

English Women's Magazines from Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Point of View

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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je prozkoumat jazyk anglických časopisů pro ženy a jeho variety v sociolingvistickém kontextu. Práce je rozdělena do dvou částí. Teoretická část popisuje obecné rysy ženských časopisů se zaměřením na jazykové prostředky, které jsou pro ženské časopisy typické. Praktická část zkoumá jazyk vybraného vzorku časopisů a následně definuje sociolingvistické faktory, které ovlivňují výběr jazykových prostředků.

Klíčová slova: ženské časopisy, neformální jazyk, titulek, jmenná fráze, gender, věk

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to examine the language of English women's magazines and its varieties in the sociolinguistic context. The thesis is divided into two parts. The theoretical part describes general features of women's magazines with regard to the language aspects that are typical for women's magazines. The practical part analyzes the language of the selected sample of magazines and then defines the sociolinguistic factors that influence the language choice.

Keywords: women's magazines, informal language, headline, noun phrase, gender, age

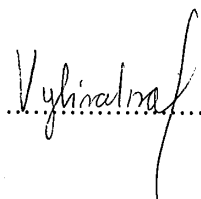
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and certify that any secondary material used has been acknowledged in the text and listed in the bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

Magazines are integral parts of today's society and as a part of mass media communication they have a power to influence the perception and opinions of mass audience. The biggest attention is paid to women's magazines whose popularity and form predetermine them to be discussed by critics, writers, feminists and many others who consider them as an inferior form of entertainment. However, women's magazines have never been intended for demanding and ambitious readers, but they function as any other leisure time activity whose aim is to provide relaxation and entertainment.

The main reason for choosing this topic was my interest in language and media environment and especially, in the British magazines and press as their vocabulary and syntax feature many peculiarities that are worth examining. The thesis is concerned with English women's magazines in the UK and its aim is to find out a set of linguistic features that characterize the discourse of women's magazines, as well as to identify social factors that affect the language choice and image of a magazine. In the theoretical part, the attention is paid to the characteristic features of women's magazines, their history and current position on the magazine market in the UK. Furthermore, it provides a theoretical overview of language aspects that appear in women's magazines, such as informal syntax and vocabulary, a mix of sentence types and how the application of various stylistic devices can achieve a powerful effect. It also provides an understanding of sociolinguistic phenomena, i.e. how language changes depending on the social context. The practical part is devoted to the detailed analysis of five women's magazines – *Woman's Own*, *Woman's Weekly*, *Grazia*, *Good Housekeeping* and *The Lady* – on the base of the linguistic and sociolinguistic features proposed in the theoretical part. The thesis is accompanied by examples, charts, tables and pictures with the intention to demonstrate the theoretical knowledge of women's magazines in a practical way.

I. THEORY

1 CHARACTERISTIC OF WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's magazines, their aspects, origin and performance on the UK magazine market.

Generally, any magazine can be defined as popular genre designed for masses. In order to achieve this definition, magazine is a publication full of articles, photographs, advices, advertisements, all in "user-friendly" format published on a regular basis. The success of magazines is to some extent influenced by today's lifestyle, which demands to live fast, to eat fast and even to read fast. An average reader looks for "escape reading" together with the availability and affordability, which magazines offer.

According to Upendran (Upendran 2008), the etymology of the word "magazine" goes back to the Arabic word "makhzan", meaning the "storehouse". Originally, the magazine was a place where goods were stored and apparently, the meaning was transferred into the "storehouse of information" (McLoughlin 2, 2000). There is a broad spectrum of magazines on the market and McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 2) suggests dividing them into two categories:

- *special interest magazines*, dealing with specialized topics like computing, DIY, household crafts or music
- *centre of interest magazines*, aimed at much wider audience - involving TV listings, supermarket "in-house" magazines, women's and men's lifestyle magazines

Women's magazines fall into the centre of interest magazines, which suggests the first important feature of women's magazine in general; that is a wide range of topics often aimed at lay public. Woman's magazine as a composition of unrelated parts (articles, fiction and photographs) is then referred to as heterogeneous (McLoughlin 2000, 2). The contents of a magazine also reflect the likes and preferences of its readership. However, McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, xi) claims that the prevailing view of women's magazines is that they are a low-brow form of entertainment. Some critics, such as the UK feminist Kate Allen (Allen 2002), also point out the creation of the "magazine woman" which represents the magazine's view of a woman as opposed to women's real lives. Kate Allen demonstrates this on an example from the book *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Freidan, who wrote: "There was a strange discrepancy between the reality of our lives as women and the image to which we were trying to conform." (Allen 2002)

Another aspect common to all women's magazines is delivering a certain ideology that influence women's perception and behaviour. The ideology-forming elements are opinions and major topics presented in the magazines. According to Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 64), ideologies are carried by different social groups and are encoded in written and spoken discourse. Language in relation to different social groups will be further discussed in the sociolinguistic context.

1.1 Types of Women's Magazines

There are different types of women's magazines which are classified according to these features: publication periodicity, target audience, price and content. All these factors are closely interconnected and McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 2) mentions that factors like material or price convey certain connotations, e.g. glossy paper connotes quality, sophistication and glamour.

Concerning the publication periodicity, magazines are issued weekly, fortnightly, monthly and quarterly. Specifically, women's magazines are often issued weekly and monthly. Weeklies have a dominant position on the magazine market (see Figure 1, p. 15) as they are affordable to a wider audience but the frequency of publishing together with a lower price and cheaper quality paper do not associate them with the term "exclusivity". According to Magforum (www.magforum.com) that is one of the prime sources of facts about magazines on the Internet, the British publisher IPC Media divides women's weeklies into four categories on the base of their content:

- *classics* - mix of stories, fashion, food, home and family, travel etc.
- *celebrity* - dealing with the life of celebrities and the latest fashion trends
- *real life* - real life stories combined with puzzles, competitions
- *mature* - respected weeklies aimed at mature women, not carrying the features of the tabloid

Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 13) claims that women's weeklies represent the life of an average woman and thus they get closer to the reader. On the other hand, women's monthlies are often considered as exclusive magazines because of their look with more than one hundred glossy pages, high price as well as representing the "ideal-woman" message. These magazines (often referred to as glossies) are generally financed by advertising, include a high number of photos and the content usually focuses on the

lifestyle and fashion. Some of them are available in two formats - the traditional A4 and the innovative A5 often called the “handbag” size.

Generally, the target audience of women’s magazines are not only young women, but also mature women. The price is variable and some magazines are published as a free newspaper supplement (e.g. *Observer Woman*).

1.2 Women’s Magazines Through History

Woman, her life, needs and problems started to be reflected in the papers and periodicals at the turn of the 17th and the 18th century with the arrival of the first woman’s magazine in the British history. *The Ladies Mercury* first appeared in 1693 and though it lasted only for several issues, it was important that a woman was recognised not only as a wife and mother, but also as a human being who needs a special interest. *The Ladies Mercury* also enhanced women to write about their problems and the magazine promised to answer their questions. (Hughes 2008)

A women’s magazine history continued with *The Tatler*. The Literary Encyclopedia (www.litencyc.com) says that *The Tatler* was founded in 1709 by Richard Steele. His intention was to publish the news and gossips heard in London area and to keep abreast of the latest events, *The Tatler* was published three times a week. Simultaneously, *The Female Tatler* was launched but it ran for less than a year. Nonetheless, this was an important point in a history as the magazine was established and ran by a woman. According to the websites that deal with *The Female Tatler* (www.umich.edu), the authors at that time wrote about the arts of conversation or pride in one’s appearance and emphasized politeness, sensibility and taste.

Another woman’s magazine format, known as the *Lady’s Magazine*, started in 1770 and was published monthly in London. Hughes (Hughes 2008) claims that in its fifty years till 1820, it defined public issues for women and now it is considered to be the first true fashion magazine. However, this started a need for a “material culture” presented in today’s magazines.

Till the 1850s, women’s magazines had obviously aimed at upper-class women as a sort of their leisure. According to Hughes (Hughes 2008), woman’s magazine as an elite product stopped with the launch of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic* magazine in 1852, intended for women caring about the house and family. There were sections on cookery, pets as well as crafts - as the ordinary woman could not afford the latest fashion trends from Paris, it provided them with the instructions how to make the item at home.

The arrival of *The Lady* in 1885 started to shape the present women's magazine market in the UK. Nowadays, it is the oldest weekly magazine for women.

1.3 Exploring the Women's Magazine Market in the UK

The recent market with such well-known titles as *Hello!* or *Take a Break* dates back to the 1930s when classic weeklies and traditional monthlies were established. However, the vast majority of women's magazines appeared with a big arrival of magazine publishers in the 1990s. McKay (McKay 2000, 204) points out that between 1990 and 1999 the circulation of magazines in the UK increased by 156 million that is a growth of 13 per cent.

The today's magazine market offers more than seventy women's titles and according to the market research report done by Mintel Oxygen (www.oxygen.mintel.com), which is a British online platform designed to provide market reports, the sales of women's magazines have fallen back since 2006, which may be a result of the crowded media environment. According to this report, Bauer Media became the UK's biggest magazine publisher for 2008 (due to the acquisition of a large Emap group of titles) and was finally ahead of IPC Media that used to be called as the "Ministry of Magazines". Other main players in the UK's consumer market are National Magazine Company, Condé Nast, D.C. Thomson and Hachette Filipacchi.

The following section provides a detailed survey into the main women's magazine sectors, weeklies and monthlies, showing their development, trends, main publishers as well as the description of the most successful ones.

1.3.1 Women's Weekly Sector

According to the study "The Power of Women's Weeklies" (www.bauer.co.uk), women's weekly sector dominates the women's magazine market and with almost thirty titles each week it is one of the fastest growing magazine sectors at all. This trend is demonstrated in Figure 1 showing consumer magazine circulations (an average weekly figure) in the first half of 2008:

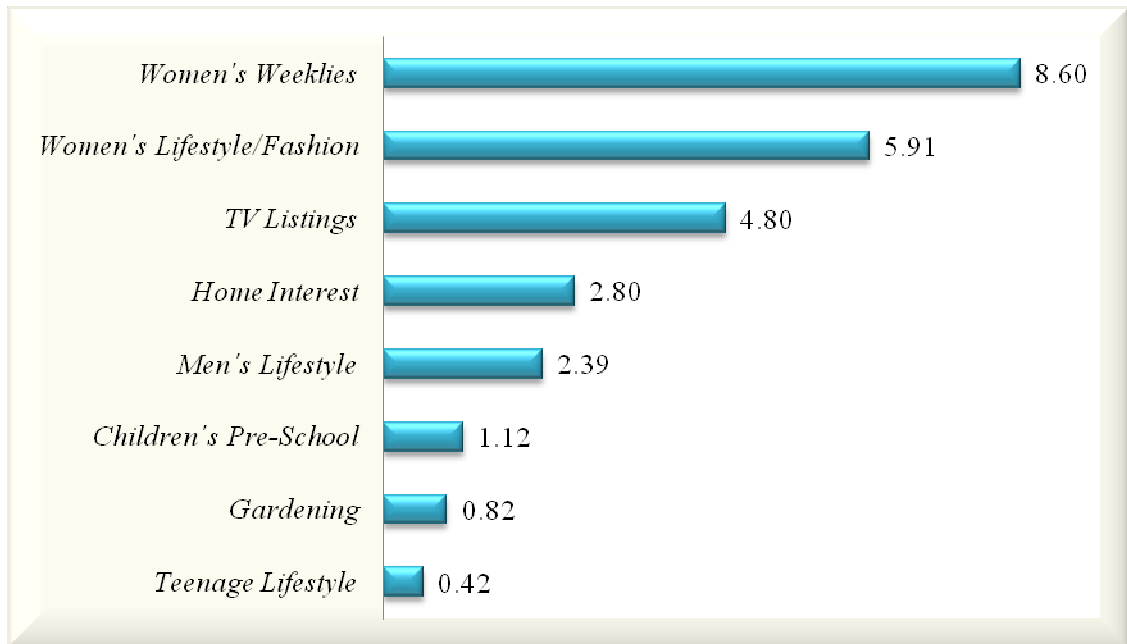


Figure 1: Magazine Market January – July 2008 (mil. £)

Figure 1 shows that women's weeklies sold the most copies in the first half of 2008. They were followed by women's monthlies (also referred to as lifestyle magazines) and surprisingly, the third place belongs to TV listings that sold almost twice as many copies as men's lifestyle. The category of home interest followed the TV listings and both children's pre-school and gardening outperformed teenage lifestyle that sold less than half a million copies and took the last place.

A case study dealing with women's weeklies available at Magforum (www.magforum.com) claims that the success of women's weeklies was a response to a growing power of supermarkets in the UK. Monthlies achieve the bulk of their sales in the first two weeks and then languish on shelves for a fortnight. Supermarkets, however, want high circulation and high frequency, turning weeklies rather into "fast moving consumer goods".

There are four types of women's weeklies which are described in the following overview. They are ranked by sales according to the results of the study "The Power of Women's Weeklies":

1. *Celebrity*

Celebrity in combination with gossip is a major sales driver on the magazine market. According to Blyth (Blyth 2006), these magazines function as tabloids, they are highly

visual and contain a lot of paparazzi photos and pages of gossip. They appeal predominantly to teenagers and young women. Celebrity magazines were first introduced into the UK in 1988 with the launch of *Hello!*, a version of the Spanish woman's weekly *Hola!* The similar format, originally British *OK!*, achieved the same success five years later. *Hello!* and *OK!* were later accompanied by magazines such as *Closer*, *Heat*, *New!* etc. (www.magforum.com).

2. *Real Life*

Real-life stories in combination with other typical elements such as puzzles and competitions is the second most favourite format among British women. This genre first appeared at the beginning of the 1990s and changed the classic weeklies, adding the "real-life" element to their original content. According to Reynolds (Reynolds 2009), the traditional real-life magazine *Take a Break* leads the sector and is followed by *Chat*, *Pick Me Up*, or *That's Life!*

3. *Classics*

Classic women's weeklies are traditional and still very popular magazines that deal with a mix of different topics. They were established between 1910-1937 and in the 1960s they reached a peak selling 6 million copies every week (www.magforum.com). Since the magazine market evolved in the 1990s, the new elements like celebrity gossip and real-life sections changed the women's weeklies and shifted classics like *Woman* or *Woman's Own* rather to classic/celebrity and classic/real life categories. Other titles that dominate this sector are *Woman's Weekly* or *Bella*.

4. *Mature*

This category is intended for mature women's readers and is represented by magazines such as *The Lady* or *Woman's Weekly*. The England's oldest women's weekly, *The Lady*, is a reputable magazine including news, short stories or articles on history and art. On the other hand, *Woman's Weekly* is more home and family oriented, having the features of both classics and mature category as it focuses on the lives of mature women.

The list of women's weekly magazines available on the magazine market is profiled in Appendix I. The table shows a publisher, sector and a launch year of each woman's weekly magazine. As Anne Cassidy (Cassidy 2009) noted in the Campaign article, *Take a Break* is

the best-selling title in women's weekly sector and is followed by a celebrity weekly *Closer*.

1.3.2 Women's Monthly Sector

Women's monthly magazines have declined in sales since 2005 as a weekly frequency has become more popular. Magforum website (www.magforum.com) explains that as a result of this, publishers such as Bauer Media and IPC Media proposed a new "weekly strategy" for a monthly sector. This new "glossy" sector is formed by weekly magazines such as *Grazia* and *Look* that have the features of monthlies, e.g. glossy paper, over one hundred pages, fashion and lifestyle sections etc. They can be included in both weekly and monthly sector. Fitzsimmons (Fitzsimmons 2007) considers this new trend of weekly glossies as the future of women's magazines.

Journalistic website Press Gazette (www.pressgazette.co.uk) divides women's monthlies into five categories and adds magazines that represent them:

1. Young Women- *Glamour, Cosmopolitan, Marie Claire, Company*
2. 30somethings- *Red, Eve*
3. 40somethings- *Easy Living, She, Psychologies*
4. Mature Women- *Good Housekeeping, Woman & Home, Yours, Prima, Essentials*
5. Fashion- *Vogue, Elle, Instyle, Harpers Bazaar*

According to Amos (Amos 2009), who refers to the data released by Audit Bureau of Circulations, the top five sellers from more than thirty women's monthlies in the UK are *Glamour, Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, Woman & Home* and *Marie Claire*. They are arranged in Table 2 showing their circulation trends since 2006:

| Title | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>Glamour</i> | 547,607 | 550,066 | 585,984 |
| 2. <i>Cosmopolitan</i> | 450,836 | 460,276 | 461,610 |
| 3. <i>Good Housekeeping</i> | 425,407 | 464, 041 | 468,579 |
| 4. <i>Woman & Home</i> | 353,160 | 336,022 | 335,922 |
| 5. <i>Marie Claire</i> | 314,259 | 330, 182 | 371,444 |

Table 1: Circulation Trends of the Top-five Women´s Monthlies

Table 1 shows a decreasing tendency in the circulations of women´s monthlies in the past three years. Average monthly figures of sold magazines were the highest in 2006. As weeklies have taken share from a monthly sector, the sales of monthlies have dropped- note the decrease in circulations in 2008 compared to 2006. However, *Woman & Home* showed the opposite trend. The list of all women´s monthlies available in the UK is alphabetically arranged in Appendix II. The table shows a magazine title, its publisher and a launch year.

2 LINGUISTIC AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

The following section is focused on the language aspects and typical features of women's magazines in terms of morphology, syntax and lexicology as well as how stylistic devices are applied in magazines to attract reader's attention. These "tricks of languages", merely used in front covers and headlines, constitute that language is a powerful tool. Language aspects of magazines will be further analyzed in its social context in order to identify a set of features that are typical for women's magazines.

2.1 The Language of Women's Magazines

2.1.1 Features of Informal Language

Apart from special interest magazines, "whose language reflects their specialist nature" (McLoughlin 2000, 2), the centre of interest magazines (e.g. women's magazines, magazines for men or teenage lifestyle magazines) usually represents everyday English used by the target audience. Among women's magazines, the level of informality varies; more slang expressions and syntactic deviations are found in celebrity weeklies rather than in traditional monthlies. Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 50) claims that there are several reasons why magazines use informal language structure:

- to increase credibility
- to increase authenticity
- to get closer to the reader
- to make the texts up-to-date
- as a means of fun, wit

Akmajian (Akmajian et al. 2001, 287) investigates the features of informal language structure and points out that the informal style is governed by rules as precise, logical and rigorous as the rules governing formal language. Concerning women's magazines, their informal language pattern is characterised by a simpler grammatical structure, personal evaluation and a slang vocabulary. Murray (Murray 2007) summarizes the main aspects of informal writing used by magazines in order to target the language of their readers:

- use of contracted verb forms
- use of abbreviations
- beginning a sentence with a conjunction
- frequent use of pronouns
- frequent use of phrasal verbs
- short sentences and short paragraphs
- overly positive content instead of substantive content or argument
- stories in the text that are too personal or too compelling
- absence of references to sources considered

It is worth noting that many of these aspects stem from journalistic principle of clarity, economy and simplicity. In her magazine handbook McKay (McKay 2000, 63) mentions that this is one way in which journalistic writing differs from literary writing. In striving for clarity, journalists try to avoid any ambiguity as opposed to literary writing where ambiguity is valued. The principle of economy involves using short words, short sentences and short paragraphs in order to write the story in the shortest possible way. In accordance with the principle of simplicity, journalists aim at avoiding anything which might distract the reader from the main purpose of the article or story. This requires the reduction of subordinate clauses to a minimum and avoidance of the passive voice, which is less clear to the reader than the active voice. Nonetheless, McKay (McKay 2000, 66) points out that the passive voice acts as a useful tool merely in shifting the emphasis from the subject to the object.

2.1.2 Sentence Types

Magazine writers use different types of sentences for different purposes. McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 16) distinguishes two types of sentences - major and minor. The difference between them rests in the presence/absence of a finite verb. Minor sentences appear frequently on magazine's front covers and headlines where the sentence has to be condensed for reasons of economy. Minor sentence also introduces the contents to the reader by brief and concise statements. According to Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 50), magazine's titles, subtitles and legends to photographs often follow an irregular sentence pattern in a form of block language that is, however, yet more typical for newspaper headlines.

2.1.2.1 Sentence Functions

A sentence can fulfil four functions: *declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamative*. Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 101) highlights the use questions, imperatives and exclamations as a typical aspect of language for women.

Questions serve the purpose of a contact-making element and according to Římalová (Římalová 2002) they create a sense of a friendly dialogue between the author and reader. Asking questions can also arouse a curiosity in a reader. *Wh-questions, yes - no questions* and *problem-solution questions* frequently appear in women's magazines. Another interactive element introduced by women's magazines is the use of imperatives. They serve the purpose of giving orders and according to McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 19) magazine writers attempt to tempt the reader into the action proposed. The reader's attention is also caught by a means of exclamations, "which are used to express surprise, alarm or a strong opinion and are accompanied by an exclamation mark" (McLoughlin 2000, 18). She also adds that an exclamation conveys emotion, heightens involvement and gives the text a sense of immediacy.

2.1.3 Headlines

Goumovskaya (Goumovskaya 2004) states that the headline is the title that is given to a newspaper or a magazine article and it serves the purpose of informing the reader briefly about the content of the article. Reah (Reah 2002, 13) also points out that it is a unique type of text that has to achieve two aims - to use space economically and to attract reader's attention. In addition, the headline writer has a variety of linguistic devices how to serve these purposes. According to Goumovskaya (Goumovskaya 2004), the peculiarity of its syntactic structure lies in the specific composition of brief items and the structure of sentences. This tendency is the most remarkable in the composition of *cover lines*, which are headlines used in the front covers. The most effective cover lines that the text producers create are of two types – firstly, they are of grammatical nature, such as "*how to*" constructions, *questions* and *exclamations*. Secondly, they are content-related and usually include news and confessions.

"*How to*" construction is only one type of a minor sentence that frequently appears on the magazine covers, others are gerunds, past participles and infinitives. Besides verbal constructions, headlines and cover lines are often condensed into nominal constructions and McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 15) refers to a fact that a head of a noun phrase is

usually heavily modified. The modification can be realized as a pre-modification, which adds an intensifying element to the noun, or a post-modification in a form of a prepositional phrase or a relative clause. Another feature of headlines to consider is the ellipsis that enables to leave out unnecessary words for the reasons of economy (McLoughlin 2000, 16). Either grammatical or lexical words are commonly omitted.

2.1.4 Vocabulary

The vocabulary system consists of several layers. Lipka (Lipka 2002, 17) presents the English vocabulary as a system of two layers, literal and colloquial, divided by the common layer. Common layer is the central area of vocabulary, which is common to all media, styles and social classes. The main core of literary layer is formed by scientific, foreign and archaic words, and the colloquial layer consists of slang, vulgarisms, dialectal words and words from technical language. However, Lipka (Lipka 2002, 18) claims that all categories of vocabulary as he presents them have no sharp boundaries and cannot be precisely defined. As women's magazines or consumer magazines in general feature the usage of informal language, the colloquial layer of vocabulary will be under examination in the practical part.

The use of vocabulary also depends on the type of women's magazine and its target audience. The presumption that women's magazines target everything that women are interested in leads to the idea of shared vocabulary proposed by Craviotto (Craviotto 2006, 7). According to this concept, there may be some overlap in the most frequent vocabulary of the magazines, which are grouped into various semantic fields. However, Craviotto adds that the existence of shared semantic fields like family, relationships, fashion or shopping does not exclusively underlie the same lexical choice in each semantic field, as there are essential differences among women such as age, social class or economic status. The results of Craviotto's research also show that the lexicon of women's magazines is not as informal as the lexicon of men's magazines, "which parallels the social acceptance of this kind of vocabulary for men but not for women" (Craviotto 2006, 8).

As far as the regional differences are considered, McKay (McKay 2000, 58) explains that for all that magazine writers try to tailor their words to the reader, they are apt to ignore the regional differences in different parts of the country. The strong metropolitan bias is preferred as most of the magazines are based in London. Magazine writers avoid

using dialectal words except for the regional women's magazines that are rarely published – such as the *Scottish Woman Magazine*.

2.1.5 Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are words or phrases that are used as rhetorical devices for “emphasis, concision, rhythm, novelty, peculiarity and style” (Gupta 2007). These stylistic features add creativity and entertainment to the magazine writing and McKay (McKay 2000, 58) considers a fun of playing with words as a tradition of the English writing. Since ancient times, two different kinds of figures of speech have been established – *tropes* and *schemes*.

Trope is a figure of speech that plays with the meaning of words and besides poetry, some tropes have been also adjusted to the magazine discourse. The most common tropes are described in the online document dealing with the rhetorical devices (web.cn.edu):

- *pun* – twists the meaning of words to create a humorous effect
- *hyperbole* - exxageration
- *metaphor* - based on similarity of certain properties of two corresponding subjects
- *metonymy* - using a vaguely suggestive, physical object to embody a more general idea
- *personification* – gives human qualities to objects
- *simile*- a stated comparison between two things

In contrast to a trope, scheme is a figure of speech that deals with word order, syntax, letters and sounds, rather than the meaning of words. Schemes are included in the magazine discourse in form of:

- *alliteration* – repetition of an initial consonant sound
- *assonance* - repetition of the same vowel sound
- *rhyme* – arrangement of words that have the same last sounds
- *asyndeton* – omits conjunction between words, phrases, or clauses
- *parallelism* – similar structure of grammatical pattern and length
- *antithesis* – contrary ideas expressed in a balanced sentence
- *diacope* - repetition of words

Scheme is also valuable for its visual effects implied in the cover lines. McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 21) states there are other linguistic tools that achieve the fun and entertainment value, such as *intertextuality*.

2.2 Sociolinguistics Criteria

The view of language as a homogenous entity is strongly in contrast with the way the language is used. Each language exhibits a considerable variation and in this respect, it is necessary to analyze how language changes depending on the context. The language in relation to society is under examination of sociolinguistics.

According to Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 81), sociolinguistics is an extra-linguistic discipline that attempts to establish casual links between the language and social varieties and objects to the view of language as a homogenous means of communication. To some extent, sociolinguistics overlaps with pragmatics as it emphasizes the context variety. Spolsky (Spolsky 1998, 3) realizes that besides the principal use of language, which is to communicate meaning, it is also used to establish and maintain social relationships. He adds that the language varies according to the target group to which it is intended. People speak differently to superiors, colleagues or friends and he marks this as the “sensitivity of speech to audience” (Spolsky 1998, 8). Accordingly, it is crucial for magazine producers to know their target audience in order to use the language appropriately.

There is a range of social influences on language choice such as gender, age, social group, ethnicity, region, social status, education, class etc. The aim of this chapter is to show the relevancy of social factors in relation to women’s magazines.

2.2.1 Social Factors and Dimensions

According to Holmes (Holmes 1998, 8), the linguistic choices will reflect the influence of one or more components:

1. The *participants*: *who* is speaking and *who* are they speaking *to*?
2. The *setting* or social context of the interaction: *where* are they speaking?
3. The *topic*: *what* is being talked about?
4. The *function*: *why* are they speaking?

In addition to these factors, Holmes (Holmes 1998, 9) also mentions four social dimensions that are interlinked with them:

1. A *social distance* scale:

- concerned with participants relationship
- considers the factor of “how well we know someone” as a relevant
- emphasizes the correlation between *intimate relationship/high solidarity* and *distant relationship/low solidarity*

2. A *status* scale:

- concerned with participants relationship
- points to the relevance of status
- emphasize the correlation between *superior/high status* and *subordinate/low status*

3. A *formality* scale:

- relates to the setting or type of interaction
- assesses the degree of formality and how it influences the language
- emphasizes the correlation between *formal setting/high formality* and *informal setting/low formality*

4. The *referential* and *affective function* scales:

- relates to the purposes or topic of interaction
- language can convey objective information of referential kind
- or it can express how someone is feeling
- the more referentially oriented an interaction is, the less it tends to express feelings.

Holmes (Holmes 1998, 11) refers to these social components as a useful framework for discussing the language in its social context. The language choice of women’s magazines is particularly influenced by gender, participants and their relationship, topic, the degree of formality, the degree of social distance and function of the interaction.

II. ANALYSIS

3 THE AIM OF THE ANALYSIS

The aim of the analysis is to provide research on linguistic as well as sociolinguistic features that appear in women's magazines on the British market. A basic overview of women's magazine market in the UK was outlined in the theoretical part and the analysis is concerned with five selected magazines. This research sample covers a broad spectrum of magazines for women in order to present objective findings. The analysis will deal with the following research areas:

1. *Linguistic area*, which will be focused on:
 - the degree of formal/informal language used in women's magazines
 - sentence types
 - nominal constructions
 - stylistic devices
 - features of front covers and headlines

2. *Social phenomena transformed by language* that will analyze:
 - the language in relation to gender
 - the language in relation to age
 - the relationship between the author and the reader on the *social distance* and *status* scale

3.1 The Research Sample

Women's magazine market in the UK offers more than seventy women's titles. Five of them were selected for the purpose of analysis. The basic criteria for choosing them were to cover both sectors of women's magazines, weeklies and monthlies, and to select a representative sample across women's magazine categories. The following magazines were collected:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Woman's Own</i> | issues 25/08/2008, 10/11/2008, 12/01/2009 |
| 2. <i>Grazia</i> | issues 25/08/2008, 10/11/2008 |
| 3. <i>Woman's Weekly</i> | issues 16/09/2008, 21/10/2008, 06/01/2009 |
| 4. <i>The Lady</i> | issue 19/08/2008 |
| 5. <i>Good Housekeeping</i> | issue 02/2009 |

Altogether, the research sample contains 10 magazines and 906 pages. These magazines stand for five different categories whereof *Woman's Own* and *Grazia* are tabloid-like magazines aimed at younger women, and *Women's Weekly*, *The Lady* and *Good Housekeeping* that are more quality magazines aimed at mature women. The research will take account of common features as well as essential differences between the language of tabloid-like magazines and serious ones. The following section is devoted to the profiles of the five selected magazines and their content aspects. Magazine's profiles are arranged in schemes.

3.1.1 Woman's Own

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Sector | weekly |
| Category | classic/celebrity/real-life |
| Age bracket | 30 - 35 |
| Publisher | IPC Media |
| Launch year | 1932 |

According to IPC Media (www.ipcmedia.com), *Woman's Own* is a popular weekly intended for confident women who know how to enjoy life. It delivers a mix of news, celebrity gossip, real-life, lifestyle and fashion. Though the age bracket is not specified, the content suggests that the average woman's reader is between 30 and 35. IPC Media even claims that the magazine is designed for every woman, regardless of her age. Every issue contains approximately 70 pages out of which 15 per cent are advertisements.

3.1.2 Grazia

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Sector | weekly glossy |
| Category | fashion/celebrity |
| Age bracket | 20 - 25 |
| Publisher | Bauer Media |
| Launch year | 2005 |

The UK edition of the Italian fashion weekly Grazia was launched in 2005. It “proudly proclaims itself as Britain’s first weekly glossy” (Plant 2005) as it has all features of exclusive monthly magazines. This innovative approach proved to be a success and in 2008 it became a consumer magazine of the year. Grazia delivers a set of fashion trends, beauty tips, celebrity news and real-life stories. However, the number of pages devoted to fashion dominates. It is made of glossy paper and the format is larger than the traditional A4. As other glossy magazines, Grazia contains approximately 150 pages out of which 30 per cent are devoted to advertisements. The target audience are young women around 25 interested in fashion and high-class celebrities.

3.1.3 Woman’s Weekly

| | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Sector | weekly |
| Category | classic |
| Age bracket | 45+ |
| Publisher | IPC Media |
| Launch year | 1911 |

Women’s Weekly is a classic weekly magazine that “celebrates the home, family and lives of mature women” (www.ipcmedia.com). It provides the readers with practical help and advice in many fields – health, fashion, cookery, gardening, travel etc. and other regular columns involve fiction and competitions. The content as well as design are focused on women over 45 and the fashion trends and models are age-relevant. On average, there are 65 pages with 16 per cent share of advertisements.

3.1.4 The Lady

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Sector | weekly |
| Category | mature |
| Age bracket | 50+ |
| Publisher | The Lady |
| Launch year | 1885 |

The Lady is the oldest weekly magazine for women in the UK and since 1885 it has been approached in a very traditional way. According to The Lady's webpage (www.lady.co.uk), it is celebrated both for the quality of its pages, including news, art, history, fiction and other regular columns like fashion or travel, and for its classified advertisements. Every issue contains approximately 66 pages with 20% share of classified advertisements.

3.1.5 Good Housekeeping

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Sector | monthly |
| Category | mature |
| Age bracket | 50+ |
| Publisher | National Magazine Co. |
| Launch year | 1922 |

Good Housekeeping is an exclusive monthly magazine that aims to attract mature women. It deals with everything that women are interested in - fashion, home, family, health and beauty, recipes, real-life or fiction. According to Magforum (www.magforum.com), the magazine was founded in the USA and the UK edition was launched in 1922. Glossy paper, high price as well as high number of pages may connote a high quality to the reader. On average there are 170 pages out of which 30 per cent is made up by advertisements.

4 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

4.1 Indicators of Informality

This chapter analyzes the most common features of informal language used in the selected magazines. For the purpose of this research, the magazines are assessed separately as *tabloid-like magazines* and “*quality*” *magazines* in order to compare the degree of informality recognized in both groups. Finally, the language of two relevant columns is analyzed in order to demonstrate the findings graphically. In order to interpret the meanings of colloquial words and idioms, two monolingual dictionaries are used:

- *Dictionary of English Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions* (www.usingenglish.com)
- *Urban Dictionary* (www.urbandictionary.com)

4.1.1 Tabloid-like Magazines

The language and style of tabloid-like magazines such as *Grazia* and *Woman's Own* resemble the style of classic British tabloids that feature celebrity news or the latest scandals, along with typical women's issues including fashion and lifestyle. From the linguistic point of view, tabloid-like magazines are characterized by using highly informal grammar that reflects the spoken form of language and the bulk of the vocabulary tends to be slangy, emotionally coloured and evaluative. However, the level of informality varies and may appear more frequently with certain topics - such as the lives of celebrities or fashion and beauty. The topics that deal with cookery or health diet exhibit less emotion. The most common informal features were observed in eight different forms, both grammatical and lexical. Grammatical features include *contracted verb forms*, *the use of conjunction “but” at the beginning of a sentence* and *ellipsis*. Among lexical features there belong *clippings*, *slang vocabulary*, *idioms and phrases*, *interjections* and *subjective commentaries* directed at celebrities.

The use of contracted verb forms in women's magazines is almost a rule:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>They're here! It's the BAGhotlist!</i> | (Grazia 25/08 08) |
| <i>It'll be an experience you'll never forget.</i> | (WO 10/11 08) |
| <i>They've never been so stylish – here's our pick of the best.</i> | (WO 25/08 08) |

Beginning a sentence with a coordinating conjunction “but” is primarily associated with the spoken medium. However, if the conjunction “but” is placed in the initial position, the sentence draws more attention to itself (www.grammar.ccc.commnet.edu):

- But* rumour has it that Simon Cowell’s not impressed. (WO 10/11 08)
But now Woman’s Own can reveal the identity of the man. (WO 10/11 08)
But perhaps we’d be in for a shock. (WO 25/08 08)

In addition, there are other coordinating conjunctions that appear at the beginning of a sentence, namely “and” and “so.” The last grammatical sign of informality that is frequently used in tabloid-like magazines is *ellipsis*:

- (**It is**) Shame they made the couple look like... (WO 10/11 08)
 (**Are you**) Confused? (WO 10/11 08)
 (**Do you**) Need proof? (Grazia 25/08 08)

At the lexical level, tabloid-like magazines feature a heavy use of *clippings*, “when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form” (Yule 1996, 66). They are in general use in both analyzed magazines:

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| <i>glam</i> | = glamorous | <i>pic</i> | = picture |
| <i>fab</i> | = fabulous | <i>lipo</i> | = liposuction |
| <i>pap</i> | = paparazzi | <i>showbiz</i> | = showbizness |
| <i>mag</i> | = magazine | <i>cardi</i> | = cardigan |
| <i>veg</i> | = vegetable | <i>comfy</i> | = comfortable |
| <i>celeb</i> | = celebrity | <i>potent</i> | = potential |

The colloquial influence on language is especially apparent in the presence of slang expressions and idioms:

- get-up-and-go* = energy
tell-all book = autobiography
singleton = any individual without partner (WO 10/11 08)
toy boy = a young boy

| | | |
|----------------|---|-------------------|
| <i>totty</i> | = attractive man or woman | |
| <i>gal pal</i> | = a man who hangs around with all girls | |
| <i>pig out</i> | = eat ravenously | |
| <i>nope</i> | = no | |
| <i>A-list</i> | = classy | |
| <i>B-list</i> | = poor | (Grazia 25/08 08) |

Idioms and phrases:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>mind your Ps and Qs</i> | = mind your language | (WO 10/11 08) |
| <i>hard and fast</i> | = rigid, fixed | (WO 12/01 09) |
| <i>doom and gloom</i> | = pessimistic outlook | (WO 10/11 08) |
| <i>down and dirty</i> | = instantly competitive | (WO 10/11 08) |
| <i>head over heels</i> | = totally in love | (Grazia 25/08 08) |
| <i>go great guns</i> | = to be very successful, favourable | (Grazia 25/08 08) |
| <i>a heart to heart</i> | = sincere talk, conversation | (Grazia 25/08 08) |

Emotions are conveyed in a form of interjections and exclamative sentences and their goal is to evoke emotion in the reader:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>Oooh!</i> <i>This boxy Chanel-style cardi is so chic.</i> | (WO 12/01 09) |
| <i>Hmm,</i> <i>let's wait and see...</i> | (Grazia 25/08 08) |
| <i>SHHH!</i> <i>The 15 secret new wrinkle-busters have landed.</i> | (Grazia 25/08 08) |
| <i>Hurrah!</i> | (Grazia 10/11 08) |

The last peculiarity of tabloid-like magazines is the use of subjective commentaries directed at celebrities at the end of an article:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <i>Come on, Si, get in the festive spirit!</i> | (WO 10/11 08) |
| <i>Don't be so hard on yourself, Cherie!</i> | (WO 10/11 08) |
| <i>Nothing a new man won't cure, Nat.</i> | (Grazia 10/11 08) |
| <i>We'll just have to wait a bit longer for our invite, eh Agy?</i> | (Grazia 25/08 08) |

4.1.2 Quality Women's Magazines

A distinction must be made between tabloid-like women's magazines and those women's magazines that are labelled as "quality". In this case, the word "quality" is matched with traditional women's magazines aimed at mature women that exhibit less emotion and more professionalism. Among these magazines belong *Woman's Weekly*, *The Lady* and *Good Housekeeping*. They are not obsessed with rumours and gossip, but treat a woman as the centre of interest. "She" is approached as a successful woman but for whom the family is paramount. The aim of this subchapter is to find out to what extent these two groups of women's magazines are similar or different.

In comparison to the degree of informality observed in tabloid-like magazines, there is a certain overlap among the proposed features. The first similarity is apparent in the use of contracted verb forms. It is common to use them also in serious women's magazines:

- It's made her a fortune.* (WW 21/10 08)
It'll give winter outfits a fashion boost. (WW 06/01 09)
Now's the time to make a fresh start. (GH 02/2009)

However, *The Lady* magazine prefers using the full forms to contracted forms:

- I **am** not making the light of the problem, but...* (The Lady 19/08 08)
*It **is** very easy to get lost.*
*If you **are** in search of...*

Similarly, the conjunction "but" may begin the sentence, but its usage is limited and it should not be considered as the characteristic feature of serious women's magazines.

In the search for ellipsis, a plenty of them were observed:

- (I) Hope your new year brings you all you wish for.* (WW 06/01 09)
(Are you) Not sure which paint to choose? (GH 02/2009)
(Is it) Mad or worth a try? (GH 02/2009)

The difference between tabloid-like magazines and quality ones is apparent from their unequal distribution of clippings. Only few of them appeared in serious magazines, namely *veg*, *fab* and *cardi*. As the same clippings were discovered in tabloid-like magazines, it

might indicate their pass into common usage. Bulk of colloquial vocabulary used in tabloid-like magazines referred to sex, fashion, scandals or celebrities. In quality magazines, the colloquial influence is evident in the sphere of body-related words:

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>bum</i> | = bottom | (GH 02/2009) |
| <i>boobs</i> | = breast | |
| <i>bingo wings</i> | = skin that hangs over the triceps | |

In addition, these body parts were often described as *saggy*, *wobbly* or *tacky*, which express rather negative attitude toward them. The rest of slang words appeared at random:

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>pizzazz</i> | = attractive, dazzling style | (GH 02/2009) |
| <i>sleaze-bag</i> | = a person regarded as sleazy | |

A few swear words that add anger and emphasis were observed as well:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>And what on earth was cladding?</i> | (WW 21/10 08) |
| <i>...I thought: "What the hell?"</i> | (GH 02/2009) |

In search for idioms and phrases, quality magazines do not contain as many of them as tabloid articles. The following examples were found:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---------------|
| <i>the penny dropped</i> | = someone finally understands something that everyone else has long since understood | (WW 21/10 08) |
| <i>second to none</i> | = better than anything else | (WW 06/01 09) |

Similarly, the use of interjections is very rare and in fact, these are the only three examples that were discovered in quality women's magazines:

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Ah, the joys of getting older.</i> | (WW 16/09 08) |
| <i>Oh, all right – I've deliberately lost track.</i> | (WW 16/09 08) |
| <i>Wow! It's been a great year for TV.</i> | (WW 21/10 08) |

The research shows that though there is a certain overlap among the major indicators of informality used in tabloid-like and quality magazines, the difference in quantity implicates the difference in quality at both grammatical and lexical levels. As serious magazines do

not primarily deal with celebrities and gossip, they do not provide any irrelevant commentaries on them. The only contact that is made with famous people is usually in a form of interviews. It is also worth pointing out that in quality magazines, the author of an article is always mentioned, which is not a very common rule in tabloid articles.

4.1.3 Analysis of the Selected Columns

The aim of this analysis is to examine and compare the features of informal language of two relevant columns that are regularly published in *Woman's Own* (tabloid-like magazine) and *Woman's Weekly* (quality magazine). Both magazines are weeklies and feature the similar opening structure in each issue. The structure is as follows:

page 3: editorial + contents

page 4 – 5: *Woman's Weekly* – *That's good to know*

Woman's Own – *Upfront...Everything that's worth knowing this week*

That's good to know and *Upfront* are the opening columns of both selected magazines but they differ in the content. *That's good to know* features important events and details that are worth noting and provides a short interview with a famous person. On the contrary, *Upfront* deals with everything that is worth knowing in terms of celebrity and gossip. Both columns thus represent the prevailing values of tabloid-like and quality women's magazines. Two copies per each magazine were chosen and five features of informal language were analyzed and then compared - *contracted verb forms, slang expressions, clippings, ellipsis* and *idioms*.

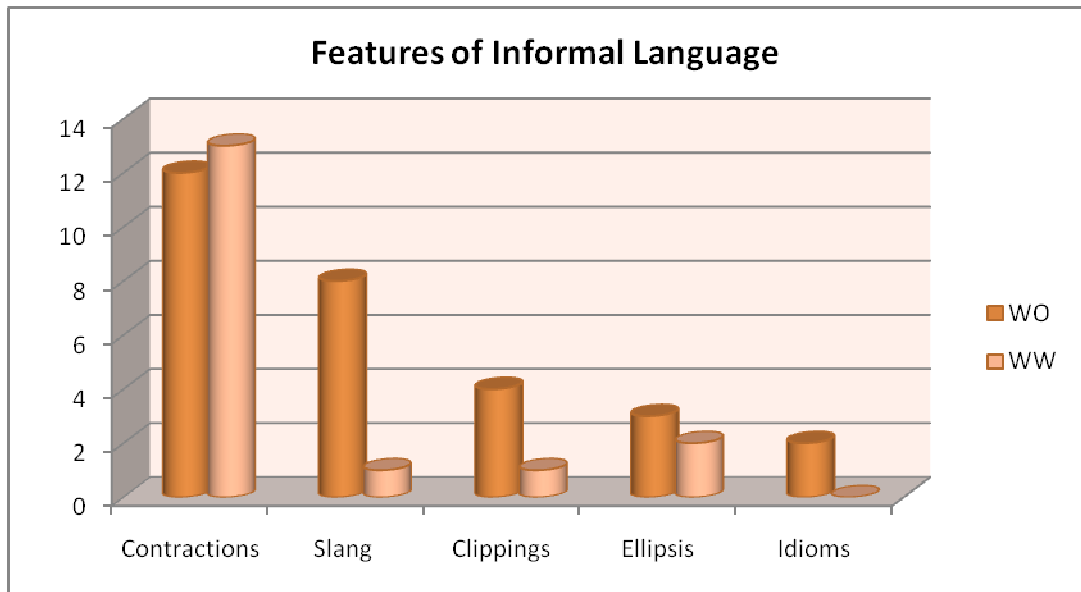


Figure 2: Features of Informal Language

Figure 2 shows that both columns feature almost the same degree in the usage of contracted verb forms (12/13), which might be then considered as a common feature of informality regardless of the type of woman's magazine. This rule can be also applied to the usage of ellipsis as there is only a slight difference between both columns (3/2). However, the most significant difference can be observed on the lexical level, since the number of slang expressions found in the column of tabloid-like magazine was eight times higher than in the column of quality magazine. In addition, clippings prevail in the column of tabloid-like magazine (4), whereas in the column of quality magazine they form only a small fraction (1). Idioms represent the smallest amount of analyzed features (2) and they were observed only in the column of tabloid-like magazine.

4.2 Word-Formation

Women's magazines are a unique source of new words that are created according to various word-formation techniques. In some respects, these newly-created words are mostly used as a means of fun or wit, but some have already entered the common use. Some words rather reflect the tendencies that are commonly used in casual speech, such as the word-formation process known as *clipping*. The most common clipped forms were mentioned in the Chapter 4.1.1. that deals with informal language of tabloid-like magazines. According to Yule (Yule 1996, 66) some new words can be formed from the

initial letters of set of words. These words are known as *acronyms* and are pronounced as single words:

PANK = Professional Aunts with No Kids

If you aren't a parent, then you are probably a PANK. (Grazia 25/08 08)

BOGOF = Buy One Get One Free

If you're shopping for one, go for special offers, BOGOFs. (WW 21/10 08)

WAGs = Wives And Girlfriends of high profile footballers

We're bombarded daily with images of girl bands, supermodels and WAGs.
(GH 02/09)

The next word-formation technique, *blending*, is joining the beginning of one word to the end of the other word (Yule 1996, 66). Blendings that were observed in the magazines are also used on the Internet and thus the original source is not obvious:

chic-onomical = a blend of chic + economical; a term used in fashion, i.e. something that is chic but inexpensive. (Grazia 10/11 08)

faux-mosexual = a blend of faux + homosexual; a fashion-conscious, heterosexual male, i.e. metrosexual. Nowadays, the meaning is rather shifted into someone who pretends to be homosexual, but is in fact heterosexual. (Grazia 10/11 08)

kidult = a blend of kid + adult; a grown-up who never want to grow up.
(Grazia 25/08 08)

According to Yule (Yule 1996, 67), a new word can be also formed when the function of the same word is changed. This is known as *conversion* and there are basically two ways of conversion that occur in women's magazines:

1. a noun comes to be used as verb:

Bag a weekend for two, with 200 each to spend... (WO 25/08 08)

Diet half time and see twice results... (Grazia 10/11 08)

YouTube him, iPlayer him, make full use of the resources... (Grazia 25/08 08)

2. a verb comes to be used as noun:

So how can you avoid party *pig-outs* and...? (WO 25/08 08)

Fashion *fix-its*! (WO 10/11 08)

Oh, and they really are *a buy* now.

(Grazia 10/11 08)

4.3 Premodification of Nouns

Women's magazines employ a heavy amount of nominal phrases where the head of a noun phrase is often premodified rather than postmodified. The elements that precede the head of a noun phrase are commonly adjectives, participles or nouns (Jucker 1992, 60). As Jucker points out, these elements can be simple or very complex. In this case, women's magazines feature the usage of complex premodifiers that are often linked with hyphens. The most complex premodifiers were observed in Grazia and vast majority of them related to fashion. They commonly appear also in other women's magazine except the magazine The Lady.

curve-friendly collections

so-hip-it-hurts rock chick totes

cost-per-wear heaven

simple-but-oh-so-cute white stilettos

average Motley-Crue-ageing-rocker-mom kinda pants

take-you-anywhere accessories

a then-married Jen'n Brad

more-than-friends friendship

(Grazia)

must-have eye shadows

spur-of-the-moment decision

would-be-fashionable woman

(WW)

pay-as-you-go plan

must-try anti-agers

top-to-toe beauty

(GH)

behind-the-scenes gossip

single mum-of-two Melissa

(WO)

If the head of a noun phrase is postmodified, it is often realized by a prepositional phrase or a relative clause:

- journey of jealousy, self-doubt and messed-up-sex-with-the-cheating-ex* (GH)
walk-through of next season's collection (Grazia)
women who have altered their mindset and their shape (WO)
Trinny, who has just split from her husband of nine years, Johny Elichaooff... (Grazia)

4.4 The Use of Questions

Asking questions is one of the contact-making elements used by women's magazines that aims at arousing curiosity in a reader. There are basically six types of questions that occur in women's magazines: *wh-questions*, *yes-no questions*, *rhetorical questions*, *problem-solution questions* and *declarative questions*. The problem/solution format of question is a typical feature of women's magazines, where the author simulates a problem and offers solution. McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 20) says that "the author anticipates that the reader is in need of advice." *Problem-solution questions* are usually yes – no questions in structure that tends to be elliptical:

Problem: *Need a new make-up?*

Solution: *Sarah Purcell selects the best autumn beauty bargains.*

(WW 21/10 08)

Problem: *Tired, heavy legs?*

Solution: *You could try this...*

(WW 06/01 08)

Problem: *Baggy boobs, clubby thighs, bingo wings?*

Solution: *No problem. New cosmetic techniques are here to help...*

(WO 12/01 09)

Another common question format is *wh-question*. It is usually placed in the front covers and headlines in order to make the reader find out the answer:

Who's flirting? Who's suffering?

(WO 12/01 09)

Who's trying to hide her mystery man?

(WO 10/11 08)

What does Joan Rivers really like?

(The Lady 19/08 08)

Rhetorical questions are interrogative in structure, but no answer is expected. There is no specified position for them in a magazine, they appear at random:

- What can be more British than two neighbours having a chat over the garden fence before one invites the other over for a cup of tea?* (The Lady)
It's Peaches, what do you expect? (Grazia 25/08 08)
Why have one when you can buy three? (Grazia 25/08 08)

Yes - no questions tend to be placed in headlines and front covers, as they are very brief in structure:

- Is Lucy's marriage on the rocks?* (Grazia 25/08 08)
Eek or chic? (Grazia 10/11 08)
Should every woman try a toy boy? (Grazia 25/08 08)

The least common type of question that appears in women's magazines is a *declarative question*. It is identical to declarative sentence in its structure, but the function is interrogative. Declarative question is often elliptical:

- Matching outfits? It must be love!* (WO 10/11 08)
Agy in a wedding dress? (Grazia 25/08 08)
Fern loses weight naturally? (WO 12/01 09)

In order to find out the precise proportion of questions that appear in the selected women's magazines, I analyzed all headlines, subheadlines and introductory sentences where the questions are frequently placed. These types of questions were examined: *yes - no questions, wh-questions, problem-solution questions, rhetorical questions and declarative questions*.

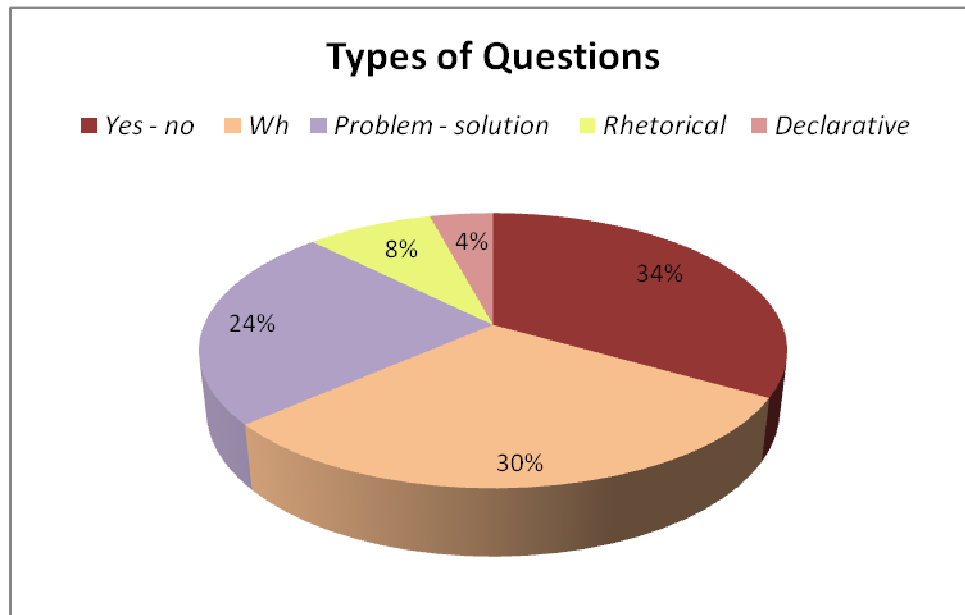


Figure 3: Questions

As can be seen in the Figure 6, the three most frequent types of questions are *yes - no questions* (34%), *wh – questions* (30%) and *problem-solution questions* (24%). The share of declarative and rhetorical questions is not significant and they are hardly found in the headlines.

4.5 Imperatives

Women’s magazines make a direct contact with the reader by means of using an imperative form of sentence. Imperatives are predominantly used in the topics that deal with women’s issues and their purpose is to advise and motivate the reader to the proposed actions. There are several fields of women’s interest that tend to be conveyed in the imperative form:

Appearance and beauty:

Look younger by tonight

Beat the clock

and be prepared for some serious results

(WO 12/01 08)

Health:

Feel great

Add years to your life

(get blood pressure checked, have cholesterol checked etc.)

(WO 10/11 08)

Body and exercise:

Love it, lose it, live with it (GH 02/2009)

Lose 3cm of your waist

...find a tape measure and check the size of your waist (WO 12/01 09)

Dieting:

Beat the bloat (WW 21/10 08)

Lose a pound a day (WO 10/11 08)

Each of these articles then contains a step-by-step instruction how to achieve the goal that is proposed in the headline. It might be compiled into a form of a plan (see Appendix III):

Start off by doing stretches....after two weeks, do 15 minutes of resistance training...eat until you're full...include protein in every meal...think positive...eat your greens...drink more water...choose alcohol wisely...etc.

(Grazia 25/08 08)

4.6 Stylistic Devices

In the Chapter 2.1.5, the most common figures of speech were introduced. They are applied into women's magazines as a source of wit and creativity, which attract the reader's attention. A *trope*, which plays with the meaning of words, was observed in these forms:

Simile:

When Sasha Pivovara first appeared at the recent round of shows, it was like the light had come on again. (Grazia 10/11 08)

Our nation is to customer service what fish are to ballet dancing. (WW 06/01 09)

Intertextuality – the following examples were observed in the headlines:

Lord of the Strings (The Lady 19/08 08)

To colour...or not to colour (WW 21/10 08)

He's a Lady! - from the song *She's a Lady* (WO 25/08 08)

Save save save - from the song *Say say say* (GH 02/2009)

Personification:

My New Year resolution lost me seven stone. (WO 12/01 09)

Barbecues take their toll on willpower. (WO 12/01 09)

Scheme is a figure of speech which plays with the word order, syntax and sounds. As opposed to tropes, a plenty of them were observed. According to Wales (Wales 1995), it is an “ear and eye catching device” and hence the reader enjoys it more:

Alliteration:

Blackberries boost brain (WO 25/08 08)

Masters of modern manners (The Lady 19/08 08)

World’s worst waxworks? (WO 10/11 08)

Assonance:

Leak of the weak! (Grazia 10/11 08)

Size wise (WW 21/10 08)

Swooney Clooney (WO 25/08 08)

Combination of alliteration and assonance:

Super suppers (GH 02/2009)

What a generous gent! (WO 25/08 08)

All the young A-listers in LA (Grazia 25/08 08)

Parallelism:

*Follow our quick tips and look **brighter, firmer and fresher** in minutes.* (WO12/01 09)

*Today’s procedures are much more clever, meaning not always being **nipped, tucked, sucked and plucked!*** (WO 10/11 08)

*We will **take you** to TK Maxx, **show you** a catwalk look, **give you** a budget and **get you** to show us your take on that look.* (Grazia 25/08 08)

Antithesis:

Small changes can have *ripple* effect 10/1

How to get *more* holidays *for less!* 10/11

One change, *big* difference GH

Diacope (repetition):

Hot tip from a hot chef!

Surprise, surprise!

Bags! Bags! Bags! G 10 11

4.7 Front Covers

A front cover primarily acts as an important selling tool and it uses a combination of visual and language strategies to attract reader’s attention. McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 5) says that this is achieved through tricks of languages, visual images, layout and graphology. According to Magforum (www.magforum.com), the cover design contains several important aspects: *title, main image, main cover line, cover lines* and *selling line*. In order to demonstrate it graphically, the main aspects of Grazia’s front cover were examined:

Picture 1: Features of Front Cover



Title, or the name of the magazine, is usually displayed in a specific typeface to be recognisable and unique (www.magforum.com). In Picture 1, the title is also accompanied by a slogan, which underlines the main strength of the magazine. Cover lines introduce the magazine's contents by using catchy and brief phrases and the most important news are included in the main cover line. According to Magforum (www.magforum.com), the selling line promotes the title's main marketing point – it can be the price or short description of the current issue. McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 14) also adds that the position for important information is in the top left hand corner – here it is the title, slogan and selling line.

From the linguistic point of view, there are several syntactic and stylistic features that are applied in the cover lines. As McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 15) mentions the text producers need to comprise a lot of information into a short space, which leads to the heavy modification of nouns and the use of minor sentences:

Modification of nouns:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <i>Miracle new figure fixers</i> | (see Appendix IV) |
| <i>10 uplifting life strategies</i> | (see Appendix VII) |
| <i>Healthy, hearty and budget conscious 20 Midweek suppers</i> | (see Appendix VII) |

Minor sentences:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <i>How to have a grown-up gap year</i> | (see Appendix VII) |
| <i>20 foolproof ways to shift stains</i> | (see Appendix V) |
| <i>Beating migraine</i> | (see Appendix V) |

The front covers also feature a frequent use of questions, exclamations and imperatives as a means of attention-seeking devices:

Questions:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <i>What does Joan Rivers really like?</i> | (see Appendix VIII) |
| <i>Who goes where?</i> | (see Appendix VIII) |
| <i>Is Jennifer pregnant?</i> | (see Appendix IV) |

Exclamations:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <i>Celeb diet exclusive!</i> | (see Appendix VI) |
| <i>Lose weight without dieting! So easy!</i> | (see Appendix VI) |
| <i>Wow!</i> | (see Appendix VI) |

Imperatives:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Lose weight, gain energy, sleep better | (see Appendix V) |
| Learn to love the shape you´re in | (see Appendix VII) |
| Win me! | (see Appendix IV) |

Besides the design aspects, visual effect can be also achieved by using alliteration and assonance:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <i>Oprah´s wise words for dark days</i> | (see Appendix VII) |
| Smart, surprising, straight-talking | (see Appendix VI) |
| <i>Andrea´s body blitz</i> | (see Appendix VI) |
| <i>Instant mood boosters</i> | (see Appendix VII) |

5 WOMEN'S MAGAZINES IN THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTEXT

The aim of this chapter is to identify the social and non-linguistic elements that are reflected in the language choice and contents of women's magazines. Firstly, this analysis is concerned with the language variety in relation to gender and age, and secondly, it is focused on the relationship of participants, i.e. the relationship between the author and the reader, and its impact on the language.

5.1 Genderlect

(Perry et al. 1992, 127) defines "genderlect" as language that marks stereotypical masculine or feminine speech. However, Kadlecová (Kadlecová 92, 2006) explains that to some extent, genderlect might be influenced by the language variety of an individual, which is known as idiolect. Furthermore, she defines syntactic and lexical features that characterize feminine genderlect, such as pronouns, expressive lexis, irony and hyperbole, and heavy use of interrogative, exclamative and imperative sentences.

The types of sentences in relation to feminine genderlect were discussed in the previous chapters, and their enormous usage is apparent. At the lexical level, the woman's influence is the most remarkable in the use of evaluative lexis and diminutives:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| <i>How gorgeous is this dress?</i> | (WW 16/09 08) |
| <i>This cute skirt is super-flattering and also versatile.</i> | (Grazia 10/11 08) |
| <i>These lovelies had the fash pack...</i> | (Grazia 25/08 08) |

Furthermore, the language of women's columnists is full of witty commentaries, irony, hyperbole and expressive words:

When the deeply conservative US President can't keep his hands off the burnished butts of the women's Olympic volleyball team, you know these girls are something else. (Grazia 25/08 08)

"Right, we've got to lag, clad and pad," my husband announced last week. My mind raced. What on earth could he mean? Lagging? Cladding? Padding? Was this some kind of street slang that he'd picked up, as a knee-jerk reaction to his 40th birthday? Seeing my stunned guppy expression, he explained: "Insulation - our heating system.

The Government's been banging on about it. We've got to save money on our energy outgoings, tighten up our wastage."

"Oh." I confess there was disappointment in my voice. (WW 21/10 08)

Kadlecová (Kadlecová 2006, 101) points out that each genderlect uses different terminology as women's interests differ from the men's. Women's "jargon" then might include the area of fashion, dieting and body rather than the technical details of the latest technologies.

5.2 Age Factor

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the difference in the language use between two generations of women – the younger generation, represented by *Grazia* magazine, and the mature women category represented by *Woman's Weekly*. The contents aspects and prevailing values of both magazines will be under examination as well.

5.2.1 Values and Their Influence on the Contents

Image of a magazine is built by several age-related factors. Firstly, the age is reflected in the prevailing values that the magazine conveys. The contents of *Grazia* suggest that it targets a group of young women that are interested in celebrities and the latest fashion trends. The average reader of *Grazia* is an independent woman without children, and thus the magazine does not offer any home and family-related topics. However, as the age grows, the interests and values change – especially when women begin to have children. This value shift is apparent in *Woman's Weekly* approach as it represents the values and interests of mature women category. The topics such as family, cookery and health are more stressed along with practical advice and tips. The selection of columns and articles that demonstrate the difference in values and interests of both magazines is provided:

GraziaWoman's Weekly

Is Jennifer pregnant?

Celebrity: Writer Lynda la Plante

The Atkins diet is back!

One Family, three generations of beauty queen

10 Hot News

Credit crunch special

This week's hottest parties

Cooking with kids

Fashion Charts

Wildlife in the garden

Madonna in new adoption shock

Knitting

After Him...

Fiction

However, there are also several columns that are regularly included in both magazines, such as fashion and beauty. This sphere of interest is common to all women regardless of the age.

5.2.2 The Use of Language

Age as a sociolinguistic factor has a huge impact on the language choice. Holmes (Holmes 2001, 167) claims that there are several features of people's speech which vary at different ages. The vocabulary and grammar patterns that are appropriate for teenagers tend to diminish when they grow older. Moreover, she adds that a specific area of vocabulary which reflects a person's age is slang. As she states, "current slang is the linguistic prerogative of young people and generally sounds odd in the mouth of an older person. It signals membership of a particular group - the young" (Holmes 2001, 167). From the linguistic features examined in the subchapter 4.1.1. it can be seen that *Grazia* employs a large amount of slang expressions with the intention to reflect the speech of its target audience. Compared to *Grazia*, *Women's Weekly* does not feature the use of slang for two reasons – it is not the speech of its target audience and the magazine itself does not belong to the tabloid-like category of women's magazines.

5.3 Relationship between the Author and the Reader

Each communication act has two sides – the sender/speaker and the recipient/listener. The communication can be either realized as an interpersonal act, or the message is conveyed through a medium. The magazine as a part of mass media communication represents a medium between the author and reader. Though the message is designed for a mass audience, it aims at reaching an individual via several interactive techniques such as asking questions or giving orders. Moreover, the interaction with the reader helps the author to achieve a designed relationship and status. As McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 73) states, the authors of a magazine aim at minimising the social distance with their readers through implying friendly and informal approach. “The writer can simultaneously be the reader’s friend, adviser and entertainer” (McLoughlin 2000, 69) and might create a sense of intimate relationship and solidarity by using personal and possessive pronouns. Each pronoun puts the author and reader into different roles. The *you* and *your* pronouns imply a sense of importance and attention that is turned to the reader. They are often included in the headlines:

***Your** letters*

*What do **you** think about what you’ve read in GH?* (GH 02/09)

***You** The Fashion Jury* (Grazia 10/11 08)

*What **you**’re wearing* (WW 21/10 08)

McLoughlin points out that the authors of magazines “must also construct an identity for themselves” (McLoughlin 2000, 69). As she claims, they apply the pronouns *we* and *our* into the discourse in two different ways. Firstly, it is *inclusive we*, where both author and reader are included and thus try to evoke a sense of intimacy and unity:

*The truth is that 80% of **us** feel dissatisfied with the body **we** see in the mirror – even if **we** have no reason to.* (GH 02/2009)

*As **we** age, **our** skin loses its natural firmness and sagging is inevitable.*

(WO 25/08 08)

On the other site, “the pronoun we can be also used in its *exclusive* sense to distance the reader” (McLoughlin 2000, 70):

We´ve got all the latest anti-ageing innovations that promise a new you in flash!

(WO 12/01 09)

Hey girls, can we play in your wardrobe?

(Grazia 10/11 08)

The *exclusive we* tends to position the author into the status of the expert and this is the first example where the relationship between the author and the reader starts to be unequal. According to McLoughlin (McLoughlin 2000, 73), it is always the author who has the authority to command the reader, either in a form of imperatives, or from the position of expert who knows the answers to the reader´s problems.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to examine English women's magazines from the linguistic and sociolinguistic point of view. The research itself was based on analyzing five different women's magazines out of which two were characterized as tabloid-like magazines (*Grazia*, *Woman's Own*) and others as quality magazines (*Woman's Weekly*, *Good Housekeeping* and *The Lady*). It was observed that both groups of magazines prefer using informal language structures to formal ones, but the level of informality varies. The most common features of informal language were divided into two groups – grammatical and lexical. The grammatical features included contracted verb forms, the initial position of coordinating conjunctions in a sentence and the use of ellipsis. At the lexical level, the most common features of informal language were observed in a form of clippings, slang words, idioms and phrases, interjections and exclamations. All of these features were observed in tabloid-like magazines and yet one more was found – subjective commentaries directed at celebrities at the end of an article. On the other hand, quality magazines did not feature as heavy use of informal language elements as tabloid-like magazines. They particularly used contracted verb forms and ellipsis with only a slight colloquial influence at the lexical level. Furthermore, other differences were noted at the level of content as tabloid-like magazines devote a large space to celebrity and gossip and prefer tragic element in the real-life stories, whereas quality magazines are more woman-oriented and include neither gossip nor tragic elements.

Besides the elements of informal language, both groups of women's magazines featured the same language aspects and there was no need to continue to assess them separately. It was observed that words are usually combined into noun phrases where the head of a noun phrase is modified by using complex premodifiers. The attention was also paid to the word play that is characterized by using and creating new words, as well as by applying various schemes to the magazine discourse, namely alliteration, assonance, parallelism, antithesis and diacope. The word play at the semantic level was mainly observed in the use of simile and intertextuality.

With regard to the sentence types, it was observed that questions and imperatives serve the purpose of contact-making elements, whereas exclamations try to evoke emotions in a reader. The analysis of question types showed that the most common type of question is yes-no question, followed by wh-question and problem-solution question.

Front cover as the first part that readers come into contact with featured a specific layout and graphology, as well as combination of several linguistic strategies. Due to the lack of space sentences are condensed into nominal constructions and minor sentences. The reader's attention is achieved by applying questions, exclamations, alliteration and assonance.

In the search for sociolinguistic factors, gender and age were identified as the most significant ones. With regard to genderlect, there are essential differences between the speech of women and men, which is then reflected in the language of "their" magazines. The language of women's magazines is characterized by using evaluative lexis, diminutives, expressive words, irony, hyperbole and personal and possessive pronouns. The age is mainly reflected in the use of different vocabulary and sharing different values that have direct impact on the magazine's content. Furthermore, the level of interaction with a reader can be measured on two scales – social-distance scale and status scale. Concerning the social distance between the author and reader, it was proved that using informal language and pronouns makes the relationship intimate and informal. However, the author sometimes tends to position himself/herself into the status of expert by using pronoun "we" in its exclusive sense, by commanding the reader and answering problematic questions.

To conclude, I hope that my bachelor thesis will contribute to the better understanding of women's magazines in the linguistics and sociolinguistic context, and will be beneficial for all who are interested in the use of English language in the real environment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----|-------------------|
| WO | Woman's Own |
| WW | Woman's Weekly |
| GH | Good Housekeeping |

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- P VI Front Cover – Woman's Own
- P VII Front Cover – Good Housekeeping
- P VIII Front Cover – The Lady

APPENDIX P I: WOMEN'S WEEKLIES

| Title | Publisher | Sector | Launch Year |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Bella | Bauer Media | Classic/Real Life | 1987 |
| Best | ACP-NatMag | Practical | 1987 |
| Closer | Bauer Media | Celebrity | 2002 |
| First | Bauer Media | News/celebrity | 2006 |
| Full House | Burda | Real Life/celebrity | 2005 |
| Grazia | Bauer Media | Fashion/Celebrity | 2005 |
| Heat | Bauer Media | Celebrity | 1999 |
| Hello! | Hello! Ltd | Celebrity | 1988 |
| Chat | IPC Media | Real Life | 1985 |
| In the Know | Bauer Media | News | 2006 |
| Look | IPC Media | Fashion/Celebrity | 2007 |
| Love It! | News Magazines | Real Life | 2006 |
| My Weekly | DC Thompson & Co | Classic | 1910 |
| New! | Northern & Shell plc | Celebrity | 2002 |
| Now | IPC Media | Celebrity | 1996 |
| OK! | Northern & Shell plc | Celebrity | 1993 |
| People's Friend | DC Thompson & Co | Mature | 1896 |
| Pick Me Up | IPC Media | Real Life | 2005 |
| Real People | ACP NatMags | Real Life | 2006 |
| Reveal | ACP-NatMag | Celebrity/Real Life | 2004 |
| Star | Northern & Shell plc | Celebrity | 2003 |
| Take a Break | Bauer Media | Real Life | 1990 |
| That's Life | Bauer Media | Real Life/Classic | 1995 |
| The Lady | The Lady | Mature | 1885 |
| Woman | IPC Media | Classic | 1937 |
| Woman's Own | IPC Media | Classic/Celebrity/R-Life | 1932 |
| Woman's Weekly | IPC Media | Classic | 1911 |

APPENDIX P II: WOMEN'S MONTHLIES

| Title | Publisher | Launch Year |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| B | Hachette Filipacchi UK | 1997 |
| Company (UK) | National Magazine Company | 1978 |
| Cosmopolitan (UK) | National Magazine Company | 1972 |
| Easy Living | Condé Nast | 2005 |
| Elle (UK) | Hachette Filipacchi UK | 1985 |
| Essentials | IPC Media | 1988 |
| Eve | Haymarket Publishing Group | 2000 |
| Family Circle | IPC Media | 1964 |
| Frank | Wagadon | 1997 |
| Glamour (UK) | Conde Nast | 2001 |
| Good Housekeeping (UK) | National Magazine Company | 1922 |
| Grazia (UK) | Bauer Media | 2005 |
| Harpers Bazaar | National Magazine Company | 1929 -1970; 2006 |
| Harpers & Queen | National Magazine Company | 1970-2006 |
| Honey | Carlton/Reed/IPC | 1962 |
| InStyle UK | IPC Media | 2001 |
| Marie Claire (UK) | European Magazines (IPC/Marie Claire) | 1988 |
| More! | Bauer Media | 1988 |
| New Woman | Bauer Media | 1988 |
| O: | Observer supplement | 2005 |
| Observer Woman | Observer supplement | 2006 |
| Prima | National Magazine Company | 1986 |
| Psychologies | Hachette Filipacchi UK | 2005 |
| Real | Essential Publishing | 2001 |

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Red | Hachette Filipacchi UK | 1998 |
| She | National Magazine Company | 1955 |
| Tatler | Condé Nast | 1709/1901 |
| Vanity Fair | National Magazine Company | 1950-1972 |
| Vanity Fair UK | Condé Nast | 1991 |
| Vogue UK | Condé Nast | 1916 |
| Woman & Home | IPC Media | 1926 |
| Yours | Emap Esprit | 1984 |
| Zest | National Magazine Company | 2003 |

APPENDIX P III: IMPERATIVES – THE PLAN

GRAZIA/HEALTH&BEAUTY

THE PLAN:

- * Start off by doing stretches for 15 minutes, three times a week. Examples include the shoulder hug (reach to opposite shoulder with each hand, hugging yourself before inhaling and lifting elbows slightly), and the butterfly (sit on floor with soles of feet together, clasp feet with hands, place elbows on inner thighs and very gently push down on knees, so your face is a few inches off the floor).
- * After two weeks, do 15 minutes of resistance training with small weights (eg, bicep curls) three times a week.
- * After four weeks, include cardio in your routine, starting with brisk walking for 20 minutes, three times a week, building up to jogging and then running.

EAT UNTIL YOU'RE FULL: During the two-week induction phase you're encouraged to eat as much of the 'good' food as you need to feel satisfied. However, these foods are chosen for their slow-release energy, so you shouldn't need to overeat. If you feel bloated, you've gone beyond satisfying your hunger. The *All-New...* plan advises keeping a food journal to keep track of the amount you need to feel full.

INCLUDE PROTEIN IN EVERY MEAL: 'In the last few years, dozens of studies have investigated low-carb/high-protein diets,' says co-author Heimowitz. 'One conclusion is fair to make: if you're interested in losing fat, a diet with a higher proportion of protein is the way to go. Evidence is accumulating that higher protein intake, within reason, has other benefits. For example, it can actually create stronger bones.' At least 175g (about the size of a chicken breast) of protein should be eaten at every meal. Protein sources include poultry, meat, eggs and tofu.

THINK POSITIVE: Keeping a diary is an essential part of the programme. One suggested exercise is to write the following: 'I want to slim down by doing the All-New Atkins, but...', then write a list of obstacles that might get in your way (a busy job, an upcoming party, etc). The next step is to transform your concerns into solutions, listing as many as possible.

EAT YOUR GREENS: 'Recent research shows that the high fibre content of salad and other vegetables keeps the "net carb" count relatively low,' says Trager. 'The original Atkins suggested only one cup of vegetables a day, but we now recommend four cups a day.'

DRINK MORE WATER: Drink at least two litres of water a day, to help prevent constipation and bad breath (frequent complaints from dieters on the original Atkins). Avoid caffeine if you're sensitive to the blood-sugar spikes it can cause. Otherwise, two coffees a day are OK.

CHOOSE ALCOHOL WISELY: After the two-week induction stage, you can have a glass of dry white wine or a shot of white spirits every evening. Go easy on mixers: soft drinks and juices are loaded with carbs.

EARN CARB 'REWARDS': 'The number of carbs you eat isn't set in stone,' says Trager. 'If you start exercising seriously, you may be able to eat more carbs than before.'

The book offers a fitness rewards system:

- * If you're under 10st 7lbs, you can eat an extra 5g carbs (a glass of wine or a handful of almonds) for every half hour of exercise.
- * If you're under 14 stone, you can eat an extra 10g of carbs (a slice of wholegrain toast with strawberry jam) for every half-hour workout.

GOOD FOODS

EAT THE FOLLOWING LIBERALLY:

FISH: Tuna, salmon, trout and sardines.

POULTRY: Skinless chicken and turkey.

SHELLFISH: Clams, prawn and crab.

MEAT: Beef, pork, lamb. Bacon and ham, if they haven't been cured with added sugar.

VEGETARIAN PROTEIN: Eggs and tofu.

CHEESE: Cheddar, feta, goats' cheese, cream cheese, gouda, mozzarella.

EAT THE FOLLOWING OCCASIONALLY:

FATS: Olive oil, canola oil, butter, coconut oil, mayonnaise and full-fat cream.

SALAD (THREE CUPS MAX A DAY): Alfalfa sprouts, celery, chicory, cucumber, lettuce, mushrooms and peppers.

VEG: (one cup max a day): Artichoke, asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, aubergine, leeks, onion, snow peas, spinach and tomatoes.

GOOD CARBS: Seeds and nuts, berries, legumes (lentils, chickpeas).

BANNED FOODS

WHITE CARBS: White bread, pasta, chips, crisps and cereals.

TRANS FATS: Found in processed food, fast food, pastry, biscuits.

SUGAR: Cakes, soft drinks, any natural sweeteners ending in 'ose', eg, fructose. ■

The All-New Atkins Advantage by Stuart Trager and Collette Heimowitz is available from www.amazon.com



APPENDIX P IV: FRONT COVER – GRAZIA



Win a fridge-freezer worth over £1,000

6th January 2009

Woman's Weekly

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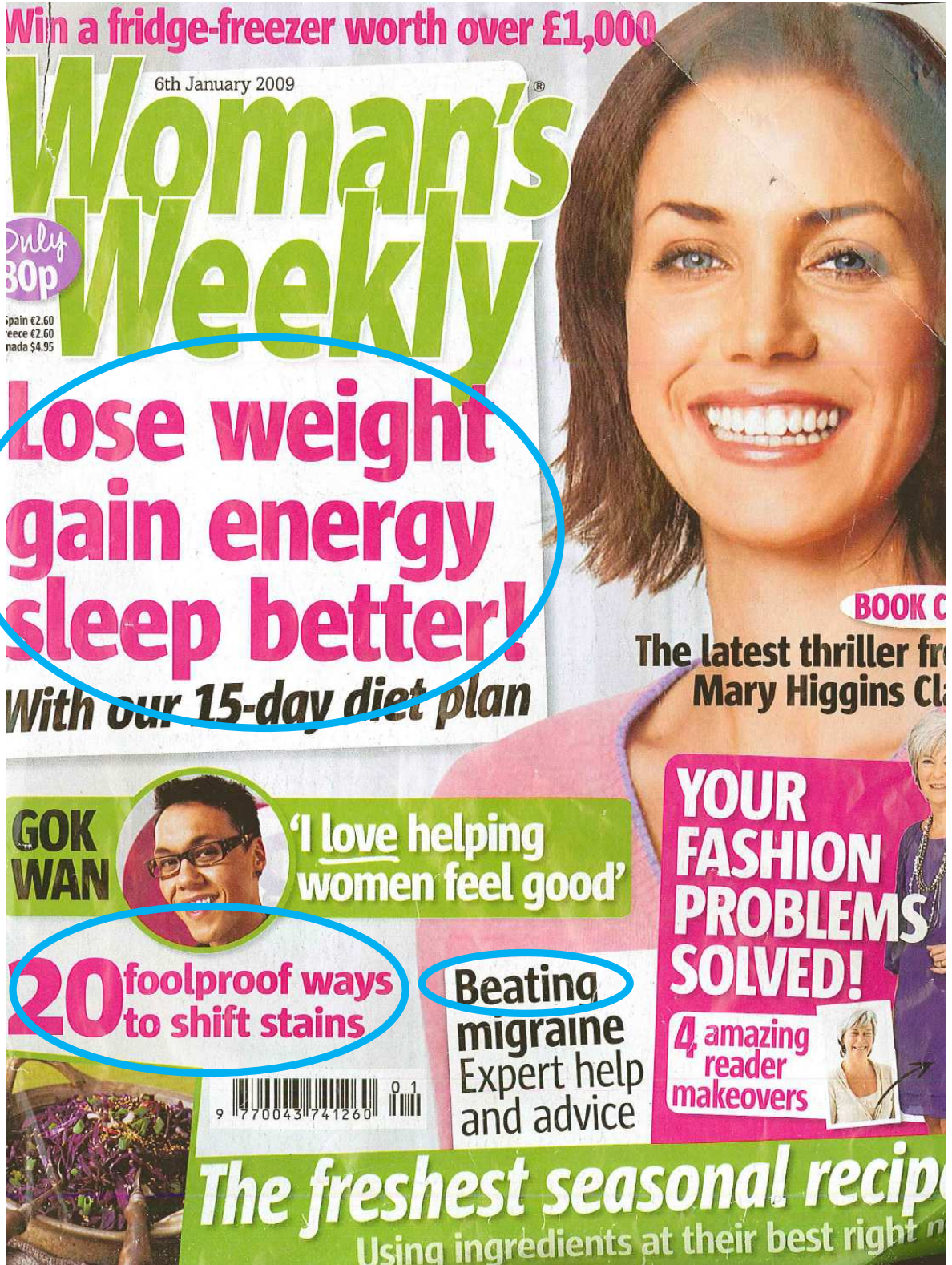
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YOUR FASHION PROBLEMS SOLVED!
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APPENDIX P VI: FRONT COVER – WOMAN'S OWN



APPENDIX PVII: FRONT COVER – GOOD HOUSEKEEPING



APPENDIX PVIII: FRONT COVER – THE LADY



The Lady

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