

The continuous dissemination of stereotypes¹ or a stride towards gender equality? Some remarks on the image of the contemporary woman and man in women's press (on the example of *Women's Health*)

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*The notions of metonymy and Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) have been fundamental to various methods of analysis in Cognitive Linguistics. Since both derive from an approach that considers language as a system reflecting the speaker's conceptualisation of the world, they constitute an invaluable tool capable of describing some social stereotypes functioning in modern, western societies. This article provides a concise overview of such concepts as stereotypes, prototypes², and Idealized Cognitive Models, with respect to their origins and the influence they exert on human conceptualisation of reality. The main focus is on the specific role they play in determining how woman and man – as words and concepts – function in the press. The analysis puts the aforementioned notions in the framework of media discourse, providing an account of the stereotypical representation of women and men in *Women's Health*. Although here and there appear voices of resistance against traditional norms and traditional division of responsibilities, they are not strong enough to bring about significant changes. The image of a woman promoted by women's magazines is based mainly on metonymic submodels such as **FAMILY LIFE**,³ **PHYSICAL TRAITS** and **PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES**. Men, on the other hand, are still perceived as strong and independent, especially in the sphere of **WORK**, **SEX** and **EDUCATION**.*

Keywords: *ICM, woman, man, magazine, stereotype*

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to reconstruct the contemporary linguistic images of women and men in the press. The research material is obtained from a popular English magazine: *Women's Health*.⁴ Due to the choice of the recipient, who is a modern reader, the magazine contains current expressions and phrases used in the English language, and the fact that it is addressed primarily to women provides different connotations, mostly stereotypical, related to the topic in question. For the purpose of the analysis, 17 issues of the magazine published from January

¹The question of whether the magazine disseminates stereotypes or not can be better addressed by referring to some common social stereotypes of women and men in America (cf., for instance, Hinton 2020).

²For a more comprehensive discussion on the relation between prototypes, stereotypes, and category structure see Lakoff (1996).

³This article adopts the following typographic conventions: (i) bold capitals are used for the names of ICMs; (ii) bold small capitals – for the names of submodels; (iii) capitals – for abstract concepts; (iv) italics are employed for the names of key terms; (v) bold italics – for lexemes and names of lexical units; (vi) single quotation marks – for explanations and definitions; (vii) angles are used to present metonymic patterns.

⁴*Women's Health* is an illustrated magazine for women, founded in the United States as a women's version of *Men's Health* magazine. Both deal with topics related to healthy lifestyle, diet, fashion, fitness, health, sex and relationships. The choice of the source was predominantly based on the fact that the magazine contains the lexeme **woman** in its title, which might suggest that it would contain specific connotations of *woman* referring both to her ideal and stereotypical characteristics.

2016 to November 2017 were collected and thoroughly examined. The research procedure is conducted⁵ in such a way that the focus is on tracking semantic connotations in the lexical layer. The collected linguistic material was limited to the lexemes *woman* and *man* (in singular or plural forms) omitting all their synonyms like, for example, *girl*, *female* or *lady* and *male*, *boy* or *gentleman*, which can also be detected in various modern magazines. Importantly, it is believed here that the precise notion of an Idealised Cognitive Model, as proposed by Lakoff (1987), provides the best framework⁶ for a comprehensive description of the concepts of WOMAN and MAN respectively. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that cognitive models are culture-dependent (that is why they are idealised), rather than universal, and they are predominantly seen as dynamic structures. For this reason, all the interpretations should be treated as abstractions which can evolve with time and the ICMs built for the purpose of this study, might possibly be restructured. Yet, it is of paramount importance to recognise the fact that although ICMs are in principle individual, they are shared within a given culture⁷ and perpetuated by the contemporary media. It is a difficult enterprise to predict which dimensions will be taken into consideration by different members of different societies and how these particular conceptualisations will be understood. Accordingly, the aim of this small-scale study is to identify and analyse the potential submodels that appear in magazines for women, and to investigate how they contribute to the supposedly stereotypical structure of the **WOMAN** and **MAN** ICMs in Western culture.

2. Methodological assumptions

From the Cognitive Linguistics point of view, language seen as a general product of cognitive abilities is not an arbitrary structure. It is grounded and motivated in human bodily, social, physical and cultural experiences because, as Johnson (1992: 347) suggests, “we are beings of the flesh”. Human categorisation constitutes one of the major, and most significant, issues in Cognitive Linguistics, simply because the ability to categorise different phenomena is an essential part of cognition. Categorisation might be seen as an unconscious, automatic process, yet the whole issue seems to be more complicated. How people judge and establish different categories has been discussed since time immemorial and it dates as far back as to Aristotle,⁸ whose views on categorisation survived unchanged for many years, until they became disproven by Rosch (cf. 1973; 1977; 1978), who proposed a model of categorisation of all human categories based on the concept of prototype. The prototype theory assumes that every category has two types of members: the prototype and several other members, which are less

⁵Some important clues about the cluster model of the two concepts may be conveyed by the analysis of certain common verbs and adjectives, as well as compounds, which frequently designate particular submodels (cf. Lakoff 1987: 76).

⁶In order to discover more about other significant notions, such as e.g. *frame*, *domain*, *schema* and *mental space*, consult Kövecses & Radden (1998) and Kövecses (2005).

⁷On this issue see Kövecses (2005) and Gibbs (1999).

⁸The Aristotelian view holds that categories can be defined in terms of a conjunction of the necessary and sufficient features that every member of a particular category has to exhibit. Such requirements not only imply that categories have clear and impregnable boundaries, but also that all the members belonging to a particular category have equal status (Taylor 1995: 25).

central, and which are related to the prototype (the most typical and the most prominent member of a category⁹) in a motivated way.

Lakoff's view of categorisation¹⁰ is focused on Idealised Cognitive Models which can be understood as conventionalised patterns of belief used in the process of understanding (Lakoff 1987). For Lakoff, various concepts are non-primitive "gestalt-structures" based on social and bodily experiences. His proposal concerning ICMs is grounded in the empirical findings of cognitive psychology on prototype effects (Rosch 1978).

According to Lakoff (1987), people organise their knowledge about the world in the form of ICMs, and the prototype effect is nothing more than simply a by-product of the use of ICMs. What is more, ICMs are seen nowadays as not only the result of thinking and reasoning alone, but rather they are inevitably shaped by interaction with culture. Each ICM employs one of four structuring principles: propositional structure, image-schemas, metaphor and metonymy¹¹ and their activation is a source of prototype effects.

Metonymic models are also considered to be the source of prototype effects such as radial structures, typical examples, stereotypes, social stereotypes, ideals, paragons, submodels and salient examples (Lakoff 1987: 74). In many cases, when one has to deal with such complicated concepts as WOMAN and MAN, one simple ICM is not enough to define their meaning. Therefore, Lakoff coined the term known as the *cluster model*, which involves combining several cognitive models into one complex cluster that is "psychologically more basic than the models taken individually" (Lakoff 1987: 74). As a result, the semantic categories of the concepts of WOMAN and MAN should be described not as one single ICM, but rather as a cluster consisting of many different aspects that best define the category in question. For example, a woman is not only a person who cares about clothes and external appearance, or one who stays at home as a housewife, taking care of children and her husband, but also an individual who is educated and climbs the career ladder, meeting other needs along the way. The man, in turn, cannot be defined by just one single ICM. The understanding of the concept of MAN requires reference to a cluster of several ICMs such as *work model* ('a person who works and earns money'), *sex model* ('the male who enjoys his sex life'), or *physical traits model* ('a person who cares about bodybuilding, weight and diet').

The overall conceptualisation of gender is motivated by some objective properties as well as by subjective factors, e.g. the point of view of a given magazine. A set of such factors seems to create a stereotype that contains not only descriptive but also axiological contents, such as values or norms. Stereotypical perception of the world is, therefore, the result of the interpretation of reality within the framework of social cognitive models¹². Both the **WOMAN ICM** and the **MAN ICM** presented and analysed below can be perceived as a conceptual network (cluster) that consists of one general definer: woman and man respectively (Langacker's *access node*¹³) and several related prototypical associations (the network built by

⁹A prototype is perceived as an example that first comes to mind when one thinks about a particular category. For example, the category **FURNITURE**, for many evokes the image of a chair, which might, in turn, be treated as a prototypical member of the category.

¹⁰For a better understanding of the categorisation process from the cognitive perspective see e.g. Evans & Green (2006).

¹¹What I present here is only a very brief overview of such principles. For a more detailed explanation and discussion, the reader can refer to Lakoff (1987).

¹²On the social functions of stereotypes consult Lippmann (1922), Holland & Quinn (1987), Berting & Villain-Gandossi (1994), Macrae, Stangor & Hewstone (1996), Barker (2004) and Schneider (2005).

¹³On this issue see Langacker (1990).

submodels). Once the network of the concept WOMAN or MAN is activated, we obtain a whole set of propositional models that are arranged according to their degree of centrality. In this way, the source of prototype effects is created. In order to obtain a full picture of this phenomenon, the examples excerpted from the magazines were divided into ten submodels,¹⁴ corresponding to the contents of the magazine, and several dozen aspects that allow a more precise systematisation of the material.

3. The analysis

Humans are categorised along diverse dimensions, yet nobody can deny the fact that gender (treated here as the division of humans on the basis of their reproductive functions) is one of the most important factors, and that the very process of designating people to particular categories is performed at the conceptual level and it is frequently manifested in language. Taking into account the social perspective, the categorisation of humans raises a number of problems as people are always subject to overgeneralisation, or stereotypical thinking. The further part of this article contains an outline of the most common aspects identified in the analysis which can be assigned to various submodels belonging to and creating the whole cognitive models of **WOMAN** and **MAN**, such as **BODY**, **FASHION AND CLOTHES**, **PHYSICAL TRAITS**, **PHYSICAL PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES**, **PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES**, **WORK AND EDUCATION**, **LEISURE**, **SOCIAL LIFE**, **LOVE AND SEX**, and **FAMILY LIFE**. As one might expect, the list of submodels discussed below cannot be seen as closed and complete. However, it is strongly believed here that this account covers the major areas describing modern women and men, at least within Western civilisation.

3.1 Submodels and their internal division

Obviously, some of these submodels are more productive than others. Although the percentage distribution may be helpful, a simple table presenting the quantitative data in detail should be useful in shedding some light on the material.

Table 1: The number of excerpts found in *Women's Health* divided into submodels of the **WOMAN** and **MAN ICMs**

Number	Submodels of WOMAN and MAN ICM	Sex distinction	Excerpts	Total
1.	BODY	Woman Man	34 1	35
2.	FASHION AND CLOTHES	Woman Man	7 0	7
3.	PHYSICAL TRAITS	Woman Man	106 6	112

¹⁴When determining the names of submodels and aspects constituting their further and more detailed developments, I mainly used the work of Spychała-Reiss (2009), though with some changes and new details selected for the purpose of the analysis.

4.	PHYSICAL PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES	Woman Man	139 10	149
5.	PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES	Woman Man	293 40	333
6.	WORK AND EDUCATION	Woman Man	114 46	160
7.	LEISURE	Woman Man	42 5	47
8.	SOCIAL LIFE	Woman Man	19 0	19
9.	LOVE AND SEX	Woman Man	62 29	91
10.	FAMILY LIFE	Woman Man	44 13	57
TOTAL		Woman Man	860 150	1010

The detailed data related to the collected language material is presented below. Excerpts containing the lexemes *woman* and *man* have not only been assigned to specific submodels, but they have been further divided into more detailed aspects, which helped in the process of categorisation.¹⁵

Table 2: The number of excerpts found in *Women's Health*, divided into submodels of the **WOMAN** and **MAN ICMs** and their internal division

Number	SUBMODELS of WOMAN and MAN ICM	Number of excerpts		Aspect covered by particular submodels	Number of excerpts	
		Woman	Man		Woman	Man
1.	BODY	34	1	a) hair b) face, skin	15 19	1 0
2.	FASHION AND CLOTHES	7	0	a) clothes and shoes b) elegance, good look	7 0	0 0
3.	PHYSICAL TRAITS	106	6	a) attractiveness, beauty b) bodybuilding, weight, diet c) ageing	32 42 5	0 2 4

¹⁵It should be emphasised that some of the examples, due to the fact that they concern different thematic areas, have been assigned to more than one thematic category, simply because it is not always easy to identify the submodel emerging from a specific phrase. For this reason, apart from clear cases that involve the activation of one particular submodel, there are connotations of the lexeme *woman* that require the activation of more than one submodel.

				d) cosmetics and hygiene	27	0
4.	PHYSICAL PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES	139	10	a) food, cooking b) sleeping c) crying d) death e) health, illnesses f) pregnancy, fertility, abortion g) pain, physical suffering	12 4 0 7 59 47 10	1 1 0 1 3 4 0
5.	PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES¹⁶	293	40	a) fear, confusion, stress b) loneliness c) sadness, bad mood, depression d) shame e) joy, enthusiasm, happiness f) thinking, overthinking, wondering g) dreams, desires h) self-analysis, criticism i) intelligence j) life experience k) mental fatigue l) activity, resourcefulness, strength m) passivity, helplessness, apathy, feeling of discrimination n) feeling of freedom, independence, emancipation o) guilt p) responsibility q) self-esteem, confidence, sense of security	15 1 36 3 2 11 5 6 2 0 16 19 14 18 9 1 59	1 0 0 0 0 3 0 3 2 4 2 6 0 4 0 6 1 6

¹⁶The category comprises all psychologically-related aspects of a human being that could potentially be further divided into **EMOTIONS**, **MENTAL STATES** and **MENTAL ACTIVITIES**.

				r) mental health, feeling of abuse	34	6
				s) support, advice, sharing ¹⁷	36	0
				t) violence, aggression	6	2
6.	WORK AND EDUCATION	114	46	a) promotion, career	45	18
				b) work, profession, work environment ¹⁸	26	8
				c) education	8	0
				d) earnings, economic situation, position	35	20
7.	LEISURE	42	5	a) holidays	13	1
				b) alcohol, drugs	15	0
				c) parties, social meetings	0	1
				d) sport, games	14	3
8.	SOCIAL LIFE	19	0	a) shopping	0	0
				b) community, social and political activity	19	0
9.	LOVE AND SEX	62	29	a) sexual techniques and behaviours	50	21
				b) betrayal, divorce	10	7
				c) contraceptives	2	1
10.	FAMILY LIFE	44	13	a) marriage, relations, love	15	6
				b) children, upbringing	8	0
				c) family	5	1
				d) housekeeping	16	6

3.2 Metonymic model

Metonymy is defined as “a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or ICM” (Kövecses & Radden 1998: 39). This view suggests that humans can acquire access to a mental concept via another mental concept. According to the methodological assumptions adopted here, the stereotypes of WOMAN and MAN can be best described as metonymic ICMs in which the prototypical member of a given category stands for the whole category (hence <PART FOR WHOLE>) or a particular characteristic feature describes and stands for the whole category, in compliance with cultural expectations (Lakoff 1987: 85–86). The activation

¹⁷To be more specific, it can be perceived as a part of **ACTIVITY – VERBAL ACTIVITY** submodel.

¹⁸In the future, the author might consider adding **housework**, as another aspect covered by **WORK AND EDUCATION** submodel.

of a particular submodel provides access to the whole ICM. In other words, it can be stated that such a submodel serves as a vehicle through which the target (that is, the **WOMAN ICM** and **MAN ICM**, respectively) can be accessed. For this reason, metonymy may constitute a typical cognitive mechanism involved in the formation of stereotypical models of women and men. Indeed, it seems logical to assume that the target concept is that of **WOMAN** and **MAN**. The vehicle, on the other hand, can be best characterised as a particular **ATTRIBUTE** or an **ATTRIBUTE POSSESSOR**, which inevitably suggests the frequent metonymic patterns presented in the analysis:

- < ATTRIBUTE FOR WOMAN >
- <ATTRIBUTE FOR MAN >
- <ATTRIBUTE POSSESSOR FOR WOMAN >
- <ATTRIBUTE POSSESSOR FOR MAN >. ¹⁹

3.3 *The concept of WOMAN as an Idealised Cognitive Model*

To begin with, it must be underlined that the model of **WOMAN** should be seen as stereotypical, or, to be more precise, “idealised”.²⁰ It does not correspond neatly to reality (see Lakoff 1987: 70) and includes not only people’s encyclopaedic knowledge of the domain in question but also the cultural models of which it is an integral part. As has been noted above, it is not possible to describe such complicated notions as *woman* and *man* with one single model. For more complex concepts, one should expect to find a cluster of models, hence they can best be described as the **WOMAN ICM** and the **MAN ICM** which consist of a cluster of metonymic models.

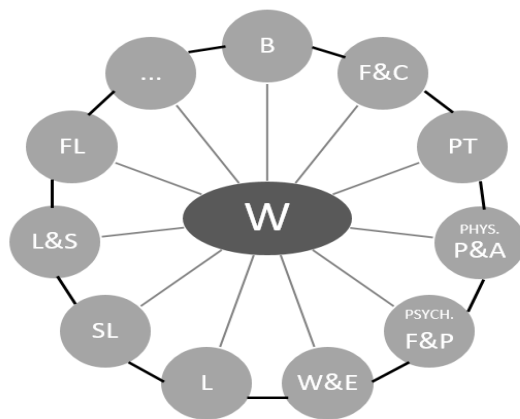
3.3.1 *The structure of the WOMAN ICM*

The phenomena and experiences involved in this cluster can be graphically presented as demonstrated below. Since the magazine *Women’s Health* is predominantly directed at women, it can be assumed that the model of a woman will be more elaborated.

¹⁹Because stereotypes are cognitive and social categories, the metonymies related to submodels could be formulated, by other researchers, in a way that reflects category structure, namely: <PROPERTY FOR SUB(CATEGORY)> and <MEMBER OF A CATEGORY FOR THE CATEGORY> (see Radden & Kövecses 1999).

²⁰Lakoff’s wording (1987: 70).

WOMAN ICM



WOMAN ICM

W – Woman

SUBMODELS of WOMAN ICM

B – Body

F&C – Fashion and clothes

PT – Physical traits

PHYS. P&A – Physical processes and activities

PSYCH. F&P – Psychological features and processes

W&E – Work and education

L – Leisure

SL – Social Life

L&S – Love and sex

FL – Family life

... – other submodels

Figure 1: A graphic representation of the **WOMAN ICM** in *Women's Health*

The larger inner circle represents the concept **WOMAN**, hence it constitutes the core, from which a number of extended submodels, represented by smaller outer circles emerge. The smaller outer circles (that is, the submodels) are obviously connected to the central point, but also to one another. Thus, the information that a woman cares about her appearance may activate other beliefs about her as a member of this group, concerning for instance education or sex life. Using more technical terminology, the submodel **BODY**, which belongs to the **WOMAN ICM**, provides a point of access to the whole network (cf. Langacker 1987: 163). One has to remember, however, that the model presented above is schematic and simplified and it does not present the more complex network of connections between the submodels.

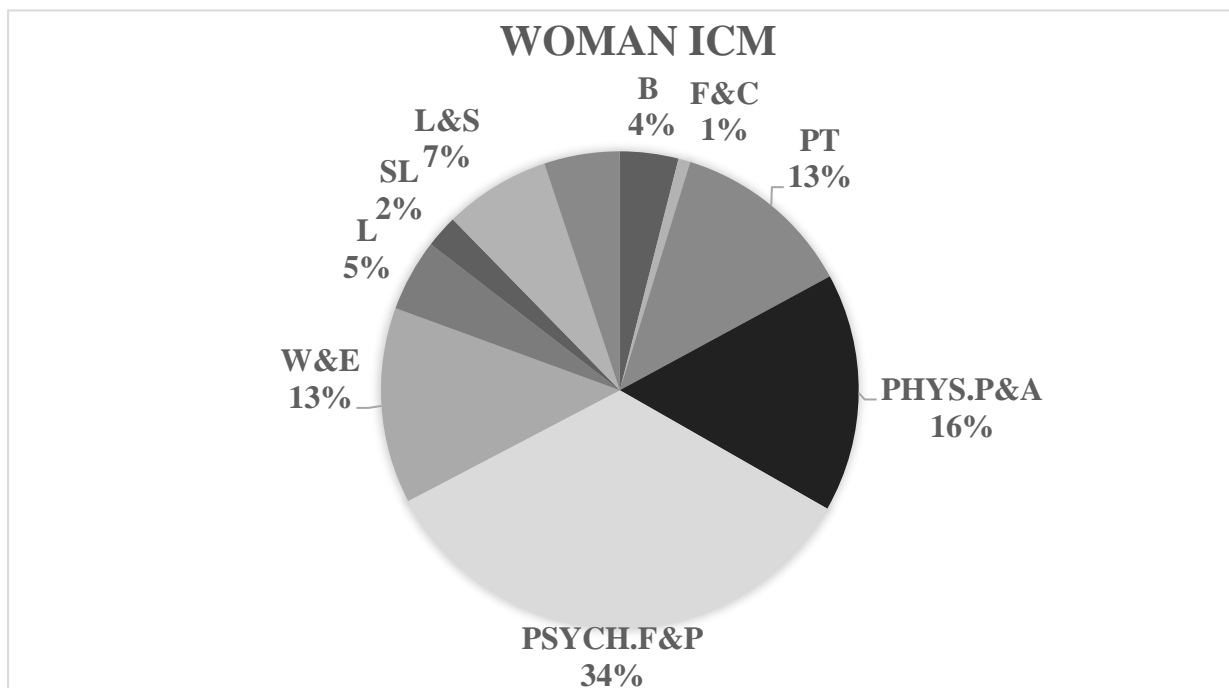


Figure 2: Productivity of submodels of the **WOMAN ICM**

The pie chart shows the percentage of individual submodels that make up the **WOMAN ICM**. One might easily observe that the most productive categories are the ones related to human psychology (**PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES** – 34%), physicality (**PHYSICAL PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES** – 16%, **PHYSICAL TRAITS** – 13%) and career (**WORK AND EDUCATION** – 13%), what can be a little bit surprising, as female magazines are frequently associated with articles on body, cosmetics, lifestyle and fashion (**BODY** – 4%, **FASHION AND CLOTHES** – only 1%).

3.4 The concept of MAN as an Idealised Cognitive Model

The model of MAN should likewise be seen as stereotypical and interpreted as a cluster of metonymic models. Not surprisingly, however, the lexeme *man* appears in the analysis only 150 times, hence the outcomes of this study should not be treated as conclusive and universal.

3.4.1 The structure of the MAN ICM

The phenomena and experiences involved in this cluster can be graphically presented as follows:

MAN ICM

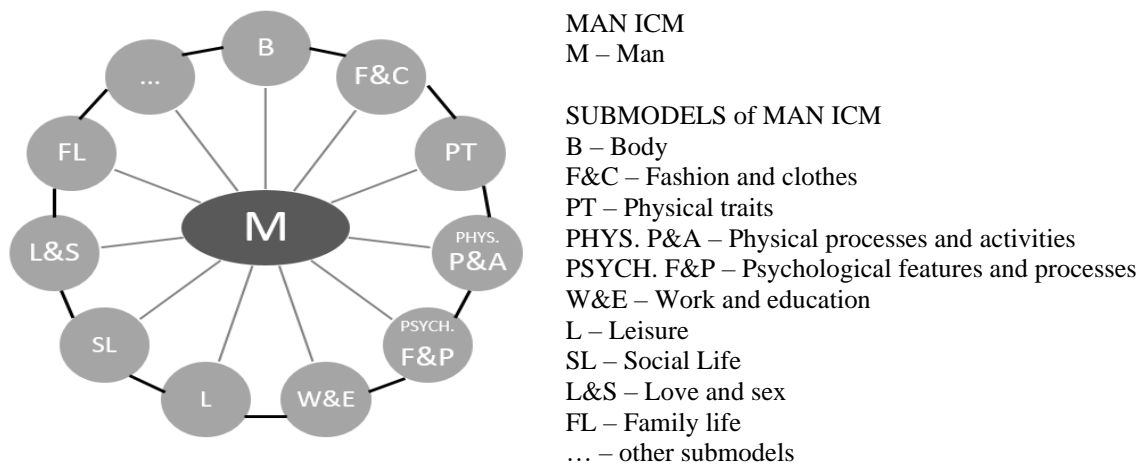


Figure 3: A graphic representation of the **MAN ICM** in *Women's Health*

The structure of the **MAN ICM** is exactly the same because the excerpts found in *Women's Health* have been assigned to the same fields, which are mostly universal for the HUMAN BEING category, however, differ in terms of their distribution and frequency of occurrence. The larger inner circle represents the concept MAN hence it constitutes the core of the cluster, and the submodels, represented by smaller outer circles, are positioned around the centre. The smaller outer circles (that is, the submodels) are also connected to the central point and to one another.

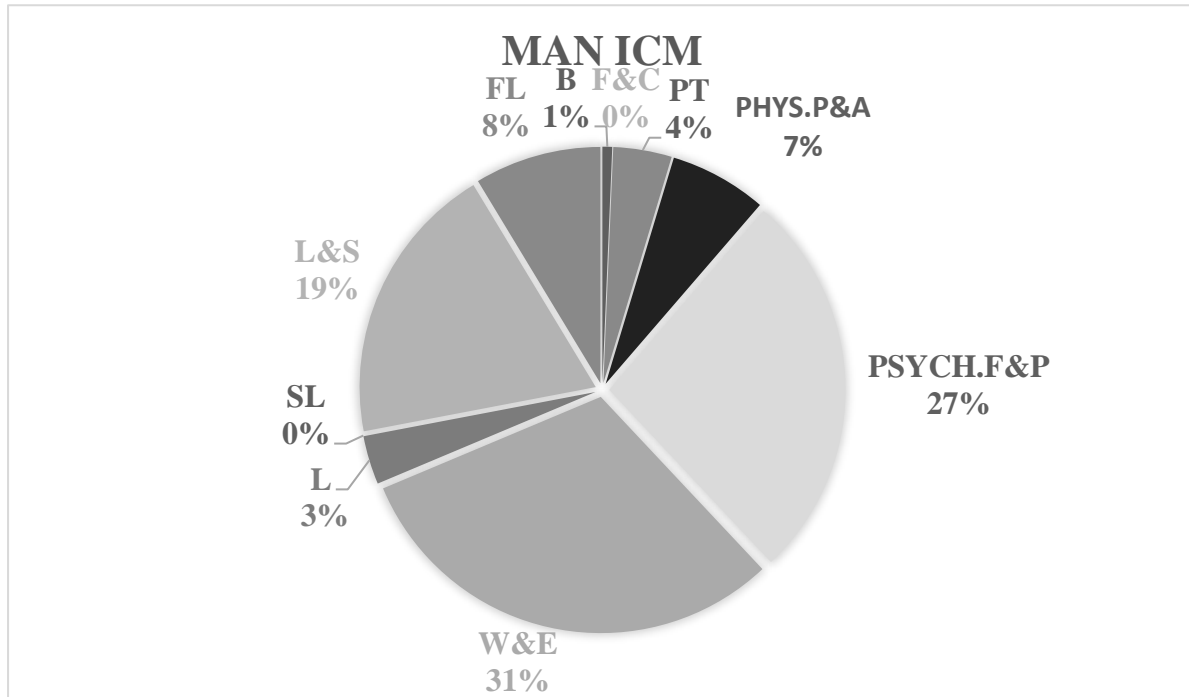


Figure 4: Productivity of submodels of the **MAN ICM**

This pie chart depicts the percentage of individual submodels that make up the **MAN ICM**. It can be said that the most prolific categories are the ones related to the professional life and career (**WORK AND EDUCATION** – 31%), male psychology (**PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES** – 27%), and sex (**LOVE AND SEX** – 19%), what is, by no means, unanticipated, as the most common gender stereotypes associated with men typically concern this three spheres.²¹

Proceeding further, let us now look at the different poles of femininity and masculinity, and consider how much the image of woman and man presented there is subjected to simplifications and stereotypes, or how likely it is to promote diversity and individuality.

3.5 *The stereotypical portrayal of a contemporary woman and man in Women's Health*

The lexeme *woman* (both in singular and plural forms) appears in *Women's Health* up to 860 times (in 17 issues of the magazine published from January 2016 to November 2017). Out of this number, as many as 293 of its uses belong to the fifth submodel – **PSYCHOLOGICAL**

²¹It might also be suggested that a similar percentage distribution could be identified in other men's magazines, what should certainly be verified in further studies.

FEATURES AND PROCESSES. By no means is this accidental, of course. One is inclined to believe that there are numerous social requirements for a woman living in the 21st century and many of them can be linked to emotional intelligence and behaviour. The lexeme *man*, in contrast, appears relatively rarely and mainly in the context of the submodels associated with *career* (46 excerpts) and *psychological processes* (40 excerpts). What has to be stressed at this point is the fact that the particular traits and dimensions identified in the study should not be seen as invariably limited to the submodel to which they have been assigned, but rather they should be interpreted as providing access to the entire network. They are usually used interchangeably, yet some of them can carry a negative axiological load and gender-related stereotypes.

3.5.1 *The PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES submodel*

As has been demonstrated above, the **PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES** submodel is the most productive one when it comes to women, as it contains as many as 293 excerpts (34% of the material collected). While we cannot state with complete certainty that such a model is the most productive in all types of magazines for women, together with a large number of other women's magazines dedicated to health and psychology available on the market, it clearly points to the fact that women pay considerable attention to their mental wellbeing and health. The submodel in question is also very productive in reference to men – 27%. The phenomenon may be illustrated by the following descriptions and statements.

A modern woman looks for support (activity) and feels the need for a social bond with other women (36 excerpts). She wants to meet them as often as possible and she is aware of the strength flowing from this. She also likes to share secrets and give friendly advice (verbal activity) which may be viewed as an example of metonymy formalised as <ADVISER FOR WOMAN> demonstrated in the contexts given below:

“Bonding with other women is the cherry on top.” WH²² 10/2017: 126

“Women from all countries and native tongues simply connect.” WH 07-08/2017: 138

“Women, however, rely on encouragement from other women, a phenomenon called ‘tend and befriend’.” WH 10/2016: 68

Men, in contrast, are shown as not being so interested in maintaining closer relations with other people, as not even a single excerpt of this kind was identified in the analysed magazines. Solidarity with women, however, does not appear with the opposite sex and many women seem to be uncertain in their contacts with men, to whom they often yield. That uncertainty goes hand in hand with low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence (59 examples, many of which with a strongly negative tinge). The excerpt:

“Unfortunately, many women are their own worst enemy.” WH 03/2016: 151

as well as showing little faith in achieving success, also illustrates women's inclination to overthinking and self-destruction which may result from the working of <INSECURE

²²The following way of marking quotes has been adopted: the letters WH stand for *Women's Health*, followed by the number and year of publication and the page where the noted fragment is located.

PERSON FOR WOMAN> metonymy. Taking into account their attributed fragility and vulnerability, women also become the victims of abuse²³:

“Women, already the most frequent victims of sexual and physical violence [...]” WH 09/2017: 94

They might not be aware of their rights and may not want to talk about the traumatic experiences they have undergone:

“Many women aren’t clear on what constitutes abuse.” WH 11/2017: 132

“Simply asking a woman if she has been “abused” is not only vague but can seem judgmental.” WH 11/2017: 133

Men, on the other hand, are pictured as brutal and abusive:

“After the man left her to die, she crawled to a phone and called a friend, who took her to the hospital.” WH 11/2017: 131

“Things aren’t much better for women who do report sexually abusive doctors.” WH 11/2016: 159

They attack by common social consent, while women are supposed to be passive, hence the latter can easily become the victims of abuse. That seems to confirm the existence of the metonymic associations: <ABUSER FOR MAN>, <VICTIM FOR WOMAN>:

“Men are not told to think twice before attacking, but women are told to think twice before defending ourselves.” WH 06/2017: 64-65

Considering the **PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES** submodel further, the most often perpetuated properties of the female character are variability, emotional instability and dwelling on different issues, for example:

“Women tend to ruminate²⁴ on negative thoughts, while men distract themselves.” WH 09/2017: 42

Weakness is also a typical feature assigned to a woman and it is strongly rooted in people’s consciousness, which can easily be demonstrated by the rich material. What is more, constant fatigue and living in a constant rush cause many women to suffer from depression:

“But inside, millions of women are struggling... and too many don’t seek help until it’s too late.” WH 05/2017: 146

However, one has to bear in mind that aspects such as fear, depression, overthinking, wondering, intelligence, passivity, helplessness, independence, confidence, aggression – to name but a few, are not just labels objectively denoting existing things and phenomena, but

²³Not only verbal, but also physical, as demonstrated by the example.

²⁴Ruminating can be viewed, more specifically, as a **MENTAL ACTIVITY**.

expressions with assigned semantic connotations, based on the categorisation of human-related phenomena (in this case provoked by the editor or authors of articles published in the magazine under study). On the one hand, they allow us to describe the world perceived by the individual in a subjective way, thus emphasising the interdependence of human cognition and language in relation to the world. On the other hand, such categorisation, especially as seen from the perspective of the media, may be manipulative and harmful.

3.5.2 *The WORK AND EDUCATION submodel*

This particular submodel is the most productive in reference to men as it constitutes almost one-third of the examples assigned to the MAN ICM, and it presents men in a positive light. Women, on the other hand, can be described in this model from two different perspectives. The first one claims that contemporary women are still treated as “the beautiful sex”, but not necessarily weaker and financially dependent on men. It must be emphasised that they are frequently featured as strong and willing to fight for their goals and happiness:

“Self-Made Women.” WH 11/2017: 50

“STRONG WOMEN... LAUGH AT THEIR FEARS.” WH 11/2017: 95

As far as the second view is concerned, that the structure of the job market is patriarchal, that is, markets are adapted to the people who created them – to men. For this reason, many women are extremely self-conscious when it comes to equal job opportunities and careers. It is frequently suggested that they face discrimination:

“Adding insult to injury, women still have to work doubly hard at proving themselves on the job.” WH 04/2017: 149

“Women have to push to get their voice heard in meetings but are sometimes expected to manage a heavier workload. On a daily basis, it’s draining and exhausting.” WH 04/2017: 149

Another, and increasingly powerful, stereotype is that women even feel as if they were pawns in the men’s game (<PUPPET FOR WOMAN>):

“I can’t tell you how many times people asked me how hard it was to be a woman in a man’s game.” WH 03/2016: 140

“It’s a man’s world—that is the reality. We need to figure out how to navigate it.” WH 01-02/2016: 68

This provides a further reason for claiming that only by following some strict rules and becoming similar to men can they advance their career:

“She only gets ahead because she communicates like a man.” WH 03/2016: 171

In contrast to women, men are stereotypically said to strongly believe in their efficiency and their immense self-confidence is frequently underlined in the analysed material (46 excerpts):

“A man can assert himself and be labelled ‘confident’ or ‘strong’, while even in 2016, an assertive woman is called ‘ballbuster’ or ‘bitchy’.” WH 03/2016: 170

“One hundred percent of men- seriously, 100 percent of men that McKinsey polled- who wanted that next role believed they’d get it compared to just 79 percent of women.” WH 03/2016: 171

“Men are four times more likely than women to ask for a pay raise [...]” WH 03/2016: 169

The productivity of the **WORK AND EDUCATION** submodel is in both corroborated by numerous examples; however, different aspects are emphasised. A stereotypical woman of the 21st century wants to work and climb up the career ladder, yet she is still discriminated against and deprived of equal job opportunities. A man, on the other hand, is stereotypically perceived as a person created to work and to occupy managerial, better-paid positions. Men are best described in reference to the submodel **WORK AND EDUCATION** (by far the most productive model) and such metonymic projections as <EMPLOYEE FOR MAN>, <ASSERTIVE PERSON FOR MAN>, <SUCCESSFUL PERSON FOR MAN> still hold tight. One might even suggest two other metonymic patterns: <INFERIOR WORKER FOR WOMAN> and <SUPERIOR WORKER FOR MAN> which perfectly show the unequal distribution of gender.

3.5.3 *The FAMILY LIFE submodel*

It is an undeniable fact that a woman can be assigned social roles such as being a mother, wife and somebody taking care of a house. It is still true that housekeeping is considered as the domain of women (16 excerpts), and although women and men are supposed to be equal, it is often repeated today that they have different moral obligations, lifestyles, and interests. Men are commonly believed to be inherently called to higher purposes, associated with prestige and power. In turn, women, often with a sense of guilt (see, for instance, Środa 2009), devote every single moment to housework:

“Krystal was essentially the ringmaster of her family circus—an invisible job that overwhelmingly impacts women.” WH 10/2017: 114

“This never-ending to-do list is driving many women to burn out and break down.” WH 10/2017: 114

“Compared with men, the average woman spends nearly an hour more each day on activities like cooking and cleaning, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. No wonder more than half of the women in our survey say they have zero time for themselves.” WH 04/2017: 149

As shown in the above examples, women are able to do theoretically impossible things. They are frequently responsible for planning and organising family life. For this reason, they are frequently sleep-deprived:

“For some exhausted women, as soon as their head hits the pillow—zing! Wide awake.” WH 09/2016: 86

With many things on their mind, they often neglect their social and sexual lives, which is also confirmed by the phrase:

“As caretakers, women juggle so many things for themselves and for others, so when you have a long to-do list, sex might fall to the bottom (that is, if it even makes the list).” WH 01-02/2017: 153

By comparison, men are said to avoid housework by all means. The lexeme *man* appears in this submodel only 6 times and never in a direct relation to the activities connected with housekeeping. For this reason, females have to pay a huge price and it greatly affects their health and mental wellbeing. It is noticeable, too, that despite everything, women are determined to build a family and defend their home and happiness (it might be suggested at this point that the two submodels: **FAMILY LIFE** and the **PHYSICAL PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES** overlap). They care about fertility, they want to have children and they often blame themselves for failures in their children’s upbringing and miscarriages:

“Plus, there’s this: For some women, ‘a failed pregnancy can feel like a failure to be a fully equipped woman’.” WH 03/2016: 174

To a considerable extent, men approach parenting with a distance. Some of them are afraid of fatherhood, which is confirmed by the statements:

“Many men feel anxious about impending parenthood, but few become violent.” WH 11/2017: 131

“For certain men, those emotions can make pregnancy feel like a crisis.” WH 11/2017: 131

The **FAMILY LIFE** submodel seems to be productive in reference to women; however, it occupies a marginal position with respect to men. A conclusion that emerges from the aforementioned findings is that women are still stereotypically perceived as the main caretakers of home and family, hence the attributive functions of **HOUSEWIFE** and **MOTHER** metonymically stand for the whole category of **WOMAN** (<HOUSEWIFE FOR WOMAN>, <MOTHER FOR WOMAN>).²⁵

4. Conclusions

All in all, the differences between women and men do not merely concern their external appearance but many other areas of their lives. Analysing numerous excerpts from the magazines, one may conclude that there are definitely more differences than similarities. It might seem that along with changes in non-linguistic reality, as well as in the language itself, there should be a transformation of human attitudes, ways of thinking and evaluating. However, some stereotypical features invariably find their reflection in reality. It is worth noticing that the choice of submodels depends on the way the image of a woman or man is shaped by the

²⁵The home-related associations more frequently and more quickly evoke the figure of a woman than a man.

modern media. For this reason, one is justified in saying that the media have the power to shape the way of thinking of their readers. The woman depicted in the magazines is interested in her health (59 excerpts – **PHYSICAL PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES** submodel) and appearance (106 excerpts – **PHYSICAL TRAITS** submodel). She is well educated and works professionally (114 excerpts – **WORK AND EDUCATION** submodel), but she still faces discrimination. In addition, she is struggling with various problems related to her social life. She frequently reflects on herself (**PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES** submodel – thinking, overthinking, wondering, 11 excerpts; self-analysis, criticism, 6 excerpts), yet she is still willing to create a family and maintain good relations with her partner (**FAMILY LIFE** submodel). Erotic life is also an essential element of her existence (62 excerpts – **LOVE AND SEX** submodel), and despite numerous duties, she tries to fulfil all the roles imposed on her (**FAMILY LIFE** submodel – 44 excerpts, in comparison to 13 belonging to the **MAN ICM**). Biology is a very important element of this type of approach to women. Although there is a slight move away from traditional depictions of vulnerability, fragility, dependence, and subservience (as many as 19 excerpts fall on the aspect – activity, resourcefulness, strength, and 18 fall on the aspect – feeling of freedom, independence, emancipation), many norms of behaviour that have been considered appropriate for women for centuries, continue to appear and perpetuate many of the stereotypes of feminine roles, features and behaviour. The man, in turn, appears to be strong, confident and successful in the professional field. He is mainly associated with work (28 excerpts), promotion (18 excerpts) and sex (21 excerpts), hence, with typically male connotations, what consequently frames him as competent and agentive, competitive, and status-oriented (the most productive submodels are **PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES**, **WORK AND EDUCATION** and **LOVE AND SEX**). The other characteristics associated with the **PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES AND PROCESSES** submodel are: indifference, emotional coldness and leaving matters related to taking care of the home and caring for the children to women (in fact, in the **FAMILY LIFE** submodel, the lexeme *man* appears only 13 times, never in relation to children and upbringing). Some typical gender role behaviours and physical characteristics like being mighty, powerful and aggressive have also been confirmed. Hence, the relationship between the sexes appears not to be about differences, but most of all about power. Living in a male-dominated society means that women and men are not only different but not infrequently unequal.

As has already been suggested, the ICMs of **WOMAN** and **MAN** presented above and their interpretation pursued in the present study does not aspire to “absolute” truth and they are created from the perspective of women on the basis of the collected material (a magazine addressed to women, whose editor-in-chief is a woman and with whom readers in many countries have become familiar). The findings are certainly not conclusive, as the main aim of this article was to shed some light on the interaction between social and cognitive factors related to the perception of women and men in the contemporary press (here *Women’s Health*). The collected material is only a fraction of what can be found in many other magazines, both for women and for men. The investigation of linguistic data allows us to develop an idealised cognitive model of **WOMAN** and **MAN** that may turn out useful for the formulation of some potentially plausible interpretations of linguistic data that appear in magazines for women.

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