

**Men in Women's Worlds:  
Constructions of Masculinity in Women's Magazines**  
**Laura Coffey-Glover (2019)**  
**Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 272pp.**

*Reviewed by Yufei Yan*

Laura Coffey-Glover, lecturer in Linguistics at Nottingham Trent University, has greatly contributed to the studies on gender construction with insightful articles published on the international core journals, such as "Ideologies of masculinity in women's magazines: a critical stylistic approach" (2015). The reviewed book, sharing the same research domain with the above article, covers a sweeping topic and methodology. It examines how masculinity is constructed through language from the perspective of labeling, describing, representing and decoding underpinned by the integration of Critical Stylistics and corpus linguistics techniques. The extensive scope and combined parameters enable this book to stand out and arouse great interest in the fields of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics and gender studies.

The book consists of nine chapters. From my point of view, it can be divided into four parts. The first (chapter 1) specifies some key notions and research aim of this study. The second part (chapters 2 and 3) is a literature review, containing theoretical and empirical researches. The third part (chapters 4 to 8), as the backbone of this book, details quantitative collection and qualitative illustration to unveil linguistic techniques used to perform masculinity in women's magazines. Finally, chapter 9 synthesises the major findings of the previous chapters and provides feasible suggestions for future studies.

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Chapter 1 raises the research aim about masculinity construction in women's magazines and defines some key concepts needed for our understanding of this book, such as gender performativity, indexicality, critical stylistics and its relationships with critical discourse analysis (CDA), among which performativity and indexicality seem to be overreached yet noteworthy definitions to me. In alignment with Judith Butler's emphasis on agency of gender identity (Butler 1990), Coffey-Glover holds that gender is produced by our action or performance rather than an innate property. As for indexicality, it refers to the application of both specific lexis and abstract gendered meaning words to construe different gender identity, which reinforces the relationship between linguistic item and gender construction. Thus, Coffey-Glover makes clear these unfamiliar terms and lays a solid theoretical foundation for later case studies.

Chapter 2 presents relevant studies about language and gender. Coffey-Glover first schematises the '3D' model (i.e. *deficit*, *dominance* and *difference*) popularised in the previous works used to address differences in gendered speech. However, she points out that the 3D model dwells on the binary opposition in gender identity through language use without taking the overall relationship into account. Diversified approaches should be involved in constructing and representing gendered meaning in discourse analysis, such as corpus linguistics, feminist critical stylistic analysis, multimodal analysis, etc. Distinguished from all above research fields, Coffey-Glover manages to explore the significance of language itself in constructing masculinity. She advocates that 'the reader is more likely to be able to make links between linguistic form and ideological meaning' (page 72).

Chapter 3 is entitled 'Women's and Men's Magazines'. Contrary to the expectation of a comparative approach as to the distribution of gendered discourse in two distinct magazines, this chapter attempts to identify a systemic review of some key empirical works on women's and men's magazines from various disciplines and themes, such as the construction of femininity as a consumerist product, the stylistic form of women's magazines, the construction of heterosexuality, etc. Coffey-Glover further discusses the relationship between masculinity and men's magazines, in which the introduction about New Laddism is verified to conform with masculinity in women's magazines.

Chapters 4–8 detail the analytical process of this study. Data collection, corpus construction and major analytical tools are elaborated in chapter 4. The representativeness and validity of data serve to be indisputably based on the far-ranging inclusion of different text and magazine genres. Additionally, the readers are allowed to applaud for Coffey-Glover's meticulous observation and practice. She is acutely aware of possible exclusion of con-

textual parameters and resorts to a manual method to supplement the deficiency in corpus analysis. Unfortunately, the researcher's personal intuition during the retrieval of specific terms may deprive the data of objectivity and authenticity.

Chapter 5 engages readers with the strategies of naming and describing, through which writers succeed in sketching male masculinity and heterosexual identity in order to expose ideological potential underlying women's magazines. Coffey-Glover categorises male-oriented lexis into three types: common nouns, body part nouns and adjectives, each of which encompasses more fine-grained sub-types. For instance, it is found that social roles and occupations within the category of common nouns are most frequently used in identifying men's qualities 'in relation to their personality and behavior, rather than physical appearance or mental attributes' (page 118), such as emergency service and police force, in which men construe stereotypical identity corresponding with conventional masculine chauvinism.

Chapter 6 looks at the ways of equating and contrasting in delineating 'good man' and 'bad man'. More specifically, three types of equivalence (appositional, intensive relational and metaphorical equivalence) and superordinate opposition (good/bad opposition) function to illustrate men's internal attributes (page 124). What impresses me most is that Coffey-Glover relates male sexuality to the conceptual metaphors 'MEN ARE ANIMALS and MEN ARE FOOD' (page 131) to reify men's negative aggression or ideal attractiveness. Such vivified interpretations not only simplify complicated gender, but help to eliminate readers' barriers in comprehending the ideological impact imposed by gender polarisation.

Complementary to the focus on the role of lexical meaning in chapters 5 and 6, chapters 7 and 8 deal with grammatical representation in constructing male personality. Chapter 7 opens up the introduction of Simpson's transitivity model, which is distinguished from Halliday's framework with consideration of critical stylistic approach. The remainder of this chapter scrutinises distributive frequency of different processes and its comprehensive explanation. However, Coffey-Glover only discusses the transitivity system operated in male agency, leaving aside female participation. To clarify distinctive features in gender construction, especially male dominance and female marginalisation, a further comparative study should be conducted for more convincing representation and evidence.

In the last analytical chapter, Coffey-Glover shows us convincing ways to interpret the ideology of masculinity in women's magazines: presupposition and implicature. Specific analysis is situated with five distinct notions explored in discourses of masculinity – that is, 'men are carnally driven; beautification processes index femininity, not masculinity; men are

naturally aggressive; heterosexuality is normative; men are the dominant partner in relationships' (page 194) – which comply with our traditional perception of gender image and practice.

This book concludes in chapter 9 with an intensive amalgamation of major findings in the previous chapters. Subsequently, Coffey-Glover reiterates the applicability and efficiency to correlate critical stylistics with corpus analytical tools, and provides multiple perspectives for further research.

To sum up, this book makes a pleasant and clarifying reading, with its detailed and professional explanation of some obscure terms. In addition, Coffey-Glover makes an innovative breakthrough in combining feminist critical stylistics and corpus linguistics in gender research. Such an analytical micro perspective thoroughly expounds the ways in which the ideological potential of masculinity works to encode male identity in women's magazines. It also sheds new light on the interpretation of gender relations and can be employed in various sex-oriented discourses, which enables readers to reflect upon sexual relationships in actual life. Nevertheless, a salient limitation of this book is the pure linguistic nature of Coffey-Glover's analysis. Further attention about masculinity construction should be extended into the analysis on modality, transitivity, metaphor, multimodality, etc. Overall, this book, as Coffey-Glover's latest publication, will undoubtedly promote more discussion on gender studies and appeal to those who show glaring interest in discourse analysis, sociology, stylistics, corpus linguistics and gender relations studies.

## References

- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Coffey-Glover, L. (2015) Ideologies of masculinity in women's magazines: a critical stylistic approach. *Gender and Language* 9(3): 337–64. <https://doi.org/10.1558/genl.v9i3.17360>