

**Build up or shrink down? Critical Discourse
Analysis on Healthism and Gender Bias in Women's
and Men's Health Magazines**

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Master's Thesis

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This thesis examines two online articles, one from the Women's Health magazine and one from the Men's Health magazine, describing healthy food items and behaviours. The aim of this study is to uncover whether these articles present underlying healthist and gendered ideologies in their linguistic features and whether the information provided in the articles upholds or challenges the current Western cultural norms.

The method used in the study is a modified version of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis method that reveals the ideological beliefs in the texts by examining different linguistic features used in the data. These beliefs are made visible by analysing three different value sets (experiential, relational, and expressive values) of the vocabulary items and by examining the textual structures of the data, and the wider socio-cultural context that the texts appear in.

The results of the analysis show that both articles promote gendered ideals of health and healthism. The Men's Health article promoted masculine coded health behaviours such as volume eating and pleasure, whereas the Women's Health article elevated health behaviours that are stereotypically feminine such as eating less and choosing unprocessed and natural ingredients. This separation of healthy behaviours based on gender shows that the categorisations of what behaviours and foods are healthy is based on ideological beliefs i.e. healthism. Based on these findings the study highlights the increased need of writers to be aware of possible biases aiding their writing as well as the necessity for both readers and writers to practice media literacy.

Key words: Healthism, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Gender politics, Gender linguistics, Magazines, Ideology, Ideological values

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List of abbreviations

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

MH Men's Health

UMLS the Unified Medical Language System

WH Women's Health

1 Introduction

Healthism is an ideology that claims that individuals have the moral obligation to take care of their health and actively pursue better health by making “better” and “healthier” choices in their daily lives (Crawford 1980, 365). This is a ubiquitous ideology that is visible in discourses of our everyday lives, as individuals and different government bodies discuss “pursuing health and/or healthy lifestyles, achieving health, having responsibility for and/or being responsible with respect to health” daily (Cheek 2008, 974). As such health as a concept has transformed into something that is no longer just the absence of disease but a central part of our everyday lives and something to take into consideration in all decision making (Cheek 2008, 974).

In this paper I investigate how healthism is linguistically present in two magazine articles concerning healthy eating. One article from *Women’s Health* titled “40 ‘Healthy’ Foods That Nutritionists Never Eat” is specifically aimed at female audiences (De Bellefonds, Brady and Miller 2021). The other from *Men’s Health* called “31 Ways to Make 2022 Your Healthiest (And Most Delicious) Year Ever” targets male audiences (Kita 2022). This split into two – gendered – target audiences adds a layer of possible gender bias in reporting which is another interest of this study. Both healthism as an ideology and gender biases in discourse are issues concerning social hierarchies and power dynamics, both of which are topics of interest often associated with critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA). Because of this association I examine the subject within a CDA frame and see whether the contents of the magazine articles differ depending on the assumed target audience. I also investigate whether the articles use different linguistic techniques to guide the reader in forming their opinions, and in essence, selling the idea that healthy eating habits should depend on the gender of the reader. I do this by utilising a method created by Norman Fairclough that was introduced in his book called *Language and Power* (2001) that is now regarded as one of the classics in the field of linguistics under the branch of critical discourse studies.

The focus of the research is to compare the information given in the magazine articles on how healthy food is marketed to women and men and whether this supposedly gender-neutral idea of healthy living is actually presented differently based on assumed gender identities. I also investigate the power dynamics within the articles and possible power imbalances between the writers and readers of the magazines with the help of the method mentioned above. This area of study is highly important as the need for critical media literacy is higher than ever and

many studies have already found that healthism is highly prevalent in news and magazine articles and their impact on the readers' wellbeing has been unfortunately negative (Ross Arguedas 2020; Boukes and Vliegenthart 2017; Declerq 2018; Fuller, Briggs and Dillon-Sumner 2013; Hanganu-Bresch 2020; Roy 2008).

The ever changing diet culture we live in is nowadays often veiled as simply "healthy habits", but this rhetoric can still be quite harmful if media literacy is not practised. In addition, the constant pursuit to be as healthy as possible has been found to contribute to the rising instances of eating disorders (Ross Arguedas 2020, 3). Therefore, critical discourse analysis on healthism and news related to the topic require further scrutiny to combat its likely harmful outcomes. Additionally, healthism contributes to hierarchical thinking and placement of people in a hierarchy of righteousness and worthiness depending on their health status and whether they are actively trying to better their health or not. As such healthist discourses fail to consider a person's lack of agency over the outcome of their health status (e.g. a person born with type 1 diabetes might never be considered "healthy" by some standards) creating societal power imbalances. Therefore studying this aspect of CDA further could benefit many people's lives by providing information about the negative consequences that healthism can have on people's everyday lives by making these issues more visible so change is made possible. The research questions for this paper are as follows:

1. What kinds of ideologies about healthy foods are detectable in the picked articles, and do they differ depending on the assumed gender of target audience members?
2. Which linguistic features show these underlying ideologies?
3. How do these divisions or similarities reproduce or challenge the current healthist and gendered social norms and practices?

I hypothesise that the magazines uphold the current division into masculine and feminine health behaviours and foods based on their assumed effect on the body (e.g. low-calorie food and weight loss is feminine, calorie dense foods are masculine), even though what is healthy is often thought to be independent from gender. I expect the outcome of the analysis to show clear ideological differences between what are considered healthy foods for men compared to women, and that "healthy" also has different meanings for these two genders.

Chapter 2 of this paper introduces the intersection of healthism and different cultural norms, and how they affect our perception of health. In this chapter I will first introduce the concept

of healthism in further detail, and the studies done on healthism. In Section 2.2 I will present the intersection of journalism and healthism, and the studies that show the presence and effect of healthism in news and magazines. Lastly in 2.3, I will introduce Western, and more specifically American gender norms and how in previous studies they have been shown to affect our perceptions of health. In Chapter 3 I will present important background information on CDA and the key concepts of the CDA method used in this paper. Chapter 4 focuses on the materials and methods of this study, and in Chapter 5 I analyse the magazines using the method introduced in Chapter 3. In Chapter 6 I discuss my findings and compare them to the previous studies that were presented in Chapter 2 and propose some future study ideas. Finally, in Chapter 7 I will conclude the most important findings of this paper.

2 Intersection of Healthism and Cultural Norms

In this section I will give some general background information to the topics of interest in this study. Firstly, I will introduce the concept of healthism and the related studies. Secondly, I will explain how magazine culture has been shown to perpetuate healthist beliefs and how that relates to this study. Lastly, I will explain what American social and gender norms are, how they affect the way we view food and health, and why these norms are relevant for this study.

2.1 Healthism

The term healthism was originally coined in the 1980s by Robert Crawford who described it as an ideology that upholds the idea that having good health is a moral obligation and an individual's responsibility to take care of themselves (Crawford 1980, 368). This ideology therefore elevates "healthy" individuals as more morally sound than "unhealthy" individuals, and centres individual action as the main reason for one's health status (Crawford 1980, 368). Issues with healthism arise as one considers that not all people can act to better their health, or possibly even want to. Especially this latter statement of not prioritising one's health is seen as a problem within the healthist ideology since, as was mentioned before, this type of rhetoric sees inaction as a moral failure that might then result in social out casting, othering and even worse job prospects (Barker-Ruchti et al. 2013, 768; Powroznik 2017, 139).

On the other hand, complying with healthist ideals has been found to help raise social status (Barker-Ruchti et al. 2013, 767–768). A 2016 study also found similar results where adhering to healthist beliefs was seen as morally responsible, and those who failed in "achieving" health viewed themselves as "complete failures" (Kristensen, Lim and Askegaard 2016, 495). This was especially prominent amongst women and in regard to food choice and food consumption (ibid.). Additionally, general societal compliance with healthist ideals has been linked to increased cases of discrimination, negative stereotyping and justifications of prejudice (Powroznik 2017, 160–161).

What this type of healthist rhetoric often fails to consider is the difficulty to determine what health actually means and how it shows in people's lives. Healthism dismisses predetermined parts of health (e.g. genetics) that a person cannot change through action as well as an individual's own opinion of the state of their health, as the sole focus of healthist discourse is on individual action and how it aesthetically shows on the body (Roy 2008, 465). Previous

studies show that people rely on outside opinion and guidance in regard to their health and how they should address it: in a 2008 study Stephannie C. Roy found that women's magazines defined health issues for their readers to offer solutions to these newly created problems (ibid.). Food and nutrition advice and commentary on celebrities' bodies in health and fitness magazines have also been linked to the spread of eating disorders and overall worse mental health (Hanganu-Bresch 2020, 314).

Hanganu-Bresch also found in their study that there is a prominent belief (especially in Western societies) that there is no such thing as eating "too healthy" which contributes to healthism and invalidates the experiences of many who struggle to fit into the narrow yet ambiguous description of a healthy individual praised by a healthist society (2020, 314). Previous studies have also found that there is a distinct gendered layer to healthism (Barker-Ruchti et al. 2013, 766; Bouvier and Chen 2021, 348). This shows, for example, in discourse where men and women are given different advice on how to take care of their health (e.g. men should focus on getting enough protein and women should watch out for too many calories), even though there is little proof that gender affects what is healthy for an individual (Monge-Rojas, Fernández and Smith-Castro 2020, 293). This type of health advice also fails to consider marginalised people who do not clearly fit into a given gender identity. I hypothesise that what is promoted to men or women in the magazine articles as healthy food options are different, and this is in itself problematic and a sign of healthism. I will discuss this gendered aspect of healthism and how it shows in Western societies in Section 2.3.

2.2 The intersection of digital news culture and healthism in magazines

In critical discourse studies in particular, it is important to consider the historical and social context of the data that is under analysis because context is what gives any text its meaning and affects the way we interpret the text (Hussein 2016, 88). Therefore, in the case of this thesis what should be noted before conducting the analysis, is the social and historical context of both the magazines and health reporting in general, as well as their interconnection to gendered social norms.

Nowadays an increasing number of people get their news online around the globe and a 2020 survey found that Americans get their news mostly from online sources with social media in the lead followed by news websites (Mitchell et al. 2020, 3). This is of particular interest in this paper, as the magazines under analysis are of American origin and are available online. As was seen with healthism, soft news consumption is also on the rise and these two societal

trends are currently deeply interconnected especially in regard to reporting on food (Declercq 2018, 393). In fact, magazines do not function solely as impartial conveyors of information but instead, they actively reflect, shape and strengthen societal conceptions regarding health and that especially women's magazines have an important part on healthist and possibly misogynistic discourse (Roy 2008, 466). Additionally, another study found that the popularisation of concepts like "healthy is the new thin" by the media contributes to the cultural spread of healthism (Hanganu-Bresch 2020, 314).

Additionally, it should be noted that news can be categorised into either hard or soft news depending on their topic, focus, and style (Reinemann 2011, 231). For example, if the topic of the news concerns political affairs, the focus is on public outcomes and the style is impersonal, the news is categorised as hard news, and if not, the news would be considered soft (Declercq 2018, 396). According to this categorisation, the magazine articles in this paper are considered soft news as the topics are not politically relevant, the foci are on private life, and the articles include opinions, and so are personal and emotional style wise. It is necessary to highlight that because magazines – such as the ones under analysis in this thesis – fall under the umbrella of soft news, they make up a considerable part of news consumption and therefore can have high influence in people's lives. Connected to this, one study found that soft news was more likely to elicit stronger negative emotions than hard news and that higher consumption rates of soft news correlated with worse mental well-being (Boukes and Vliegthart 2017, 140–143). So, it is worth acknowledging how these types of news have been shown to perpetuate healthist beliefs.

Western media has, and continues to play a large part in normalising these healthist discourses and healthist ideals by redefining and pushing the boundaries of what it means to be healthy in these normalised and ever pervasive healthist discourses (Cheek 2008, 974–975). Other studies have also found that the media enforces healthist beliefs and frequently subjects obese bodies to derogatory portrayals and so perpetuates the spread of healthism and increased health anxieties (Ross Arguedas 2020, 3; Kristensen, Lim and Askegaard 2016, 489). Connectively, it has been found that in health journalism there is a challenge of accuracy in the interpretation and conversion of scientific research into intriguing news coverage and that performing this translation inaccurately could lead to distortions in the general public's "perceptions of biomedical knowledge and reality" (Declercq 2018, 394). Yet, especially women's magazines influence our perceptions of what constitutes good health and how it can be attained even though the health information is likely to be incorrect or distorted (Roy 2008,

463; Hanganu-Bresch 2020, 315). Additionally, a common thread that was found was that women's magazines tended to "instruct women directly about their health-related responsibilities" and emphasised adverse effects that "inaction or incorrect action" would have if the reader does not follow the given instructions in the articles (Roy 2008, 463, 469).

Additionally, news articles are essentially products meant to be consumed, which connects to the fact that health related articles have been found to create additional problems for the readers and are then selling solutions to these new problems (Cheek 2008, 974). This type of rhetoric is very healthist in nature as magazine articles about health are often written from the perspective that there is a health issue that the reader must want to correct. For example, the article might claim that eating some food ingredient might result in weight gain and therefore it should be left out of one's diet, assuming here that the reader must want to lose weight to begin with. This type of writing may reinforce healthist ideals and might be especially harmful to many consumers, as the readers are likely to be in a vulnerable place if they are seeking health-promoting information (Seale 2003, 517). This is especially true for media representations of food as food is commonly written about only in terms of risk to one's health and so these representations turn something crucial for life into something that can kill (Seale 2003, 520).

Similar to this paper, one CDA study has found that women's and men's magazines have been shown to perpetuate gendered healthist ideologies in food choice and health advice e.g. through different recommendations depending on the assumed gender of the audience (Fuller, Briggs and Dillon-Sumner 2013, 261). Another study found that women's magazines reinforce healthism in their discourse and shape and reflect a narrow predominant discourse on both health and femininity (Roy 2008, 472–474). The most prevalent themes that the study found in women's magazines was to be vigilant and careful of their health choices, creating a sense of urgency and advising readers to exercise self-control (Roy 2008, 468). The magazines also used militaristic language to inspire readers to "fight for good health" and both explicitly and implicitly stated that the readers are responsible for their own health status (Roy 2008, 468). Adhering to these demands was also found to be connected to demonstrate "moral worthiness as a citizen and woman" (Roy 2008, 468).

The same study found that women's magazines function "as guidebooks for women" reinforcing patriarchal gender norms and how to be a woman, and by extension, men's magazines fill the same role for men (Roy 2008, 463–464). For example, women's magazines

have been found to frame the responsibility of health of the whole family as the woman's job, a patriarchal stereotype (Roy 2008, 473). Therefore the studies presented in this section lead to the hypothesis that the magazine articles in this study are also highly likely to exhibit healthist and gendered ideological beliefs that are in alignment with the predominating cultural norms regarding healthy eating habits. The aim of this study is to add valuable and precise information into this research on gendered healthist beliefs perpetuated by the media by examining healthist rhetoric more closely through qualitative analysis. Therefore I expect to find specific linguistic features in my data that contribute a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of healthism in magazine articles with added contextual understanding that compliments the previous quantitative research done on the topic.

2.3 American social and gender norms

The target audience of the Men's Health and Women's Health magazines are affluent Western (American) men and women, respectively (Men's Health 2019; Women's Health n.d.). Because the target audience is mainly Western - and American - people, the analyst needs to consider the historical background (what has been said about the topic before) and current state of the issue i.e. socially prevalent gender norms and health behaviours in American society at the time of the analysis. This information is likely to guide the writing of the authors' of the magazine articles and therefore these norms are also likely to appear in the articles in some way.

Healthism is highly pervasive especially in Western societies and has been for centuries. The Western diet culture has its roots in Christian puritanism which rejected all forms of "corruption" which showed in food culture by wanting to separate Christian foods from the "dirty things" that Indigenous people ate (Martel 2011, 83). One's identity was also believed to be dependent on a person's diet, and therefore e.g. Indigenous foods were viewed as dirty and poisonous to white Christians (Martel 2011, 86). In fact, the current culture still often categorises foods into healthy or unhealthy depending on their perceived level of cleanness and naturalness (Allen, Dickinson and Prichard 2018, 2). Nowadays healthism manifests in many forms but is still underpinned by old issues like "how to avoid death, how to view and respond to risk and how to remain in "an ever-vigilant state" to find perfection (Cheek 2008, 974). Being healthy has therefore achieved a sacred status in many Western societies and being healthy is equalised with being a worthy and responsible individual (ibid.). Healthism also has a clear gendered aspect to it, and in fact, there have been multiple studies done on the

interlapping of gender and food, and so gender affecting food choice and multitude of health behaviours is now a thoroughly studied and well-understood fact (e.g. Bouvier and Chen 2021, 348).

There have been clear divisions into men and women, and masculine and feminine behaviours in the American society throughout history that are clearly still visible today (Vester 2010, 39). These gender norms are clear in the societal expectations of dietary and health behaviours as well: e.g. some food items are often described as masculine or feminine, and so eating them comes with the belief that consumption will also make their eaters exhibit more of the given characteristic (Vester 2010, 45). For example, several studies have found that meat is viewed as a masculine food item, and engaging in dieting behaviours like fasting is seen as a feminine act (Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 266; Vester 2010, 39, 45). One study found that because of this association men are likely to avoid some healthy foods to avoid being viewed as feminine (Fleming and Agnew-Brune 2015, 72). Additionally, two studies found that these gendered beliefs about health behaviours are perpetuated from an early age (Lee and MacDonald 2010; Clark 2018). The girls in one study described their relationships with food as “surveillant, judgemental and binary in its categorisations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ food and behaviours” (Clark 2018, 482). Another study found gendering of health behaviours in the preferred way of weight control: dieting was deemed a feminine act and exercise was seen as masculine (Lee and MacDonald, 2010, 212).

However, dieting has not always been seen as feminine as it is nowadays in the United States, which alludes to the fact that health promotion and behaviours are also affected by gender bias. In fact, when dieting was first invented and introduced to American society, it was actually advertised for men and later on moulded into a feminine act (Vester 2010, 39). These roots of dieting are still visible in the current state of society as dieting behaviours are still “promising men that their influence, political power and social privileges would grow as their waistlines slimmed” (Vester 2010, 39). Whereas dieting advertised to women focused on granting women “public attention, recognition, and [...] power – even if in a strictly limited and self-destructive sense” especially in relation to fasting (Vester 2010, 45). Many studies have found that the Western cultures still emphasise dieting and slimmness and promotes “norms describing “what and when” one should eat, as well as what one should look like” but people’s fears, conflicts and social norms regarding food seem to complicate the issue and confuse contemporary consumers on what is actually healthy (Arganini et al. 2012, 85). For these reasons I expect to find clear divisions into masculine and feminine food items and

dieting behaviours in the magazine articles as well as some conflicting information within the articles, too.

According to previous studies and the historical and social context presented above, not only does the contents of health promotion depend on the assumed gender of the target audience, but the linguistic choices seem to depend on gender, too. For example, one study found that in modern Western societies men “often show *skepticism and resistance to nutrition education messages, and frequently perceive healthy eating as monotonous and unsatisfying” (Arganini et al. 2012, 86; spelling as in the original). Additionally, traditional masculinity teaches men to suppress emotions, seek power, and “conform to social norms” with the threat of ridicule and out casting by other men (Rivera and Scholar 2020, E4-E6). These teachings can negatively affect men’s health and men’s attitudes towards health promotion. For example, men are prone to “toughing out” signs of ill health and are likely to be resistant to receiving help for their health as rejecting the help made them feel more masculine (Rivera and Scholar 2020, E5).

This is on the contrary to women who “generally show a tendency to perform healthier food choices and are much more concerned about the importance of food choice and eating behaviour[s]” and are also more likely than men to embrace dietary advice as women are more cognisant of the implications of the relationship between diet and health (Arganini et al. 2012, 86, 95). Another more current study also found comparable results where men affirmed their masculinity by rejecting healthy behaviours and health promotions whereas women did the opposite to emphasise their femininity (Monge-Rojas, Fernández and Smith-Castro 2020, 293). On the basis of these studies, I expect to find linguistic choices in the articles that tend to these expected reactions i.e. women being less resistant to guidance than men and therefore possibly needing less linguistic persuasion.

3 CDA and Key Concepts

In Section 3.1 I introduce the origins of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and some general criticism that CDA has received as an approach and how I will take this criticism into account in this study. Section 3.2 provides some key concepts used in this study regarding the methodology.

3.1 Origins and criticism of CDA

Critical Discourse Analysis is a field of research that began taking form in the 1970s (Breeze 2011, 495). It has a multidisciplinary background in, for example, linguistics, sociology, and philosophy though its origins lie in textual and linguistic analysis (Hidalgo Tenorio 2011, 183–184). One of the first adopters of CDA was Norman Fairclough whose methodology will be applied in this paper as well (Breeze 2011, 495). The goal of Critical Discourse Analysis is to uncover dominant ideologies, power relations, and hierarchical imbalances that are upheld or reproduced in discourse use (Hidalgo Tenorio, 2011, 184). There are multiple theories and methods created and used under the umbrella of CDA, but they all share this common goal, though the schools of CDA differ in other realms (Hidalgo Tenorio 2011, 189–190). CDA has been used in qualitative and quantitative studies, especially in corpus studies (Breeze 2011, 502).

This colourful background makes CDA a useful frame for this study as there are many benefits arising from this background, though it has also brought about criticism for its vastness. The major criticisms that CDA has received is for its issues with objectivity and epistemology (Breeze 2011, 494). Critics often note that CDA lacks an established theoretical framework which can heavily interfere with some integral parts of research e.g. with possibilities to replicate a study to prove or disprove results (*ibid.*). To combat the criticism of lack of a theoretical frame, the analyst can choose a method that has been more well-established e.g. by choosing a method that has clear steps on how the analysis should be conducted. The effect of personal bias on interpretations can be counteracted, for example, by giving alternative interpretations or providing counterpoints in the analysis of the data.

A necessary part of critical discourse analysis is accounting for the context and audience, which is another issue that some research in this field has been lacking (Breeze 2011, 503). For example, it has been claimed that if the analyst is not a part of the target audience, it is hard for the analyst to claim to know the reaction the audience would have to the information

in the given context (ibid.). To elaborate on this example, if the researcher analyses an article from a magazine that they themselves do not read on a regular basis, the researcher might not be able to accurately interpret e.g. how critically the audience would receive the information given in that specific article. There have been multiple ways to take into account these criticisms and counteract them, perhaps the best of which is by applying as many of them as possible in any given study. If as many as possible of the previously mentioned points are combated it brings more reliability to the study.

In this study I accounted for these criticisms by choosing a method that has clear and precise steps to follow in the analysis so that the analysis and its conclusions are made transparent and replicating the study is made possible. As was mentioned, another common criticism is that the analyst might not be in the target audience of the data which is under analysis. As I am not in the target audience (i.e. a regular reader of the magazines), I take this into consideration by providing background context on the assumed target audience and the relevant cultural and societal norms (see Chapter 2). I also do not claim that the results of the analysis are generalisable nor represent the opinions of the target audience as a whole. However, it is important to note that an outsider's perspective may also be beneficial to the study as it provides a unique perspective that might otherwise be neglected. Additionally, I provide different interpretations in the analysis to the data to account for possible bias affecting the analysis.

3.2 Fairclough's CDA method: key concepts

This section introduces the Critical Discourse Analysis framework used in this study and provides detailed information on the related key concepts. This framework was presented by Fairclough in his book *Language and Power* (1989). This book is a classic that is highly relevant in the field of critical discourse studies and is still actively in use even after 34 years of its first publication in 1989 (Robinson 2016, 116). In this thesis I use the second edition of this book that was published in 2001 due to availability as the second edition remains largely unaltered from the original but has an additional 10th chapter (Robinson 2016, 116). The ideas presented in the book were meant to serve as an introduction to CDA for interested students and scholars alike (Robinson 2016, 116). Since then the framework, whether as a whole or parts of it, have been used in multiple CDA studies examining various aspects of power structures in discourse (see Faghieh and Moghiti 2017; Mohammadi and Javadi 2017).

There is a vast array of different methods and frameworks created under the CDA umbrella, but the reason for picking this framework for this thesis over other CDA methods is mainly based on the fact that Fairclough gives clear steps on how to conduct the analysis in the form of questions to ask when conducting the analysis (Fairclough 2001, 92). Other methods that were considered (e.g. naturalisation and three-dimensional model (cf. Garcia-Jerez 2016; Hussein 2016)) did not have as transparent steps as the method that was picked, and the reliability that comes with the clarity of the method was deemed highly necessary for this type of qualitative analysis. CDA has also been heavily criticised for the lack of structure in its methodology, and this framework inherently combats that criticism.

In Section 3.2.1, I will give a general introduction to the major point of interest of the study found in Fairclough (2001) i.e. the three ideological values and what they mean and how they appear in different formal features within a text. In the following sections I will show how these values may appear in written discourse in more detail: firstly in textual structures and secondly in vocabulary items, and how they relate to the type of data used in this thesis. It should be mentioned that the method originally also included a section on grammatical features. The length of this paper prevented including the grammar section as the quality of the overall analysis would have suffered from the briefness of the analysis were all the sections included. Additionally, the original method proposed that the vocabulary items should be analysed first, but in this paper I will begin my analysis with the textual structures to give the reader a clearer concept of the data that is under analysis. For a more elaborative description of which aspects of the method were modified and why, see Section 4.2 below.

3.2.1 Ideological values in text

Fairclough differentiates three main types of value that texts may have within their formal features i.e. vocabulary items, grammatical features, and textual structures (Fairclough 2001, 93). These types of value are either experiential, relational or expressive. Fairclough also mentions that these values are not mutually exclusive, and the same formal features can portray one or more of these values (Fairclough 2001, 93).

The first one of the values is experiential values. These are values that represent the author's own experiences of the world. Furthermore, experiential values are one's beliefs and knowledge of the "natural or social world" (Fairclough 2001, 93). For example, in healthist discourse an author may classify some foods as healthy if they have linguistically recognisable ingredients and others as unhealthy if the ingredients are unrecognisable or

difficult to pronounce; a categorisation that is based on the author's personal experience. This is considered a healthist classification scheme, as foods are not inherently healthy or unhealthy based on their recognisability or name, yet this type of rhetoric is common in healthist discourse.

The second type of value is relational value. As the name suggests, relational values deal with relations and social relationships which are portrayed in the text (Fairclough 2001, 93). For example, in the case of vocabulary, relational values appear in a text when an author uses terminology that is ideologically significant (say e.g. healthist) and therefore assumes that the audience agrees with the take. For example, an author might say that someone is "overeating" to describe their food intake. This is a healthist relational value, as there is an assumption that "overeating" not only is unhealthy but also accurately portrays this nebulous amount of food as "too much" and additionally the author assumes that the readers would agree with this description.

The last of the value set are expressive values. These values show the author's evaluation of the reality of the given information i.e. whether something is true or not (Fairclough 2001, 93). These values appear within a text when social identities and subjects are discussed (ibid.). For example, a text may show healthist expressive values if the author uses positive and emotive language to characterise one aspect of health, and assigns negative values for another. For example, an author might describe consuming certain foods as poisonous to the body and other foods as beneficial or even necessary to achieve good health.

In order to find examples in a text of the three values presented above, Fairclough gives the analyst ten main questions to follow during the analysis, some of which have so called sub-questions (Fairclough 2001, 92). He specifies, though, that the ten questions made for the framework are not a "blueprint" but more of a guide (ibid.). The purpose of asking these questions is to get an overall as well as a detailed picture of how different ideologies are depicted in the text through different linguistic tactics (ibid.). Questions 5–8 are excluded from this study, as those questions are only applicable to grammatical features. Even though Fairclough has framed these as questions, for the sake of clarity, I will be referring to these questions as topics instead from now on.

3.2.2 Textual structures

The textual structures part is the first major section under analysis in this study. In the original method, there are two topics to examine under textual structures, the first of which focuses on what interactional conventions are used within the text, and furthermore, whether there are some clear ways that “one participant controls the turns of others” (Fairclough 2001, 93).

What Fairclough means by interactional conventions is that there are naturalised conventions in each discourse type i.e. boundaries that each spoken and written discourses are expected to follow (Fairclough 2001, 111–112). These conventions relate primarily to spoken dialogue, especially when considering the control of other participants, and therefore will perform a lesser part in this study (Fairclough, 2001, 110). However, these topics will be addressed briefly in this paper, too, when applicable. For example, the primary data of this paper are magazine articles, which are also expected to have some boundaries, or interactional conventions that they should follow. These conventions relate to the general written genre conventions e.g. what can be said (e.g. what is said is to be truthful) and the way the articles are written are expected to follow a certain routine e.g. having an interesting headline (Fairclough 2001, 111–112).

The aforementioned part of this framework of one participant controlling the turns of others also does not fully fit this study. The point of this paper is to examine magazine articles and not, for example, conversations, which could show more imbalances between the participants and turn-taking. However, even magazine articles can be considered to have some power imbalances between the participants. For example, the readers rarely have a say in what is written and an open dialogue between the author and the readers is not a widespread practice. Therefore the author has power over the readers as the readers only receive the information that the author has written about.

The second major topic in the original method regarding the textual structures is what larger-scale structures the text has (Fairclough 2001, 93). In this study, the analysis of the textual structures will focus on this topic. The point of this part is to see which items are presented first in the text and what is saved for last. This can tell the analyst that the information that is presented first is considered more important or more “news-worthy”, and what is presented last is considered less significant (Fairclough 2001, 115). For example, in news and magazine articles what is presented in the headline and in the first paragraph are considered the most important parts of the whole article (Fairclough 2001, 115).

3.2.3 Vocabulary

Fairclough gives four topics to analyse in the vocabulary part of the method. The first three topics deal with the three values mentioned above (see Table 1). In the original method there is also a fourth topic to analyse in the vocabulary section. The fourth topic examines metaphors, but this topic has been excluded from this paper. This was a necessary modification, as the analysis in this paper is qualitative in nature, and had the metaphors been included, the analysis of the other topics would have had to be condensed a significant amount. (For further detail on why this modification was necessary, see Section 4.2.)

Table 1. Topics for Analysis: Vocabulary. Adapted from Language and Power (Fairclough 2001, 92–93).

ANALYTICAL CATEGORY	TOPIC	FURTHER CONTENTS/ EXPLANATION
Vocabulary	Experiential values	Classification schemes
		Ideologically contested words
		Rewording and overwording
		Meaning relations
	Relational values	Euphemistic expressions
		Markedly informal and formal words
	Expressive values	Ideologically charged words inducing an emotive reaction in the reader

3.2.3.1 *Experiential values of words*

The experiential values topic considers classification schemes, ideologically contested words, ideologically significant meaning relations (e.g. synonyms) and rewording or overwording (Fairclough 2001, 92). Classification schemes are ways in which (parts of) texts can be categorised into different schemes (Fairclough 2001, 96). For example, in a healthist rhetoric foods can be classified as healthy or unhealthy depending on their macronutrient distribution. Ideologically contested words are specific vocabulary items that can, for example, be issued to one political party or are otherwise divisive (Fairclough 2001, 95). For example, calling an eating regimen a “traditional diet” can be highly divisive, as either of these terms may cause either a positive or negative reaction in the reader depending on their background.

Rewording, or oppositional-wording, is a concept where an author consistently uses either positive or negative wording throughout the text in relation to one idea and the analyst then rewords their text in the opposite manner to bring attention to how these ideas can be presented in completely different light with just switching vocabulary items (Fairclough 2001, 94–95). For example, “sustaining” one’s health and being “preoccupied” with one’s health have vastly different mental connotations, even though they can be said about the same issue. A related concept, overwording, reveals an author’s fixation on a certain aspect of reality. For example, being preoccupied with “bettering” one’s health or “developing” healthier habits can be shown through continuously using different words for personal development (Fairclough 2001, 96).

As was mentioned above, even meaning relations such as synonyms can be considered to be ideological in certain contexts (Fairclough 2001, 96). This is clear in cases where two words are equated that are or are not often thought to be synonymous: for example, equating “healthy” with “skinny” is not necessarily factual (a person can be one of these but not the other) but using these terms synonymously is still a naturalised concept and also a sign of healthist ideology.

3.2.3.2 *Relational values of words*

The second major topic deals with relational values and more specifically euphemisms and words that are either formal or informal in a way that they stand out in the text. In the case of euphemisms, an author can for example avoid using terms that could cause a negative reaction in the reader and use a euphemism that is more positive in tone and therefore be more agreeable in the eyes of the readers. In a healthist context this could show in using a term like “overeat” instead of “binge”.

The second context where relational values can be found is in markedly informal or formal words. Whether a word falls into either category is often clear when the context it appears in is considered. For example, some words are less likely to appear in written articles though they might be common in conversational speech and vice versa e.g. the word *well* is much more likely to appear in spoken discourse than in written discourse (Aijmer 2013, 26). So, a specific word is informal in a situation where it is unlikely to appear in other similar texts. This is ideologically significant as e.g. using markedly informal language in a written article makes the text seem more conversational and therefore giving the illusion of a conversation between two equals, and alternatively, markedly formal language will portray the speaker or

writer as an authoritative figure (Fairclough 2001, 112). Markedly formal language may also be a tool that an author can use to restrict access to the information creating a sense of belonging to those who understand the terms and creating a sense of “awe” to those who do not (Fairclough 2001, 57). This can be used in healthist discourse as well, as the author might use informal language to make the reader more comfortable with receiving health advice, or by using formal language such as specific medical jargon that gives the reader the impression that the writer is an authority figure on the topic (Xie et al. 2021, 3).

3.2.3.3 Expressive values of words

The third topic is about expressive values of words. In the context of vocabulary, expressive values emerge when an author uses ideologically charged words that are meant to induce an emotive reaction in the reader (Fairclough 2001, 98). For example, an author might use words that induce a positive reaction in the reader to persuade the reader to agree with the presented information. This could be done by calling a food item “delicious” when the author deems it healthy. Expressive values can also be used to induce a negative reaction in the reader, for example by calling some food items “junk” foods, if the author believes them to be unhealthy. Both of these examples show values of healthism, as they are not objectively factual as they are driven by the author’s personal evaluation of the foods.

4 Materials and Methods

The following sections introduce the materials used in this paper and the methodology that was applied in the analysis. In Section 4.1 I will give background information on the articles used in the analysis as well as the magazines as a whole. Section 4.2 will focus on how and why the method introduced in Section 3.2 was modified and how the method was used in this paper.

4.1 The magazines

In this study I will focus on how two articles from two online magazines, Women's Health (henceforth WH) and Men's Health (henceforth MH), describe and discuss health and food consumption and whether there are ideological differences between the two. WH magazine is a spin-off of the previously founded MH magazine with the purpose of expanding their target audiences, as there is now one aimed at men and another for women (Women's Health n.d.). These magazines were picked in the interest of this study to find out whether these discussions on healthy foods differ depending on their assumed audience. These magazines are part of the same media company called Hearst that operates in forty countries and owns nearly 260 magazines with a wide global reach (Hearst n.d.). As the magazines are part of the same company and discuss similar topics, and mostly differ in their target audiences, they were deemed well-fit for comparison.

The MH website describes themselves as “the brand for active, successful, professional men who want greater control over their physical, mental, and emotional lives” (Men's Health 2019). According to the “About” page of the MH website, the MH magazine launched in 1986 and now has 21 million readers and the printed version of the magazine is published in 35 different countries with 25 different printed editions (Men's Health 2019). According to this 2019 editorial, the MH magazine is “the world's largest men's magazine brand” (ibid.). The printed version of the MH magazine is released every month whereas the website is updated daily with new articles covering topics ranging from health and fitness to entertainment, style, and grooming (ibid.) Some of the articles published online are also featured in the printed versions of the magazine: this is indicated at the end of the online articles, as is the case with the article chosen for this analysis (Kita 2022).

According to the “About” page of the WH magazine website, the magazine was first launched in 2005, 19 years after the MH magazine (Women's Health n.d.). The WH magazine covers

topics about “health, fitness, nutrition, and wellness” (Women’s Health n.d.). There is no provided information on the readership of the printed version of the magazine, but the online version of the WH magazine has 44 million monthly readers (ibid.). New articles are published on the site multiple times a day whereas the printed version of the magazine is published ten times a year (ibid.). Interestingly, there is no specific mention about the gender of the target audience, instead the “About” page only refers to the consumers as “readers” (ibid.). However, the gendered name of the magazine still leads one to believe that the magazine mostly targets women.

The two magazines were chosen for their circulation numbers and wide reach around the world. This gives the magazines a reasonably high influence over different people’s lives and behaviours. These specific magazines were also picked with the interest of the study in mind. As was mentioned before, the main focus of this study is on health-related topics.

Additionally, the focus of the analysis is on gendered bias in health reporting, and the WH and MH magazines are gendered already in their names, making it easier to compare the two articles from a gendered point of view. For example, had I picked a general health magazine that had not specified the gender of the target audience, it would have complicated the comparison process unnecessarily. Also as the magazines are both part of the Hearst digital media company, they are likely to share some editorial processes and styles (Hearst n.d.). For example, both magazines mention on their “About” pages that the focus of the articles published on the websites is on accuracy of information that is presented in an informal and personal way i.e. a more reader-friendly manner (Men’s Health 2019; Women’s Health n.d.). This additional information aids in the comparison of the possible health reporting biases based on gender, as the information on the websites claims to be objective in nature yet the information between the websites seems to differ depending on the target audience.

Another reason behind picking these magazines over others is that they have been studied widely beforehand (see Bazzini et al. 2015; Fuller, Briggs and Dillon-Sumner 2013; Zarhin 2021). Many of the studies have found that these magazines provide similar content to each other but present the information in gendered ways that “reinforce patriarchal norms and expectations” (Zarhin 2021, 1851). And as was mentioned in Section 2.2, another study found that these magazines perpetuate gendered and healthist ideologies about food (Fuller, Briggs and Dillon-Sumner 2013, 261). Equivalent results were found in another study, where the magazines were shown to reproduce and uphold gender stereotypes about what a healthy body looks like depending on the person’s gender (Bazzini et al. 2015, 198). These previous studies

give reason to believe that these magazines are fruitful for comparison and would fit the objective of study well. The aim of this study is to expand on these previous studies by providing a more detailed look into which exact linguistic aspects of the articles show these gendered and healthist ideologies. This then can provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the topic by generating new insights e.g. by uncovering linguistic relationships or patterns in the text that might have previously been overlooked.

The article from the Women's Health Magazine is titled "40 'Healthy' Foods That Nutritionists Never Eat" co-written by Colleen de Bellefonds, Krissy Brady and Korin Miller (2021). All three of the authors are freelance journalists that often write about health and wellness topics for the site (Women's Health n.d.). The article from the Men's Health Magazine is headlined "31 Ways to Make 2022 Your Healthiest (and Most Delicious) Year Ever" written by Paul Kita (2022). Kita is the food and nutrition editor of the MH magazine and a cookbook author (Men's Health 2019). Both articles discuss healthy food options for women and men, respectively.

At the time of writing this paper, these articles were the top results for the term "Healthy Eating" when searched with the built-in search function of the websites. What should be noted is that the website does not give any further information on how the top results are picked or how the algorithm of the search engine operates (e.g. pushing recent articles or most read articles). Despite this, the reason to pick the top results of each website is because it gives an idea of what seems to be of interest to the target audience either from the readers' point of view and/or what is algorithmically pushed by the websites. This, though, does not denote the fact that the articles are only a small take from a vast array of published media on the websites, and therefore cannot be viewed as a generalisation of the ideas presented in the magazines. They should rather be considered "not as a true and accurate reflection of some aspect of an external world, but as something to be explained and accounted for through the discursive rules and themes that predominate in a particular socio-historical context" (Prior 1997, 70).

Notably, the Women's Health article is longer than the Men's Health article and they also somewhat differ in their layouts. The WH article has 3044 words and the MH article has 1501 words. Additionally, the layout of the MH article was a common online article layout i.e. the whole of the article is on one page and reading requires vertical scrolling. This is different from the WH article that was compiled into a slideshow where each topic had its own slide

and reading the article requires clicking through these slides. The scope of the study limited the possibility to add any additional articles to the analysis. For the same reason the pictures, a video, and advertisements in the articles were left out of the analysis. The focus of the paper is on the qualitative analysis of the texts, and more specifically the values of vocabulary items, therefore it made sense to disregard all unrelated items. Though all these aspects bring their own contribution to the whole of the articles, it was still sensible to leave out these items for various reasons: the pictures (four in the MH and forty in the WH) were mostly of the foods discussed in the article (i.e. already mentioned in the text) and the seven minute video found at the end of the MH article was seemingly unrelated to the article itself. All advertisements, such as hyperlinks, were also disregarded from this paper for reasons mentioned above. However, all of these aspects would present interesting topics to analyse in possible further studies.

What comes to the ethics of this thesis, the materials used in this study are publicly available and non-delicate in nature, so there was no need to acquire any specific forms of consent as there was no private nor confidential information acquired during the collection of the data. Though the topics of the articles may be considered delicate and rather personal by some (discussions on health and eating habits), they do not violate any individual rights as the articles do not address any specific person and provide highly generic information overall.

4.2 Method

The method used in this study is Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis method from his 2001 book *Language and Power* which is regarded as a CDA classic. The key concepts of this method were introduced in Section 3. I will first go into more detail on how and why it was necessary to slightly modify the method for this study and how it might affect the study, and then explain how the method was used in the analysis.

Before I utilised the tools given in the method I first read through the articles to gain a general perspective of them. During this initial reading of the articles it was evident that not all of the concepts given in the method were fit for this study. So, this initial reading helped me narrow down which aspects of the method would not benefit the study that I could therefore leave out. As was mentioned previously in Section 3.2.1, Fairclough intended this method to be a guide that could be modified to fit a certain study or dataset (Fairclough 2001, 92). Modifications to this method have been done in previous studies as well for example by only examining the first seven questions of the method mentioned in Section 3.2.1 (see

Mohammadi and Javadi 2017). For these reasons, I found it appropriate to make some changes to the method myself.

This method was modified by excluding a category that cannot be used when analysing written texts. This part is the topic under textual structures i.e. controlling the turns of other participants which was created specifically for analysing oral communications (Fairclough 2001, 110). Other modifications done on the method were leaving out some parts of the analysis i.e. metaphors from the vocabulary section and the whole of the grammatical features. As was briefly mentioned in Section 3.2, it was necessary to discard the grammar section as the length of this paper did not allow for a detailed enough analysis of all three sections (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, and textual structures). For the same reason it was necessary to narrow down the vocabulary section as well, which meant discarding metaphors. Had this exclusion of metaphors not been done, the analysis would not have been detailed enough for significant findings. The reason to exclude metaphors over any other vocabulary topic was that metaphors are given their own section in the original method, whereas the other topics (i.e. the three values) work as one unit together. With this exclusion the analysis stays more coherent.

Even though these modifications were necessary, it is important to note that both the grammar section and the metaphors would have brought interesting and unique perspectives to the analysis and interpretation of the data. For example, grammatical features may show ideologically charged relationships between topics that might not be detectable from vocabulary items alone, and metaphors may also present ideological beliefs that might otherwise be missed. However, these exclusions provide necessary room for a deeper analysis of the vocabulary items which may combat the missing of these sections with its depth. Though, these are still important topics that should be included in larger future studies.

Additionally, I modified the order in which the analysis was conducted as was mentioned in Section 3.2. This meant moving the textual structures section before the vocabulary section. This was done because the textual structures give the reader a comprehensive yet concise idea of what the data consist of without having to read the magazine articles beforehand. In this way the analysis moves from macrostructures (i.e. textual structures) to microstructures (i.e. vocabulary items). This should not affect the outcomes of the study, as the information provided stays the same whether one uses the order given in the original method or changes the order slightly like in the analysis of this study.

After the initial reading of the articles, and the elimination of some aspects of the method, I read the articles again. The idea of this second reading was to get a more comprehensive idea of the topics and themes of the articles. During this second reading the focus was on the textual structures: firstly on the interactional conventions of the articles (i.e. style of writing and layout), and then on the larger-scale structures i.e. what kind of information was given first in the articles and what types of information was given last. After gaining an understanding of the general structures of the articles, I continued into a more detailed analysis of each article. This meant reading both articles several times and focusing on a different topic under the vocabulary section of the method each time.

Firstly, I gathered all the examples of experiential values of words by reading the articles four times, each time scrutinising a different aspect of experiential values (i.e. classification schemes, ideologically contested words, rewording and overwording, then meaning relations). After I gathered all the examples of experiential values, I repeated the steps but with relational values in mind. This meant firstly collecting all examples of euphemistic expressions, then examples of markedly formal and informal words. Finally, both articles were read one more time whilst finding examples of expressive values in the vocabulary. When all the examples were collected, I compared the examples and examined if there were similar themes in the examples. After finding these themes, I chose one or more examples from each theme to represent the value they held. The scope of the study (i.e. limitations on time and in length) made it unfeasible to use all the examples in the analysis.

5 Analysis

This analysis will be divided into three major categories guided by the method introduced in Section 3. I will firstly analyse the textual structures of both of the articles and then compare them to each other. Secondly, I will analyse the vocabulary items of the articles starting from experiential values, then analysing relational values and finally expressive values of words (see Table 1). It should be noted that in the following examples some of the words are in boldface to indicate my own emphasis, but all other styles in the indented examples are as in the original texts (unless otherwise specified). However, outside the indented examples I use italics to indicate a direct quote from the article under analysis.

5.1 Textual structures

In this section I examine larger scale structures that the magazine articles have and compare them to each other.

5.1.1 The structure of the MH article

The MH article starts with the headline, and a subheading “Un-boring your diet – for good” giving a setting on what is to be expected from the article (Kita 2022). The text starts with a prelude to the article where the author explains in some detail why *trendy diets* are bad, and how the advice that later follows in the article is different from these other diets. The rest of the article is built like a to-do list with 31 steps. Notably, the steps also function as subheadings that stand out in the text grabbing the readers’ attention with the large font size and bolded letters. This indicates that the information in these subheadings is considered important and interestingly all of the steps give one piece of advice on how to prepare a healthy dish or reassess what is foods are actually healthy, as can be seen in these examples:

(1) Hate Salad? Cook it.

(2) **Rethink** What “**Counts**” as a Serving of Fruits or Vegetables

In the first example, the implication is that the aforementioned *trendy diets* would suggest eating a salad is a healthy choice, but as can be extracted from the context, the MH article sees a plain salad as boring (cf. subheading) and the advice is then to make the salad more interesting and appetising by cooking it. In the second example (2), the author advises the reader to re-evaluate what *counts* as healthy. Most of the steps have similar prompts, where the subheading gives a trendy diet prompt and then offers a solution to fix it to be more

intriguing. Following each of these steps there is a paragraph elaborating on how exactly the reader should perform the prompt, often referencing recipes from different cookbooks, or studies in relation to the health benefits of different food items.

As was mentioned in Section 3.2.2, the headline and the first paragraph are considered the most important parts of an article. The headline of the MH article is “31 Ways to Make 2023 Your Healthiest (and Most Delicious) Year Ever” and as is clear from this, the focus of the headline is on how to live healthier (*ibid.*). If we consider the conventions that magazine articles often follow, then the reader is led to believe that the first paragraph is likely to elaborate on how to live healthier. Interestingly though, the first paragraph of the article focuses on how boring other diets are; a theme that runs throughout the article.

5.1.2 The structure of the WH article

The beginning of the WH article follows a similar structure to that of the MH article: there is an eye-catching headline “40 'Healthy' Foods That Nutritionists Never Eat” and a smaller, somewhat ominous subheading reading “I see you, veggie chips” (De Bellefonds, Brady and Miller 2021). These headings work together to establish the tone of the article that is evidently negative to generate fear or worry in the readers.

The first paragraph continues this worrisome tone when the author leads the reader into the topic by describing how many staples in people’s diets are actually something nutritionists would advise you to avoid entirely. After this first paragraph, the rest of the article is written much like the MH article, though the layout is different (see Section 4.1). The following text is written like a list of things to avoid: each subheading is simply the name of the food, and the following paragraph explains why the reader should avoid said food. Each paragraph also either indirectly or directly quotes a nutritionist or refers to a study. Notably, there is no concluding paragraph at the end of the slideshow as the final slide is just as the others before it.

5.1.3 Comparison of textual structures

The headline and the first paragraph in the MH article were slightly contrary, as the headline focused on how to make healthier choices but the following paragraph focused on what the following advice in the article would not be. So, when considering the typical conventions of articles where most valuable information comes first, it is clear that the author wanted to

highlight the differences between the MH nutrition advice and all other dieting advice. The WH article was more consistent with the focus of the information in the headline and the first paragraph matching the larger context of the article (i.e. highlighting first which foods are not healthy and then citing an agreeable nutritionist). Also, the style of writing in the articles varied slightly. The MH article was more casual, conversational, and humorous in tone whereas the style of the WH article followed the more typical conventions expected from news sources, though the WH article also had some more casual styles incorporated into it (see 5.2.2 below for details).

5.2 Vocabulary

This part of the analysis will be further divided into three parts, each of which will focus on one value (see Table 1). Each value section is separated into three subsections: the first of which focuses on the given values in the MH article, the second examining the same in the WH article and the third and final subsection comparing the two articles.

5.2.1 Experiential values

In this section I present the findings of my analysis about experiential values, firstly in the MH article, then in the WH article and ending in comparison of the two. The findings in each of these subsections follow the same pattern: I analyse first the classification schemes, ideologically contested words, followed by rewording, overwording and finally meaning relations.

5.2.1.1 *Experiential values in the MH article*

The MH article can be classified as a how-to-guide as it lists ways that will make the year 2023 *the healthiest* and *most delicious* year for the readers. It gives step-by-step instructions and recipes on how to make healthy meals. This is evident in the headline and in the format of the article:

(3) **31 Ways** to Make 2023 Your Healthiest (and Most Delicious) Year

In this example, the *31 Ways* is the indicator that the following article will give the reader exactly 31 steps to follow to achieve their *healthiest* year. This example also includes another classification scheme which classifies healthy foods as unappealing, the same categorisation that is visible in examples (1) and (2). This division is visible in example (3) where the author specifies that these 31 steps will help the reader make the healthy foods also *delicious*,

implying that healthy foods are inherently unappetizing. Another classification scheme visible throughout the article is the division of diets into good and bad diets. The article classifies *trendy diets* as bad and the diet advice in the article as good. From the very beginning the article creates a dichotomy between these diets: MH advice is *un-boring, smart*, and for independent thinkers whereas other diets are classified as *boring, repetitive* and for people who *want to be told* what to eat.

The MH article also includes pre-existing schemes such as ways to grow or optimise oneself. This is especially visible in the verbs used in the article such as *build, grow, upgrade, supercharge* and *power up*. This frames the reader as an active participant and empowers them to make these prescribed changes through these uplifting themes. This optimisation of one's health is also visible in the author's description of how the reader can modify i.e. *hack* seemingly boring but healthy foods into tasting good:

(4) smart nutrition **hacks**

This implies that there are no rules prescribed to the reader, but the reader has the power to make the food items tastier. The article also frames healthy eating as adding more foods into one's diet rather than taking away foods that are deemed unhealthy. This scheme is especially vivid in the phrases such as *eat more, load up on, douse with more, pack in even more* and *don't forget* to eat.

There were few ideologically contested words in the MH article, yet the ones used in the article appear more than once, and are often used both for and against by both those who agree with healthist ideologies and those opposed to them, depending on context and assumed core meanings. For example, the word *diet* appeared repeatedly in the MH article, though it was only used in a negative context:

(5) DOWN WITH trendy **diets!**

In this example, the author uses the word *diet* only to describe other eating patterns or regimes, but avoids using it about the one promoted in the article. The word *diet* has a negative connotation to it, and is often equated with starvation or restriction, yet it is also commonly used to describe any pattern of eating in a neutral way. Therefore the author's decision to only call other eating regimes *diets* has an ideological undertone, as these other diets are seen as too restrictive, so they need to be separated from the promoted eating plan as to avoid this unpleasant implication.

Another ideologically contested word that appeared in the article was the word *processed* used to refer to certain types of food. Interestingly, the word was used both in a negative and a positive context. Food processing can be used in a positive context for example when describing the removal of harmful bacteria. Food processing in a negative context is often thought to either remove beneficial nutrients or add harmful ingredients. The author makes a distinction between the two with a prefix as can be seen in the following example:

(6) Limit “**Ultra-Processed**” Foods

In this example, the author implies that there are certain foods that are processed too much with the prefix *ultra*, implying that those foods are unhealthy and therefore advising the reader to avoid said foods. However, the author also advises the reader to use a food processor to prepare healthy meals several times throughout the article. In these contexts, the processing of food is seen as neutral or positive, contradictory to the example (6) above. This contradiction shows an ideological belief that there is a certain level of processing of foods that is seen as positive and healthy, but processing can also be negative and unhealthy.

The final ideologically contested word found in the MH article can be seen in the next example where the author gives a nickname to a snack:

(7) **The Traditionalist**: 1 medium apple + small handful of almonds

The author calls the snack the *Traditionalist*, which can be viewed as an ideologically contested word. Depending on the reader’s political viewpoint, being a traditionalist might have positive or negative associations. The negative connotations with the word *traditionalist* can be equated to being regressive and reactionary. The word *traditionalist* could also be reworded as well-established and accepted to have a positive association. Considering the positive context that the word is used in, as well as the readership of the MH magazine, it is likely that the word *traditionalist* is expected to have a positive impact on the readers, and is likely to appeal to a more conservative audience.

There are also clear examples of rewording in the MH article. The author systematically gives the nutrition advice in the article positive values, and uses negative values for other diets. In order to avoid assigning any negative values to the MH advice, the author has to use rewording i.e. replace a more naturalised or dominant wording with an alternative one. This technique is clear in the MH article in the example (4) above, where the author uses the word

hacks to describe the MH nutrition advice and by also calling the prescribed diet *advice* and *tips*:

(8) **The advice** that follows aligns with what we at Men’s Health have long preached

(9) There’s nothing special about these **tips** that you *have* to do them in January

Using words like *advice*, *tips* and *hacks* are more positive in tone and are likely associated with words like suggestion and improvement. These words align with the framing of the rest of the article where *rules* and being *told what to do* are seen as negative values, and independent thinking and empowerment are accentuated. If these words were replaced with *rules*, *tricks* or *gimmicks* the tone would change greatly and might then evoke negative emotions in the readers. The author also refers to the information as *a healthy approach to eating*:

(10) **A healthy approach to eating** wins out over a trendy diet

This is also another example where the rewording, and therefore an ideological belief, is evident. The author systematically refers to the information in the article in positive ways and opposes it with other diets, diminishing the value of those diets by drawing connections between these diets and words that can evoke a negative reaction in the reader such as *trendy*. This framing continues throughout the article, as can be seen from the next example:

(11) [The MH advice] helps you **build the body** you want and **sustain your health**

In this example, the author suggests that the reader values a specific type of body and would want to focus on their health. This example still carries ideological beliefs, and a way to reword this sentence would be to say that “the rules will make you preoccupied with your health and body” (my own example). These replacements are evidently much more unfavourable to the advice given in the article and would therefore produce a negative reaction in the reader, even though the contents of the advice have not changed. This shows ideological beliefs guiding both wordings. The MH article continues with the positive rewording by also giving names to seemingly plain dishes and snacks to make them more appealing:

(12) The Nothing Fancy [...] Pod Power

The recommended snack in the first half of the example refers to a pear and the latter half refers to edamame. These nicknames may be more appealing to the readership if context is considered. The article comes from the perspective that other diets are boring, and therefore the MH approach must be separated from the rest of the diets. This includes making seemingly plain and regular snacks seem more interesting by, for example, giving them names that the readers can identify with. *The Nothing Fancy* may appeal to a more conservative male reader that associates diets (and fruit) with femininity. This connotation to femininity can be avoided with highlighting the lack of fanciness in the food i.e. by using the word *nothing*. The same avoidance of femininity can be seen in the latter half of the example (12), where edamame is given a new value of *power* instead of its traditional association with femininity (Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 266). To highlight the ideological beliefs in both examples, one could also call the snacks “The Boring One” or “The Basic” to accentuate an opposing side.

There are also several instances of overwording in the MH article. These instances show a preoccupation with certain aspects of presumed healthy eating habits such as adding more foods into one’s diet and improving oneself as well as with a so-called do-it-yourself attitude. These are all examples of ideological beliefs that focusing on these aspects would make a person healthy. The overwording concerning volume eating can be seen in repetitive use of words such as *add*, *big*, *more*, *even more*, and *the entire*. This phenomenon can also be seen in the following examples:

(13) **Eat More** [...] even if you think you eat plenty

(14) **10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Pack in Even More** Fiber

Both examples use the word *more* to emphasise the importance of volume of food for healthy eating. This emphasis is also visible in the latter example above in *pack in*. The author also uses repetition for emphasis when he lists the same piece of advice five times in the subheading *10, 11, 12, 13, 14*. This style of emphasis is also utilised later in the article when the author lists different spices as individual steps to add flavour to food:

(15) **25. Turn to Cumin Seeds [...]** **26. And** Chaat Masala [...] **27. And** Asafetida [...] **28. And** Furikake [...] **29. Annnnd** Sichuan Peppercorns

From the example above, the use of overwording is clear not only in the list format but in the use of the word *and* as well as the stretching of the word in the last subheading. This

overwording shows the ideological belief that flavour of food is an important part of a healthy diet.

There are also various occurrences of overwording when highlighting the alleged correctness of the information given in the MH article:

- (16) we at Men’s Health have **long preached**, for **decades**, and likely will **preach** for **decades** into the **future**

There are several instances of overwording in the example above. First of these is the use of *preach* to indicate that the given information on the MH article is almost divine in nature as the word *preach* is also used in common phrases such as “preach the gospel”. To also emphasise the unchanging continuity of the advice the author also uses the words *long*, *decades*, and *future* to indicate a vast period of time from the past into the distant future where the advice is ever changing, implying an ideological belief of traditional practices holding unchanging wisdom. This connects to the puritanical beginnings of dieting advice in the US where diet was an important part of religious Christian practices and a way for men to highlight their virtuous and uncorrupted character (Martel 2011, 83–86).

Interestingly, there were also overwording in a negative sense where the author described other diets. These instances are closely related to the aforementioned rewording where the author used negative values to describe other diets. The overwording in these cases is apparent by the repetitive use of synonymous words like *boring* and *bland* and using the phrase *rules, rules, rules* when referring to or describing other diets. These two types of overwording highlight the ideological belief that the MH way is the correct and healthy way to eat whilst diminishing other diets.

The final aspect of preoccupation of the article is on self-improvement, and especially from a perspective where the body and its functions are described with mechanical terms. The overwording is evident in the words like *harness power*, *upgrade*, *fight back*, *supercharges* and *power up*. The same preoccupation is repeated within the contents of the article where it is recommended to upgrade your blender and utilise your microwave for healthy cooking.

There are some ideologically significant meaning relations in the MH article. Some of these meaning relations were mentioned in earlier instances of experiential values, as the examples often overlap. One such meaning relation, or more precisely a synonymous use of words, can be found in the following example:

(17) They're [trendy diets] **bland**, they're **boring**

Here the author equates *trendy* diets with the words *bland* and *boring*. In relation to this, there is also another ideologically significant meaning synonym that is assigned to the diet that MH article advertises when the author equates their diet with *a healthy approach* (see example (10)). From context it is clear that these diets (MH diet vs. other diets) are also used as antonyms of each other, reiterating the ideological belief that because MH diet is the healthy option, other diets must then be unhealthy.

5.2.1.2 Experiential values in the WH article

The article in the Women's Health magazine can be classified as a how-to guide as the article is written like a list with each topic representing one item to avoid. The classification scheme used in the article divides foods into healthy and unhealthy foods based on their nutritional value and "naturalness". The overall theme in the WH article is the deceiving nature of unhealthy foods that are classified as *unnatural*, *processed* or *artificial*. Another classification within the article is the focus on how much one can eat before a given food item becomes unhealthy:

(18) keep your portions to a tablespoon or two

In this example, the article gives a clear amount (*a tablespoon*) of how much the reader can eat before becoming unhealthy. The article does not, for example, classify foods as healthy in regard to the readers' mental wellbeing or enjoyment, which could be done by emphasising the importance of eating what makes the reader feel satisfied.

There were three ideologically contested words in the WH article that appeared more than once in the text all in similar contexts. The words used were *natural*, *processed* and *packaged*, all of which were used to describe the processing of food, or the presumed lack of processing. The definitions of these terms are broad and highly ambiguous, and often rely on a subjective and personal experience to aid the categorisation. As can be seen in the following examples, the context in which the word *natural* is used alludes to an ideological belief that the presumed naturalness of a food item is good for one's health:

(19) **naturally** gluten-free foods like fruit [...] are definitely good for you

(20) Look for **natural** peanut butter

In the first example, fruit is considered *naturally* good, but it can be argued that all foods must go through some processing such as washing or the long process crafting the fruit into what it is today. This shows that there is an ideological belief that certain types of processing are not harmful nor affect the given title of naturalness of the food. Interestingly, there is also a mention in the article of peanut butter being *natural* as can be seen in the second example (20). Categorising peanut butter as natural is also ideological, as it could be argued that peanuts must go through multiple steps of processing to become peanut butter. This leads to the next example, where the author describes *processed* soy protein as questionable:

(21) a host of questionable ingredients, such as **processed** soy protein

Just as with the concept of *natural*, what was considered *processed* in the article is evasive and based in ideological beliefs. All processing was not considered to be negative (as was seen with peanut butter), as an ingredient turns into an unhealthy one when it is given the arbitrary label of *processed*. For example, the article also recommends using protein powder (a food that could be considered highly processed in other contexts) but as it lacks the modifier *processed* it avoids the negative connotations that the adjective is presumed to have.

In this context the word *natural* is an ideologically contested word as there is not a widely agreed upon definition of what qualifies as a *natural* food product nor is there an explanation provided in the article for this. Compare the example above (21) to the following example where another ideologically contested word *packaged* can be found:

(22) many gluten-free **packaged** foods are just as high in calories [...] as any other processed food

As can be seen in this example, highlighting the packaged nature of a food is also ideologically charged for the same reasons as it was for *processed* and *natural*. Many of the foods recommended in the article come in a packaging (see example (20)), and what separates them from the unhealthy, not recommended foods is the lack of the modifier *packaged*.

There are several instances of systematic rewording in the WH article, and in fact, much of the article could be reworded from an opposing side. This is because most of the WH article highlights specific characteristics of foods fairly arbitrarily as either healthy or unhealthy depending based on ideological beliefs. For example, “unnatural” foods are framed (i.e. reworded) as unhealthy, but the necessary components to fall into this category are left undefined. For one instance, protein powder is recommended but protein bars are not:

- (23) packaged protein bars are often packed with various forms of sugar [...], excess fats [...], and artificial colors and flavors. Plus, protein bars sometimes contain gas-causing compounds like sucralose [...] and chicory root”

In this example, the author frames protein bars as unhealthy by using unfavourable rewording. In order to examine the ideological beliefs hidden in this example, this text could be reworded from an opposing view:

Protein bars are a convenient way to get more protein in your diet. They are delicious and sweet, and also have healthy fats in them to keep you satisfied for longer. Plus, protein bars sometimes contain sucralose to avoid using ingredients that spike blood-sugar, as well as chicory root for added fibre to keep you fuller even longer. (my own example)

As can be seen from this alternative wording, the food item is exactly the same in both texts, but depending on one’s ideological beliefs about the health status of the food, the framing changes. Therefore the example (23) shows clear indications of ideological beliefs on what makes a particular food a healthy choice when examining which components are included and excluded from the text.

The article is also written with the belief that one should get as many nutrients as possible from a meal for it to be healthy, and does not for example emphasise enjoyment and longevity with healthy eating behaviours. This ideological rewording is visible in the next example:

- (24) The differences between vegetable-enriched and regular pasta are **so nutritionally insignificant** that swapping one for the other **doesn’t impact your health very much at all** [...]. **The legit healthier alternative:** swapping your go-to-pasta for spiralled vegetables

Here the author highlights nutritional contents of a food as the most important component to consider when considering possible health outcomes. This example could be reworded as follows:

There is little difference between the nutritional components of vegetable-enriched and regular pasta, and completely swapping your pasta with vegetables can leave you hungry and unsatisfied, so choose the pasta that you enjoy eating the most. (my own example)

This rewording highlights the healthist components in the original text i.e. that one should always choose the food with the highest micronutrient contents in order to be considered healthy.

The theme of being pointedly aware of everything you eat is visible in the WH article in the way the authors use overwording. This is done a significant amount when referring to the amounts of food one “should” eat. The repetition of phrases such as *limit yourself*, *check the label*, *choose one with less*, show a clear ideological preoccupation with eating less by using overwording. Another heavy preoccupation in the article is on the nutrient profile of foods, especially with unwanted additives or nutrients. This overwording can be seen from the following examples describing different food items:

(25) **packed** with added **sugars** or sugar **substitutes**

(26) making them **high** in added **sugars** and **calories**

Both examples above discuss the nutrient contents of foods in an unfavourable way, and this type of overwording was visible throughout the article in nearly all of the foods that were listed in the text. This shows clear ideological preoccupation with nutrition content and is an example of a healthist belief system where certain nutrients are favoured and others are maligned.

There are a few ideologically significant meaning relations in the WH article in the forms of synonymy and antonymy. In the case of synonymous uses of words, the ideological relation was drawn between *natural* and *healthy*. Another synonymous use was for the words packaged and processed foods. As was shown earlier in the analysis, these terms were only used in a negative tone and assigned only to foods that were recommended to avoid:

(27) many gluten-free **packaged** foods are just as high in calories [...] as any other **processed** food

In this example, the author only describes assumed unhealthy foods with the words *packaged* or *processed*. However, many of the recommended food alternatives are also sold in a packaging (e.g. yoghurt, peanut butter) but neither word was used to describe them, which shows the ideological use of an antonym: if a food is packaged or processed, it cannot simultaneously be healthy. Therefore this synonymous use of these two words, and contextual antonymy, further proves the healthist belief that draws an arbitrary line between what can be considered healthy food and what cannot.

5.2.1.3 Comparison of experiential values

Both articles focus on optimising meals and one’s health, but from different perspectives: one from adding in and other from avoiding. The MH article gives the reader a more active and

empowering role in optimising their diets by *hacking* healthy foods into tastier options, whereas the WH article tells the readers how to avoid choosing a seemingly healthy option that is in fact not healthy “enough”. This upholds the gendered stereotype of eating more being masculine and dieting being feminine (Cavazza, 2015, 266).

The WH article classifies foods into good and bad groups based on their nutritional value and so-called naturalness. The MH article also does this, but from a different perspective: the overarching theme is that all other diets are bad and the MH diet is good. Both of these categorisations are stereotypical examples of gendered food and dieting behaviours. The roots of dieting in Christian Puritanism meant embracing naturalness and promised purity for women and promoted self-reliance for men i.e. rejecting corruption, that in this case is all other diets besides the MH diet (Martel 2011, 83–86; Vester 2010, 45).

A difference between the two is clear as the WH article sees that even things labelled *good* or *healthy* could be better, whereas the MH article focuses more on enjoyment and flavour. Interestingly, the WH article deemed “tricking” to be a value of unhealthy foods disguised as healthy, whereas the MH article framed tricks or *hacks* as a positive thing. In the WH article there are also multiple mentions of how much to eat serving-wise before a food item becomes unhealthy, unlike in the MH article where there was little mention of such guidelines.

In comparison, the MH article elevates enjoyment and excitement, whereas the WH article elevates nutritional value and raw, wholefood ingredients. There are also clear contradictions between the two articles on what is deemed healthy: the MH article gives advice to the readers to “rethink what counts” as a serving of fruits and lists fruit juice as a healthy example (Kita 2022). In contrast, the WH article clearly states that juicing produce is not healthy because “you cut the healthy fiber that’s so important” (De Bellefonds, Brady and Miller 2021). Therefore there are clear gendered differences on what is classified as healthy or not i.e. a sign of healthism.

The MH article and WH article shared one ideologically contested word but also used ones that were not found in the other. The shared word was *processed*: both articles deemed an undefined level of processing to be unhealthy. What makes this term even more ambiguous is the fact that both articles deemed some processing to be acceptable: the MH article used the word in both negative and positive context directly, but the WH article avoided using the word in a positive context but from further context it was clear that some processing could be considered healthy (see example (20)). The WH article did however have a larger

preoccupation with the concept of processing, as was seen from the synonymous use of packaged and processed, and naturalness and health.

The MH article used the word *diet* in an ideologically contested way when describing different ways of eating and there was a clear preoccupation with the negative connotations of *diet* in the MH article that was not found in the WH article. In fact, the WH article did not use this word for any eating regimen. Another ideologically contested word that was also only found in the MH article was *traditionalist*. This word was positively associated with healthy eating. No such connection was found in the WH article nor any other mention of a specific ideology in relation to healthy eating.

The rewording in the MH article focused on differentiating the MH diet from other diets and also reworded their advice in a manner that would appeal to a more conservative audience. The WH article also used rewording to separate WH diet advice, but in a different manner. The WH article had a more general approach and drew little attention to the WH advice and rather differentiated unhealthy foods from healthy foods based on their ideologically assigned labels of naturalness or unnaturalness. Interestingly, in the WH article there were also systematic rewording on what aspects of healthy eating or food items were highlighted. For example, WH article did not mention the taste of food as an important aspect of healthy eating and instead only considered nutrient density as a contributory factor. In conclusion, the MH article and WH article shared the textual tool of separating good and bad diets or foods based on ideological beliefs by using systematic rewording, but differed in the sense that MH considered enjoyability of foods an important factor of a healthy diet, whereas the WH article did not.

Both the MH article and WH article had numerous instances of overwording throughout the texts. As was with other aspects concerning experiential values, the overwording in the MH article focused heavily on the alleged correctness of the MH advice and repeatedly diminished other advice, and promoted eating more. There were also several instances of overwording of vocabulary items concerning self-improvement. These themes were not found in the WH article. In fact, there was only one systematic overwording topic in the WH article that was mentioned above (i.e. limiting one's eating), but there was a heavy emphasis on the topic throughout the article. In fact, almost every food item that was discussed in the article had at least one instance where this type of overwording was applied.

Both articles used ideologically significant synonyms in the text as well as healthist antonyms. The MH advice was framed as the antithesis of other diet advice where the previous of the two was used synonymously with healthy and the latter as boring, and by extension, unhealthy. The WH article used the word processed synonymously with unhealthy, and therefore the word processed was an antonym to the word healthy. All of these meaning relations show ideological beliefs on what is deemed healthy and what is not based on assumed gender. Additionally, all the examples above highlight the importance of critical media literacy as noticing these ideological patterns and arbitrary categories of healthy and unhealthy foods require the reader to be highly aware of the possible biases and underlying intentions that might affect what is written and how.

5.2.2 Relational values

The relational values of words can be seen in the use of euphemistic expressions in the text as well as in the formality or lack of formality in the words.

5.2.2.1 Relational values in the MH article

The author of the MH article used relatively few euphemistic expressions in the text, but the few that were found in the article all described the consequences of following their diet advice long term:

(28) **sustain your health** long term

In this example, the euphemistic expression *sustain your health* is used to avoid negative or offensive language. To reword this example one could say without following the advice the reader might end up with a preventable illness or disease. The MH article uses another euphemistic expression when describing the diet that they are prescribing:

(29) we at Men's Health have long preached [...] that **a healthy approach to eating** wins out over a trendy diet

In this example, the euphemistic expression is calling the MH eating regimen a *healthy approach to eating* whereas it could also be described as a diet as well. But to avoid the negative connotations of the word *diet* they opt for the more positive wording above thus using a euphemistic expression. This ingroup–outgroup division and ideological beliefs behind it are clear in this statement considering that there is little explanation what exactly separates the MH approach (ingroup) from *trendy diets* (outgroup).

The MH article is mostly written using relatively informal wording which is somewhat expected and typical of magazine articles (Declercq 2018, 396). However, there are some instances where the vocabulary is both markedly formal and informal, and therefore differs from what is naturalised for this type of discourse. For example, the author of the article mostly uses informal, conversational language when discussing the different food items and their nutritional values, but he deviates from this pattern when describing the health benefits of some foods:

- (30) Turn to Onions for Disease-fighting **Antioxidants**
- (31) people who regularly ate from the full color spectrum [...] had a 20 percent lower risk of **cognitive decline** compared to those who ate fewer

In the first example, the author uses a formal term *antioxidant* and so deviates from the otherwise casual tone of the article. The term itself might be familiar to many readers but what these compounds actually are or why they are beneficial might not be clear to the readers. The second example (31) also uses a more scientific jargon seen in the term *cognitive decline*. The same analysis applies here: the reader might be familiar with the words but the extent of which might be lost on the reader. This is an interesting contrast to the rest of the article that is written in a very expressive way (see following Section 5.2.3) as these terms are expected to be found in scientific articles on dietetics or neurology. In fact, Xie et al. (2021, 5) define these terms as “formal medical terminology” as they can be found in “formal medical databases” like “the Unified Medical Language System” or UMLS. This contrast is what makes using these terms ideological in nature: as was mentioned in Section 3.2.3.2 Fairclough explains that using markedly formal language can be a way to restrict access to information and also a mechanism to define a group (Fairclough 2001, 57). For example in this case, the reader who is familiar with the terms might feel included in a restricted and highly valued group, whereas the reader unfamiliar with them might feel a sense of “awe” both of which can lead to compliance and agreement with the statements (ibid.).

In contrast, the rest of the article is written in an informal style e.g. using filler words and interjections often only found in spoken discourse (Aijmer 2013, 26):

- (32) **Oh**, did you not see this article, **like**, the day it came out? **WELL GUESS WHAT**. [...] They [the tips] aren’t any less effective in, say, February 2022

In this example the author uses the two markedly informal words *oh* and *like* that can carry ideological values and also capitalises parts of the text. Using markedly informal language is one way to influence the reader by creating a sense of equality, trust and ease, as these words are often used in casual settings especially amongst close individuals (Fairclough 2001, 112). The more personal language can therefore be a useful and powerful tool to influence the readers opinions.

5.2.2.2 Relational values in the WH article

There are some euphemistic expressions in the WH article and interestingly all of them address the same issue: not eating “too much” and avoiding *overeating*. In the following example, the author is describing low-calorie frozen meals and the consequences of eating them:

(33) **leaving you hungry** again in no time

The bolded part of example (33) is a euphemistic expression as the author is avoiding the offensive or unpleasant alternative of describing what consequences of being left hungry actually indicates. In order to avoid using a euphemism this phrase could be reworded as the frozen meals will make you eat more and lead to weight gain. Another similar euphemistic expression can be found in the next example where a registered dietitian is quoted describing a healthy amount of nuts in one’s diet:

(34) stick to a serving size of just couple of tablespoons to **keep calories in check**

In this example, the euphemistic expression is having to *keep calories in check*. This example also shows that the dietitian avoids expressing the possibly offensive language of saying that more than just a couple of tablespoons of nuts can lead to weight gain, as more calories would mean receiving more energy and some of that energy might be stored as fat in the body. In Western societies weight control and dieting are viewed as feminine behaviours and these euphemistic expressions clearly uphold this gendered division (Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 266).

The WH article is written using somewhat neutral vocabulary with little markedly informal or formal words. The exception to this is in the beginning of the article where the author uses a censored cuss word that markedly deviates from the rest of the article adding both shock value and possible interest in the topic by using this inflammatory wording:

(35) nutritionists think these 40 staple foods should be on your **sh*t** list

In this example, the word shit has been censored with an asterisk and it could be argued that the censoring of the word further amplifies the markedness of the word. Cuss words are often only found in spoken and informal discourse, and using a curse word in a magazine can be shocking to the reader in its unexpectedness as the reader has an established scheme of the type of language used in such contexts which is often neutral and objective (Aijmer 2013, 130–131). Such markedly informal language can be used as an ideological tool to draw attention to the severeness of the topic of interest so much so that it warrants use of such inflammatory language. This indicates that there is a healthist belief behind the example that certain *staple foods* are so unhealthy that they must be avoided at all costs shown in the use of the curse word.

There were also instances of markedly formal words in the article that appeared in the form of scientific jargon that was used both in negative and positive contexts. For example, the authors use markedly formal words when describing ingredients of foods that are not considered healthy:

(36) **artificial** colors and flavors [...] a sugar **substitute** [...] a fiber **additive**

All of the bolded words in example (36) can be found in the UMLS and are therefore considered markedly formal (Xie et al. 2021, 5). In this example, the readers are likely to have pre-existing schemes on the bolded words that equalise such words with negative outcomes. The reader might not be familiar with these terms and using them can be a scare tactic as the unfamiliar is likely to be perceived as dangerous.

The authors also use markedly formal medical words when describing the health benefits of certain foods, but only use the formal words about the healthy compounds in the foods, not ingredients as was the case in the previous example:

(37) greens, which contain **fat-soluble vitamins**, essential **minerals**, and **antioxidants**

In this example, the use of these markedly formal terms (bolded) causes a reaction in the reader depending on their background. Like in the example (36), the bolded words in example (37) can also be found in the UMLS and they are therefore considered formal, and for this reason might cause awe in a reader that is unfamiliar with the specifics of these words (Xie et al. 2021, 5). On the other hand, the reader that is more knowledgeable in the topic might feel a

sense of belonging caused by the restricted access also discussed in Section 3.2.3.2. The decision to include clusters of medical terms that are often found in academic papers can add into the persuasiveness of the text and therefore lead either reader group to believe that the information is correct and trustworthy by the connotation of science being objective in nature.

5.2.2.3 Comparison of relational values

The few euphemistic expressions in the MH article described the health benefits of the diet advice given in the article. The MH article also used a euphemism about the prescribed itself calling it a *healthy approach* instead so as to avoid any negative connotations that might arise if the advice was called a diet. The WH article also used some euphemisms, but instead focused on the negative outcomes that would follow if the reader were to ignore their advice. All of the euphemisms were about an energy surplus from food leading to weight gain yet these phrases were formulated in a way that pointedly avoided mentioning the possibility of gaining weight. Interestingly, there were no such mentions of weight gain in the MH article. Noticing these intricate ideologically charged patterns requires the readers to apply critical thinking and to not accept the given information at face value so as to avoid being susceptible to misinformation that might otherwise occur if the readers do not engage critically with media content.

Both articles used both markedly informal and formal vocabulary items that were ideologically charged, and so differing from the expected language use of similar discourse. Both articles used formal words to amplify the nutritional value and health outcomes of preferred and recommended food items. Markedly formal words were also found in both articles in negative contexts, though the MH article used these words when describing unwanted health outcomes whereas the WH article only used them for ingredients that were deemed unhealthy. Markedly informal words were found only in negative contexts in the WH article contrary to the MH article where similar words were used to create a conversational tone to the article.

5.2.3 Expressive values

In this section the focus of analysis is on expressive values of words where the writer uses wording that expresses an opinion or a personal evaluation of the given subject matter. Such words may induce a negative or positive reaction in the reader depending on the reader's

personal stance on the subject. Such language is used in persuasive texts, and unsurprisingly both texts had a variety of examples of expressive values in their wordings.

5.2.3.1 Expressive values in the MH article

The MH article contains a vast amount of expressive language and therefore also has expressive values in the words. As was discussed in the previous parts, the style of writing in the article is personal and casual and as such repeatedly shows signs of ideological beliefs about the topic. For example, the author calls the supposedly unhealthy diets *trendy* (see example (5)). In this example, not only is it clear from the context that the author sees *trendy diets* as harmful but the word *trendy* itself is considered to have a negative expressive value within itself. The ideology behind this is that all trends are often promoted excessively and undeservingly. Additionally, buying into trends can be seen as a “non-critical” way of thinking, which might go against some personality traits that are traditionally considered masculine such as being an independent thinker and not listening to authority (Rivera and Scholar 2020, E4-E6). Here the expressive language caters to a certain audience as the language expresses a subjective opinion on what *diets* are and what components make them unhealthy (i.e. being *trendy*).

The expressive language in the article mostly concerns the MH diet and other diets. The same theme continues in these values i.e. that the MH diet is healthy where others are not. This can be seen in the subjective evaluation of the “other” diets in example (19), where the author describes other diets as *bland* and *boring*. The author also continues expressing their opinion on the *trendy diets* in the following examples:

(38) trendy diets will almost certainly still be around in the future **doing damage**

(39) The second [a trendy diet] **leaves you poisoned**

These examples show a subjective evaluation of the diets by the author on the outcomes of following these *trendy diets* and by extension, not following the MH advice. Using such expressive language, i.e. calling a diet damaging or poisonous, is likely to cause an emotive reaction in the reader as is typical of expressive values of words. Due to the choice of words, the reader is likely to avoid following these diets to evade these highly adverse results. The author continues to use expressive language when describing the MH diet, and more specifically, he assigns only positive values to it:

(40) **Un-boring** your diet – for good.

In the previous example, the author claims that the MH diet is *un-boring* in contrast to other diets that he explicitly calls *boring* (see example (17)). Similar expressive language can be seen in examples (3) and (4). In example (3), the author describes the MH diet as *the healthiest* and *most delicious*, and in example (4) the author calls the diet advice *smart*. All of these examples show a subjective evaluation on what makes something healthy (i.e. delicious, not boring) and what is unhealthy (i.e. boring, bland). Interestingly, the author also calls the MH advice *nothing special yet effective* later in the article. This example also shows expressive values, as *nothing special* is given a positive value in the text by its correlation with *effective*. This arbitrary connection is a sign of ideological beliefs where the term *nothing special* could be replaced with not gimmicky or traditional, both of which are likely to appeal to the assumed male audience holding conservative or traditional values.

Using expressive language is an effective way to connect with or ostracise the readers, depending on the assigned values. For example, the author also uses expressive language when he describes eating a salad (see example (1)). In this example, the author assumes the reader's taste preferences and the lack of interest in eating salads. Considering the audience of the MH magazine is likely to consist mostly of men, the assumption here draws on the assigned value of femininity to a salad and therefore recommending plain salads is likely to alienate male audiences that hold traditional beliefs of feminine and masculine ideals. The author also assigns positive values to enjoying doughnuts if it is done purposefully:

(41) **Don't Forget to Enjoy** Food [...] that means **a purposeful** weekly trip to the doughnut shop

In this example, the author reminds the reader to *enjoy* their food, expressing an ideological belief that enjoyment is an important part of a healthy diet. The expressive language continues when the author describes that eating doughnuts can be a healthy part of a diet if done on purpose. This purposefulness also has relational value, as the author once more attracts the assumed male audience and the masculine ideal of being in charge of one's life.

5.2.3.2 Expressive values in the WH article

Expressive values can be found in numerous parts in the WH article. For example, the article implies in many ways that the consumer is being tricked into believing that certain foods are healthy but the article exposes these foods as unhealthy based on subjective evaluation:

- (42) pre-bottled coffees and teas are often packed with **added sugars or sugar substitutes** [...] “I never buy them, since you can easily pack in **the calories** and the sugar **without even realizing it**”

The previous example from the article quotes a dietitian implying that pre-bottled coffees and teas are not healthy because the ingredients and calories hide from the consumer (i.e. consuming them *without even realizing*). This same sentiment also shows in other places in the article such as in using quotation marks around the words *healthy* and *diet* when describing certain unfavourable foods, and in the multiple uses of synonymous words for deceiving:

- (43) **junk foods in disguise**

In this example, not only is claiming that some foods are disguised as healthy expressing a subjective evaluation, but calling certain foods *junk* also shows expressive value. The authors have assigned a negative value to these foods based on ideological beliefs. This is evident in the fact that the word *junk* in relation to food induces a negative reaction in the reader because *junk* is synonymous with inedible and repulsive words like rubbish and dirt. The word *disguise* is the other word in the example (43) that can induce a negative emotive reaction in the reader. Again, the ideological connection can be depicted through the use of synonymous words such as hide and deceive. In *disguise* has a negative value as the foods are depicted in an unappealing light i.e. trying to trick the reader into making unadvisable decisions, which is also visible in the use of similar terms like *infiltrated*, *misleading*, *deep undercover* and *dicey marketing*. These show signs of healthist ideology because the author has divided foods into categories of healthy foods and junk foods based on subjective evaluation.

Other words with expressive values in the article were also detectable such as the ones in the following examples, where the author provides an opinion on the health status of the food depending on its “fakeness” or “cleanliness”:

- (44) I recommend eating **real** whipped cream over the **fake** stuff
- (45) Brissette suggests looking for a "**clean** label" that lists **real** food ingredients

In these examples, the author assumes a negative reaction to the word *fake* and a positive one to both *real* and *clean*. These words are not clearly defined nor common ways of describing food. For some, cleanliness is a highly valued characteristic on its own (as cleanliness is also associated with godliness), and is also expected of foods in order to be consumable. The

ideological implication in example (45) is that the cleanness of food depends on its ingredients, not for example whether it has been washed or not. The word clean is often also associated with pureness and this connection may cause a positive reaction in some readers (Martel 2011, 83–86). Both of the examples above also have an evaluation on the “realness” of foods. This is interesting as there is no consensus on what exactly makes a food item *real* or *fake*. This is an ideological tool where the authors rely on the emotive reaction of the reader to associate the given foods as either good and healthy and therefore *real*, or as bad and unhealthy i.e. *fake* based on context.

5.2.3.3 Comparison of expressive values

Both articles had a variety of words that showed expressive values. The expressive values in the MH article were mostly concerned with compliance and framing it in a way that was likely to cause a negative reaction in the reader. The author framed the diet advice as interesting and enjoyable and contrasted it with other diets by offering an opinion on the damage that these other diets will cause. Interestingly, the author used words that showed expressive values that are traditionally regarded as masculine and used this comparison as a way to cause a positive reaction in the reader i.e. not being compliant with mainstream diets but instead following the *smart* MH diet. On the other hand, the expressive values of words in the WH article mostly consisted of evaluations of foods deceiving the consumer. The authors highlighted an opinion that foods that the reader might believe are healthy are in fact not healthy, and therefore the reader should not trust their own instincts when deciding what to eat. The WH article also assigned positive values to words such as *clean* and *real*. These two major subjects are contrary to the message in the MH article, where the reader is advised to choose foods that the reader enjoys and modify these foods to the reader’s liking. The WH article had clear instances of preoccupation with pureness of food, which is also traditionally considered a feminine trait (Martel 2011, 83). As a summary, the expressive values found in both articles were closely tied to traditionally feminine or masculine traits.

6 Discussion

The three main objectives of this study, that also worked as the research questions for the analysis, were firstly to investigate what kinds of ideologies about healthy foods were detectable in the MH and WH articles and whether the depictions of what is considered healthy differs depending on the assumed gender of the audience, and secondly which linguistic features show the underlying ideologies, and thirdly whether these depictions reproduce or challenge the current social norms and practices. The first and second research questions were addressed in the analysis section of this paper. In this section I will provide more detailed answers for the second research question as well as address the third question, i.e. how the divisions and similarities between the articles reproduce or challenge current American social norms by comparing the findings in the analysis to the data found in previous studies.

All of the three analysed values (experiential, relational, and expressive) showed healthist ideologies in different linguistic forms in both articles. These healthist beliefs were also highly gendered and differed greatly between the articles. The fact that the articles showed clear indications of healthist rhetoric throughout the texts is unsurprising, as healthism has been a pervasive part of Western societies for centuries and continues to be so (Crawford 1980, 368; Declercq 2018, 394). The cultural and social context is likely to affect how and what was written in these articles, and so it was therefore expected that Western gender norms and healthism would be present in both articles. Previous studies have also found that both the MH and the WH magazine tend to reproduce these Western gender norms and healthist rhetoric (Fuller, Briggs and Dillon-Sumner 2013, 261; Bazzini et al. 2015, 198).

As was seen in the comparison of the textual structures section, the articles differed in what they presented as the most important information in the given article. The MH article focused on separating its advice from other diets whereas the WH article informed the readers on what individual foods are unhealthy. This is typical of gendered healthist discourse, as nowadays dieting is seen as a feminine act and it is unsurprising that diet advice aimed at male audiences would be veiled as not being diet advice at all, so to avoid any unwelcome connotations with femininity (Vester 2010, 39). The tone of the WH article was highly negative and advised the readers to be highly vigilant with their eating and not trust their own instincts of what is healthy for the individual. This is also common in health advice given to female audiences in health magazines (Roy 2008, 468).

The style of writing in the MH article was also more personal and informal than the WH article. There have not yet been many studies on how the style or tone of a text affects how health related information is received depending on gender, but previous studies have shown that men were seen as more prone to reject nutrition advice and so possibly needing different ways of convincing to accept the information than women as it can be seen as a threat to one's masculinity (Arganini et al. 2012, 86). In relation to this, a more conversational style is often viewed as less authoritative than formal styles and so information delivered in this way might be viewed as less threatening to one's masculinity (Fairclough 2001, 112). In fact, the whole of the MH article was written in a way that was highly persuasive yet seemingly personalised as the author often advised the readers to modify healthy foods to fit their own taste preferences. This is in high contrast to how the WH article presented their information i.e. prescribing a list of things to avoid.

Another gendered difference between the articles was that the WH article focused on promoting eating very little whereas the MH advised eating more foods. This is a typical healthist ideology where high volumes of food are seen as masculine and eating smaller portions, and fasting, are seen as feminine (Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 267). Therefore this categorisation also upholds the current healthist and gendered divisions of healthy foods and behaviours. MH avoided any negative connotations with their advice and WH avoided directly mentioning weight gain or gaining fat, though this was the underlying threat under not following their advice. Weight control is also seen as a feminine behaviour and directly mentioning the possibility of gaining fat could be viewed as threatening by the readers and so avoiding it might be beneficial for the text to be persuasive (Bazzini et al. 2015, 198).

Both articles showed healthist ideals through different linguistic methods. These healthist ideologies were found in all different aspects depicting experiential, relational, and expressive values. Both articles held the healthist belief that one can never be healthy enough, but from slightly different perspectives. This belief that there is always room for improving one's health is at the heart of healthism (Crawford 1980, 375). This theme of "never healthy enough" has been found in health magazines in other studies as well that showed that there is always room for improvement and that a moral person should aim to always achieve better health (Zarhin 2021, 1861–1862). The differences between the two magazines though were in the way that each article advised their audience to achieve better health. The overarching advice in the MH article was to add and modify healthy foods to suit the reader's preferences,

whereas the WH magazine advised to eat less and focus on “natural” and “unprocessed” foods both of which were made visible through examining the different values in the articles (De Bellefonds, Brady and Miller 2021).

The difference in food recommendations is in alignment with other studies where it was detected that health advice for women tends to focus on calorie restriction and low-calorie foods, but for men the advice gravitates towards eating enough. This difference is also tied to traditional beliefs where eating less highlights one’s femininity and vice versa (Vester 2010, 45; Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 267). The MH article tended to address other issues besides just nutritional values of foods when considering what is healthy such as enjoyment but the WH article did not. This is also a sign of healthism that has been found in other studies where women’s magazines present a highly simplified idea of health and what it entails (Roy 2008, 473–474).

The MH article additionally rejected the word *diet*. This shows that the text was modified to suit and consider the previously mentioned men’s tendency to reject diet advice and rather focused on the excitement of the advice. The WH article did not separate its contents from dieting. As was seen in Section 2.3, dieting is nowadays seen as feminine and therefore it is not surprising that the WH article would not need to distance its advice from dieting.

Additionally, compliancy is also traditionally viewed as a feminine trait which has been connected to women being more receptive to diet advice and therefore might also explain the aforementioned differences between the WH and MH articles (Arganini et al. 2012, 86, 95). So, making the MH advice seem very novel and exciting might be appealing to male audiences that align themselves with traditional masculine values, as one of them is about improving oneself by seeking power over others (Rivera and Scholar 2020, E4-E6).

The WH article was preoccupied with the arbitrary categorisation of processed vs. unprocessed foods and the article classified foods into the former category if considered healthy and into the latter if considered unhealthy. Interestingly, the MH article did not show this dichotomy and actually framed processing in a positive way. This difference has been seen in other studies too, where processing was viewed as masculine as it aligned with the masculine ideal of the body being a machine (Roy 2008. 86). The foods that were categorised as processed in the WH magazine were food items that are more often eaten by men according to some studies, which might explain why the MH article did not frame them as unhealthy (Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 266). American gender norms have been

highly affected by Christian puritanism and continue to be so (Martel 2011, 83). This connection might explain why the WH article amplified the necessity of eating natural and unprocessed foods, as naturalness was connected to purity i.e. a highly regarded value in Christianity, and additionally gendered as feminine (Martel 2011, 86).

The MH article equated traditional values with healthy foods on multiple occasions and had high instances of preoccupation with differentiating the MH advice from other advice. No such comparisons were found in the WH article. There was also more explicit language focused on self-improvement in the MH article. This is yet another instance where the socio-cultural context explains the preoccupation with self-improvement: traditional masculinity teaches men to seek power over others and so self-improvement is one way to feel more secure in one's masculinity (Rivera and Scholar 2020, E4-E6).

As was seen in the 2012 study introduced in Section 2.3, men seemed to be resistant to education messages concerning nutrition, as they deemed healthy eating too “monotonous and unsatisfying” (Arganini et al. 2012, 86). The same message was clear in the MH article though the author's writing choices combatted this perspective by overwording amongst other rhetorical devices. The author differentiated the MH approach from other diets by repeatedly stating that the author's advice was not *boring* like other diets (Kita 2022). This discussion about diets being too boring was not found in the WH article. This can be explained with the results of the 2012 study that explained how “women are more aware about diet and health-diet relationship implications and also embrace suggested dietary changes to a greater degree than men” (Arganini et al. 2012, 86). As women seem to be more willing to listen to diet advice, such convincing that a diet will not be too boring is unnecessary.

In summary, there were clear separations of good and bad foods in both articles, but the MH article mostly focused on good and bad diets. The information also differed between the articles which additionally showed that the information in the articles were based in healthist ideologies that were also highly gendered which is typical of Western societies (Cavazza, Guidetti and Butera 2015, 266). This study gave a unique viewpoint to these previous studies as all of the diverse examples given in the analysis provided proof that critical media literacy is highly necessary for one to be able to recognise these subtle underlying ideological values in texts. Additionally, several suggestions for further research rose during the writing of this thesis. Firstly, one expansion idea would be to examine the ethics surrounding advertisements within health-related articles. This could be done by exploring the ethics of sponsorships,

advertisements, and affiliate links in health-related publications as advertisements of any kind may be ethically dubious but still have high influence in people's lives. Secondly, a thorough corpus study could be conducted to investigate gender bias in health magazines. This study could look at how frequently certain ideological values appear in publications targeted at different genders so as to get a more well-rounded understanding of how healthism and gender bias appear in different publications.

Moreover, current research on the effects of healthism and advertising has primarily focused on young girls and women. To better understand the broader impact of healthism and gendering of health behaviours, more research is required to include all genders in the studies. Finally, it is crucial to consider ethnic diversity in research on healthism, as the impact of healthism is often studied within the context of white and affluent groups. Therefore, future research should investigate the effects of healthism on other ethnicities and socio-economic statuses to gain a more complete understanding of this phenomenon and its effects on different people.

7 Conclusion

In this thesis I examined how two articles, one from the Women's Health and another from the Men's Health magazine, depicted healthy food choices for their readers. I studied whether the articles differed in their information and whether the given advice was gendered in nature and based in healthism. These two magazines were picked as they have been studied in similar contexts before and having articles from magazines that are gendered from the start (i.e. one advertised for female audiences and another for males) gave an intriguing starting point for the study as one of the main interests of this study was on gender bias.

This study had three guiding research questions for the analysis, first of which was to investigate what kinds of ideologies about healthy foods were detectable in the picked articles and whether they differed depending on the assumed gender of target audience members, and the second considered which linguistic features show these underlying ideologies, and the third examined how these divisions or similarities reproduce or challenge the current healthist and gendered social norms and practices. This analysis was conducted by using a slightly modified version of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method that was created to unveil ideological beliefs by examining different linguistic features used in the given data. The method included examining the textual structures of the articles as well as the vocabulary items and analysing these aspects in the wider, socio-cultural and historical context where the texts appear in. The textual structure section of the method looked at the order of information that was given first in the articles (i.e. what was written first is considered the most important part). The vocabulary section focused on analysing word choices that had either experiential, relational, or expressive values that were healthist in nature.

Regarding the first research question, the detailed qualitative analysis of these articles showed that the MH article and WH article differed in what they considered healthy depending on the given audience. The MH article focused on high volume of foods and pleasure as the focal points of a healthy diet whereas the WH article advised the reader to eat less and be highly vigilant of the ingredients and nutrients in any given food. Additionally, the WH article categorised foods into healthy and unhealthy foods depending on their level of processing and "naturalness". The MH did not categorise foods directly into good or bad, or healthy and unhealthy foods, and the article was adamant at separating itself from any other commercial diet by explicitly framing the MH diet advice as "smart" and "un-boring" (Kita 2022).

Concerning the second research question, the analysis demonstrated that these underlying ideologies were detectable in all of the analysed linguistic features (i.e. textual structures and different vocabulary items).

These findings show that the WH and the MH articles follow and uphold the current healthist Western ideals of gendering healthy foods and diets, which was done by upholding the idea of feminine and masculine eating patterns. For example, it has been found that in Western societies foods and health behaviours, such as dieting, are gendered, and eating or taking part in a certain health behaviour will make the person present more of the given gendered characteristic (Vester 2010, 45). Taking this into consideration, dieting and small portions are considered feminine in the wider social context where the articles appeared, so it is unsurprising that these same themes were elevated in the WH article but diminished in the MH article. In contrast, larger portions and lower interest in nutrition values of foods have been found to be associated with masculinity, and these themes were present in the MH article but not in the WH article. These findings provided a satisfactory answer to the third research question mentioned above.

The analysis provided sufficient answers to the research questions and the results align with earlier studies, though it should be noted that the scope of this paper is not wide enough to generalise the findings and should not be applied to the magazines that were under analysis as a whole or to any other health related magazines. Additionally, this study focused only on some linguistic aspects of the two articles, and future studies should consider applying the entirety of the method to find more meaningful and detailed results. It should also be considered to account for the multimedia format that the articles appear in and also study other related material such as pictures, videos, and advertisements that appear in the articles and magazines for a better understanding of the material.

However, this study provides a unique perspective to the well-studied phenomenon of gendered healthist discourse in media. By conducting a highly detailed qualitative analysis of linguistic features, this study revealed intricate patterns in the texts that might have otherwise gone unnoticed. Furthermore, the focus of this study on the specific linguistic features of healthist rhetoric adds valuable and practical insights for real-world contexts, as it illustrates through clear examples to readers and writers of how biases can be subtly embedded into texts. Moreover, this emphasis on recognizing biases aids in the development of critical media literacy skills.

Additionally, this study has some broader implications that raise questions about the state of health reporting and gender bias. The analysis showed clear indications of healthism and gendering of food behaviours which have been shown to be harmful and manifesting in e.g. men avoiding healthy behaviours and women participating in excessive dieting (Rivera and Scholar 2020, E5; Clark 2018, 482). With the continuing interest in health and health related topics it is highly important to consider the implications that biased health reporting can have on the readers: healthism and assigning gender to health behaviours have been linked to worse health outcomes such as worse mental and overall health, and rising instances of eating disorders (Hanganu-Bresch 2020, 314; Ross Arguedas 2020, 3).

These studies and this analysis highlight the need for critical engagement with health media, and underscores the importance of media literacy in the process. This vital skill allows readers to better understand and critically evaluate the information presented in health reporting, and to identify and challenge biases that may be present in the reporting. The analysis also highlights the need for health reporters and writers to provide accurate, inclusive and well-informed coverage of health topics and consider the biases that might guide their writing and work to confront the issue directly. Were these suggestions applied, they may work together to minimise the harm that is likely to arise from health reporting in the future.

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Appendix 1: Finnish summary

Tämä tutkielma käsittelee terveystuskon (*healthism*) esiintymistä terveysturportoinnissa ja sen vaikutusta terveysturportointiin sekä sitä, kuinka lukijoiden oletettu sukupuoli on sidoksissa terveysturportoinnin sisältöön, tarkemmin terveystvaikutteisten ruoka-aineiden ja -ainesosien väitettyihin terveystvaikutuksiin. Terveystusko on ideologia, jonka mukaan ihmisen moraalinen velvoite on pyrkiä saavuttamaan aina parempi terveystentila jokapäiväisillä päätöksillä (Crawford 1980, 365). Suomen kielessä ei ole vakiintunutta termiä kyseessä olevalle ideologialle, mutta usein aiheesta käytetään termiä terveystusko tai liiallinen terveystden tavoittelu.

Tämän tutkimuksen materiaalina on käytetty kahta artikkelia, joista toinen on Men's Health -lehestä ja toinen Women's Health -lehestä. Sen tavoitteena on selvittää, löytyykö näiden kahden artikkelin erilaisista sanavalinnoista ja tekstin rakenteesta terveystuskoon viittaavia arvoja, jotka ovat luonteeltaan myös sukupuolitettuja. Lisäksi tutkimus pyrkii ottamaan selvää, ylläpitääkö vai vastustaako artikkeleissa esitetty informaatio nykyisiä länsimaalaisia kulttuurisia ja sukupuolitettuja käyttäytymissääntöjä ja -normeja.

Tutkimusta ohjaa kolme kysymystä, joiden avulla tutkimusanalyysi toteutetaan:

1. Millaisia ideologioita terveellisistä ruoista artikkeleissa on havaittavissa, ja ovatko nämä ideologiat erilaisia riippuen artikkelien kohderyhmän oletetusta sukupuolesta?
2. Mitkä lingvistiset piirteet havainnollistavat artikkelien taustalla olevia ideologioita?
3. Miten nämä eroavuudet tai samankaltaisuudet artikkelien välillä tukevat tai vastustavat nykyisiä sukupuolitettuja ja terveystuskon mukaisia sosiaalisia normeja ja käytäntöjä?

Tutkimuksen hypoteesina on, että nämä artikkelit ylläpitävät nykyistä jakoa maskuliinisiin ja feminiinisiin terveystkäytänteisiin ja -ruokiin, vaikka terveystden ja terveellisen ruoan oletetaan usein olevan riippumattomia henkilön sukupuolesta. Oletan, että tutkimuksen analyysiosiossa on kuitenkin havaittavissa selkeä ero siinä, mitkä ruoat ja terveystkäyttämiset nähdään terveellisinä miehille ja mitkä ovat terveellisiä naisille.

Ennen tutkimuksen toteuttamista on olennaista tietää, mitkä arvot voivat ohjata käsityksiämme siitä, mikä on terveellistä ja kenelle, sekä mistä syystä nämä arvot ovat sisäistyneet länsimaiseen kulttuuriin. Tämän tutkimuksen kannalta olennaisimmat näistä arvoista ovat terveystusko ja sosiaalisten käytäntöjen sukupuolittuneisuus länsimaisessa

kulttuurissa. Kuten aiemmin mainittiin, terveysusko on ideologia, jonka pohjimmaisena ajatuksena on, että hyvän terveyden tavoittelu on yksilön moraalinen velvoite, joka on myös lähes poikkeuksetta vahvasti riippuvainen yksilön omista teoista ja jokapäiväistä päätöksistä (Crawford 1980, 365). Tutkimuksissa on havaittu, että tämän ideologian mukaisesti toimiminen voi kohottaa yksilön sosiaalista statusta (Barker-Ruchti et al. 2013, 767–768). Terveysusko vaikuttaa myös siihen, miten ihmiset näkevät sekä oman arvonsa että toisten ihmisten arvon. Tutkimuksissa on huomattu, että ne, jotka eivät onnistuneet ”saavuttamaan” hyvää terveyttä, joutuvat syrjinnän kohteiksi, ja että kyseiset henkilöt myös näkevät itsensä kokonaisvaltaisina epäonnistujina (Powroznik 2017, 160–161; Kristensen, Lim ja Askegaard 2016, 495). Hyvän terveyden liiallinen arvostaminen altistaa myös syömishäiriöille ja henkiseen pahoinvointiin (Hanganu-Bresch 2020, 314). Terveysuskolla on siis moniulotteisia ja negatiivisia vaikutuksia ihmisten elämään, minkä vuoksi on tärkeää, että terveysuskoa vahvistavaa retoriikkaa tutkitaan kriittisesti, jotta näitä negatiivisia vaikutuksia voitaisiin vähentää.

Tutkimuksissa on myös havaittu, että terveysaiheisilla aikakauslehdillä, erityisesti naistenlehdillä, on olennainen osa terveysuskon vahvistamisessa ja popularisoinnissa (Hanganu-Bresch 2020, 314; Roy 2008, 466). Lisäksi näiden lehtien on havaittu muovaavan käsityksiä siitä, mitä terveydellä tarkoitetaan ja kuinka se on mahdollista saavuttaa, vaikka kyseisten lehtien raportoinnissa on havaittu huomattavia virheitä ja eroavuuksia siihen, mitä terveydestä on todettu tieteellisissä tutkimuksissa (Cheek 2008, 974–975; Declercq 2018, 394). Aikakauslehtien on lisäksi havaittu vahvistavan binääristä sukupuolijakaumaa, jossa terveystietäytyminen ja terveelliset ruokatuotokset on jaoteltu sukupuolen mukaan (Fuller, Briggs ja Dillon-Sumner 2013, 261).

Tämän tutkimuksen materiaalina toimii kaksi yhdysvaltalaisista aikakauslehteä, joten on olennaista huomioda, millaisena terveelliset elämäntavat ja terveellinen ruoka nähdään nimenomaan amerikkalaisessa kulttuurissa ja kuinka näihin teemoihin on perinteisesti suhtauduttu. Amerikkalainen yhteiskunta on perinteisesti jakanut terveelliset elämäntavat sukupuolen mukaan, ja tämä jako on edelleen havaittavissa amerikkalaisessa kulttuurissa (Vester 2010, 39). Myös useat ruoat on perinteisesti sukupuolitettu, ja tähän jakoon perustuu uskomus, että tietyn ruoan syöminen lisää syöjässään joko maskuliinisia tai feminiinisiä piirteitä (Vester 2010, 45). Esimerkiksi lihan ja urheilun uskotaan lisäävän maskuliinisuutta, kun taas vihannesten ja laihduttamisen koetaan lisäävän feminiinisuutta (Cavazza, Guidetti ja Butera 2015, 266; Vester 2010, 39–45). Tutkimuksissa on myös havaittu, että miehet

vastustavat naisia todennäköisemmin terveysviestintää ja terveyttä edistäviä käytänteitä (Arganini et al. 2012, 86–95). Näistä syistä oletan, että myös tämän tutkimuksen materiaalissa on havaittavissa lingvistisiä eroja riippuen siitä, onko kyseinen artikkeli suunnattu naisille vai miehille.

Tämä tutkimus perustuu kriittiseen diskurssianalyysiin, jonka tavoite on havainnollistaa diskurssien sisältämiä vallitsevia ideologioita ja valtasuhteita (Hidalgo Tenorio, 2011, 184). Tutkimuksessa on käytetty Norman Fairclough'n kehittämää kriittistä diskurssianalyysimetodia. Kyseinen metodi on alkuperäisesti kriittisen diskurssianalyysin klassikkoteoksesta nimeltään *Language and Power* (Fairclough, 1989). Tässä tutkimuksessa käytetään kyseisen teoksen toista painosta, joka ilmestyi vuonna 2001. Valittu tutkimusmetodi tarjoaa yksityiskohtaisen ja selkeän rungon analyysiin, mikä vahvistaa analyysin läpinäkyvyyttä ja lisää siten myös tulosten luotettavuutta.

Alkuperäisen metodin mukainen analyysi toteutetaan vastaamalla kymmeneen Fairclough'n luomaan kysymykseen, jotka on jaettu kolmeen eri kategoriaan: sanasto, kielioppi ja tekstin rakenne. Tässä tutkimuksessa analysoidaan vain tekstien sanastoa ja rakennetta tutkimusta rajoittavien ulkoisten tekijöiden takia (tutkimukseen käytettävä aika ja tutkimuksen sanamääräinen pituus). Lisäksi artikkeleista analysoidaan ensin tekstin rakennetta, jotta tutkimuksen lukija saa selkeän kuvan artikkeleiden kokonaisuudesta ennen kuin siirrytään tarkempiin sanastollisiin osuuksiin.

Tekstin rakenteiden analyysissä keskitytään siihen, mikä tieto esitetään ensimmäisenä tekstissä ja mikä on jätetty viimeiseksi. Tämä perustuu siihen, että ensimmäisenä annettu tieto käsitetään tärkeimmäksi, ja se voi siten olla perusteeltaan ideologinen (Fairclough 2001, 115). Sanaston analyysi on jaoteltu kolmeen osioon. Näistä ensimmäinen käsittelee kokemusperäisiä arvoja, joihin sisältyy luokittelujärjestelmät, ideologisesti kiistanalaiset sanat, uudelleenmuotoilu (*rewording*) ja liikatoisto (*overwording*) sekä merkityssuhteet. Seuraava osuus koskee samaistuttavia arvoja (*relational values*), joita ovat kiertoilmaisut ja ilmeisen muodolliset ja epämuodolliset sanat. Kolmas ja viimeinen osuus koskee ekspressiivisiä arvoja, joihin sisältyy ideologisesti latautuneet sanat.

Kuten aiemmin mainittiin, tutkimuksen materiaalina toimii kaksi artikkelia, jotka ovat kahdesta eri aikakausilehdestä. Ensimmäinen artikkeli on Men's Health -lehdestä ja toinen Women's Health -lehdestä, jotka kummatkin ovat luettavissa lehtien nettisivuilta. Koska nämä aikakausilehdet ovat saman mediayhtiön rahoittamia ja ne tuottavat samantyyppistä

sisältöä, ne sopivat hyvin vertailtaviksi tähän tutkimukseen. Näitä kahta lehteä on tutkittu myös runsaasti aiemmin, joten tämän tutkimuksen tuloksia on mahdollista verrata aiempiin tuloksiin (esim. Bazzini et al. 2015; Fuller, Briggs ja Dillon-Sumner 2013; Zarhin 2021). Tutkimukseen valitut artikkelit olivat kullekin lehdelle kuuluvan hakukoneen ensimmäiset tulokset, kun hakusanana käytettiin ”Healthy Eating” termiä. Artikkelit siis valittiin, koska hakukone suosi näitä artikkeleita ja se todennäköisesti suosittelee kyseessä olevia artikkeleja laajalle lukijaryhmälle.

Artikkeleiden analyysi toteutettiin niin, että niistä kumpikin luettiin ensin läpi kokonaisuudessaan, jotta saataisiin käsityksiä sisällöstä, teemoista sekä yleisestä rakenteesta. Tämän jälkeen siirryttiin tarkempaan artikkelikohtaiseen analyysiin. Analyysi toteutettiin siten, että artikkelit luettiin läpi useaan otteeseen niin, että jokaisella lukukerralla keskityttiin yhteen metodissa esitettyyn arvoon (kokemusperäiset arvot, samaistuttavat arvot ja ekspressiiviset arvot). Jokaisella lukukerralla kerättiin kaikki esimerkit yhdestä tekstissä ilmenevästä arvosta, jonka jälkeen siirryttiin seuraavaan arvoon toistaen samat askeleet. Kun kaikki esimerkit oli kerätty kummastakin artikkelista, esimerkkejä verrattiin toisiinsa, jotta saataisiin selville niitä yhdistävät teemat. Kun nämä teemat olivat selvillä, valittiin yksi tai useampi esimerkki havainnollistamaan kyseessä olevaa arvoa syvempää analyysia varten. Tutkimusta rajoittavat tekijät estivät jokaisen esimerkin sisällyttämisen tähän tutkimukseen.

Tutkimuksen analyysiosuus rakentui niin, että artikkeleista analysoitiin ensin tekstin rakenteet, jonka jälkeen siirryttiin sanaston analyysiin. Tekstin rakenteiden analyysiosuus jakautui lisäksi niin, että ensin analysoitiin Men’s Health -lehden sisältö, sitten Women’s Health -lehden sisältö, minkä jälkeen näitä sisältöjä verrattiin toisiinsa. Myös sanaston analyysi jaettiin kolmeen pääkategoriaan, jotka olivat metodissa esitetyt kolme arvoa. Nämä pääkategoriat oli jaettu vielä kolmeen analyysiosuuteen, eli jokaista arvoa analysoitiin ensin Men’s Health -lehdestä, sitten Women’s Health -lehdestä ja lopuksi näitä verrattiin toisiinsa.

Tekstin rakenteiden analyysissa havaittiin, että artikkelit erosivat huomattavasti toisistaan siinä, mitkä aiheet ja teemat koettiin tärkeimmäksi eli mitkä aiheet artikkeleissa esitettiin ensimmäiseksi. Men’s Health -artikkeli keskittyi siihen, miten artikkelissa mainostettu ruokavalio eroaa muista dieeteistä ja oli tyyliältään keskusteleva ja humoristinen. Women’s Health -artikkeli taas keskittyi siihen, mitä erilaisia ruokia lukijan tulisi välttää ja oli tyyliältään pääsääntöisesti muodollinen.

Sanaston ensimmäisessä analyysiosiossa, jossa tarkasteltiin kokemukseräisiä arvoja, havaittiin, että kumpikin artikkeli korosti aterioiden optimointia terveyden kannalta, mutta eri näkökulmista. Men's Health -artikkeli korosti sitä, miten saada terveellisistä aterioista ja ruoista hyvänmakuisia, kun taas Women's Health -artikkeli korosti sitä, mitkä terveellisinä mainostetut ruoat eivät oikeasti olekaan "tarpeeksi" terveellisiä. Terveysusko näkyi artikkeleiden kokemukseräisissä arvoissa siten, että kumpikin artikkeli jakoi ruoat tai ruokavaliot hyviin ja huonoihin oletetun (epä)terveellisyyden kautta. Artikkelit erosivat jaottelussa kuitenkin toisistaan: Women's Health -artikkeli ilmaisi ruoan terveellisyyden riippuvan ruoan ravintosisällöstä sekä satunnaisesta luonnonmukaisuudesta ja prosessoinnin tasosta. Men's Health -artikkeli taas esitti terveellisyyden olevan riippuvainen ruoan maistuvuudesta ja nautinnosta sekä yhdisti terveellisen ruoan myös perinteisiin arvoihin.

Sanaston toisessa, samaistuttavia arvoja koskevassa, analyysiosiossa havaittiin, että kummassakin artikkelissa käytettiin ideologisesti latautuneita kiertoilmaisuja sekä ilmeisen muodollisia ja epämuodollisia sanoja. Men's Health -artikkeli vältti käyttämästä sanaa *diet* artikkelissa mainostetusta ruokavaliosta ja sanaa käytettiin vain muista, epäterveelliseksi luokitelluista ruokavaliosta. Women's Health -artikkeli puolestaan käytti kiertoilmaisuja kuvaillessaan negatiivisia seurauksia, joita lukijalle koituisi, jos tämä ei seuraa artikkelissa esitettyjä neuvoja. Nämä kiertoilmaisut koskivat painonnousua ja rasvan kertymistä kehoon. Artikkelissa vältettiin kuitenkin puhumasta painonnoususta suoraan. Kumpikin artikkeli käytti selvästi muodollisia sanavalintoja korostaessaan terveelliseksi koettujen ruokien ravintosisältöä ja positiivisia vaikutuksia kehoon. Epämuodollisia sanavalintoja löytyi myös kummastakin artikkelista: Women's Health -artikkeli käytti näitä sanoja vain negatiivisissa konteksteissa, kun taas Men's Health käytti epäformaaleja sanoja luomaan kirjoitustyyliin keskustelevan sävyn.

Kolmas ja viimeinen sanaston analyysiosuus koskee ekspressiivisiä arvoja. Kumpikin artikkeli käytti runsaasti sanoja, jotka ilmaisivat näitä arvoja. Men's Health -artikkeli käytti sanoja lähinnä korostamaan muiden dieettien negatiivisia vaikutuksia kutsumalla niitä muun muassa tylsiksi, vahingollisiksi ja myrkyllisiksi. Men's Health -ruokavaliota kuvaillessaan kirjoittaja taas käytti positiivisia termejä kuten älykäs ja nautinnollinen. Women's Health -artikkeli käytti ekspressiivisiä sanoja kuvaillessaan sekä terveellisiä että epäterveellisiä ruokia. Epäterveellisiä ruokia kuvailtiin hämääviksi, ja lukijaa kehoitettiin olemaan luottamatta omaan vaistoonsa valitessaan terveellisiä ruokia. Kyseessä oleva artikkeli kuvaili terveellisiä ruokia puhtaiksi (*clean*) ja aidoiksi (*real*). Tämä jaottelu poikkesi huomattavasti siitä, mitä

Men's Health -artikkelissa kuvailtiin terveelliseksi. Nämä kaikki edellä mainitut termit ovat ideologisesti latautuneita ja perustuvat kirjoittajien henkilökohtaisiin mielipiteisiin ja ovat siten myös esimerkkejä terveysuskosta.

Terveysusko näkyi kummassakin artikkelissa kaikissa kolmessa analysoidussa arvossa sekä tekstien rakenteessa. Artikkelien sisältämä informaatio oli myös sukupuolittunutta ja artikkelien sisällöt poikkesivat toisistaan huomattavasti. Nämä tutkimustulokset eivät olleet yllättäviä, sillä myös aiemmat tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että terveysuskolla on läpitunkeva osuus länsimaisessa kulttuurissa ja Men's Health sekä Women's Health -lehtien on osoitettu toistavan näitä sukupuolittuneita terveysuskon ideaaleja (Crawford 1980, 368; Declercq 2018, 394; Fuller, Briggs ja Dillon-Sumner 2013, 261; Bazzini et al. 2015, 198). Yksi sukupuolittuneista terveysuskon piirteistä artikkeleissa oli muun muassa se, että Men's Health -artikkeli vältti käyttämästä termiä dieetti mutta Women's Health -artikkeli ei. Tämä on tyypillistä länsimaisessa kulttuurissa, jossa laihduttaminen nähdään feminiinisenä (Vester 2010, 39). Men's Health oli tyyliltään myös huomattavasti rennompi, kun taas Women's Health -artikkeli oli sävyiltään negatiivinen ja korosti tarkkuuden tärkeyttä terveellisten ruokien valinnassa. Myös tälle ilmiölle on sukupuolittunut perusta länsimaisessa kulttuurissa, jossa miehet vastustavat tyypillisesti perinteisiä terveysdiskursseja ja suora neuvonta voi uhata kokemusta omasta maskuliinisudesta, kun taas naiset ovat vastaanottavaisempia neuvoille sekä tarkkaavaisempia terveydentilastaan (Vester 2010, 39; Arganini et al. 2012, 86; Roy 2008, 468).

Yksi olennaisimmista tutkimushavainnoista oli se, että terveyden sukupuolittuneisuus näkyi artikkeleissa siten, että Women's Health -artikkeli kehotti lukijoitaan syömään vähemmän, jonka uskotaan perinteisesti lisäävän feminiinisyyttä, kun taas Men's Health -artikkeli kehotti lukijoitaan päinvastaiseen suuntaan, eli lisäämään ruoan määrää, jonka puolestaan uskotaan lisäävän maskuliinisuutta (Cavazza, Guidetti ja Butera 2015, 267). Toinen keskeinen havainto oli se, että terveysusko ja sukupuolittuneisuus näkyivät artikkeleissa myös siten, että artikkelit painottivat eri asioiden tärkeyttä terveydelle. Men's Health -artikkeli painotti nautintoa ja yksilöllisyyttä ja Women's Health -artikkeli korosti ruoan ainesosien arbitraarisen puhtauden ja luonnonmukaisuuden tärkeyttä. Amerikkalaisiin sukupuolinormeihin ja ruokakäytäntöihin on vaikuttanut vahvasti kristinusko ja puritanismi, joka voi selittää sen, miten naisille suunnatussa artikkelissa korostui puritanismiin liitettävät feminiiniset arvot (puhtaus ja luonnollisuus) ja miksi miehille suunnatussa artikkelissa korostui maskuliiniseksi luokiteltu yksilöllisyys (Martel 2011, 83–86; Rivera ja Scholar 2020, E4-E6). Nämä tulokset ilmentävät,

että kumpikin artikkeli tukee terveysuskon mukaisia sukupuolittuneita arvoja ja siten myös aiempia tutkimustuloksia.

Aiemmat tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että terveystiedon raportointi on altis terveysuskon sukupuolittuneille ideaaleille ja tämä tutkimus loi lisäksi syvemmän katsauksen siihen, kuinka erilaiset lingvistiset valinnat voivat muokata käsitystämme terveydestä ja siitä, mitä se tarkoittaa. Jatkotutkimukset ovat perusteltuja, sillä terveysuskolla ja medialla on osoitettu olevan laaja vaikutus terveyteen ja hyvinvointiin. Tutkimusta tulisi siis syventää sekä laajentaa koskemaan myös muita sukupuolia ja ihmisryhmiä. Tutkimuksen tuloksista voidaan lisäksi päätellä, että kirjoittajien sekä lukijoiden on tarpeellista harjoittaa kriittistä medialukutaitoa myös terveystiedon raportoinnin suhteen, sillä ideologiset arvot voivat muovata myös väitetysti objektiivista terveystiedon raportointia, jonka kritiikin kuluttaminen voi vaikuttaa negatiivisesti sekä yksilön mielenterveyteen että kollektiiviseen hyvinvointiin.