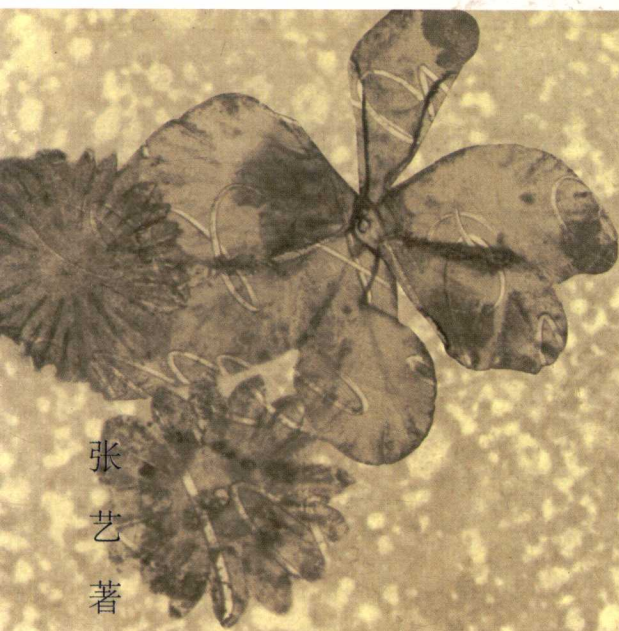


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# 女性杂志中女性身份的

## 话语建构

*Dicursive Construction of Female Identity  
in Women's Magazine*



张 艺 著

山东大学出版社



女性主义与女性主义

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## 前言

本研究旨在探寻相互冲突的意识形态如何体现在女性杂志中的女性身份建构中。具体地说,就是分析女性杂志中权力结构与女性身份话语建构的相互关系。本研究是基于 *Cosmopolitan* 的个案研究。这里的权力关系结构指建构在社会行为者之间的权力关系。*Cosmopolitan* 中的社会行为者包括女性读者、女明星、男性、Cosmo 和专家。这种权力关系结构主要是通过分析概念和人际两个功能来实现的,即通过分析实现他们的语言手段来进行。更进一步说,通过分析比较社会行为者的不同社会行为表征方式,以及社会行为者的不同表征方式来进行。本研究中 *Cosmopolitan* 所建构的女性性别身份与女性主义和消费主义相关,所以比较分析不能只限于女性和男性之间,还应包括其他相关的社会行为者如专家以及 Cosmo 等。

之前的女性性别身份的话语建构研究主要是通过比较男性与女性之间不同的言语行为进行的。对于女性杂志话语中的女性性别身份建构缺乏系统、全面的语言研究。正是在这种背景下,本研究以关注解释文化、社会和语言使用之间关系的系统功能语言学为主要理论基础框架,并引入了以女性主义为立场研究语言的女性文体学。本研究中的话语分析工具包括社会行为表征方式分析和社会行为者表征方式分析。本研究采用了 UAM 统计软件并辅以 Concapp 分析数据库样本。UAM 主要用来标注文本,并为定性分析提供描述数据。Concapp 则用来找寻定位索引和计算关键词出现的频率。

本研究数据库中的 48 篇文本分别选自 *Cosmopolitan* 中的“明星访谈”、“男女关系”、“时尚”和“目录”四个部分。时间跨度为一年,即从 2009 年 4 月到 2010 年 4 月。因为这些文本均采自杂志中的常规栏目,所以它们能从一定程度上代表杂志的总体内容。

社会行为表征方式分析显示,一方面女性读者在所有社会行为者中

权力最小,另一方面同样作为女性的女明星拥有的权力要大得多。扮演的角色不同,*Cosmopolitan* 建构他们的方式也就不同。女明星在物质、心理和话语过程中出现的频率几乎相等,而关系过程的频率最低。作为模板,女明星更多的是通过外部特点来表征。*Cosmopolitan* 杂志多方位地建构女明星,用她们的所做、所想以及所说使它所推广的意识形态合法化。女明星的权力主要表现在话语和关系过程中,而在物质和心理过程中表现较弱。这种建构看似冲突,实际原因是明星不仅是模板,而且也是女性,所以身份建构中既要表现权力又要显现与女性的亲密关系。与之形成对比的是女性读者。她所参与的过程中物质过程占了绝大多数。她绝对活跃,但她的行为所能影响的范围很小,仅限于服饰和她自己的身体。而女性的心理过程则表现为情感化,在话语过程中她们则保持沉默。而在两性关系部分,像“say”、“explain”这一类的言语动词被用在物质过程中。所以可以说女性尽管很活跃,但权力最少。

男性的社会行为主要表现在心理和话语过程中。男性在心理过程中的表现为绝对的情感化,他的情感一般针对女性,他的心理过程也与女性相关。他的话语过程和心理过程对文本提到的事物如服饰和建议起到一种推荐的作用。而专家则被建构成具有绝对的权威,他们绝大多数的社会行为都是话语过程,而且是直接引用的形式。*Cosmo* 的社会行为在绝大多数情况下表现为物质和心理过程,它的身份建构同时体现了权威性和亲密性,因为 *Cosmo* 要与读者建立亲密关系,而作为消费杂志又要对读者表现出权威性。

在社会行为者的表征方式方面,*Cosmopolitan* 通过使用不同的人称代词将社会行为者分为 US 和 THEM 两组。权力建构在距离之上,通过比较各社会行为者与女性间的距离,发现男性距离女性最远,所以相对于女性他们拥有最大权力。因此可以说 *Cosmo*、专家以及女明星是帮助女性得到男性的“工具”。对社会行为者表征方式的分析进一步支持了对社会行为表征的分析,更进一步明确了社会行为者之间的权力关系。

当前的研究验证了为研究女性性别身份所构建的理论系统和分析工具的有效性。本研究可以为研究其他的媒体话语中女性性别身份建构提供理论和方法的支持。

本研究入选 2013 年山东省社会科学规划研究项目。在此对在研究过程中提供指导及帮助的各位专家、同事及学长表示感谢。

张艺

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Context of the problem

With the development of discourse analysis, more and more feminist linguistic studies have been devoted to the discursive construction of gender identities. Feminist linguistics in many ways overlaps with or is related to the principles and assumptions in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Wodak, 1997, p. 7). Both of them distinguish themselves by denying the mimetic view of language as transparent, value-free medium reflecting reality. In this connection, language works as a machine, generating, and as a result, constituting the social world, including social identities and social relations.

The studies of how gender is represented in language take the departure from the assumption that language is not a neutral expression, but a filter of ideology (Ehrlich & King, 1994, p. 60). Feminism tackles women or gender by its general respect for women's own perspective, and, more importantly, pays persistent attention to the workings of power structures where men take greater privilege. Therefore, power is of great importance in the study of gender and language. Spender's (1980) argument that men, in order to maintain their power, use linguistic resources to silence women has become a popular topic in this field. However, the new trend in feminist study, according to Carmeron

(2005, p. 484) is to study gender in specific contexts or communities of practice. This book deals with gender identity in the special genre of media discourse, women's magazines, or in other words, it explores the ways *Cosmopolitan* constructs female identity with regards to power.

The research here takes it as its premise that the female readers of the mainstream women's magazines are potentially vulnerable to the influence of the representations of females in the media. They read the representations as the ideologies of the media, the ideologies of those who have the power to decide what is acceptable, normal, ideal and so on. Such ideologies are handed down and naturalized clearly by a powerful media. Readers of women's magazines, in relation to the production of the various ideologically-laden messages about the female image, are therefore in a relatively weak position.

Broadly speaking, power is conceptualized in terms of unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (and hence the shapes of texts) in particular socio-cultural contexts (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 1). Compared with the reader, *Cosmopolitan* is on the powerful side, but there are advertisers behind it. In order to attract the advertisers, the magazine intentionally cultivates an environment which advertisers will be pleased with. The result of the complex relationship embodied in texts is that the reader is simultaneously constructed as a female and as a consumer and the stars are set as role models. For instance, *Cosmopolitan* creates an image of "a fun and fearless female" in order to appeal to the advertisers (Whitehorne, 1997, p. 82). Therefore, the ideology of "fun and fearless female" is encoded as "permeating linguistic and other semiotic systems" (Martin & Rose, 2003) in *Cosmopolitan* discourse, which result in asymmetries in linguistic choices among the social actors (Poynton, 1989, p. 70). Hence, ideology and power both inherently exist in language use, but ideology is the more fundamental element that constrains the existence and change of power.

As far as the power in this study is concerned, it is defined in terms

of asymmetries between participants in discourse events (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 1). Power relationship in this study, refers to the power structure constructed among the social actors in the discourse, namely, the female, the male, *Cosmo* and the experts. The female in *Cosmopolitan* includes the stars in the section of Interview, and the female reader, being addressed as “you” in the texts. The male refers to the man in relation to the female in texts, being addressed as “he” in the texts, and implying man in general. Apart from the female and the male, two other important groups of social actors are included, namely *Cosmo*, being referred as “we” in the texts, and the experts. In this study, “*Cosmopolitan*” refers to the magazine, while “*Cosmo*” refers to the social actor participating in the construction of female identity in *Cosmopolitan*.

## 1.2 Significance of the present study

The present study attempts to spell out whether the ways of gender identity construction encoded in the women’s magazines are associated with the power of social actors. To accomplish this aim, one specific women’s magazine—*Cosmopolitan* is chosen for qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis.

Discourse analytical approaches take such philosophy in linguistics as their starting point that the access to reality is always through language, where language representations of reality are never mere reflections of pre-existing reality but construction of reality (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, pp. 8-9). The discursive approach to gender identity construction study started in the 1990s, and mainly takes the speech behaviors of women and men and interactions between women and men as its academic endeavors. So far the study of the gender representation in media discourse, namely women’s magazines, is mainly done in the field of cultural and media studies. How gender is represented in women’s magazines is rarely studied systematically and comprehensively



in the field of linguistics.

Against the background of the lack of systematic and comprehensive linguistic studies of construction of gender identity in the discourse of women's magazines, the present study is intended to explore this issue, primarily on the basis of a semantically or meaning oriented theoretical framework—Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). In addition, feminist stylistics is included for it takes feminism as its stance in studying language.

The significances of the study can be summarized as follows: firstly, it may contribute to systematic linguistic studies of how the particular media discourse as reference to *Cosmopolitan* represents and constructs gender identity, by employing multi-disciplinary theories such as SFL and feminist stylistics. Secondly, it may suggest that in connection to gender identity in women's magazines, the male, along with other relevant social actors, makes contribution to the construction of female identity, because women's magazines simultaneously serve as lifestyle consumer magazines, and both female and consumer are the constructed identity for the reader. Thirdly, for a better understanding and illustration, both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in this study. For quantitative analysis, UAM corpus tool is adopted. Qualitative analysis is based on the statistics produced by UAM.

### 1.3 Objectives of the present study

The feminism adopted by women's magazines has been rewritten in order to accommodate consumerism. Hence, the feminism in women's magazines is a comprised one, a “depoliticized” one (Goldman, 1988, p. 32). *Cosmopolitan* therefore, on the one hand, advocates “fun fearless female”, and on the other hand, encourages the female to work on her sexuality to appeal to the male.

This study is aimed to explore how the conflicting ideologies are encoded in the way women's magazines construct gender identity. More

specifically, it deals with the discursive construction of gender identity in relation to the power structure in women's magazines, with special reference to *Cosmopolitan*. The power structure here refers to the relationship constructed by *Cosmopolitan* among the social actors, namely, the female reader, the star, the male, Cosmo and the experts, and it can be illustrated by analyzing the ideational and interpersonal meanings, or by analyzing how they are realized through specific linguistic choices. Comparisons are made among the different social actions attributed to different social actors, and the different ways to represent social actors. Since the identity constructed here is associated with both feminism and consumerism, the comparisons can not be confined to the ones between the female and the male, and they have to be extended to the other relevant social actors such as the experts and Cosmo.

#### 1.4 Definition of identity in the study

The notion of identity is an on-going subject of academic endeavour, often used but rarely defined. It varies from one discipline to another. It is believed that identity has been used in a wrong sense since "some people... tend to reserve the term 'identity' for a sense of self that is relatively continuous and 'fixed' over time" (Gee, 1999, p. 39). Moreover, Ivanic (1998, p. 11) argues that though identity is a useful term, it is "misleadingly singular" and the plural form "identities" is sometimes better, because the plural form captures the idea of people identifying simultaneously with a variety of social groups. Accordingly, one or more of these identities may be highlighted at different times; they are sometimes contradictory, and sometimes interrelated. It is people's diverse identities that constitute the richness and dilemmas of their sense of self.

As the study analyzes the discursive construction of gender identity in women's magazines, we tend to view identities as "the attributions or





ascriptions of others”, emerging from an individual’s different sorts of relationships with others, and changing as their relationships change (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002, p. 7). In terms of gender identity in this study, it is used in a plural sense, and comes from the construction of the particular discourse, *Cosmopolitan*.

#### 1.4.1 Gender identity

The study of gender starts from the feminist criticism of the assumption of binary sexuality that takes the differentiation between the two “sexes” as a natural fact based on the evidence of body representation. However, in addition to the assumption, the feminists also criticize the so-called sex-typical qualities. They argue that these traits, which are employed as justification for the unjust and unequal treatment of women, are actually culturally conditioned rather than biologically determined. According to them, there is actually no evidence for biological female-or male-typical traits:

... the sociologically reasoned view is advocated that the gender roles allotted by society are based on the anatomical difference between the sexes, but that their manifestations evince such enormous difference over different historical eras and in different cultures that the attempt to legitimize them by recourse to “nature” seems untenable and—wherever it is nevertheless undertaken—ideologically highly suspicious...

(Wodak, 1997, p. 2)

As a result, to avoid naturalization of the sex characteristics and attributes, the feminist researchers employ “gender” to distinguish from “sex”. While sex is more biologically determined, gender, or in other words, a cultural sex, takes on a culturally specific form (Wodak, 1997, p. 4). From social constructionist perspective, “feminine” and “masculine” are not what people are but effects they are produced by who they act and talk; “gender is repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which congeal over time to provide the appearance of the substance, of a ‘natural kind of being’”

(Burtler, 1990b, p. 13). For example, when people speak, they have to continually restate identities, continually reposition themselves discursively and remind people of how to take them.

In terms of the gender identity in *Cosmopolitan*, this study takes the social constructionist definition of gender, and tends to believe that repeated attribution of particular social action is one of the ways *Cosmopolitan* constructs gender identity.

#### 1.4.2 Consumer identity

Such magazines as *Cosmopolitan* are also called lifestyle consumer magazines because they offer identity as a style of living and a style that can be performed primarily through consumption—the idea that to have is to be. Theorists of consumer culture believe that members of society take on the ways of relating to the material world of things and to each other through reading lifestyle magazines, watching ads, going shopping and using products. Texts in the consumer culture such as women's magazines stylize or aestheticize everyday life, and encourage people to achieve beautiful or harmonious selves by consuming the right products (Lury, 1996). Thus, identity itself becomes something that is seen as a possession, or something to be owned.

Generally speaking, the key relationship in consumer culture is the one between the “communicator” and the “audience member”, instead of the one between the two private individuals who happens to be filling those roles (Lerman, 1983, p. 75). Both media producers and consumers, then, participate in a media culture that comes into being because of their orientation towards the media texts. All the commercial texts construct particularly institutionalized identities and relations that may have little to do with the selves constructed by their participation in other aspects of their lives (Gergen, 1991, p. 6).

In terms of the female in this study, the female reader is viewed as the potential consumer to the advertisements in *Cosmopolitan*, while the stars are constructed as role models. Such relationship between them only comes into being in *Cosmopolitan*.