* or *blue*, often without supplementary semantic information. Additionally, colour options for these products outside of *black, blue*, and *brown* are rare. Setting powder and eyebrow pencil provide a unique circumstance since these products require colour matching to the consumer's colour features. Brands will be deterred from using abstract colour names for skin or hair products for two reasons. The first is that making abstract connections between a person's features and an ideological concept may result in inadvertent commentary about race or ethnicity. The second is that these products require descriptive colour names so that consumers are informed about the colour properties of the product and thus can accurately select the right product for their skin or hair colour. The result is that products which are majority Category I have property restrictions that products from the other subsections do not have. Thus these products are restricted in their colour naming practices.

The products analyzed in this paper can be divided into three sections based on proportion of colour category. The first section of majority Category III encompasses the most products and thus can be seen as the default for colour naming conventions. Breaking down these products into price classes reveals that the middle price class has significantly more

Category III colour names and significantly fewer in Category I and II compared to the low-price and high-price classes. These results verify the theoretical implications that middle class products benefit more from having ideological colour names from a marketing perspective since they do not have the cost benefit of the low-price class nor the luxury brand recognition of the high-price class. As with the product types that have more products within them, the middle price class having significantly more colour names entries will lead to the proliferation of Category III colour names simply to differentiate their colour names from within their product line and to differentiate themselves from competing brands. For those product types with a majority of terms falling into Category II, it is noteworthy that Category III is the second most frequent category[1].Finally, the group of product types with a majority of colour terms from Category I has a distribution that can be explained by the properties of the products, specifically the limited colour range and the necessity to describe colour names precisely for colour matching purposes. These results have focused on which products have the most Category III colour names. The discussion section will examine what themes these Category III colour names are indexing.

5.0 Discussion

This section will analyze the indexicality of Category III colour terms. There are a number of themes that can be identified in abstract colour names including pseudo-feminism, the names of individuals, geographic locations, temporal phenomena, classes of food, sexual proclivity, ameliorative affirmation, cosmos, social deviance, and themes pertaining to a specific

[1] The volume of Category II is partially due to a minimal difference between Category II and Category III in this section and the novelty of the product lip oil.

social identity/ movement. In addition to the semantic content, there are several linguistic strategies present in colour names. These include metaphors, alliterations, parallelisms, and puns. Colour names then serve as a vehicle for unconscious marketing persuasion that do not suffer from the overt messaging of overt advertisements. This function explains why colour names are often abstract and why basic colour terms represent a minority of the data. Even colour names with basic colour terms present are rarely just the basic colour term with no extemporary information for most products. Thus, colour names are often not concurrent with the colour itself but exist to serve an alternative function. The themes and rhetorical strategies mentioned above accomplish these goals in distinct ways or by targeting certain groups.

5.1 Themes of Feminism

One of the most influential themes present in Category III colour names are pseudo-feminist sentiments. The term pseudo-feminist is used here because these colour names do not strictly index feminist movements or philosophies, but rather a general alignment with how advertisers understand broad feminist themes. These names generally fall into three subthemes. The first are names that index feminine personae with positive attributes, *Feminist*, *Queen, HBIC, Chic Phreak, Goddess, Babe Power, UN-Nude – Amazonian, Hustle In Heels, Ladies Night, Girls Trip, Zine Queen, Ecofeminist, Working Girl, Dragon Girl, Go Girl, Riot Girl, Not Your Baby, Girl Crush, Strong As Helle, Girl To Know, Girl Gang, Literal Queen, Lady Bold, Comeback Queen, Size Queen* and *Warrior Princess*. The second are names that take common colloquial phrases from English but give them a feminine themed twist, *Shedefined, The Female Gaze, Womankind, Madam President, Womanism, Girls Will Be Boys, Hype Woman, Three Wise Girls, One-Woman Show,* and *Walk of No Shame*. The third are colour names that use traditionally

derogatory terms that have be reclaimed in some feminist communities, *Bitch Perfect* and *Hoe Is Life.* Nearly all the pseudo-feminist colour names are found in the middle price class, except for *Babe Power, UN-Nude Amazonian, Hustle in Heels, Warrior Princess*, and one instance of *Goddess*, which are found in the low-price class. There are no colour names in the high-price class with overt pseudo-feminist themes. These findings correspond with the pattern of the middle price class having the most Category III colour names, holding a veritable monopoly on themes of pseudo-feminism. Regardless of which subtheme or product the colour name falls into, each of these names are reflective of commodified feminism (Ringrow 2016.p. 40, Windels, Champlin, Shelton, Sterbenk, & Poteet 2019). Advertisers are associating pseudo-feminist values with their products that are nearly exclusively marketed to a female identifying audience. There are many other colour names that are included in the same product line as many of the names mentioned above, however these names do not specifically index feminism and thus can only be analyzed as such in the context of other pseudo-feminist colour names. A theme with great overlap with pseudo-feminist sentiments are colour names that promote the freedom of expressing sexual acts and desires.

5.2 Sexual Proclivity

A theme loosely connected to contemporary feminism is the notion of embracing sexual expression. This theme can be seen in many colour names, not limited to *Orgasm, Orgasm X, Peachgasm, Goldgasm, Pinkgasm, Stargasm, Nu Impertinent, Nu Authentique, Nu Insouciant, Nu Confident, Nu Parisien, Nu Decadent, Nu Irrelevant, Nu Exuberant, Nu Artistique, Nu Intense, Nu Extreme, Lover, DIRTY TALK, Thirsty Bae, Send Nudes, Sexy Lips, XXX, Sex Machine, Sex Shuffle, Sexual Healing, Sexpot, Dominatrix, Erotic Adventure, Nympho, Aphrodisiac, Deep*

Throat, MILF, Shag, ect. These names' elicitation of provocatively sexual content is consistent with the notion that sexually charged colour names have a place in the market (Reichert & Lambiase 1999) and are an integral part of cosmetics advertising and advertising in general (Cortese 1999, p. 27-28). While these names constitute overt sexual themes, the majority of sexually provocative names are suggestive rather then direct. These strategies range from double entendres to names that simply elicit multiple interpretations. Names like *880 Caress Plum, Love Before Breakfast, Primal, It's So Big, Rebound, Lose Control*, and *Big Pink Energy* are not explicitly sexual, however a specific sexually implicit reading of the name is available. Nearly all these colour names are found in the middle price classes of their respective products, with a couple of exceptions. The *Peachgasm, Goldgasm, Pinkgasm*, *Stargasm* line comes from the high-price class and the *Nu Impertinent, Nu Authentique, Nu Insouciant, Nu Confident, Nu Parisien, Nu Decadent, Nu Irrelevant, Nu Exuberant, Nu Artistique, Nu Intense, Nu Extreme* line comes from the low-price class. Sexually implicit colour names are effective for a couple reasons. The first is that the implementation of sexual themes in a colour name with multiple interpretations may appear shrewder than the explicit names. The second is that by having colour names like *880 Caress Plum, Love Before Breakfast, Primal, It's So Big, Rebound, Lose Control*, and *Big Pink Energy* with multiple interpretations, one of which is sexual, does not automatically detour consumers who have an aversion to explicitly sexual content. Aside from sexual proclivity, there are colour names that elicit themes of social deviance.

5.3 Social Deviance

For the purposes of this paper, social deviance represents any colour name with a counter cultural or antiestablishment element, typically invoking a negative social evaluation.

Social deviance constitutes a wide-ranging theme that encompass many social elements, resulting in many sub categorizations. These include themes of religious (specifically Christian) deviance, including *Sin, Jezebel*, and *Devil Rouge*, inherent deviant attributes, including *Bad Seed, Naughty, Freak, Corrupt, Damned*, and *Wicked Ways*, substance consumption, including, *Brunch Drunk, DAY DRINK*, and *Paraphernalia*, anti-establishmentarianism, including *Rebel, Rule Breaker, Nude Protest*, and *So Anti*, and other miscellaneous themes, including *Bad Bride, STFU, Bad Girl's Club, Devil's Advocate, Dangerous, D for Danger, Whora, Damage Control, Miss Conduct, BackTalk, Liar, Prohibited Rouge, Forbidden Pink, Vendetta, Chelsea Grin, Risky Business, Sweet Revenge*, *Freaky, Crazy, Outlaw, Scandalous, Dangerous*, and *Dangerous Affair.* The price correlations for these names follow an interesting pattern when it comes to the high-price class. The names in this class are arguable the least volatile compared to the social deviance names from the middle-price or low-price classes and index more general deviant themes rather then anything overtly violent or sexual (e.g., *Devil Rouge, Prohibited Rouge, Forbidden Pink, Nude Protest, Rule Breaker*) or constitute terms where the deviance is much more coded and less overt[2] (e.g., *Vendetta, Paraphernalia*, and *Chelsea Grin*). This suggests that high-price class brands are cognisant of not using terms that are overly volatile or colloquially deviant as they could risk putting off their presupposed sophisticated clientele. Subsequently, the marketing behind these names is aimed at a consumer base that embraces anti-establishmentarianism or counter cultural tendencies. An important factor to consider for this theme is the societal expectation for women to wear makeup or use beauty products. Not only

[2] Terms like *Prohibited, Forbidden, Nude Protest*, and *Rule Breaker* would be less provocative than terms like *STFU, Sin*, and *Whora*.

is there a presupposition that women specifically to want to 'improve' their appearance, but also the presupposition that those that do not are generally misrepresented in larger media (Ringrow 2016, p. 2). Nevertheless, women who do not use cosmetic products do exist in the marketplace, and these colour names may serve to persuade them to use such products, specifically, out of a sense of cultural defiance. Another possibility is that women will want to use the products because it gives them an edge to their identity and helps them stand out from the rest of society. However, these positive affirmations are better represented in the next theme.

5.4 Ameliorative Affirmation

Ameliorative affirmation refers to words or phrases that instill positive feelings in the consumer, either as a nonspecific antecedent or as a message that sub textually acknowledges the consumer. While less specific than other colour name themes, colour names that contain, either explicitly or implicitly, affirmations constitute a significant amount of data. The positive feelings these names exhibit are wide-ranging, and often overlap with the aforementioned themes. These include beauty and positive sexual affirmation, like *Beauty, Natural Beauty, Platinum Beauty, Flawless, Smoking Hot, Lover, Heartthrob, Dreamboat, Love, Beloved, Ravish,* and *Love Lust*; themes of intelligence or creativity, like *Brilliant, Enthralling, Visionary, Ingenuity, Imagination,* and *Enlightenment*; themes of financial or career success, like *PROSPEROUS RED, SUCCESSFUL RED, AMBITIOUS RED, Rockstar, Icon, Influencer, Boss* (in both the literal and colloquial sense), *Supermodel, Popstar, Booked, 100 Busy,* and *Money* (in both the literal and colloquial sense); themes of happiness, love, and optimism, like *Happy, HOPEFUL RED, Love, Believe, Hope, Encourage, Lucky, Joy, Grateful, Bliss,* and *110 #Blessed*. Finally, there

are names that function as ameliorative affirmation but do not significantly represent any sub theme, like *Bold, Real, Brave, Fabulous, Loveable, LOVELY RED, RESPECTED RED, Mover, Shaker, Badass, Powerhouse, Hot Shot, Gladiator, Triple Threat, Fly Girl, Angel, Affection, Mesmerize, Blossoming, Honor, Regal, Divine, Passionate, Slay, Strut, Brave, Witty, Yes Honey!, Confident, Sleek, Chic, Driven, Fierce, Power, Glam, 105 Supreme, Unbothered, Fly, Clarity, Serenity, Trust, Sincerity, Zen, Adventure, Inhibition, Aura, Grace, Faith, Modest,* and *Demure*. There are significant overlaps between each subtheme but organizing names into these sub themes provides a representative window as to what ameliorative feelings that marketers are looking to instill in consumers. These names are supplemented by the findings of semantic priming experiments.

Ameliorative affirmation colour names are typically the most abstract of colour names as they rarely reference even actions, locations, events, or people, like the other themes do. Rather, their generality and focus on emotional reactions relies on different effects of semantic priming. These colour names can affect a consumer's behaviour with positive affirmations leading to a positive correlation between the product and the consumer's feeling of self (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows 1996). For example, if a colour is named *Natural Beauty*, and the consumer's subconscious behaviour is influenced by the colour name thus making them feel more beautiful, the consumer will have positive evaluations of the product. Additionally, the connection between a perceptual stimulus like a cosmetic colour and a semantic label like a cosmetic colour name may become strengthened due to their abstract relationship (Labroo, Dhar, & Schwarz 2008). Reading a name like *Natural Beauty* will prime related semantic cues, likewise, the *Natural Beauty* colour will prime related perceptual stimuli. However, because the

link between the Natural Beauty label and the Natural Beauty colour are not semantically or perceptually competing, the connection between the two is strengthened and the consumer may associate that colour with a particular brand's marketing. However, some brands attempt to do the opposite, which is to relate their colour names with specific social identities.

5.5 Community Identity

Community Identity for this paper refers to an imagined community of people typically revolving around a distinct culture pertaining to a certain geographical area or a distinct social movement. These themes range in scope greatly, but all refer to a form of community that some will and some will not identify. These communities can be broad enough to denote simple dichotomies of urban and rural, like *Urban, City Girl, Cityscape, Metro Midnight, Downtown*, and the inspiration for most *Urban Decay* products. Three particular metropolitan centers are well represented in colour names, Paris: *Paris Beach, 458 Forever Paris, Paris Fling, 213 Atelier Parisien, Nu Parisien, Paris.NY 127, Made in Paris 110, Matte Me In Paris 430, Nude in Paris 105, Parisian red, 458 Forever Paris*; Los Angeles: *Sunny In LA, Hollywood calling, Hollywood Exagger-eyes, Pure Hollywood, Brilliant Hollywood Pink, Beverly Hills, CALI, Cali dream, She's So LA*; and New York*: 325 Toast of New York, New York Apple, Big Apple*. There are dozens of colour names that reference a certain city or country, however these three metropolitan centers are not just mentioned by name, but by additional semantic information that other geographical themed colour names do not include. The other major theme of community identity colour names are those referring to certain social movements or identities. These can be chronologically themed, like *Millenial, 90s, 1990*, and *So 90s*, or pertaining to a specific social personae, like *Boho, Boho Chic, Bohemian, Hippie Girl,* and *Hipster*. Regarding price class, all the geographically indexed

themes are found in the middle price class, except for the *Paris* names which are represented in all three price classes. However, this seems to be a way of lending authenticity or prestige to the product as Paris has a world-renowned cosmetics industry. The temporal themes are additionally found in the middle price class, however there is a unique pattern with the social movement themes. *Boho, Boho Chic, Bohemian,* and *Hippie Girl* are found in the lower-price class. The indexicality of these names is twofold. The first is that these social identities have rustic or anti materialistic themes that are counter to high class bourgeoise products and thus would include individuals who are less likely to spend extravagantly on cosmetic products. The second is that individuals who do spend extravagantly on cosmetic products will likely not connect with these social identities. Consequently, *Hipster* does not have the same anti materialistic indexicality and this colour name is found in the middle price class. Community Identity colour names serve to confirm membership or indulge in the community membership aspirations of the consumer. Since cosmetic colour names can function as an expression of identity beyond labeling a colour shade, these colour names reflect our memberships to certain sociological communities.

5.6 Rhetorical Strategies

5.61 Puns

Despite their reputation as one of the broadest forms of comedy, puns are well represented in colour names. As a departure from strictly discussing Category III colour names, puns are an effective rhetorical strategy for integrating Category I and II colour terms into the name while remaining memorable to the consumer. Names such as *White on Time, In Nude-Tral, Making Mauves, Buff and Tumble, Mauve It, Petal Pusher, Just in Wine, Grape Shifter,*

Thyme is Money, Zip Wine, BLUE MY MIND, Celes-teal, Beet-ing Heart, Hail Cherry, Against the Grey-in, and *I Pink I Love You* all use puns to represent both the colour of the product and express an English colloquial expression. Puns are not limited to referencing basic colour or supplementary colour terms but can index other themes as well. Colours like *Marakesh-Mere, Kinda Soar-Ta, Beam There, Done That, Glosssed And Found*, and *Pigment Of Your Imagination* represent Category III colour name puns, typically employing the play of words to reference other physical aspects of the product. Though the complexity of such puns is limited compared to conventional print advertisements, these puns still exhibit the psycholinguistic qualities described by Sedivy & Carlson (2011, p. 73). Rhetorical strategies work in ways beyond double meanings as the next section on parallelism will show.

5.62 Parallelism

Parallelism is the repetition of a lexical element or morphosyntactic structure used to make the linguistic content either more memorable or more engaging. The use of parallelism provides the addressee with a linguistic focal point that becomes ingrained due to recurrent exposure (Mooney & Evans 2019, p. 50). Parallelism works with colour names when all the names within a product line follow the parallelism. The simplest form of parallelism is repetition, which can be achieved with a morphological unit, like *Un-Nude Ruler, Un-Nude Seductress, Un-Nude Poet, Un-Nude – Visionary, Un-Nude – Philosopher, Unzipped, Unbuttoned*, and *Unhooked*, a lexical item like *Nu Impertinent, Nu Authentique, Nu Insouciant, Nu Confident, Nu Parisien, Nu Decadent, Nu Irrelevant, Nu Exuberant, Nu Artistique, Nu Intense*, and *Nu Extreme*, or a syntactic structure like colour names from the brand Patrick Ta, *She's Baked, She's A Doll, She's Vibrant, She's Blushing, She's So LA, Oh She's Different, She's That Girl, Do We*

Know Her?, She's Sincere, She's Adorable, and *She's Seductive*. The difference between parallelism and other rhetorical strategies in colour names is that parallelism requires a collection of colour names and is relatively meaningless when examined individually. The advantage of having collections with these repetitive elements in the names is that the entire collection becomes memorable in the eyes of the consumer and not just an individual product from the collection. The paralleled feature may become a symbolic trademark of a brand. The brand Patrick Ta has become synonymous with the brand's image. A consumer would know that any product with this syntax for a colour name belongs to Patrick Ta. Even seeing a novel product with a hypothetical colour name like *She's Glowing*, the consumer would recognize the product as belonging to Patrick Ta without any extemporary information.

6.0 Conclusion

The fact that most cosmetic color terms are non-descriptive with regard to the colour they represent shows how paramount abstract indexical relationships can be. Moreover, having colour names that index abstract themes allows the consumer to find a colour name that indexes one or more features of their personality. The indexical quality of colour names combined with the language and rhetorical strategies commonly employed in advertising results in colour names that are burdened with more responsibility then providing the linguistic code for a colour. Both indexicality and these rhetorical strategies highlight two key phenomena. The first is the nuance of advertising language and how brands can incorporate persuasive language techniques in the most unexpected of places. The dedication that goes into branding and marketing something as microscopic as colour names implies there is no respite from engaging in consumerist culture. The second is that these names provide a window into

what social identity with which women specifically are looking to identify, as cosmetics remains a largely female-oriented market and the branding reflects this. Engagement with cosmetics remains a desirable vehicle for gender performativity, and however this may change in the future, brands will continue to index colour names with a majority female audience in mind. While colour names may index gender neutral themes, names that index masculine themes are non-existent.

The outcome of having abstract colour names has had significant impacts on linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic disciplines. These colour names construct a new avenue in colour studies as these colour names may be purely ideological and offer no descriptive qualities. This ideological construction contributes to forming new semiotic relationships between colour and label and contributes to the visual ideology of our linguistic landscapes. Additionally, the themes most indexed by colour names thus serve to identify the social identities that appear desirable to various populations, including ideological evaluations of gender, sexuality, desirable qualities, cultural centers, social personae, and many other themes. Future research may focus on diachronic studies of colour names, multilingualism in cosmetics advertising, and exploring the indexicality of abstract colour names to see if they indeed offer no descriptive colour qualities.

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