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INFORMATIVE AND FORMAL FEATURES OF THE
ELECTRONIC WOMEN’S MAGAZINE

Dolores Dordzhievna Khalgaeva (a)*, Svetlana Valerievna Mandzhieva (a),
Svetlana Ilinichna Mandzhieva (a), Ervena Anatolievna Kalykova (a),
Zhanna Nikolaevna Sarangaeva (a)
*Corresponding author

(a) Kalmyk State University named after B.B. Gorodovikov, 11, Pushkin Str., Elista, Russia, english@kalmsu.ru,

Abstract

The paper studies the distinctive features of an electronic women’s magazine, its informative and formal peculiarities. Due to the shift of the audience towards the media industry, the format of publication is focused on the concept of the addressee. The appearance of magazines focusing on purely female topics is considered as a noticeable phenomenon of modern Russian periodical press, although the concept of a “women’s magazine” is still quite debatable. The opinions of researchers differ in the coverage of typological aspects of magazine periodicals for women. Nevertheless, when there are different approaches to the typology of women’s magazines, many researchers distinguish a range of elitist publications, also called prestigious, glossy, pathetic, fashionable, glamorous publications for well-to-do women (*Vogue*), fashion magazines (*Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*), etc. The women’s glossy press functions according to three well-developed mechanisms: seduction, entertainment and manipulation; it is represented mainly by “templates”, “clones” of foreign women’s publications working according to strictly specified writing methods and having a set of universal topics. The analyzed material showed that many materials in these magazines are based on translated articles based on foreign realities and only to a certain extent adapted to Russian life. These magazines are a translated version of a foreign original, or have a number of materials on Russian topics, or represent new Russian-language publications with a foreign name. Electronic women’s magazines are characterized by an impressive volume of creolized texts, high quality of technical performance, rich illustrative material and a large percentage of advertising.

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Keywords: Electronic, female, magazine, glamour, informative, formal



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1. Introduction

Spectacularity and festivity as the most striking characteristics of printed publications of women's magazines get even more of their degree in modified electronic versions due to the latest technical capabilities that turn them into art galleries. Undoubtedly, in creolized texts, illustration is the leading spectacular element, however, the meaning of the text is also important, since illustration is always accompanied by text materials used to varying degrees of completeness. These are either outlines under photo materials, or short texts-inserts in a slideshow, or a text exposition preceded by a photo gallery. Besides, texts may have a more or less independent meaning, the photo complements and illustrates this material. Secular news reflects all the main thematic sections of the magazine and is built as news feed in an information publication.

2. Problem Statement

The subject-thematic format of the publication allows choosing the media the aspect of displaying a particular topic (politics, economics, sports, etc.), based on both the desire to serve or influence a certain audience, and the filling of a free subject-thematic niche in the media market.

3. Research Questions

The study set the following tasks:

- To consider the distinctive features of an electronic women's magazine;
- To identify substantive and formal features of an electronic women's magazine.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of compositions in electronic magazine websites to identify their content and formal features

5. Research Methods

The study utilized the methods of conceptual and interpretative analysis, introspection.

6. Findings

Glossy magazines have become an integral part of modern life. It is an illustrated periodical printed publication of high printing quality and a wide variety of topics. Such magazines are designed to entertain the reader, therefore, avoiding serious topics, create the illusion of an eternal feast of life, the illusion of the accessibility of "glamorous life" (Sleptsova, 2008). It is noteworthy that glamour is associated with foreign magazines, and, above all, with *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*. According to researchers, it was the magazines that became the channel for importing glamour into Russian reality and culture, and moreover, gave impetus to the development of Russian glamour periodical press (Kaminskaya & Shmeleva, 2009).

The researchers state that the glossy magazine is a leisure media of mass culture designed to reduce the excess of free time, i.e. the leading positive function of the glossy magazine is entertainment – filling leisure time: relieving stresses, distracting the reader from pressing problems, which are currently not possible to solve (Ashinova, 2015).

An illustration plays a special role in the glossy magazine. It is a visual code that builds a system of symbolic values: aesthetic, moral, social, gender and others. The glossy magazine quite visually shows a model of imitation, the generally recognized version of fashion (Soley-Beltran, 2004). Nevertheless, illustrations, even in glossy magazines, almost always require text support: the narrative ability of illustrations is enhanced by verbal features. Advertising is the main income of such magazines. Most of the visual information is represented by the advertising material turning the entire magazine into a kind of an advertising catalog of consumer goods, where all advertising products are a world of luxury (Sleptsova, 2008).

According to Roginskaya (2004), we may talk about the existence of two main typical discourses of the female “glamour”: the discourse of private life (in magazines like *Cosmopolitan*) and glamorous discourse, the key for which are the concepts of fashion, style and secularism (in magazines like *Vogue*).

Developed electronic women’s magazines are distinguished by simple, but at the same time memorable graphic design: easy-to-read text blocks, logos, emblematic, animation elements combined into one corporate style for all portals and attached pages. Text headings and subheadings on the portal home page function as links to materials. Almost every word and visualization is a reference to either the materials of this publication or the code by which this resource is searched on the network. Links posted on the main web page are usually a means of moving to a nested system of texts, links to archive materials and links to external network resources (Slovikovskaya, 2001).

Since online publications operating exclusively on the Internet have no printed analogues, for example, WWoman, MyJane.ru, WomanMagazine.ru, etc., electronic publications represent the Internet versions of printed magazines, for example, *Lisa*, *Cosmopolitan*, etc. New electronic technologies have changed the media industry: a new type of products reproduced by the screen was introduced to the audience (Yermolenkina & Kostyashina, 2015).

In this regard, in our opinion, the online versions of *Vogue* magazine are especially distinguished.

Let us compare the home pages of the English (American) and Russian versions. These are truly luxurious stacked portal windows, their thematic breakdown repeats the heading of the printed magazine.

Subscribe fashion beauty parties culture fashion shows videos voguepedia magazine promotions
www.vogue.ru.

Fashion Fashion shows Store Beauty Accessories Parties VOGUE TV Magazine.

Indeed, as we see, the fundamental topics of a magazine that positions itself as the “fashion bible” coincide: fashion, fashion shows, beauty, parties, magazine, although there are differences: for example, in the Russian version there is no special section videos, which is replaced by the section VOGUE TV; similarly, there are no Subscribe, culture, voguepedia, promotions sections while a special Accessories section is highlighted; in the English version, it is a subsection of accessories under fashion shows. Each showcase section is a variety of new subsections, which may also not match or partially match in both versions. For example:

- fashion (vogue daily, 10 best dressed, guides, most wanted, 5 days 5 looks 1 girl, street style, astrology) and, accordingly, fashion (News; VOGUE Live; VOGUE choice; Trends; street style; Modeling business; Who is who; Video);
- fashion shows (fashion shows home, accessories, latest fashion shows) – fashion shows (Resort (year); Autumn-winter (year); Couture spring-summer (year); Menswear autumn-winter (year); Pre-Fall (year); Spring-summer (year); Menswear spring-summer (year); Video);
- parties (all parties, fashion week, the met gala) – parties (Photo; Video; Table Talk; Current Events).

The culture section, which does not stand out as a separate section in the Russian-language version of *Vogue*, in the English-language magazine includes the following topics: film & TV, books, art, theater, music, profiles & platforms, homes, travels & lifestyle, weddings.

A distinctive feature of the magazine is its simple but memorable graphic design. The optimality achieved by a balanced proportion of text blocks, animations and illustrations is fully applicable to electronic versions of *Vogue*.

The website of the Russian-language version of the magazine is designed as follows. The first line indicates the interests of the magazine: Vogue – fashion, fashion shows, shop, beauty, accessories, parties, VogueTV, magazine. A remarkable detail attracts attention in the design: the word “Russia” is written in the internal space of the letter “O” in the name of the magazine. All materials are accompanied by photo illustrations that occupy most of the screen space. In other cases, photo illustrations may be deployed in the photo gallery. For example, a photo and a title-link leading to an introductory article and a photo gallery are placed under the heading “Fashion” (“News” topic). As in this case, the magazine’s website focuses on surprisingly colorful and highly artistic audiovisual materials (for example, photo galleries or photo shoots), in which the text plays a secondary role in explaining the images.

According to the researchers, the electronic version of the publication is not a copy of the printed issue, which is associated, first of all, with the technological capabilities of updating materials that are adapted to the same for their perception on the computer screen, with a multiple increase in the amount of information, including due to hyperlinks that expand the information field. In addition to the materials published in the printed issue, the sites contain archives of publications, additional articles on current topics, ratings and forums.

According to Atabekova (2004), differences in the linguistic design of English and Russian-language sites are associated with different frequency of use of linguistic units and with a discrepancy in the content of grammatical categories in two languages and reflect the ethnocultural specifics of linguistic presentation of the cognitive activity of an individual. Thus, the functioning of the language on English-language web pages is more personally and socially oriented, focused on the addressee, aimed at interactivity, the information is presented in dynamics and is characterized by its qualitative originality. A distinctive feature of the structure of hypertext as a specific speech communication of a product in the environment of electronic communication in relation to the usual linear text, Atabekova (2004) calls the necessary simultaneous deployment of parallel and chain types of communication between constitutive units of hypertext. As she notes, these hypertext characteristics are common to speech communication on

English and Russian-language web pages. However, in the structure of the English hypertext, the percentage of emotionally rhetorical components is higher.

Let us continue the comparative analysis and consider the home page of the English-language and Russian-language versions of the Glamour magazine website: Glamour.com and Glamour.ru.

In the menu, the first line indicates the topics (or interests) of the magazine:

Glamour.com: Fashion Beauty Celebs & TV Sex & Love Weddings Health & Diet Get Inspired Video.

Glamour.ru: stars, fashion, beauty, fitness and diets, relations, horoscopes, competitions, forum, shopping.

Already at the magazine primary lead level the versions are different. So, in the Russian version there are no such headings as Weddings, GetInspired, Video; in the American version, in turn, there are no headings of horoscopes, contests, forum, shopping. Sex & Love corresponds to a relationship section.

The editorial board of the Glamour.ru site gives the following brief description of the concept and format of product: “Glamour.ru is a daily updated resource about stars, fashion and beauty. The reader of Glamour.ru is a modern young lady who wants to be aware of all the latest news in the world of fashion and show business, current trends and innovations in the beauty industry. In other words, she wants to be the first and Glamour.ru helps her with that.

The Glamour.ru website contains exclusive video reports from secular events, detailed photo galleries, dynamic news, and recent news of the fashion and beauty industry. All the details of the life of celebrities, their successes and failures, meetings and breakups, fashionable experiments and discoveries – everything immediately appears in the news feed of Glamour.ru. In blogs, the editors of the magazine share the secrets of Glamour stylists, analyze the fashionable mistakes of stars, suggest everyday fashion solutions. Glamour.ru forum is a platform for an exchange of views between almost 10,000 users. Weekly contests, as well as materials of the printed version of the magazine occupy not the last place on the site.

News headlines are explained in subtitles. This refers to celebrities from the Western fashion world and stars. News is presented in the form of simple narrative sentences; foreign names are given in transcription, the names of fashion brands remain without translation. The heading “Stars” attracts attention, for example, with the announcement of a self-portrait. It shall be noted that only one of approximately nine news is local, and the names of Russian celebrities (secular characters) already appear here. Besides, in local news there are no translations of phrases such as public talk, fashion editor, fashion industry, which once again indicates the foreign origin of these words and their place in a fashion discourse.

For comparison, let us also consider the websites of the Russian and American versions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine: www.cosmopolitan.com and www.cosmo.ru.

Cosmopolitan women’s magazine | Fashion, style, beauty, relations www.cosmo.ru/ (Reports from fashion shows on the best catwalks in the world. Information from fashion weeks, trends, recent fashion shows. Interview with designers). The information about the forum is separately shown on the site: Forum Cosmo (Forum Cosmo – Showbiz – There is a problem...); as well as the section “Sex & Love” (News, articles and services of the “Sex and Love” section).

Let us compare it with the information on the British version: *Cosmopolitan* UK: Fashion, Hair & Beauty, Sex and Relationships www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/ (*Cosmopolitan* is the lifestyle list for millions of fun fearless females who want to be the best they can in every sphere of their lives, with information on relationships (McMahon, 1990).

In the Russian version, the first line announces the directions of the magazine: Fashion, sex & love, beauty & health, stars, psychology & career, *Cosmo* world, entertainment & hobby. On the first page there is news under the heading: *Cosmonews*.

It shall be noted that in comparison with glamour.ru, where almost all the news was devoted to foreign, and more often to American stars, on cosmo.ru two of the four news may be devoted to local celebrities, one to Americans and one to European celebrities. However, even if we are talking about a domestic product, the material is not without the use of borrowed vocabulary, for example: franchise, online casting, producer and others.

Thus, we may notice that the site cosmo.ru posted more local and European news. *Cosmopolitan* is one of the first foreign women's magazines in the domestic market, and, apparently, is more adapted to the interests of the Russian-speaking audience than *Glamour*, a magazine of approximately the same class, but which appeared much later in Russia.

7. Conclusion

A comparative analysis of the composition of sites shows that both English and Russian sites reflect the main trends of hypertext towards interactivity, informational richness through links, and the use of all types of media. In general, Russian sites of women's magazines follow the format of the originals, while at the same time differing in a number of significant features, which allows referring to the phenomenon of glocalization. In this regard it shall be noted that the choice of a set of mandatory magazine topics on Russian sites is to some extent caused by local interests (especially noticeable in *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*, in *Glamour* – to a lesser extent), although the content of some materials (especially with regard to secular news about celebrities) is so-called transnational (i.e. American) in nature. According to the form of representation, these materials also follow the specified genre standards; the secondary nature of Russian-language texts is also manifested in English-language borrowings, inclusions of foreign-language words and phrases and a somewhat artificial style.

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