

Print Media Analysis

I have chosen the female magazines *More* and *Cosmopolitan* (*Cosmo*) to demonstrate the techniques for analysing the use of language in printed media. In the following quote, from David Gauntlett's book *Media, Gender and Identity*, *More* and *Cosmo* are both discussed and their place in the female magazine industry is identified.

"Cosmopolitan spawned many imitators and variants, of course, including *Over 21*, *Glamour*, *Working Woman* and *Company*. The late 1980s saw the launch of even more sex-obsessed magazines like the UK's *More*, which stripped out much of the more 'mature' stuff about lifestyle and work, and gave young readers even more of the glamour, problem pages, handsome hunks and sex - most obviously in the notorious 'position of the fortnight' feature - which they seemed to crave."

(Gauntlett, 2004, p.54).

In a series of studies, Van Dijk (1988, 1991) developed a framework for analysing news - which can be applied to *More* and *Cosmo*. Van Dijk suggests there is a thematic structure - the themes and topics. This is made up by using schematic structured materials.

"The schematic structure of a particular type of text is specified in terms of the ordered parts it is built out of."

(Fairclough, 2003, p.29).

The schematic structure of *More* and *Cosmo* is what I will be concentrating on, rather than the magazines overall themes and topics. I will be covering word chains, process types, the structure of journalistic stories, intertextuality, the joys of Schadenfreude: Celebrities, female stereotypes and sexuality in female magazines.

When looking at the word chains in *More* and *Cosmo* I will be looking for **repetition**, **synonym** (words with a similar meaning), **antonym** (words with an opposite meaning), **hyponym** (words that are a member of a particular group) and finally, **meronym** (part of a whole).

There are five kinds of Process Types and I will look for examples of each in *More* and *Cosmo*. The types are: **Action**: the process affects somebody, **Event**: the process only affects the doer, **State**: consists of verbs of classifying or identifying, **Mental**: consists of verbs of thinking, perceiving and feeling and **Verbal**: those verbs concerned with saying or speaking. Finding examples of these Process Types will highlight what kinds of topics are being discussed in both magazines.

Labov & Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1972) (cited in Bell, A. in Boyd-Barrett & Graddol, 1994, p.101) have analysed the structure of journalistic stories and have found these types of narratives to consist of six elements. These are: **The Abstract** (summarises the central action and main point of the narrative), **The Orientation** (sets the scene - who, when what etc), **The Complicating Action** (central part of the story), **The Evaluation** (significance of the story established), **The Resolution** (what finally happened) and finally, **Coda** (wraps up the action). I will pick one article from each magazine and annotate them to show these different elements.

Intertextuality is the term used to describe how we (as reader) understand the text in terms of our experience and awareness. If the reader has not experienced or is not aware of the object used in the intertextual reference, then the sense, or joke, may be lost. I will look for examples of intertextuality in *More* and *Cosmo*.

Schadenfreude is a German expression used in English with the meaning 'shameful joy'. Used in relation to *More* and *Cosmo* to characterise their attitudes to celebrities and how they describe the celebrities 'shocking' behaviour with a mixture of disapproval and pleasure. Celebrities can be anyone from singers and sportsmen/women to actors and actresses in *EastEnders*. I will look at which celebrities are featured in the two magazines and what they are in the magazine for - the story.

Stereotype comes from Greek 'stereo' = 'solid'. It was a printer's term for a solid block of type which could be used to represent something which would otherwise need lots of work with individual pieces of type to show fine detail. I will look at how *More* and *Cosmo* construct stereotypes for the female from the articles they include.

Finally, I will analyse the sexuality contained in *More* and *Cosmo*. "Magazines aimed at teenage girls and young women are too highly sexualized, according to some critics, and have been blamed for contributing to a perceived increase in promiscuity and a real increase in unplanned pregnancies among British teenagers" (Reading & Stokes, 1999, p.209). I will note what types of sexual articles are featured in the magazines and discuss the use of sexual language throughout.

Word Chains

Repetition

More: 1) 'Looks' - a) '537 ultra-sexy Spring looks!' b) 'Where Posh gets designer looks at High Street prices'

2) 'Cheese' - a) 'The cheese test' b) 'The cheese verdict' c) 'Misunderstood romantic or pure, unadulterated cheese?'

3) 'Diet' - a) 'Charlize's Monster Makeover Diet' b) 'The Monster Diet' c) 'The Makeover Diet'

Cosmo: 1) 'You' - a) '11 sex dreams you need to know about' b) 'You will get hair colour to suit your cut' c) 'You and your friends' d) 'You and Him'

2) 'Celebrity' - a) 'Celebrity be-the-best' b) 'Upfront Celebrity'

3) 'Really' - a) 'Secrets to female orgasm that really, really work'

Synonym

More: 1) pie-eater, pig out, lardy frump 2) ropey, monstrous 3) quick, now

Cosmo: 1) loved-up feeling, dizzy elation, totally balmy passion 2) glamorous, gorgeous

Antonym

More: die, biggest, lose, new, anyone, better, like, without, woman, hot, buy, genius, quick, good, off, truth

Cosmo: best, quick, new, man, good, friends, strength, past, bright

Hyponym

More: 1) cheese, Edam 2) bags, earrings, t-shirts, trousers, hand bag 3) diet, calories, exercise, fitness 4) he, inner bloke, ex-boyfriend 5) sex, horny, sexy, sexiest, strip tease, fantasy

Cosmo: 1) tops, shoes, bags, tops, skirts 2) sex, horny, orgasm

Meronym

More: chest, nails, brain, back, legs, arms, head, feet, hips, toes, teeth, ears, eyes

Cosmo: face, eyes, fingers, hands, mouth, cheeks, nose

Process Types

Action

More: kiss, dish, murdered, gets, slept, killed, sell, sod, scratching

Cosmo: can-do, living, give, help, use, seeing, met, made, take

Event

More: have, tell, die, get, dump, shrink

Cosmo: invited, get, does, go, happening, going, wait, takes

State

More: new, related

Cosmo: sexy, distraught, make, an, have, feel

Mental

More: relax, stressed out, bored

Cosmo: hear, love, see, like, know, hate, want, saw, remember

Verbal

More: blame

Cosmo: lyrics, told, talk, say, tell

On the following three pages I have inserted some articles from *More* ('My mum killed my dad just like Charlize's') and *Cosmo* ('I seduced my very own 007 in a speedboat') with annotations to highlight the six elements that narratives consist of.

Intertextuality

More: 1) 'Charlize's Red Carpet Diet!' - *This intertextual reference is about the Oscars red carpet that the Stars walk on into the award ceremony.*

2) 'I'll do anything to get on the new **Big Brother!**' - *This intertextual reference is about the reality TV programme Big Brother.*

3) 'As **Insaniamania** sweeps the nation....' - *This intertextual reference is about the song Peter Andre wrote while taking part in the reality TV programme for ITV called I'm a celebrity get me outta here! And thus this term relates to the hysteria created by his song.*

4) 'The **O.C.** - we're already obsessed!' - *This intertextual reference is about a new C4 teen programme.*

5) 'With shed loads of fit men and storylines to rival **Footballers' Wives**.....' - *This intertextual reference is about the weird and wonderful storylines in an ITV programme.*

6) 'Charlize's **Monster Makeover Diet**' - *This intertextual reference is using the name of actress Charlize Throne's new film.*

7) 'Sod **The Priory**.....Get some holiday therapy!' - *This intertextual reference is using the name of a rehab centre in the UK that is famous for its celebrity and VIP guests.*

Cosmo: 1) 'Being heralded as Britain's **Nina Simone**.....she talks about high heels, **Will Smith**....' - *These intertextual references are about, firstly, a singer that Amy Winehouse is being compared to and an actor that she fancies.*

2) 'Life after **Friends** (the one where Matthew finds real love)' - *This intertextual reference is a joke on how C4 has been showing re-runs of Friends and giving a short description of the episode by saying 'the one where....' So Cosmo is*

trying to be humorous and using the same style for their article about Matthew Perry one of the ex-Friends cast.

3) 'Kiss and Tell' - *This intertextual reference is a pun on the saying Kiss and Tell.*

4) 'I seduced my very own 007 in a speedboat!' - *This intertextual reference is about James Bond.*

5) 'Cosmosutra' - *This intertextual reference is a pun on the Karma Sutra guide to great sex.*

Celebrity

More:

Front cover (see Appendix A): 1) Jodie Marsh and Natalie Denning - Kiss 'N' Tell stories - this is an example of schadenfreude because on the one hand *More* says that oh this is so bad because they said they would not kiss and tell and oh look, they have in the end.

2) Peter Andre saying he would die for Jordan - schadenfreude here because on the one hand we read that and think he is silly then on the other we think that is very sweet.

3) Charlize's Red Carpet Diet - some parts of *More* suggest women should be happy with who and how they are but this demonstrates that if a celebrity has done this diet then you must try it!

4) Posh buying designer gear at High Street prices - we want to be like them so much that we need to find ways of achieving their looks at prices we can afford, but even better when a celebrity admits to buying stuff on the cheap as well!

Inside: SJP from *Sex and the City*, Becks, Charlotte Church, Jamie Callum, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Janet Jackson, Jenny Frost, Drew Barrymore, Jennifer Love-

Hewitt, Robin Williams, Keanu Reeves, Posh and J-Lo. (Plus many more little pieces on other celebs)

Cosmo:

Front cover (see Appendix B): 1) Matthew Perry 2) Leann Rimes 3) Michelle McManus

Inside: Sarah Michelle Gellar, Victoria Beckham, Amy Winehouse, Melanie Sykes.

Stereotypes

More:

The types of articles in this magazine suggests a type of woman through what they think she would be interested in, thus creating a kind of female stereotype. The types of articles included in this magazine are: diet, celebrity gossip, fashion, beauty, men, sex, health and life in general.

Cosmo:

The types of topics covered in this magazine to create a female stereotype are: love, celebrity, shopping, diets, sex, hair colour, friends, jobs, confessions, 'singldom', relationships, what men really think, books, fitness, money, career and travel.

Sexuality

More:

'Why you'll have mind-blowing sex on Tuesday (at exactly 11.45pm)!'

'Ultra sexy looks!'

'Feeling horny?'

'Position of the fortnight'

'Hurrah! New sex toys!'

Cosmo:

'11 sex dreams you need to know about'

'Your quick and steamy encounters'

'What's sexy now?'

'I seduced my own 007 in a speedboat'

'We had sex by the fireplace'

'Secrets to female orgasm'

'Cosmosutra'

In conclusion, *More* magazine's word chains were mainly formed using Hyponym and Meronym. This was the same for *Cosmo*. There was mostly Action process types in *More* - suggesting this magazine is concerned more so with what the female does. In *Cosmo*, the Mental Process type was most frequently used - suggesting this magazine deals with the matters of the mind and what goes on in a woman's brain.

Both of the articles I had chosen from each magazine to demonstrate the six elements of a narrative text, had all six elements. It was easier to pick them out from the *Cosmo* article, as this was a short article and thus the elements were more noticeable. Due to them both being personal stories, the Coda was the most accessible of the six elements.

There was far more intertextuality in *More*, maybe this is because it is a fortnightly magazine and thus relies on what is going on in the music and television scenes more so than *Cosmo*. *More* is more of a 'gossip' magazine than *Cosmo* and thus references the popular more. This also explains why *More* had much more

celebrity orientated material than *Cosmo* and thus, the level of schadenfreude in *More* was higher than in *Cosmo*.

To look into what female stereotypes were housed in both magazines, I looked at what types of words were used on the contents page - in the titles of the features. I found that *More* gave less 'mature' female stereotypes than *Cosmo*. This was because in *Cosmo* there were features on jobs, money and careers, but these did not appear in *More*. *More* seemed more concerned with the sex, men and fashion sides of female identity and interest.

Sexuality seemed more playful in *More*, with features like 'New sex toys!' and 'Position of the fortnight'. *Cosmo* seemed more mature due to features referring to historical books like the Karma Sutra 'Cosmosutra' and taking a more biological standpoint to sex 'Secrets to female orgasm'.

Overall, looking at the use of language in these two magazines highlighted how they work and more so, appeal to women. Their differences were probably due to their different target audience, as *More* is for the older teen / young woman whereas *Cosmo* targets a 20s / 30s age group.