

appear, it is in a font large enough to be read comfortably from a distance. This means the space devoted to such text is limiting its content, and so there are various linguistic strategies that have to be used to ensure that the message about the content is succinct but clear. This is what we shall now turn to.

Sentence types – main/minor

The magazine cover needs to cram a lot of information into a relatively small space, using font sizes that are sufficiently large to be read from a distance. Nouns can be extensively premodified, which is a feature of print language rather than spoken language. It serves to summarize a complex concept, and also help build the reader's anticipation of what is coming next.

Toxic stag parties – and the women paid to run them (*Cosmopolitan*, Figure 3.1).

Here, there is no finite verb. 'Paid' is a verb, but this is non-finite in this context because it not clear when the action is to take place (i.e. 'were paid' or 'are paid' or 'will be' all give three different tenses that are equally possible).

The best new gadgets for sculpting rock-hard abs (*Men's Health*, Figure 3.2).

Here again, there is no finite verb, and there is no subject to carry this out. The subject is generally the noun, noun phrase or pronoun that occurs before the verb. As readers, we need to actively read meaning into this minor sentence by inserting a pronoun and verb thus: 'These are the best new gadgets for sculpting rock-hard abs.' In other words, we are actively engaging with interpreting the text.

Sometimes the modification comes after the head noun, such as in a post-modifying prepositional phrase. For example, the glossy food magazine *Olive's* 'Chefs to watch this year' (Figure 3.4) comprises the head noun 'chefs' with the prepositional phrase that is modifying this to give the relevant information.

There is extensive use of elision and ellipsis, frequently omitted determiner. Adjectives are often used in place of determiners. For example, on the cover of *Olive*, addressing a reading position where the relevance of food is secure,

Cold days, hot food

Healthy comfort food that tastes great

Here, the main heading comprises the juxtaposition of cold/hot, in so doing setting up a problem and then offering the solution. The solution is expanded in the subheading with the head word *food* pre-modified with 'healthy comfort'. In both cases, these are minor sentences, heavily weighted in a recognizable lexicon of food, well-being and quality.

Minor sentences often lack a finite verb, but are complete in their intention. Finite verbs carry tense, such as present or past, which gives a clear idea of where something has been completed or when it took place. Because grammatical tense also is related to a subject, this verb can tell us whether an action refers to singular or plural participants.

Sentence functions – declaratives/imperatives/interrogatives, exclamatives

Imperatives appear to lack an explicit subject, but conventionally we understand them to implicitly include the interpreter as the subject. This lack of a specific subject gives a sense of timelessness to the text.

Exclamation marks are punctuation features that are routinely found on magazine front covers. They can be used to convey emotion, give a sense of immediacy and heighten a sense of involvement or inclusiveness for readers. If we think of these in terms of magazine news values, they generally add positivity to the magazine, usually containing a sentiment that is a solution to a perceived problem. For example, '2016's top trends revealed!' (*Olive*, Figure 3.4) implies the magazine is offering readers inside information on previously unknown developments in culinary excellence.

There is a tendency for the use of exclamation marks to be used with less frequency depending not on the linguistic content but on the market for the magazine. For example, if we look at the US-based celebrity gossip magazine, *National Enquirer* for July 2019, the cover features four stories, each of which carries an exclamation mark:

1. Michael Douglas moves into dad's garage!
2. Meg Ryan's dream wedding!
3. Keanu Reeves: inside his private world!
4. What these stars know: Scientology under siege!

In example 1, the exclamation is used to give a heightened sense of surprise: a famous film star is apparently reduced to living in a garage. This juxtaposition of celebrity and mundanity is the underlying surprise that the exclamation point is highlighting. The other examples are less remarkable in their content, with the exclamation mark being used instead to give a sense of immediacy, particularly in the case of example 4, where the Church of Scientology is frequently in the news for its practices, but here the exclamation point is indicating new information. Thus we can see that there is still an attention to positivity and excitement (examples 2 and 3 above), but there is also an additional excitement generated by scandal (examples 1 and 4). Gossip and scandal are more common tropes found in lower-priced magazines, irrespective of subject (news, lifestyle, hobbies, etc.).

In conventional spoken language, we use imperatives sparingly, but in print media, particularly in this case on magazine covers but also integral to advertising language, there is no problem with the absence of softeners such as 'please'. Delin (2000) points out that advertising language rarely uses 'please', and this is a feature of media language that is found on the front cover of magazines. The absence of this softening device acts to make us feel part of a community where the text producers have our best interests at heart and are enthusiastic in relaying this. It is to the creation of this sense of shared community that we will now turn as we look in more detail at the strategies magazines use inside their covers to create a sense of common understanding.

Magazines and synthetic personalization

In looking at how magazines use language to foster community, belonging and shared interest in readers, we will be drawing again on Norman Fairclough's concept of **synthetic personalization**, but focusing in this case on how the notion can be applied to written texts. Synthetic personalization is a way of describing

how media text producers can employ linguistic strategies to encourage their audience to think of themselves as being addressed individually, while at the same time drawing them into a community of interest. As Talbot (2010: 151) explains, synthetic personalization has three facets: the establishment of commonality, the impression of two-way interaction and the use of informal language as a positive politeness strategy. The commercial underpinnings of this strategy are clear from its roots in the advertising language of the twentieth century, as well as its continuing pertinence to advertisers seeking to refine their forms of address (Vesanen, 2007). In fact, magazine language has many similarities with that found in advertising, drawing as it does on strategies of synthetic personalization. As Ellen McCracken has pointed out:

The special-interest magazines often encourage their readers to think of themselves as members of a distinct group linked to certain modes of consumption [...] Because of their commercial goals, the special-interest publications address readers with messages of pseudo-individualised consumption linked to the ideological roles expected of members of such groups.

(McCracken, 1992: 257)

Given the supposed differences in gendered consumption practices as well as discursive communities, we will be looking at how magazines aimed at women differ from those with a primarily male audience. To begin with, though, we will start by looking at certain linguistic features that are common in most magazines.

Common-sense assumptions

So what is the relationship between language and the construction of a community of readers? In his discussion of 'anti-languages', Michael Halliday (1975) shows how shared and exclusive vocabularies can separate and maintain a coherent social group: the construction of alternative vocabularies, shared used of metaphors. As Fairclough (1989) has observed, what are presented as 'common sense' interpretative schematics are required to make the fullest sense of many media texts. In other words, what do the participants in an