Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in
Lingue e Letterature Europee e Americane
Classe LM-37

Tesi di Laurea

Gossip sections and readers' contributions in British girls' magazines: a linguistic analysis of "Top Of The Pops", "We Love Pop" and "Shout"

Relatrice
Prof. Sara Gesuato

Laureanda
Laura Crema
n° matr.1079822 / LMLLA

Anno Accademico 2015 / 2016

Table of contents

Chapter 4. Results

Chapter 5. Discussion and conclusion

Chapter 1
Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the origin and goal of my work, which deals with girls' magazines. After defining a few key notions, I briefly describe the magazines considered for analysis, and sketch out my research method. Finally, I give an overview of the rest of the dissertation.

1.1 Origin of the project

In my free time, I often read magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour*, which target women in their 20's and 30's; they offer a lot of advice on beauty and fashion, and contain news about, and interviews to, celebrities. Sometimes, though, I happen to take a look at magazines targeting younger girls. I have always found them very funny and entertaining, catchy in the way they cover topics, and also useful to young girls facing teenagers' typical physical and psychological problems. This raised my interest in looking at these magazines in detail so as to understand what it is that makes them so catchy and attractive, most of all in the sections about gossip and those including readers' own stories or letters. I thus decided to examine some issues of three magazines for girls, namely *Top Of The Pops* (henceforth *TOTP*), *We ♥ Pop* (henceforth *WLP*) and *Shout* in terms of the layout and the typical lexico-grammatical patterns characterizing their gossip sections and their readership's contributions.

1.2 Girls' magazines

Girls' magazines are considered a fundamental element in the process through which girls "forge their [...] identities" (Massoni 2004: 49), because they "participate in the construction of particular meanings about what it is to be an adolescent girl" (Gonick 1997: 72). Evans et al. (1991) divide them into two categories: teenzines and teen-fan periodicals. Teenzines (a.k.a. "mainstream magazines"; Campbell 2008: 3) are "commercial magazines" or "slick-cover periodicals" that "claim a focus on personal growth and self-improvement," and contain articles about "fashion and beauty care" (Campbell 2008: 100; also cf. Evans et al. 1991, Currie 1999), an editorial letter and embarrassing episodes reported by the readership (Evans 1991; Pattee 2004; Eneas Lira

2009); they are also said to be "advertise-driven" (http://articles.latimes.com/1989-08-18/news/vw-638_1_teen-star). Teen-fan periodicals (a.k.a. "teen tabloids") focus "almost exclusively on teen celebrity and entertainment stories" (Campbell 2008: 100), without referring to scandalous episodes, though (Quintanilla 1989). They are said to be free from advertising (Quintanilla 1989) and to feature comics, questions and answers, and quizzes (Campbell 2008).

An additional popular publication targeting young girls is fanzines. The word *fanzine* is a blend of *fan + (maga)zine*, and indicates "a non-mainstream form of print media produced within an oppositional (subcultural) framework" (Androutsopoulos 2000: 514, 516). Fanzines are "DIY" publications offering "alternative insights […] that [… are] not likely to be represented in other media" (Gaballo 2012: 150), and are usually sold in record stores and cafés or at concerts (Androutsopoulos 2000: 518). Some of them are published as a reaction to mainstream teenzines (Wray and Steele 2002: 192).

As will be described in more detail in section 3.3.1, the magazines I examine in this dissertation (*TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*) are similar in terms of topics, structure, communicative purpose and circulation to teenzines, teen-fans and fanzines, but not exactly like them in all respects. Like teenzines, they feature sections or columns about fashion and advice to the readership; like teen-fans, they have sections or columns about gossip and have only a couple of pages devoted to ads; finally, like some fanzines (the ones that deal with music), they feature some articles or columns about singers. However, they are not prototypical representatives of any of those genres. First of all, with regard to purpose, teenzines tend to be informative-directive, that is, they aim at giving advice to the reader on issues that matter to them; teen-fans provide information about stars in the show business: their content is meant to be entertaining; fanzines are meant to promote knowledge of a cultural and/or social phenomenon (e.g. musical genres such as punk, or a political movement) among their fans; *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*, instead, aim at being informative-directive like teenzines, and entertaining like teen-fans at the same time. Second, with regard to structure, *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* differ from teenzines in that they have a gossip section, most of their pages are not occupied by ads, and they feature a fashion column but not one about beauty; they differ from teen-fans in that their gossip sections do not constitute the majority of the pages of the magazines, they do feature some fashion advice, they do not have comics, and include quizzes only occasionally; they

differ from fanzines in that fanzines do not have a *typical* structure and their topics are different – even if there may be columns about singers, these play different genres from the singers in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*. More generally, *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* feature more or less the same types of columns and topics as mainstream magazines. Finally, with regard to circulation policies, while teenzines and teen-fans are published by publishing houses and then sold at the newsagent's or in supermarkets, fanzines may be handmade or printed by underground editors, and are distributed at conventions or "rock gigs" (Gaballo 2012: 151). As happens with teenzines and teen-fans, *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* are sold at the newsagent's and in supermarkets. For all the above reasons, *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* probably exemplify a hybrid genre, and a specific label form has still to be devised. The degree of similarity to, and contamination from, other related genres can be explored by examining the linguistic encoding of my magazines, as I specify in the following section.

1.3 Approach

I wanted to explore the use of linguistic features typical of spoken language, advertising language and text messages, if any, in the gossip sections of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*, and the possible stylistic similarities occurring in the letters written by readers. The reasons for this are as follows: first, previous studies on girls' magazines had already mentioned the presence of features of spoken language in girls' magazines, but without specifying in which sections – or only with reference to beauty columns – and without providing systematic evidence for this. So, was this a widespread and verifiable property of the magazines? Also, when I first read *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*, I had the impression that their articles looked like print ads for the way their words were combined (in different sizes and colours, etc.) and also like text messages (their articles not only were quite short, but also contained some abbreviations like the ones generally used in text messages). But was this just my impression or an actual fact? Finally, previous studies had referred to shared patters across some types of letters written by readers, but not all of them. I decided to examine some of the components of selected issues of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* in an attempt to answer those questions. To this end, I first compiled a machine-readable

corpus[1] of the texts selected for analysis. This would enable me to relatively easily identify phraseological patterns in the texts (Biber et al. 1998: 4) and determine the frequency of occurrence of words and word combinations (p. 26). Then, I took into consideration some of the features described as typical of spoken language (e.g. Halliday 1985, Carter and McCarthy 1997, McCarthy 1998, Fox 1987, and Biber 1999), text messages (e.g. Faulkner and Culwin 2004, Choudhury et al. 2007, Durkin et al. 2011, Jones and Schieffelin 2009) and advertising language (e.g. Geis 1982, Cook 1992, Meyers 1994, Rush 1997, and Pennarola 2003), and checked whether and to what extent they were also typical of my object of study (i.e. selected components of a few issues of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* – see chapter 3).

1.4 Overview of the dissertation

In Chapter 2, I briefly discuss some of the works analysing linguistic features of girls' magazines. In Chapter 3, I explain the goals of my work, the data collection procedure, the method used in my analysis and theories about the language of the different forms of communication with which I will compare the style of girls' magazines. The results are discussed in Chapter 4. The final chapter summarizes the research, derives the implications from the findings, and provides suggestions for future research in this field.

---

[1] In linguistics, a corpus is "a body of naturally occurring language […] *representative* of some language or text type", generally made up of "a collection of *machine-readable authentic* texts" (McEnery et al. 2006: 4, 5; original emphasis).

<p style="text-align: center;">**Chapter 2.**</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">**Historical background and literature review**</p>

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, I provided some background information about girls' magazines, as well as a description of the magazines that are the object of my analysis. In this chapter, I present an overview of the evolution of girls' magazines, and report on previous linguistic studies of girls' magazines published both in English-speaking countries (the UK and the USA) and other countries. I conclude with a summary of the features of girls' magazines and the identification of my research goals.

2.2 The evolution of girls' magazines

Girls' magazines have been published for several years. Drotner (1983) reports that in Great Britain cheap weeklies have been published since 1888, and publications for girls since the 1860s. However, it was the Education Act of 1918 that paved the way for the publication of girls' magazines. The Education Act stated that children were not allowed to work and were required to go to school until the age of fourteen; this gave poor children the opportunity to receive some form of free education (p. 36). And it was girls as school-goers that were then identified as the perfect target for *School Friend*, a magazine which first came out in 1919, which was cheap and affordable also by lower-middle-class girls.

Drotner (1983) also describes how this new magazine included short stories and serials, queries from the readers and editorial snippets. But the most prominent column in this weekly was the fiction story. Imitating the style of authors popular among the readership (p. 37), fiction stories focused on the life and adventures of a fourteen-year-old girl, Babs, and her friends, each embodying characteristics the readership could easily identify with (p. 38). Over the following years, characters and plots changed, not only in *School Friend*, but also in other similar weeklies that had started being published. In the early 1930s, for example, plots began to be centred on schoolgirls becoming stars, and at the same time, columns with curiosities and the latest from the world of celebrities were added (pp. 42-43). The publication of these magazines, as is reported in Currie (1999), came to an end in the 1940s. However, after the Second World War, "the potential for a specifically teenage fashion market was fully reached" (p. 40). Publications targeting

young women started in 1944 in America with *Seventeen*, and in 1946 in Great Britain with *Myfair* (p. 40).

Over the following decades, there were developments and changes in the content of girls' magazines. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, "the notion of 'teenagers'" developed, and the fashion market for this social group started to grow (Currie 1999: 42)[2]. Then, as Carpenter (1998) points out, in the years between 1974 and 1984 girls were considered sexual objects or victims, while in the following decade the fact that they could experience sexual desire was emphasised (p. 162). Finally, Quart (2003) argues that, since the 1980s, girls' magazines have turned from advice on fashion and beauty into creators of "an unaffordable but palpable world of yearning girls" (p. 4), a tendency that might also have been influenced by the creation, at the beginning of the 1990s, of a new genre "which crosses magazines with catalogues" – the magalog (p. 5).

Teen magazines became very popular over the decades and had a wide circulation. Over the last few years, however, the ever-growing importance of the Internet in teenagers' lives (http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20140102005297/en/Research-Markets-Teenage-Pre-Teen-Magazines-Market-Update#.VT8zJ5Om2J8) and the so-called *Kagoy*[3] factor (i.e. the fact that girls tend to become 'older' sooner, so that teenagers might buy magazines targeting older girls) have determined a decline in the circulation of the printed versions of teenzines. The magazines I analyse here have also suffered from a decrease in their selling rates, but are still among the ten most popular teenzines (http://www.magforum.com/glossies/teen.htm).

In the following section, I summarise the findings of studies on the language of girls' magazines and of fanzines.

---

[2]The "teen" market had already been identified – or created – at that time, according to Quart (2003). She reports that in 1945 *Seventeen* magazine sent memos to advertisers trying to persuade them that teen girls would make good buyers due to their being "copycats" that imitate each other by doing and buying the same things (p. 6).

[3]*Kagoy* stands for "kids are getting older younger" (http://www.magforum.com/glossies/teen.htm). In Quart (2003) the word is spelt *kgoy* (p. 47).

2.3 Studies on girls' magazines

Several studies on the content and the readership of girls' magazines have been conducted within the disciplines of media studies (e.g. Drotner 1983), psychology (e.g. Evans et al. 1991; Carpenter 1998; Luff and Gray 2009; Slater et al. 2011), health studies (Chow 2004), and sociology (e.g. Finders 1996; Gonik 1997; Currie 1999; Quintanilla 1989; Bayerl 2000; Norton 2001; Brownet al. 2002; Moskowitz et al. 2002; Campbell 2003; Massoni 2004; Williams 2006; Kang 2009). Nevertheless, only a few analyse girls' magazines (also) from a linguistic point of view (i.e. McRobbie 1978, Talbot 1992, Willemsen 1998, Cotrău 2003, Pattee 2004, Eneas Lira 2009, Sim and Pop 2009, Teglová 2009, Grozdanova 2010). In particular, those analysing British magazines for girls (i.e. McRobbie 1978, Talbot 1992 and Teglová 2009) only consider teenzines. Since my analysis in Chapter 4 focuses on the linguistic patterns, rather than the content, of some issues of girls' magazines, here I am going to review only linguistic studies. I begin with studies on British and American magazines, then proceed to sum up studies that examine magazines published in Brazil, the Netherlands, Romania, and Bulgaria, and finally I consider studies on fanzines, which are comparable in some respects to girls' magazines (e.g. Cotrau 2003, Pattee 2004).

2.3.1 Studies on British magazines

British magazines are analysed by McRobbie (1978), Talbot (1992) and Teglová (2009). McRobbie (1978) briefly describes the layout and the language in which articles and picture stories are written in the teen magazine *Jackie*. She highlights the need for the magazine to appear "inviting" because "it is to be glanced through, looked at and only finally read" (p. 9). The language is said to derive from "the days of the teenage commercial boom" and to be influenced by the language spoken in the 1950s – a kind of language invented by the media, which is not contaminated by regional or social variations, and is also free from vulgar words, but which includes expressions such as "scrummy hunk, dishy, (…) comeon [sic] let's blow this place, I'm the best mover in town," aiming at drawing the image of a dynamic youth, "on the move" (p. 17). In particular, she observes that the texts in the magazine's beauty section are characterised by "the use of puns, proverbs or witticisms," most of all in the headlines (e.g. "How Yule Look Tonight," "Moody Hues," etc.; p. 38), and also by the presence of "hesitancy and

apologetics" expressions (e.g. "Unless you're blessed with," "If you're lucky enough to have large, bright eyes…"; p. 40), and reference to supposedly shared problems, which convey "a tone of sisterly resignation evoking comfort and reassurance" (p. 41).

Talbot (1992) also analyses *Jackie*, observing how, in general, to catch the reader's attention, its editors tend to use informal words, thus suggesting that they share something with the reader, and to use inclusive *we* so as to catch the reader's attention. Her detailed examination of the beauty section – in particular, the interviews to "the community of lipstick wearers" (p. 183) – reveals the predominant use of statements in the interviewees' speeches and the editor's use of exclamation marks when reporting an expert's opinion on what the interviewees say. In Talbot's opinion, this shows that the editor wants to "establish her distance from scientific statements" and to be "friendly" towards the reader (p. 187).

Teglová (2009) analyses the language and content of three British magazines for teenage girls, one of which is *TOTP*. Among the linguistic aspects of magazines, Teglová mentions some word-formation processes, such as blending and initialism[4], the presence of compounds and loanwords (pp. 33-34), and of poetic devices such as puns, alliterations or rhymes (pp. 37-38).

2.3.2 Studies on American magazines

In her analysis of some American magazines, Pattee (2004) briefly discusses the magazines' introductory editorial letters. She points out how their tone is "intimate" and "attempts to establish some kind of 'sisterly' relationship between magazine and reader" (Leman 1979, cited in Pattee 2004: 5). However, she adds that the level of formality of the texts varies; for example, the editorial letters in the magazine *Teen* are less formal than in *YM* (p. 5). Pattee also comments on other sections of girls' magazines, such as the pages in which readers share some embarrassing experiences they have lived. The jargon in which anecdotes are said to be written adheres "to the slang and writing style of the magazine," resembles "teen styles" and includes "teen-specific shorthand (like *b.f.* for 'best friend' or *b.f.f.* for 'best female friend'), which creates a tone of inclusion" (p. 8).

---

[4] Blending is a process through which two words or expressions are combined into a new word (Bussmann 1996). Initialism is a technique for abbreviating phrases which involves using only the initials of each word, which are then pronounced separately, as in *A.S.A.P.*, which stands for *as soon as possible.* (http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/96057?redirectedFrom=initialism#eid).

As a result, while learning how they should, or should not, behave in some contexts and situations, the readership is also said to "develop a literal vocabulary of humiliation" (p. 10), and become fluent in a so-called "embarrassing stories vocabulary" (p. 12). Familiarity with this kind of vocabulary enables a "fluent" reader to predict the development of the stories described in this section even if the writer "fails to anticipate the humiliation to come" (p. 12).

2.3.3 Studies on girls' magazines published in other countries

In her analysis of Brazilian magazines for teenagers, Eneas Lira (2009) describes the letters that editors usually write as an introduction to each new issue of a magazine. She observes how their authors adopt an emotional tone in order to engage the reader's attention, using such devices as leave-taking formulas at the end of the letter (*Oie!*, *Beijinhos*, *Um grandebeijo*, *Até!*), features of orality like exclamations, questions and intensifiers (p. 77).

Willemsen (1998) studies the structure and language of boys' and girls' Dutch magazines. She focuses on a number of issues of *Yes*, for girls, and *Webber*, for boys, published in 1994. Her analysis concentrates on the introductory sections (i.e. "the headline and the actual introduction to the article"), which include "emotion words, i.e., words or expressions signifying emotion like love or hurt," and, at the same time, "tough or cool words." Willemsen shows that *Yes* is full of emotion words, which we do not find in *Webber* (p. 857), whose language is, instead, rich in "tough words and expressions" and also that, unlike her initial expectations, the number of adjectives is not high in either magazine. Willemsen also reports that headlines in *Webber* are shorter than in *Yes*, but that the sentences in the texts are longer; she also sees that the number of punctuation marks is more or less the same in both magazines, while the specific marks used vary (i.e. *Yes* texts have more "question marks, ellipsis points, and exclamation marks," while in *Webber* punctuation is only used to separate sentences and clauses; p. 858).

Romanian magazines for girls have also been analysed from a linguistic point of view, for example by Cotrău (2003) and by Sim and Pop (2009). The former examines a number of "issues of teen lifestyle and music magazines in both printed and electronic formats" (p. 31), which belong to the so-called *niche press*. Cotrău shows how, in order to engage the linguistic habits of their audience, authors try to make the magazines as

dynamic as possible, and tend to use "colloquial […] and idiomatic" forms, rejected by the mainstream press (p. 33), as well as "deliberate misspellings and special spellings," which are the result of the manipulation of Romanian words and English loanwords. This includes: spelling Romanian words so that they reproduce English sounds (e.g. ş may be changed into *sh*), and vice versa; writing English words in the way they are pronounced (e.g. *rulz* replaces *rules*; p. 36); capitalising words in order "to indicate shouting or exclamation", possibly combining this with vowel lengthening (e.g. "*RUUULE*"); having numbers replace letters and syllables (e.g. *0* can replace *o*, *2 too/to* etc.); and contracting words following an English pattern (e.g. reducing *ceeste* to *ce's* just like *what is* can be contracted to *what's*; p. 38).

Sim and Pop (2009) identify some features of girls' and women's magazines, the main one being the presence of loanwords in the sections about music, everyday life (p. 565), beauty and fashion (p. 566), economics and technology (p. 567).

Grozdanova (2010) considers Bulgarian teenzines that are influenced by the reaction to the previous totalitarian regime, a phase started in the 1990s (p. 120). The aim of Grozdanova's work is to describe the "devices that are frequently used in the teenage press for manipulative purposes" (p. 121). The scholar finds that editors use personal pronouns (generally the second person singular pronoun and the first person plural pronoun) to establish a close relationship with the reader (p. 125), questions (p. 130) and tag questions (p. 123). Also, she reports that superlatives are preferred to comparatives (p. 128) and that there is a tendency to overgeneralise or use "overstatements" to "make things appear larger or better than they really are" (p. 127).

2.3.4 Studies on the language of fanzines

I know of two studies that focus on the language of fanzines: Androutsopoulos (2000) and Gaballo (2012).

Androutsopoulos (2000) analyses the language used in some issues of German fanzines published between 1992 and 1995, observing that their style combines such elements as idioms, jargon, slang, "orality features" and the like (p. 520).

In the fanzines considered, the author notices the presence of non-standard spellings, which come in two types – regular and exceptional. "Regular non-standard spellings" are frequently occurring spellings that are supposed to represent informal

speech (e.g. the "reduction of unstressed article," the "elision of verb final –*e*" and the "contraction of verb + *es*"; p. 523). "Exceptional non-standard spellings," instead, are occasional spellings which contribute to expressing the writer's attitude or feelings towards what he or she is describing. Spellings are then divided by Androutsopoulos into six more specific groups: phonetic spellings, in which the standard pronunciation of a word is represented by non-standard orthography; colloquial spellings, that is, spellings for phenomena typical of colloquial speech, such as the "so-called weak forms"; regiolectal spellings, which indicate specific German regional varieties; prosodic spellings, which emphasise word stresses by means of capital letters, hyphens or "the representation of vowel lengthening;" interlingual spellings, which represent loanwords according to German orthography; and homophone spellings, that is, "graphic alterations without a correspondence to phonic alterations" (p. 521). Finally, Androutsopoulos observes how some spelling variants might be due to the influence of the English medias on German fanzines (e.g. the use of the letter *x*, not present in the German alphabet; p. 527).

Gaballo (2012) also analyses fanzines from a linguistic perspective. She takes into consideration two fanzines published in the UK, *Sniffin' Glue* and *Scanner,* observing how their editors try to create a kind of language that people outside the fanzine culture can hardly understand (p. 151), and that the way these zines are written lies "between a personal letter and a magazine" (p. 153). She argues that the language used is "based on informal and colloquial English" (p. 167), which helps create "a social bond" with the readership (p. 158), but also "purged of almost all 'unorthodox' vocabulary" and with no "verbal violence" (p. 167).

Gaballo explains how, in order to make "the rejection of traditional conventions" even clearer, the authors of *Sniffin' Glue* deliberately choose to misspell words, by respelling them (e.g. *been* becomes *bin*) or using "phonetic spelling" (pp. 162-163), and to commit "grammatical errors" (p. 156). She also observes that the language in this fanzine directly addresses the readership by means of colloquial expressions (such as "Do you get what I mean?" or "If ya see what I mean"), and also includes contractions (the very title of the fanzine – *Sniffin'* – is an example of this) and abbreviations (p. 167). On the other hand, the author shows how the texts in the web zine *Scanner Zine* reproduce

the structure of a monologue, and display a more formal style than *Sniffin' Glue* does (p. 168).

2.3.5 Conclusion

Previous studies have identified several properties of girls' magazines and fanzines: the importance of the layout due the secondary role played by the actual content of articles (McRobbie 1978), non-standard spellings (Cotrău 2003, Androutsopoulos 2000, Gaballo 2012), phraseologies adopted or adapted from other sources, such as expressions used in the media and by young people (McRobbie 1978, Talbot 1992), and the recurrent use of a set of linguistic resources such as specific personal pronouns, emotion words (McRobbie 1978, Eneas Lira 2009, Pattee 2004) and punctuation marks (Talbot 1992, Willemsen 1998) that help the author create a close relationship with the reader (Talbot 1992, Grozdanova 2010).

However, the linguistic patterns identified are relevant to magazines published in non-English-speaking countries (exception made for McRobbie's and Gaballo's work), and none specifically analyses the lexico-grammatical patterns occurring in the texts of gossip sections or of all types of readers' contributions included in girls' magazines, which I address in this dissertation. Also, some scholars have mentioned the presence of features of spoken language in girls' magazines (e.g. Talbot 1992, Grozdanova 2010), but not by using a corpus-based approach. Finally, to my knowledge, no one has investigated whether girls' magazines share linguistic features with forms of communication that are shaped by similar contextual variables, namely text messages and advertising language: like the former, the texts in girls' magazines consist of short, written discourse segments; like the latter, they offer advice to, and try to influence the behaviour of, their target readership. At the same time, though, the texts of girls' magazines are not spontaneously produced by individuals "on the spot" like text messages, but likely to be purposely drafted and edited by multiple co-authors before they are published. Also, not all the texts found in girls' magazines are advertorials or ads. The degree of similarity across different forms of communication is thus worth exploring.

2.4 Research perspectives

Advertising language, text messages and spoken language have their own distinctive features (see Chapter 3), but also have some features in common. Informal words, for example, are a feature typical of all the three forms of communication considered; punctuation and font variations play an important role in advertising language, in that they emphasise words or phrases, and they are also used to represent prosodic features in transcripts of spoken language. I expected to find features of the aforementioned forms of communication instantiated in the magazines, but with some variations. For example, I expected features of advertising language to be mostly occurring in the headers (they occupy a big amount of space on the page and immediately strike the reader with their colours and fonts), features of spoken language to be the only ones instantiated in the balloons (which are supposed to express what the person in the picture is *saying* to the reader or another celebrity in the picture), and features of text messages to be instantiated mostly in articles and captions. My general goal was to check how often and where in the magazines such features might show up.

I also analysed readers' contributions. My aim was to check whether there were similarities across the letters, that is, whether there were recurrent words or phraseologies that could suggest that readers use similar writing styles. I expected to find the letters and anecdotes analysed in each issue all very similar to each other.

In the following chapter, I explain in detail the approach to my research. First, I describe the goals of my research. Next, I provide information about data collection and the structure of *TOTP*, *WLP* and *Shout*, the magazines that are the object of my study. Finally, I explain the method of analysis adopted to investigate several aspects of the magazines considered.

Chapter 3
Method

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explain the method I adopted to conduct my analysis on *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*. First of all, I outline the goals of my research and the data taken into consideration. Then, I describe in detail the components of the magazines selected for analysis, and how I compiled them into a corpus. Finally, I specify the linguistic aspects of the texts I took into consideration and how I analysed them.

3.2 Research goals

In this work, I analyse the register of two sets of texts I selected from *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*, namely the gossip sections and the texts written by the readership, the former a magazine component not examined in previous studies, the latter only partially discussed in Pattee (2004). My first aim is to check whether and to what extent the style of the texts in the gossip sections of the magazines can be considered influenced by, or evocative of, other forms of communication such as spoken language, text messages and advertising language. My second aim is to check whether readers' letters share similar writing styles. The discourse of each magazine issue is considered both on its own and from a comparative-contrastive perspective.

In the following section I provide the detailed description of the structure of the magazines chosen for analysis, and describe and motivate the selection of the specific texts for analysis.

3.3 Data collection and description
3.3.1 General characteristics of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

When I first embarked on this project, I wanted to form a general idea of what magazines teenage girls in Britain can read. So I started buying a number of different magazines for girls at some local stores in the British town of Aberystwyth, where I was staying at the time. Besides *TOTP*, *WLP* and *Shout*, I originally also considered such magazines for girls such as *Girl Talk* and *Seventeen*. However, I later decided not to consider *Girl Talk* and *Seventeen* due to their distinctive readership. *Girl Talk* only targets

7-to-11-year-old girls (http://www.immediate.co.uk/brands/girl-talk/), and indeed I could notice differences between the topics covered in this magazine and those in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*; for example, while it features articles about gossip, beauty and self-improvement, like other magazines, it does not focus on hyper-sexualised celebrities, and instead provides positive female role models for girls to emulate (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/10737542/Why-Im-turning-Girl-Talk-magazine-feminist.html). *Seventeen*, instead, is a teenzine, so its editors give prominence to columns about fashion, beauty and self-improvement, while gossip is almost non-existing. I thus decided to take into consideration for my analysis *TOTP*, *Shout* and *WLP*.

I decided to examine the same issues of the above magazines. The issues I bought are the October, November and December 2014 issues of both *TOTP* and *Shout*, but only the October and December issues of *WLP*, since I could not find the November issue. Since each monthly issue was generally about a main common theme (Christmas, the release of a new movie, etc.), I expected to find similar words or phrases across the magazines, and I thought this would enable me to more clearly notice differences in textual patterns across magazines, if any, if their lexis could be expected to be highly comparable.

The websites of the magazines' publishing houses provide some information concerning their content. *TOTP*, reportedly the best-selling magazine for pre-teens and teens in the UK (http://www.immediate.co.uk/brands/top-of-the-pops/), is said to focus on "self discovery, self expression and the world of celebrities," and to feature "the latest fashion and beauty, star gossip, real life stories and celebrity advice." Similarly, *Shout* features articles about "must-have fashion, gorgeous beauty buys, the latest trends and expert styling tips, [...] true-life stories, shock reports, problems personally answered by our agony aunt, and the hottest celebrity interviews and posters" as well as a long section with articles about gossip. It targets pre-teens and teens (http://www.dcthomson.co.uk/brands/shout). *WLP*, finally, is described as a magazine "for girls obsessed with music, celebrities, fashion and gossip" (https://www.egmont.co.uk/magazine/love-pop/). It is said to target girls aged 13-15 (http://www.mediaweek.co.uk/article/1080493/egmont-launches-new-teen-magazine-we-love-pop), but the magazine reports anecdotes also sent by younger readers, so actually, similarly to *TOTP* and *Shout*, *WLP* targets pre-teens and teens.

TOTP, WLP and *Shout* share features of both teenzines and teen-fans (see section 1.2). Like teenzines, they all have an editorial letter, anecdotes sent by the readership, articles about entertainment, and a section about fashion. Like teen-fans, they do not have ads besides a couple of pages, have a section about gossip, as well as questions and answers and quizzes. The following descriptions of the sections and columns included in the magazines further highlight their hybrid status in between teenzines and teen-fans.

3.3.2 *Top Of The Pops*

A typical issue of this magazine features a section about gossip, fashion advice and readers' contributions, mixed to quizzes and games. After the cover page, which gives the reader an idea about the content of the issue, there is a page labelled *TOTP Hello*, with an introductory letter and the summary of the columns and articles occurring in the issue. The former is a short article written by the staff writer, aiming at giving a quick overview on the content of the issue. The latter, instead, occupies a very wide area of that page, is divided into three main parts – *All about you, We ♥shopping,* and *Celebs and gossip*, and includes a small reproduction of the cover page with page numbers juxtaposed to some of the cover lines.

We ♥ shopping only includes a series of pictures of the most fashionable clothes and make-up products of the month, but generally there is not much text describing the pictures.

The *All about you* section features the following columns:
- *OMG!,* which lists, supposedly, "real readers'" embarrassing experiences;
- *Your stars*, that is, the horoscope;
- *Your problems solved!,* including letters from the readers about life problems addressed by two experts;
- *TOTP Real Life,* which reports real-life experiences written by the readers;
- *Your say,* which collects funny letters and tweets from the readers.

The *Celebs and gossip* section of *TOTP* is, instead, made up of the following parts:
- *BBC Radio 1 gossip* – a four-to-seven-page column, including three textual components: *Gossip. Cos everyone loves to*, a three-page patchwork of short articles about celebrities; *The 5SOS goss*, with the latest from 5SOS, an Australian band; *7 things…* or *5 reasons…*, a series of brief articles concentrating on a

celebrity or a recent event; finally, *100% official One Direction*, with very short interviews to the members of the One Direction band;

- A number of interviews to celebrities, identified by means of different labels (*TOTP exclusive/ boys/ Corrie/ Strictly/ The Hunger Games/ Stereo Kicks/ Zoella/ The Vamps/ 5SOS Special/ The X Factor*), some of them occurring in all the issues, others only in one;
- *TOTP Lolz*, including the columns *#awkward* and *Up close & personal*, full of funny pictures of celebrities;
- Posters;
- *The Latest*, a series of descriptions of newly released songs, movies and books;
- *TOTP Prizes*, with instructions on how to take part in competitions so as to win prizes;
- *TOTP Game* and *TOTP Quiz* (not included in the December issue);
- *TOTP Make It*, a two-page DIY column, which only occurs in the December issue, with instructions on how to create celebrity-inspired Christmas decorations.

3.3.3 *Shout*

Shout, too, has a cover page anticipating the content of the issue, and then a first page with the editor's introductory letter and the summary.

The introductory letter is similar in content to the one found in *TOTP*, that is, it anticipates the main topics of the issue, but its structure is different, in that it is a list of "promises" to the readership the editors will try to keep.

In the summary, four sections are listed, that is, *Celebs*, *Style*, *All about you* and *Fun*, which, in turn, are made of various columns. The *Celebs* section (labelled *Celeb* or *Celebs* within the magazine) is made up of the following columns:

- *Tweets 'n' Deets*, very similar to *TOTP*'s *Gossip. Cos everyone loves to* in its structure and content;
- *#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!*, a page in which readers send letters about their social life to a blogger;
- *Papped*, with funny pictures of celebrities (cf. *TOTP*'s *#awkward*);
- *The Union J column*, a diary page written by a member of the Union J band;

- *100% X Factor*, a six-page column (resembling *Tweets 'n' Deets* in its structure, and replaced by a section about *The Hunger Games* movie in the November issue), all focussed on this TV show, with short articles and interviews;
- *TV HQ*, with the latest TV shows and interviews;
- *Crushes of the month!*, with gossip and pictures about the protagonists of famous TV shows or band members;
- *39 sassy celeb shockers* (only in the December issue);
- *The shout selfie awards* (only in the November issue).

Finally, there is a section with materials sent by the readers; it is labelled *All about you* in the summary, and includes columns such as:

- *Ask Laura,* which presents an expert's answers to letters from the readers about life problems;
- *True stories,* which includes real-life stories by readers;
- *#cringe*, which is made of anecdotes written by the readers sharing their embarrassing experiences;
- *Social Scopes!,* which is the horoscope.

3.3.4 *We ♥ Pop*

The cover page of *We ♥ Pop* is structured exactly like those of *TOTP* and *Shout*, but the following page is rather different from its equivalents in the other magazines.

First of all, the introductory letter is not an anticipation of the content of the magazine, but the editor's narration of an episode about one or more celebrities. Of course, reference is made to a topic that is going to be discussed at some point in the issue (e.g. in the letter in the October issue, some X Factor contestants are mentioned, and further on there is an article about the X Factor TV show), but no list of the other topics of the issue is provided.

Unlike *Shout* and *TOTP*, the summary in *WLP* does not provide an initial distinction of the columns into different sections, that is, there are no titles such as *Gossip* or *Shopping* putting together columns sharing similar topics. The only column accompanied by a label is the one containing posters. The articles, however, are often labelled with a caption on the top left corner of the page.

The structure of the magazine can thus be outlined as follows:

- *AAA* (*Access Absolutely Anywhere*), providing the latest gossip (cf. *Shout*'s *Tweets 'n' Deets* or *TOTP*'s *Gossip. Cos everyone loves to*);

- *100% One Direction*, with news and curiosities about the band called *One Direction*;

- *We* ❤*gossip/Oh my goss!*, very similar to *AAA*;

- *Finger of fail*, showing celebrities' embarrassing pictures (cf. *Papped* and *#awkward*);

- Interviews;

- *Pop's 50 most shocking moments* (not included in the December issue);

- A 5SOS *mini-mag* (not included in the December issue);

- *Page forty Phwoar*, similar to *Shout*'s *Crushes of the month*.

Besides the shopping section and the quizzes, the rest of the magazine is devoted to the readers' lives, and includes the following columns:

- *Problems,* presenting letters from the readers, which one or more celebrities answer every month;

- *Horoscopes*;

- *Write here write now,* listing funny letters from readers (some of their tweets are also included);

- *Oh no you didn't!?*, that is, the embarrassing experiences column.

3.3.5 Conclusion

TOTP, *Shout* and *WLP* aim at being informative and entertaining at the same time. They comprise very similar types of columns – they discuss a wide range of topics likely to be of interest to young women (fashion, gossip, life advice, etc.), and include funny stories, quizzes and games thanks to which the reader can while away the time in a relaxed mood. Their articles and columns are all very short – information is reduced to the essential, while pictures prevail, so the reader can easily skim through the pages without putting much effort in decoding the verbal texts. Only one minor difference can be detected with regard to content, that is, *WLP* does not have those long real-life stories that are found, instead, in *TOTP* and *Shout*. Finding linguistic similarities and differences, if any, between the three magazines, is the goal of the analysis to follow.

3.4 Data selection

I decided to analyse a selection of articles from the gossip section and a selection of letters and anecdotes written by the readers. As I wrote in Chapter 1, these are my favourite of all the pages of the magazines. Also, these pages are the only ones that include a reasonable amount of texts and that, at the same time, do not report interviews, that is, edited elicited conversations, or texts similar to diary entries. More specifically, from *TOTP* I selected *Gossip. Cos everyone loves to*, *The 5SOS goss*, and *7 things/ 5 reasons…, #awkward* and *Up close & personal* for the analysis of the articles about gossip (total words: 3,916), and *OMG!*, *Your problems solved!*, *Your say* for the analysis of the material sent by the readers (total words: 2,243). From *WLP* I chose *AAA* (*Access Absolutely Anywhere*), *100% One Direction, We <3 gossip/Oh my goss!*, *Finger of fail*, *Pop's 50 most shocking moments, Page forty Phwoar* for the analysis of the articles about gossip (total words: 4,817), and *Problems*, *Write here write now*, and *Oh no you didn't!?* for the analysis of the material sent by the readers (total words: 1,722). Finally, the following columns were selected from *Shout*: *Tweets 'n' Deets*, *Papped*, *100% X Factor*, *Crushes of the month!* for the analysis of the articles about gossip(total words: 7,003), and *Ask Laura*, *#cringe*, and *#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!* for the analysis of the material sent by the readers (total words: 5,230). Tables 1, 2, 3 below present a detailed list of the texts analysed.

Instead, I disregarded sections of the magazines that did not lend themselves to the analysis I had in mind. Thus I excluded all the interviews, which are – presumably – the edited written versions of originally oral discourse; shopping sections, quizzes, games, and instructions, which have a limited verbal component; and "real-life stories" because, first, they were not included in all the issues considered, and second, they were much longer than, and thus less comparable to, the readers' letters I had decided to analyse. I also chose not to consider those articles about new book or music releases because representative of the advertorial genre, that is, articles with a promotional function, including direct suggestions to the readership as to what listen/watch/use and ultimately buy.

Despite their different titles, the columns and articles in the gossip sections generally deal with the same topics (e.g. *#awkward, Papped!* and *Finger of fail* all include pictures in which celebrities have strange poses or funny facial expressions; *Crushes of*

the month and *Page forty Phwoar* have articles and pictures about the most handsome male celebrities) or talk about the same celebrities. Similarly, readers' contributions are divided into three very similar sections in all the magazines (life problems, 'banal' problems, embarrassing situations).

After deciding on the texts to be collected, I compiled them into a corpus.

Table 1. Texts analysed in *TOTP*

Magazine	Gossip section	Word tokens	Readers' contributions	Word tokens
TOTP – October issue	*Gossip. Cos everyone loves to* *The 5SOS goss!* *7 things… we learnt from Zoella's vacay* *#awkward!* *Up close& personal*	1,388	*OMG!* *Your problems solved!* *Your say*	799
TOTP – November issue	*Gossip. Cos everyone loves to* *5 reasons why… we're crushing on Brooklyn* *The 5SOS goss!* *#awkward!* *Up close & personal*	1,595	*OMG!* *Your problems solved!* *Your say*	755
TOTP – December issue	*Gossip. Cos everyone loves to* *5 things… we learnt from Radio 1's Teen Awards* *#awkward!* *Up close & personal*	933	*OMG!* *Your problems solved!* *Your say*	689

Table 2. Texts analysed in *WLP*

Magazine	Gossip section	Word tokens	Readers' contributions	Word tokens
WLP – October issue	*AAA – Access absolutely anywhere 100% 1D* *We ♥ gossip* *Finger of fail* *Pop's 50 most shocking moments* *Page forty phwoar!!*	2,972	*Don't mope in bed – speak to our Ed!* *Write here write now* *Oh no you didn't!?*	886
WLP – December issue	*AAA – Access absolutely anywhere 100% one direction* *Oh my goss!* *Finger of fail* *Page forty phwoar!!*	1,845	*Having bad times? Ask the brothers Grimes!* *Write here write now* *Oh no you didn't!?*	836

Table 3. Texts analysed in *Shout*

Magazine	Gossip section	Word tokens	Readers' contributions	Word tokens
Shout – October issue	*Tweets 'n' deets!* *Papped!* *100% X Factor!* *Crushes of the month!*	2,221	*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!* *Ask Laura…* *Insta-gran!* *#cringe*	1,883
Shout – November issue	*Tweets 'n' deets!* *Papped!* *The Hunger Games is back!* *The shout selfie awards* *Crushes of the month!*	1,975	*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!* *Ask Laura…* *#cringe*	1,491
Shout – December issue	*Tweets 'n' deets!* *Papped!* *Live from X Factor!* *39 sassy celeb shockers!* *Christmas crushes of the month!*	2,807	*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!* *Ask Laura…* *#cringe*	1,856

3.5 Creation and analysis of the corpus

The texts selected for this analysis were saved as .txt files, the only type a concordancing software program can read. I prepared distinct files for each component (e.g. headers, captions) of each of the eight sections of each issue of the magazines. Altogether, the data consists of 24,931 words. The following table shows the length in words of each corpus component, section and issue. The data collected counts as a corpus because it is machine readable, it exemplifies naturally occurring language directly taken from existing magazines, and is representative of different types of texts selected according to consistent criteria in line with my research goals. In particular, my corpus can be considered specialised in that it is domain or genre specific (McEnery et al. 2006: 15).

Table 4a. Length in words of each corpus component (*TOTP*)

Magazine issue	Gossip sections	Words	Readers' contributions	Words
TOTP October	Headers	154	*OMG!*	172
	Straplines	2		
	Subtitles	67	*Your problems solved*	519
	Articles	546		
	Captions	408	*Your say*	108
	Balloons	211		
TOTP November	Headers	135	*OMG!*	519
	Straplines	5		
	Subtitles	52	*Your problems solved*	131
	Articles	517		
	Captions	581	*Your say*	105
	Balloons	305		
TOTP December	Headers	79	*OMG!*	436
	Straplines	1		
	Subtitles	60	*Your problems solved*	149
	Articles	248		
	Captions	364	*Your say*	104
	Balloons	181		

Table 4b. Length in words of each corpus component (*WLP*)

Magazine issue	Gossip sections	Words	Readers' contributions	Words
WLP October	Headers	305	*Oh no you didn't!?*	458
	Straplines	24		
	Subtitles	96	*Don't mope in bed – speak to our Ed!*	278
	Articles	1,558		
	Captions	822	*Write here write now*	150
	Balloons	140		
WLP November	Headers	130	*Oh no you didn't!?*	482
	Straplines	7		
	Subtitles	71	*Having bad times? Ask the brothers Grimes!*	206
	Articles	756		
	Captions	779	*Write here write now*	148
	Balloons	102		

Table 4c. Length in words of each corpus component (*Shout*)

Magazine issue	Gossip sections	Words	Readers' contributions	Words
TOTP October	Headers	121	*#cringe*	700
	Straplines	29	*Insta-gran*	343
	Subtitles	67	*Ask Laura…*	689
	Articles	1,193		
	Captions	448	*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!*	151
	Balloons	113		
TOTP November	Headers	144	*#cringe*	552
	Straplines	19		
	Subtitles	74	*Ask Laura…*	729
	Articles	1,047		
	Captions	242	*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!*	210
	Balloons	106		
TOTP December	Headers	251	*#cringe*	613
	Straplines	5		
	Subtitles	133	*Ask Laura…*	968
	Articles	1,821		
	Captions	294	*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg!*	275
	Balloons	183		

After compiling the corpus, I tagged the gossip sections for text components, parts of speech, and features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language. Tagging the gossip sections for text components allowed me to identify internal text boundaries, that is, to precisely state where one component ended and when the following one began. POS-tagging, instead, was meant to enable me to investigate in my corpus the

occurrence of some features of advertising language and spoken language (i.e. modal verbs and adjectives, and discourse markers and back channels, respectively) whose scope are single words. Finally, tagging the texts for features of text messages, and the other features of advertising language and spoken language (see sections 3.5.3.1, 3.5.3.2 and 3.5.3.3 for the complete lists) was meant to help me determine their frequency of occurrence and distribution across the corpus.

Instead, I did not tag the readers' contributions for text components, since the texts are basically short narrations of embarrassing events, or the reader's manifestation of her emotions, so they do not include distinct text components. Also, given that they are written by readers – who, unlike magazine editors, are not motivated by the need to promote their publications – I did not expect these texts to show features of advertising language; I also did not expect them to show features of text messages (narratives are unlikely to be as short as them) or spoken language (these texts are more of a monologic than dialogic type). Rather, I decided to "only" POS-tag them to identify, thanks to the tools of a concordancing programme, frequent words and/or phraseologies across the texts, which I expected to reveal the content-related profile of the texts.

3.5.1 Manual tagging of the gossip sections

In order to be able to later analyse typographic, structural and linguistic patterns in the texts under study, I found it useful to tag the texts themselves. To this end, I manually encapsulated chunks of text between tags indicating their rhetorical function in the larger texts and/or their typographic characteristics.

The process of tagging parts of text according to their graphic characteristics was done entirely manually. I used tags to mark the different components of the columns, the features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language, and variations in the fonts used. Below I list the tags I used (with examples), starting from those indicating the type of text identified and moving on to those describing the characteristics of the font:

- <HEADER> tags the title of an article or a column inside the magazine;

(from *WLP* October 2014)

- <ARTICLE> is used to identify articles..
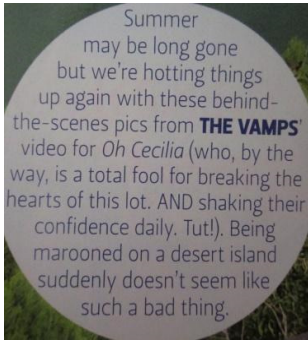
(from *TOTP* October 2014).

They comprise 5 types, identifiable on the basis of their content and wording:

    a. *suspense articles*, that is, articles that have (an) introductory suspense-creating sentence(s), a mini-narrative which elaborates on the topic mentioned in the introduction, and a final comment by the editor on the events reported (this may or may not be explicit; in the latter case, the comment is anyway retrievable from some ironic words used in the introduction or in the mini-narrative);

    b. *narrative articles,* that is, articles which report events from the first sentence. They are generally written with verbs in the past tense and include temporal adverbs or other linkers introducing temporal clauses and, thus signalling the sequence in which the events reported happened and/or their logical connections. There may be a final comment of the editor, often realised as an exclamation;

    c. *dialogic articles*, that is, articles made up of questions to the reader or a celebrity, and answers to their hypothetical questions;

d. *articles with quotations,* that is, articles including, or solely made of, one or more quotations. In the first case, the remaining text may be an introduction and/or a final comment by the editor[5];

e. *short articles*, that is, articles consisting of a few words or a couple of sentences, which generally start with a conjunction or punctuation marks signalling that the article (or at least its first sentence) is the continuation of its title. Sometimes these articles are so short that it may be hard to keep them apart from captions at a first glance. Unlike captions, though, they do not refer to pictures, tweets or quotations.

- <CAPTION> refers to those sentences describing a picture or used as comments to tweets or other quotes; they are usually printed within the picture and highlighted (so that the words are clearly visible and do not disappear in the background among the details of the image), or are placed next to the tweet or quotation;

 (from *Shout* November 2014).

Captions can be classified into three types:

a. *captions type 1*, that is, captions that convey objective, factual information: they may indicate the name of a celebrity, identify an object appearing in the picture, or describe a situation captured in the picture or refer to an article;

b. *captions type 2*, that is, captions that offer the editor's purposeful misinterpretation of the picture they refer to, probably with the aim to make the article or column funny;

c. *captions type 3*, that is, captions that comprise the editor's comments on a picture, an article, or, most frequently, tweets and quotations, and which do not include any descriptions or summaries.

---

5 I did not analyse the quotations included in these articles, since they are tweets by celebrities or portions of interviews with them, that is, they are not texts completely produced by the magazines' editors.

- <STRAPLINE> identifies the sentence that is generally located above the title of an article;

Hotter than Nando's hot sauce! (from *Shout* November 2014)

- <SUBTITLE> identifies the sentence that is generally located immediately after the title of an article; it might summarise the content of the article or simply be the editor's comment on the events narrated; *Get the factor 50 on - the Greek isles have turned into a vlogging hot spot!* (from *TOTP* October 2014)

- <QUOTATION> is used when someone's exact words are reported in inverted commas;

- <BALLOON> identifies the balloons attached to the pictures in the articles;

Yabba Dabba Spew (from *WLP* December 2014)

The doorbell is broken. I could be missing so many packages and guests! What if the Queen is outside? This is terrible @AmazingPhil (from *Shout* November 2014)

Here are the tags for the typographic features of text segments, each accompanied by a brief definition:

- <HIGHLIGHTED> is the label for very short text segments (usually one or two sentences) which are highlighted or included within a coloured shape;

- <ALLCAPS> is used when the following portion of text is entirely written in capital letters;

- <BOLD> tags words that are written with a font that appears thicker than the one used for the rest of the article, or it marks words that are surrounded by a thick coloured line;

- <ITA> labels words written in italics;

- <SHOWLOGO> is used when the logo of a TV show is inserted in the text;

- <GREEN>, <DGREEN> (i.e. 'dark green'), <LGREEN> (i.e. 'light green'), <RED>, <YELLOW>, <PINK>, <PURPLE>, <BLUE>, <WHITE>, <GREY> are used to signal the presence of words, phrases or portions of texts written with a coloured font – this means that when no colour tags are provided, the following text is written in black;

3.5.2 Automatic POS tagging of the corpus

Part of speech (i.e. POS) tagging was done automatically thanks to the online Free CLAWS WWW Tagger developed at the University of Lancaster. The tagger recognised all the different parts of speech, the presence of punctuation marks and the end of sentences. However, I checked whether all the tags were correct, and modified some of them when necessary (for example, the tagger did not recognize multi-word interjections as such).

3.5.3 Selection of features for the gossip sections

The works I read in order to learn in detail about the main features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language are those by Pennarola (2003), Cook (1992), Meyers (1994), Geis (1982) and Rush (1997) on advertising language; by Kemp et al. (2014), Wood et al. (2013), Choudhury et al. (2007) and Durkin (2011) on text messages; and by McCarthy and Carter (1997), Biber (1988), Halliday (1989) and Horowitz and Samuels (1987) on spoken language, which I now briefly summarise.

3.5.3.1 The main features of advertising language

Pennarola (2003) identifies various features in print advertisements. She observes that they perform a *phatic function* relevant to catching the reader's attention, a *referential function* relevant to the description of the characteristics of a product, and a *conative function* relevant to persuading the reader to buy the product (p. 12). She points out that advertising language is characterised by spelling deviations (p. 19; cf. also Cook 1992), puns (p. 21), and the presence of vague and allusive adjectives, that is, adjectives with an indefinite meaning with emotional value rather than referential meaning (p. 25). Other studies on advertising language refer to features such as the repetition of sounds and rhymes, and unexpected spellings which "bring […] out what is unusual and therefore

memorable" (Meyers 1994: 32 and 39), rhetorical figures/schemes/tropes as classified by classic authors, such as anaphora, paradox, metaphor, etc. (McQuarrie 1993), the presence of modal verbs which indicate the degree of possibility of a statement, comparative adjectives, and ellipsis of the second term of comparison in comparative studies (Geis 1982: 60, 86; also cf. Rush 1997). Also, Cook (1992) mentions a particular type of neologism when talking about spelling deviations; he states that if some words related to the product advertised have similar syllables, these might be connected and become a morpheme of a new word (p. 101). Rush (1997), finally, highlights the great importance of the noun phrase in English advertising. She says that it can work as an independent clause both in the headlines of an advertisement and in the body (158). According to Rush, these noun phrases generally have several pre-modifiers (p. 164), that is, adjectives[6], sometimes in their comparative or superlative form, sometimes pre-modified by an adverb, sometimes repeated (pp. 160-162), or compounds of two or more nominal, adjectival, adverbial or verbal elements, with their words separated by hyphens (p. 164).

3.5.3.2 The main features of text messages

Text messages are said to have a language of their own, that is, 'textism' (Kemp et al. 2014), which displays characteristics such as "abbreviations […], letter/number homophones […], initialism […]," which have turned out to be compulsory stylistic choices due to the limited number of characters available in mobile phones (Kemp et al. 2014: 1586; also cf. Durkin 2011). Text messages are also characterized by "ungrammatical" forms (p. 1587), that is, deliberate mistakes (cf. also Choudhury 2007). They include emoticons, kisses, replacing punctuation, repetitions of question/exclamation marks, "incorrect punctuation and capitalisation," omissions of nouns/pronouns/verbs/verb endings, "grammatical homonyms" (e.g. *their* instead of *they're*), "ungrammatical word forms (does you want to go out later?)" and "word/verb reduction (tryna, hafta, gonna, wanna)" (Wood et al 2013: 285).

---

[6] Rush (1997) calls these adjectives *classifying* when they give specific information about the head, and *descriptive* when they have an evocative effect (p. 160).

3.5.3.3 The main features of spoken language

Biber (1988: 24) convincingly argues that there is no "absolute […] distinction" between spoken and written texts: features are said to occur in different percentages depending on the situation in which the text is generated and on its function. However, some distinctive characteristics of oral communication have been identified by several scholars, such as the following:

- the importance of rhythm and intonation (Halliday 1989; also cf. Biber 1988: 44, who states that these aspects may be represented in written language by means of "features such as underlining, bold-face and certain punctuation marks");
- general words, such as *thing, stuff, business*, which "allow vague and indefinite reference" (McCarthy and Carter 1997: 16);
- ellipsis, that is, usually the omission of the subject of a verb, when it is clear or retrievable from the context (McCarthy and Carter 1997: 14);
- back-channels, such as *mm, uhum, yeah, no, right, oh* etc., that is, non-words, sounds indicating that the listener is listening to their interlocutor and willing to reply, that is, actively participating in communication as a co-interlocutor (McCarthy and Carter 1997: 12);
- discourse markers, which are "words or phrases used to mark boundaries in conversation between one topic or a bit of conversation and the next," such as *right, ok, I see, I mean* (McCarthy and Carter 1997: 13);
- heads, also named *topics*, that is, nouns or noun phrases that "identify […] information for listeners and establish […] what is important" by placing nouns or noun phrases "at the front of a clause" (McCarthy and Carter 1997: 16);
- tails, that is, "slot[s] available at the end of a clause in which a speaker can insert grammatical patterns which amplify, extend or reinforce what [s]he is saying or has said" (McCarthy and Carter 1997: 18);
- hedges, that is, a "strategy" to "soften the force of what" the speaker says by means of adverbs and modal verbs, and which allows the speaker "to avoid coming straight to the point or to avoid speaking directly" (McCarthy

and Carter 1997: 16-17; also cf. Halliday 1989, and Horowitz and Samuels S.J. 1987);

- neologisms or previously existing words that are given a new meaning, a higher presence of informal words and contractions than in written language (Horowitz and Samuels 1987: 92-93).

3.5.3.4 Summary of the features selected

To sum up, the features of advertising language whose presence I investigated in the gossip sub-corpus were neologisms/spelling deviations[7], vague adjectives, poetic uses of the language (rhymes, repetitions of sounds, etc.), modal verbs, comparatives, noun phrases, and also typographic features (e.g. changes in font); besides adjectives and modal verbs (identified through POS tagging and thus already having their own tags), these features were tagged as <ADS>. The features of text message whose presence I checked for in the same corpus were neologisms/abbreviations/misspellings, grammatical irregularities (word-ending omissions, homonyms, subject-verb that do not match, etc.), and emoticons; these features were tagged as <TXT>. Finally, the features of orality I decided to search for were written markers of prosodic features, general words (e.g. *thing, stuff, business*), informal words, hedges, ellipsis, back-channels, discourse markers, tags, heads and tails, and also imperatives and interrogatives, speech functions that are typical of oral interaction; besides monosyllabic back-channels and discourse markers (identified through POS tagging and thus already having their own tags), the other features were tagged as <SPOKEN>[8].

---

[7] To check whether words were actually written in an original way, whether they were neologisms, or whether they belonged to informal registers I consulted online dictionaries and print dictionaries: the *OED dictionary* (online and paper formats), the *Macmillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (online and paper formats), the *Collins dictionary* (online format), and the *Urban Dictionary* (only available online). More specifically, if a word was spelt differently from the relevant term entry in the dictionary, but still recognizable as an alternative version of the *same* word, because pronounceable in exactly the same way, or very similarly, I classified it as "spelling deviation" (e.g. *bangerz* instead of the standard plural form *bangers*). If, instead, a word was not present in any one of the dictionaries I consulted, then I classified it as a neologism.

[8] Whenever I found a feature that was typical of two forms of communication (e.g. non-standard spellings), I tagged it twice (e.g. I tagged *bangerz*, word with non-standard spelling, as <ADS> and <TXT>).

3.5.4. The analysis

After I had tagged the corpus, I analysed the gossip sections and the readers'
contributions by using AntConc. In particular, in the former set of texts, I checked the
frequency of occurrence of the features that I had manually tagged, and their dispersion
across the magazine sub-corpora and textual components. In the latter set of texts, I
identified the most frequent content words – by creating frequency word lists, and
focusing on the 50 most recurrent words – and recurrent phrases – by retrieving clusters
of 2 to 5 words attested at least 4 times. If the 50th most recurrent content word had the
same frequency as the following words (e.g. the 51st and 52nd), I included those as well
in the list. The cut-off for the clusters is quite low, but this is due to the fact that the most
recurrent cluster identified occurs 14 times, and this finding is not surprising, considering
the relatively small size of the corpus investigated.

3.5.5. Conclusion

By using the concordancing program, and by exploiting the tags in the corpus, I
checked the frequency of occurrence and dispersion of the features of advertising
language, text messages and spoken language in each textual component (and groups of
textual components) of each magazine issue.

I used AntConc to analyse readers' contributions, too. I examined the funny letters,
the letters about life problems and the 'cringe' stories from the three magazines
separately, by identifying frequency word lists and recurrent phrases.

In Chapter 4, I am going to present the findings of my analysis on the corpus I
created. I will report on the frequency of occurrence of features of advertising language,
text messages and spoken language in the sub-corpus of the gossip section, and their
sequencing in each text. Also, I will report on the most prominent lexico-syntactic
patterns in the sub-corpus of readers' contribution.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I report the results of the analysis I conducted on the columns and articles which I selected from *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*. In section 4.2, I describe the findings concerning the gossip sections, starting from the parts introducing columns and articles, that is, headers, straplines and subtitles (see 4.2.1), moving on to articles (see 4.2.2) and concluding with captions (see 4.2.3) and balloons (see 4.2.4). In section 4.3, instead, I present the results of the analysis on readers' contributions, starting from letters concerning adolescents' problems (see 4.3.1), and then moving on to letters about less serious topics (see 4.3.2), and lastly, anecdotes about embarrassing episodes (see 4.3.3). Both sections 4.2 and 4.3 end with a sub-section in which I discuss the results of the analyses conducted.

4.2 The gossip sections

The gossip sections are mostly made up of headers, articles, captions commenting on pictures and articles, and balloons expressing what celebrities might say or think, according to the magazines' editors. The headers in my corpus represent the typographically most prominent part of an article or column, as they generally occupy a big portion of the page, may be written in capital letters, with letters of various colours, and may also be highlighted (see 4.2.1). Articles are the textual components actually providing information, and which display a variable internal structure (see 3.5.1 and 4.2.2). Captions are phrases or sentences that generally appear within pictures, or next to tweets or quotations, and describe or comment on them (see 4.2.3). Finally, balloons include the words the magazines' editors imagine the celebrity in the picture might have said about the episode described or mentioned in the article or caption which the balloons refer to (see 4.2.4). Possible additional components are straplines and subtitles; they are the lines placed, respectively, above or under headers, and give a brief summary of the article they introduce (see 4.2.1).

4.2.1 Headers, straplines and subtitles

This subsection is about the headers, straplines and subtitles occurring in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout.* I report the results of their analysis, that is, the frequency of occurrence and dispersion of the features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language I identified in them. These features were identified and tagged according to the classification scheme outlined in sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.3.4, whose application was straightforward throughout the corpus.

TOTP, *WLP* and *Shout* have similar numbers of straplines (5, 3 and 6, respectively) and subtitles (20, 17 and 19, respectively). However, they differ markedly with regard to headers (58, 80 and 131, respectively). The length of these textual components is similar across the magazines only in the subtitles (on average, 7.5 words in *TOTP,* 7.6 in *WLP* and 7.35 in *Shout*), while it is different in the straplines and headers (on average, 1.6 words in *TOTP*, 5.6 in *WLP* and 7.2 in *Shout* for the straplines; and, on average, 2.8 words in *TOTP*, 4.3 in *WLP* and 3.35 in *Shout* for the headers).

4.2.1.1 Headers

In this section I present the findings about the headers in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*. The three magazines have 58, 80 and 131 headers, respectively. I identified features of the three forms of communication considered (i.e. advertising language, text messages and spoken language) in almost all the headers in *TOTP* and *Shout*, and in about half of the headers in *WLP*. About half of the time, headers instantiate only 1 such feature in all the magazines. The form of communication that is instanced the most in all the magazines is advertising language, but to different extents across the magazines; for example, most headers in *TOTP* and *Shout*, but only about half in *WLP*, have features of advertising language. The following paragraphs provide details about the dispersion of the features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout.*

In *TOTP* there are 58 headers. As is shown in Tables 5 and 6, almost all the headers (90%) display features of the three forms of communication considered, especially advertising language (in 81% of the headers), followed by spoken language (31%) and text messages (12%). In particular, there are 86 features of advertising language distributed in 47 headers, 9 features of text messages distributed in 7 headers, and 19 features of spoken language distributed in 18 headers. More specifically, more than half

of the headers have multiple instances of the same form of communication, or of mixed forms of communications.

Table 5. Clustering of features in the *TOTP* headers

Headers with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	6	10%
One feature	21	36%
Two or more features	31	54%
Total	58	100%

Table 6. Frequency of features in the *TOTP* headers

Form of communication	Number of features	Number of headers (%)	Average number of features per header
Advertising language	86	47 (81%)	1.82
Text messages	9	7 (12%)	1.28
Spoken language	19	18 /31%)	1.05

Table 7 shows, instead, the frequency of occurrence of features of advertising language instanced in the headers. Noun phrases (e.g. *X Factor fails*) and graphic variations (e.g. *How to WOW AT FASHION WEEK*) are the most frequent (i.e. 40% and 33%); less frequent are, instead, instances of poetic uses of language (e.g. *A lotta love for Lukey,* with alliteration of the letter *l*), words with non-conventional spelling (e.g. *aww-some*), vague[9] adjectives (e.g. *Marvellous mythical Mikey*), and neologisms (e.g. *fringe-spiration*).

Table 7. Features of advertising language in the *TOTP* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Noun phrases	34	40%
Graphic variations	28	33%
Poetic uses of language	9	10%
Vague adjectives	8	9%
Non-conventional spellings	5	6%
Neologisms	2	2%
Total	86	100%

---

[9] I am using Pennarola's (2003: 25) term, who defines "vague" adjectives whose meaning is not referential but emotional and not objective (see section 3.5.3.1).

Features of text messages are instanced in 7 headers, and, as is clear from Table 8, they include non-standard spellings (56%) and abbreviations (e.g. *goss* instead of *gossip*; 44%).

Table 8. Features of text messages in the *TOTP* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Non-standard spellings	5	56%
Abbreviations	4	44%
Total	9	100%

Finally, I identified 19 features of spoken language, listed in Table 9. The most frequent features are words/expressions typical of informal registers (e.g. *loads of, dude*), which make up 74% of the total. Then, there are 3 imperatives (e.g. *be seen*), 1 interrogative (*What's under her hat?*) and 1 word in bold, which is meant to suggest prosodic emphasis (*Now **this** is paradise!*).

Table 9. Features of spoken language in the *TOTP* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Informal words	14	74%
Imperatives	3	16%
Interrogatives	1	5%
Graphic variations	1	5%
Total	19	100%

To sum up, advertising language is the form of communication that is represented the most in the headers in *TOTP*, especially by means of noun phrases. Spoken language is the second most frequently represented form of communication, with informal words being the predominant feature, while features of text messages (mostly non-standard spellings) are not frequently instanced.

Headers in *WLP* are similar to headers in *TOTP* in the general dispersion of the features of the three forms of communication examined, but different in the actual features instanced.

In *WLP,* there are 80 headers. As is shown in Tables 10 and 11, only about half of the *WLP* headers (46) have features of the three forms of communication considered (58%). The one that is represented the most is advertising language (in 43% of the

headers), followed by spoken language (23%) and text messages (8%). The linguistic traits instanced in the headers include 55 features of advertising language distributed in 34 headers, 6 features of text messages distributed in 6 headers, and 20 features of spoken language distributed in 18 headers. Thus, there are about half headers with two or more features.

Table 10. Clustering of features in the *WLP* headers

Headers with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	34	42%
One feature	23	29%
Two or more features	23	29%
Total	58	100%

Table 11. Number and dispersion of features in the *WLP* headers

Form of communication	Number of features	Number of headers	Average number of features per header
Advertising language	55	34 (42%)	1.62
Text messages	6	6 (8%)	1.00
Spoken language	20	18 (23%)	1.11

Table 12 shows the frequency of occurrence of the features of advertising language instanced in the headers. The features identified include noun phrases (e.g. *Jack's secret selfies*) as the most frequent (49%); graphic variations (e.g. *Finger OF FAIL*) and poetic uses of language (e.g. *Beyonce's sister beats up Beyonce's husband,* in which the subject and object display parallel structures), as the second most frequent ones, each of them making up 18% of the features identified. Finally, vague adjectives (e.g. *best*) and neologisms (e.g. *insta-gag*) are only occasionally instantiated.

Table 12. Features of advertising language in the *WLP* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Noun phrases	27	49%
Graphic variations	10	18.2%
Poetic uses of language	10	18.2%
Vague adjectives	4	7.3%
Neologisms	4	7.3%
Total	55	100%

Features of text messages, instead, are instanced in 6 headers, including abbreviations (83% of this group of features) and 1 symbol substituting for a word (♥, 17%; see Table 15).

Table 13. Features of text messages in the *WLP* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Abbreviations	5	83%
Symbols	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Finally, in the *WLP* headers, I identified 21 features of spoken language, listed in Table 14. In order of decreasing frequency of occurrence they are words/expressions typical of an informal register (e.g. *wedgie*; 48%) 4 interjections (e.g. *Oi*), 3 imperatives (e.g. *Look!*), 2 interrogatives (e.g. *Youtubers party?*) and 1 ellipsis of the subject (*Plaits a good look*).

Table 14. Features of spoken language in the *WLP* headers

Feature	Number	Percentage
Informal words	10	50%
Interjections	4	20%
Imperatives	3	15%
Interrogatives	2	10%
Ellipsis	1	5%
Total	20	100%

To conclude, *WLP* is similar to *TOTP* in the dispersion of the features: more specifically, advertising language is the form of communication that is represented the most, followed by spoken language and text messages). However, the magazine has fewer headers with features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language than *TOTP*.

The headers appearing in *Shout* are very similar to those in *TOTP* except for the frequency of occurrence of some of the features of advertising language.

In *Shout* there are 131 headers. As is shown in Tables 15 and 16, almost all the headers display features of the three forms of communication considered (89%), especially advertising language (80%), while considerably less frequent are features of

spoken language (24%) and text messages (12%). The findings show that there are 168 features of advertising language distributed in 105 headers, 16 features of text messages distributed in 16 headers, and 32 features of spoken language distributed in 32 headers. Thus, similarly to the data in *TOTP* and *WLP,* here too there are some headers with multiple instances of the same feature. More specifically, more than half of the headers in *Shout* have two or more features (53%). These figures are very similar to those relevant to *TOTP*.

Table 15. Clustering of features in the *Shout* headers

Headers with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	15	11%
One feature	47	36%
Two or more features	69	53%
Total	131	100%

Table 16. Number and dispersion of features in the *Shout* headers

Form of communication	Number of features	Number of headers (%)	Average number of features per header
Advertising language	168	105 (80%)	1.6
Text messages	16	16 (12%)	1.0
Spoken language	32	32 (24%)	1.0

Table 17 shows the frequency of occurrence of the features instanced in the headers. Features of advertising language include noun phrases (e.g. *Mystery tweet*) and graphic variations (e.g. ***Liam** hits back*), which are the most frequent (40% and 46%, respectively, of the features of this form of communication). In addition, there are also instances of poetic uses of language (e.g. *Tweets 'n' deets*, in which the two content words rhyme), vague adjectives (e.g. *prettiest*), and words with non-conventional spellings (e.g. *dramz*).

Table 17. Features of advertising language in the *Shout* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Graphic variations	74	44%
Noun phrases	65	39%
Poetic uses of language	13	8%
Vague adjectives	12	7%
Non-conventional spellings	4	2%
Total	168	100%

Features of text messages are instanced in 16 headers, and, as shown in Table 18, they include non-conventional spellings (e.g. *dramz*) and abbreviations (e.g. *K-Stew* instead of Kristen Stewart).

Table 18. Features of text messages in the *Shout* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Abbreviations	12	75%
Non-conventional spellings	4	25%
Total	16	100%

Finally, features of spoken language, listed in Table 19, are instantiated 32 times. The features occurring the most are words/expressions typical of an informal register (e.g. *jitters, sass*; 44%), while there are 12 interrogatives (e.g. *Did you know?*), 3 imperatives (e.g. *Don't mess with Iggy*), 2 graphic variations signalling prosodic emphasis (e.g. *OVER Ariana?*), and 1 interjection (*Boo*).

Table 19. Features of spoken language in the *Shout* headers

Features	Number	Percentage
Informal words	14	44%
Interrogatives	12	38%
Imperatives	3	9%
Graphic variations	2	6%
Interjections	1	3%
Total	32	100%

Overall, *Shout* displays patterns similar to those identified in *TOTP*: almost all its headers have features of the three forms of communication considered, and almost all have features of advertising language (esp. graphic variations), followed by spoken language and text messages.

To conclude, as is possible to infer from the above findings, *TOTP* and *Shout* display similar frequencies of occurrence and dispersion of features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language; they both have instances of features of the three forms of communication examined in almost all their headers, and a high percentage of features of advertising language. The headers in *WLP*, instead, display more standardized linguistic features – only less than half of them have features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language. The normalized frequency (calculated per 1,000 words, see Table 20a) more clearly reveals the general similarity between *TOTP* and *Shout* (234 and 325 features, respectively, for advertising language; 24 and 31, respectively, for text messages; and 52 and 62, respectively for spoken language), as well as the scarcity of features occurring in the *WLP* headers (126 for advertising language, 14 for text messages, 46 for spoken language).

Table 20a. Normalised frequency of forms of communication (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* headers

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Headers	Advertising language	234.0	126.0	325.0
	Text messages	24.0	14.0	31.0
	Spoken language	52.0	46.0	62.0

Table 20b. Normalised frequency of features (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* headers

Forms of communication	Features	Normalised frequency in *TOTP*	Normalised frequency in *WLP*	Normalised frequency in *Shout*
Advertising language	Noun phrases	92.0	62.0	122.0
	Graphic variations	76.0	23.0	143.0
	Poetic use of language	24.0	23.0	25.0
	Adjectives	22.0	9.0	23.0
	Non-conventional spellings	13.0	0.0	8.0
	Neologisms	5.0	9.0	0.0
Text messages	Non-standard spellings	13.0	0.0	8.0
	Abbreviations	11.0	11.0	23.0
	Symbols	0.0	2.0	0.0
Spoken language	Informal words	38.0	23.0	27.0
	Imperatives	8.0	7.0	6.0
	Interrogatives	3.0	4.0	23.0
	Graphic variations	3.0	0.0	4.0
	Ellipses	0.0	2.0	0.0
	Discourse markers	0.0	9.0	2.0

At the same time, similarities across the three magazines can be identified. First of all, advertising language is always the most represented form of communication, followed by spoken language and text messages. Second, in all the magazines, even though the actual frequencies are not the same, the three most recurrent features of advertising language are noun phrases, graphic variations and poetic uses of language, while the most recurrent features of spoken language are informal words.

4.2.1.2 Straplines

The sub-corpora of the gossip sections including straplines are very small, since there are 5 in *TOTP,* 3 in *WLP* and 6 in *Shout*. I was only able to identify features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in *Shout*, and the results are reported in the following paragraph and Tables.

The 6 straplines in the *Shout* sub-corpus may have one or more features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language. In particular, I identified 4 features of advertising language (i.e. 3 comparatives and 1 noun phrase), 1 feature of text messages (i.e. 1 abbreviation), and 3 features of spoken language (i.e. 2 informal words and 1 interrogative). Tables 21 and 22 summarise the findings of the *Shout* straplines.

Table 21. Clustering of features in the *Shout* straplines

Straplines with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	0	0%
One feature	4	67%
Two or more features	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Table 22. Frequency of features in the *Shout* straplines

Form of communication	Features	Number	Percentage
Advertising language	Comparatives	3	75%
	Noun phrases	1	25%
Text messages	Abbreviation	1	100%
Spoken language	Informal words	2	67%
	Interrogatives	1	33%

To conclude, as is manifest from the findings reported above *Shout* is the only magazine whose straplines display features of the three forms of communication

examined, and these are mostly representative of advertising language. This becomes more manifest when considering the normalized frequency values calculated per 1,000 words – 0 for all the three forms of communication in *TOTP* and *WLP*, other and higher values in *Shout* (see Tables 23a and 23b).

Table 23a. Normalised frequency of forms of communication (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* straplines

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Straplines	Advertising language	0.0	0.0	75.0
	Text messages	0.0	0.0	19.0
	Spoken language	0.0	0.0	57.0

Table 23b. Normalised frequency of features (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* straplines

Forms of communication	Features	Normalised frequency in *TOTP*	Normalised frequency in *WLP*	Normalised frequency in *Shout*
Advertising language	Noun phrases	0.0	0.0	56.0
	Adjectives	0.0	0.0	19.0
Text messages	Abbreviations	0.0	0.0	19.0
Spoken language	Informal words	0.0	0.0	38.0
	Interrogatives	0.0	0.0	19.0

4.2.1.3 Subtitles

The subtitles occurring in the gossip sections of the magazines analysed are more numerous than the straplines (17 in *TOTP,* 18 in *WLP* and 32 in *Shout*). Their recurrent features are reported below.

In *TOTP* there are 17 subtitles. As is shown in Tables 23 and 24, almost all the subtitles (88%) display features of the three forms of communication considered, and the one that is represented the most is advertising language (in 53% of the headers), followed by spoken language (24%) and text messages (18%). This sub-corpus includes 10 features of advertising language in 9 subtitles, 3 features of text messages in 3 subtitles, and 6 features of spoken language in 4 subtitles. Thus, some subtitles have more than one feature (13 have one feature, 1 has three of the same type and 1 has three of different forms of communication).

Table 23. Clustering of features in the *TOTP* subtitles

Subtitles with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	2	12%
One feature	13	76%
Two or more features	2	12%
Total	17	100%

Table 24. Number of features and dispersion in the *TOTP* subtitles

Form of communication	Number of features	Number of headers	Average number of features per header
Advertising language	10	9 (53%)	1.11
Text messages	3	3 (18%)	1.00
Spoken language	6	4 (24%)	1.50

Table 25 shows the frequency of occurrence of the features instanced in the subtitles. The features of advertising language identified in the *TOTP* sub-corpus are poetic uses of language (e.g. *Witness the fitness*, in which the two words rhyme; 60%) and vague adjectives (e.g. *Mega* […]; 40%).

Table 25. Features of advertising language in the *TOTP* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Poetic uses of language	6	60%
Vague adjectives	4	40%
Total	10	100%

Features of text messages, instead, are instanced in 3 subtitles, which all present the same abbreviated word (*pics*).

Table 26. Features of text messages in the *TOTP* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Abbreviations	3	100%
Total	3	100%

The *TOTP* subtitles also include 6 features of spoken language, which are listed in Table 27. The features occurring the most are interrogatives (e.g. *Haven't we seen these […]?*) and imperatives (e.g. *Get the factor […]*), each making up 33% of the features of this group. Then, there are also 1 discourse marker (*well*) and 1 informal word (*lookie*).

Table 27. Features of spoken language in the *TOTP* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Imperatives	2	33%
Interrogatives	2	33%
Discourse markers	1	17%
Informal words	1	17%
Total	6	100%

To sum up, in the *TOTP* sub-corpus, subtitles mostly have features of advertising language, followed by features of spoken language and features of text messages, but unlike the headers, their most recurrent features are poetic uses of language rather than noun phrases.

In *WLP* the number of subtitles is almost the same as in *TOTP*, but their characteristics are different.

In *WLP* there are 18 subtitles. About half subtitles (56%) exemplify one or more features of the three forms of communication taken into consideration. However, differently from *TOTP*, in these subtitles there are no features of advertising language, but only features of text messages (in 28% of the subtitles) and of spoken language (in another 28% of the subtitles). Each one of these two forms of communication is instantiated with 6 features in 5 subtitles. More specifically, of the 10 subtitles with features, 70% have only one feature, while the remaining 30% have two or more (of the same type or of different types).

Table 28. Clustering of features in the *WLP* subtitles

Subtitles with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	8	44%
One feature	7	39%
Two or more features	3	17%
Total	18	100%

Table 29. Number of features and dispersion in the *WLP* subtitles

Form of communication	Number of features	Number of headers	Average number of features per header
Advertising language	0	0 (0%)	0.0
Text messages	6	5 (28%)	1.2
Spoken language	6	5 (28%)	1.2

Tables 30 and 31 show which features are instanced in the subtitles. In particular, the features of text messages identified are 4 abbreviated words (e.g. *probs*) and 2 words written with symbols ($#!?), while the features of spoken language consist of 2 interjections (e.g. *er*), 1 reference to an interlocutor, 1 transcription of sounds, 1 interrogative and 1 graphic variation signalling prosodic effects.

Table 30. Features of text messages in the *WLP* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Abbreviations	4	67%
Symbols	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Table 31. Features of spoken language in the *WLP* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Interjections	2	34.0%
Reference to interlocutor	1	16.5%
Interrogatives	1	16.5%
Rendering of sounds	1	16.5%
Graphic variations	1	16.5%
Total	6	100%

In conclusion, *WLP* only has features of spoken language and text messages. Their frequency of occurrence in the subtitles is roughly similar, and their most recurrent features are abbreviations and interjections, respectively.

The *Shout* subtitles are similar to *TOTP* in that they instantiates features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language. However, features of spoken language are the most frequently exemplified, similarly to *WLP*.

In *Shout* there are 32 subtitles. Differently from *WLP*, but similarly to *TOTP*, they exemplify the three forms of communication considered, and most of them (i.e. 91%) display one or more of the features investigated. More specifically, 38% of the subtitles

have only one feature of advertising language, text messages and/or spoken languages, while 53% have two or more. In this sub-corpus there are 20 features of advertising language distributed in 17 subtitles, 6 features of text messages distributed in 5 subtitles, and 29 features of spoken language distributed in 18 headers. Spoken language is thus the most prominently represented form of communication in this textual component in *Shout*.

Table 32. Clustering of features in the *Shout* subtitles

Subtitles with	Number	Percentage
Zero features	3	9%
One feature	12	38%
Two or more features	17	53%
Total	32	100%

Table 33. Number and dispersion of features in the *Shout* subtitles

Form of communication	Number of features	Number of headers	Average number of features per header
Advertising language	21	17 (53%)	1.23
Text messages	6	5 (16%)	1.20
Spoken language	29	18 (56%)	1.60

Table 34 shows the frequency of occurrence of features of advertising language in the subtitles, which include noun phrases (e.g. *The Janoskians*), the most frequent (70%), 2 instances of poetic uses of language (e.g. ***Lorde let loose***, with alliteration of the letter *l*), 2 vague adjectives (e.g. *dodgy*), 2 graphic variations (e.g. *LORDE let loose*) and 1 comparative adjective (e.g. *fitter*).

Table 34. Features of advertising language in the *Shout* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Noun phrases	14	66.5%
Graphic variations	2	9.5%
Poetic uses of language	2	9.5%
Vague adjectives	2	9.5%
Comparatives	1	5.0%
Total	21	100%

Features of text messages, instead, are instanced in 6 headers, and only include abbreviations (e.g. *goss*; see Table 35).

Table 35. Features of text messages in the *Shout* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Abbreviations	6	100%
Total	6	100%

The features of spoken language occurring in these subtitles are 8 interrogatives, the most recurrent feature (e.g. *All-day pamper sessions?*), 7 interjections (e.g. *Oh*), 7 graphic variations signalling prosodic emphasis (e.g. *ACTUAL soap*), and, less frequently, informal words (e.g. *showbiz*), imperatives and the typographic rendering of sounds (→ *cue dramatic music* →).

Table 36. Features of spoken language in the *Shout* subtitles

Features	Number	Percentage
Interrogatives	8	29%
Interjections	7	25%
Graphic variations	7	25%
Informal words	3	11%
Imperatives	2	7%
Rendering of sounds	1	3%
Total	28	100%

It thus appears that *Shout* mostly has features of spoken language in the subtitles, unlike *TOTP* and *WLP*, and that its most recurrent features are interrogatives and interjections/discourse markers.

To conclude, the subtitles in the magazines display differences. The *WLP* subtitles differ from those in *TOTP* and *Shout*. First, they do not have features of advertising language; second, the number of subtitles with features of the three forms of communication considered is lower than in *TOTP* and *Shout* (about half subtitles in *WLP* vs almost all subtitles in *TOTP* and *Shout*). A comparison of the normalized frequency values (per 1,000 words) shows that the subtitles occurring in *TOTP* and *WLP* display more standard linguistic characteristics than those in *Shout*. Indeed, *TOTP* and *WLP* have, respectively, 56 vs 0 instances of advertising language, 17 and 36 of text messages, and 34 and 36 of spoken language), while *Shout* has the highest values of features of advertising language and spoken language (77 and 106, respectively), and the second highest of features of text messages (22).

Table 37a. Normalised frequency of forms of communication (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* subtitles

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Subtitles	Advertising language	56.0	0.0	77.0
	Text messages	17.0	36.0	22.0
	Spoken language	34.0	36.0	106.0

Table 37b. Normalised frequency of features (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* subtitles

Forms of communication	Features	Normalised frequency in *TOTP*	Normalised frequency in *WLP*	Normalised frequency in *Shout*
Advertising language	Noun phrases	0.0	0.0	51.0
	Graphic variations	0.0	0.0	7.0
	Poetic use of language	33.0	0.0	7.0
	Adjectives	22.0	0.0	10.0
Text messages	Abbreviations	17.0	24.0	22.0
	Symbols	0.0	12.0	0.0
Spoken language	Informal words	5.0	0.0	11.0
	Imperatives	11.0	0.0	7.0
	Interrogatives	11.0	6.0	29.0
	Graphic variations	0.0	6.0	25.0
	Discourse markers	5.0	12.0	25.0
	Reference to interlocutor	0.0	6.0	0.0
	Sounds	0.0	6.0	3.0

4.2.1.4 Conclusion

To sum up, there are similarities across the magazine sub-corpora regarding the general dispersion of the features considered (with the exception of straplines; see 4.2.1.2), while there is considerable variation in the forms of communication represented and the specific features instanced.

TOTP and *Shout* display a similar dispersion of the features, since features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language occur in almost all their headers and subtitles, while *WLP* only has some in about half of its headers and subtitles. This means that *TOTP* and *Shout* have headers and subtitles that are richer in features than *WLP*. This is more clearly evidenced through a comparison of the normalized figures for the three sub-corpora (see Table 38).

Table 38. Normalised frequency of forms of communication (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* headers, straplines and subtitles

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Headers	Advertising language	234.0	126.0	325.0
	Text messages	24.0	14.0	31.0
	Spoken language	52.0	46.0	62.0
Straplines	Advertising language	0.0	0.0	75.0
	Text messages	0.0	0.0	19.0
	Spoken language	0.0	0.0	57.0
Subtitles	Advertising language	56.0	0.0	77.0
	Text messages	17.0	36.0	22.0
	Spoken language	34.0	36.0	106.0

In the headers and subtitles *Shout* has the highest number of features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language among the magazines, followed by *TOTP* and *WLP* (the only exception concerns features of text messages in the subtitles, in which *WLP* has the highest frequency value among the three magazines). Interestingly, the dispersion of the features is very similar in the headers and subtitles across the three magazine sub-corpora (90% and 88% in *TOTP*, 58% and 56% in *WLP*, and 89% and 90% in *Shout,* respectively).

The headers also show similarities in the forms of communication represented: all the magazines mostly have features of advertising language; the subtitles, instead, display rather varying patterns, since in *TOTP* features of advertising language are predominant, in *WLP* there are mostly features of text messages and of spoken language (which are instanced with the same frequency), and in *Shout* features of spoken language are the most frequent.

Finally, the specific features that are instanced in the sub-corpora are more similar in the headers than the subtitles. In the headers, noun phrases are the most frequently recurring feature of advertising language in *TOTP* and *WLP*; *Shout* mainly contains graphic variations (this feature is also frequent in articles and captions; see 4.2.2 and 4.2.3), but noun phrases are quite frequent too. Abbreviations are the most recurrent feature of text messages in *WLP* and *Shout*, and the second most recurrent in *TOTP*. Finally, informal words are the main feature of spoken language that is instanced in all the magazines. In the subtitles, instead, the only similarity I noticed is the constant presence of abbreviations (which belong to the features of text messages).

In the following section, I report the findings concerning articles, the textual components that follow headers, straplines and subtitles.

4.2.2 Articles

After analysing the headers, straplines and subtitles, I also checked whether features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language occurred in the five types of articles (see 3.5.1) identified in the corpus. *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* have a total of 207 articles (37 in *TOTP*, 72 in *WLP* and 105 in *Shout*). Thus, there are 18 suspense articles (5 in *TOTP,* 3 in *WLP* and 10 in *Shout),* 88 narrative articles (26 in *TOTP,* 16 in *WLP* and 46 in *Shout),* 30 dialogic articles (5 in *TOTP,* 2 in *WLP* and 23 in *Shout),* 29 articles with quotations (1 in *TOTP,* 2 in *WLP* and 26 in *Shout*) and 49 short articles (only in *WLP*). In the following sections, I report the findings for each group of articles.

4.2.2.1 Suspense articles

Suspense articles make up 13%, 4% and 10% of the articles in *TOTP*, *WLP* and *Shout*, respectively – their frequency is thus similar in *TOTP* and *Shout*, and slightly lower in *WLP*. Features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language tend to co-occur in these articles. All the articles in *TOTP* and *WLP*, and 90% of those in *Shout*, have features of these forms of communication, whose frequency of occurrence varies across the magazines: the most frequently occurring features in *TOTP* are those of advertising language (with 9 features distributed in 5 articles), and in *WLP* the most frequent ones are those of spoken language (with 7 features distributed in 3 articles), while in *Shout* features of advertising language and spoken language are equally frequently represented (with 10 features distributed in 7 articles in both cases). Tables 39 and 40 give an overview of these findings.

Table 39. Clustering of features in the suspense articles

Articles with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
One feature	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
Two or more features	5 (100%)	3 (100%)	8 (80%)
Total	5 (100%)	3 (100%)	10 (100%)

Table 40. Frequency of features in the suspense articles

Articles with features of	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Advertising language	5 (100%)	2 (67%)	7 (70%)
Text messages	3 (60%)	0 (0%)	5 (50%)
Spoken language	1 (20%)	3 (100%)	7 (70%)

The variety of features of advertising language in *TOTP* is wider than in *WLP* and *Shout*, and features of spoken language are instead more varied in *Shout* than in the other two magazines; similarly to features of advertising language, features of text messages are more varied in *TOTP* than *Shout*, but do not exist in *WLP*.

I identified 9 features of advertising language in *TOTP,* 3 in *WLP* and 10 in *Shout* (see Table 41). All the magazines have graphic variations as the most frequent feature (44%, 67% and 70%, respectively, of the features of advertising language); in particular, highlighting the name of the celebrity involved in the episode described is very common in the articles and captions, most of all in *Shout*.

Table 41. Features of advertising language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Graphic variations	4 (44%)	2 (67%)	7 (70%)
Vague adjectives	2 (22%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Poetic uses of language	1 (22%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)
Comparatives	1 (22%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)
Non-standard spellings	1 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	9 (100%)	3 (100%)	10 (100%)

As shown in Table 42, features of text messages only occur in *TOTP* and *Shout* (there are 4 and 5, respectively), and mostly consist of abbreviated words (there is only 1 non-standard spelling in *TOTP*).

Table 42. Features of text messages in *TOTP* and *Shout*

Features	TOTP	Shout
Abbreviations	3 (75%)	5 (100%)
Non-standard spellings	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
Total	4 (100%)	5 (100%)

Finally, features of spoken language are present in all the magazines. While in *TOTP* these features are the least frequent (there are 2), in *WLP* and *Shout* they predominate (there are 7 and 10, respectively). Also, while in *TOTP* there is no prominent

feature (there are two features and each occurs once), in *WLP* informal words are the most frequent, and in *Shout* graphic variations for prosodic reasons are the most recurrent, as is shown in Table 43.

Table 43. Features of spoken language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Ellipsis	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Reference to interlocutor	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Informal words	0 (0%)	3 (43%)	1 (10%)
Discourse markers	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	2 (20%)
Imperatives	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	2 (20%)
Graphic variations for prosodic reasons	0 (0%)	1 (14%)	3 (30%)
Interrogatives	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
Total	2 (100%)	7 (100%)	10 (100%)

To conclude, the suspense articles do not make up a big portion of the sub-corpora of articles, so it is not easy to retrieve recurrent patterns in them. It is only possible to observe that in the suspense articles in *TOTP*, but not in those in *WLP* and *Shout,* features of advertising language occur more frequently than features of spoken language.

More precise observations can be made for narrative articles, which are presented in the following section.

4.2.2.2 Narrative articles

Tables 44 and 45 show the general dispersion of features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in narrative articles, that is, those that report events. Unlike suspense articles, narrative articles make up a considerable part of the articles in the magazines, that is, 70% of the articles in *TOTP*, 22% of the articles in *WLP* and 44% of the articles in *Shout*. Also, unlike the suspense articles, not all the narrative articles have features of the three forms of communication considered: 84% in *TOTP* (41% of which only have one feature), 94% in *WLP* (20% of which have one feature) and 93% in *Shout* (37% of which have one feature instanced). The dispersion and frequency of occurrence of features of the three forms of communication considered varies across the magazines. More specifically, in *TOTP* features of advertising language are as frequent as features of spoken language (20 features distributed in 15 and 14 articles, respectively), while in *WLP* there are mostly features typical of spoken language (29 features distributed

in 14 articles), and in *Shout* features representative of advertising language (53 features distributed in 46 articles).

Table 44. Clustering of features in the narrative articles

Articles with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
One feature	9 (41%)	3 (20%)	16 (37%)
Two or more features	15 (59%)	13 (80%)	30 (36%)
Total	26 (100%)	16 (100%)	46 (100%)

Table 45. Frequency of features in narrative articles

Articles with features of	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Advertising language	15 (58%)	11 (69%)	46 (100%)
Text messages	3 (12%)	7 (44%)	15 (33%)
Spoken language	14 (54%)	14 (88%)	26 (57%)

Tables 44 and 45 report the frequency with which features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language occur in the narrative articles. *TOTP* is the magazine with the widest variety of features of advertising language, followed by *WLP* and *Shout*. Similarly to the suspense articles, the narrative articles have graphic variations as the most common feature of advertising language instanced in all the magazines (see Table 46).

Table 46. Features of advertising language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Graphic variations	11 (50%)	5 (33%)	37 (70%)
Poetic uses of language	4 (20%)	3 (20%)	11 (21%)
Non-standard spellings	2 (10%)	2 (13%)	2 (4%)
Neologisms	2 (10%)	2 (13%)	0 (0%)
Comparatives	1 (5%)	3 (20%)	0 (0%)
Vague adjectives	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	20 (100%)	15 (100%)	53 (100%)

Features of text messages are not as frequently exemplified in the magazines as features of advertising language or spoken language. In all the magazines the only two features of text messages attested are abbreviations and non-standard spellings (see Table 47).

Table 47. Features of text messages in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Abbreviations	3 (75%)	6 (75%)	19 (90%)
Non-standard spellings	1 (25%)	2 (25%)	2 (10%)
Total	4 (100%)	8 (100%)	21 (100%)

Finally, features of spoken language occur in almost all the articles in the magazines, especially in *WLP*. However, it is *TOTP* that has the widest variety of features among the magazines, followed by *WLP* and *Shout*. In all the magazines, the most recurrent features are interjections/discourse markers, and the second most frequent are informal words (see Table 48).

Table 48. Features of spoken language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Interjections/discourse markers	6 (30%)	10 (34%)	11 (27%)
Informal words	5 (25%)	6 (21%)	9 (22%)
Ellipses	3 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Imperatives	2 (10%)	4 (14%)	7 (17%)
Tags	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Interrogatives	1 (5%)	2 (7%)	8 (19%)
Graphic variations	1 (5%)	3 (10%)	6 (15%)
Sounds	1 (5%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)
Reference to interlocutor	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Total	20 (100%)	29 (100%)	41 (100%)

To sum up, the narrative articles have many features of spoken language. However, unlike the dialogic articles (see 4.2.4.3), the most recurrent features are interjections and informal words, while interrogatives and imperatives only make up a small part of the features.

4.2.2.3 Dialogic articles

Tables 49 and 50 show the general dispersion of features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in the dialogic articles, those that mimic dialogic interactions between the editor and the reader or a celebrity. These features are virtually absent from *WLP* (only 3% of the articles in this magazine sub-corpus belong to this group), while in *TOTP* and *Shout* they make up a more numerous set (14% and 22% of the total amount of articles, respectively). All of them, though, exemplify at least one feature of spoken language.

Table 49. Clustering of features in the dialogic articles

Articles with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
One feature	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Two or more features	5 (100%)	2 (100%)	23 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)	2 (100%)	23 (100%)

Table 50. Frequency of features in the dialogic articles

Articles with features of	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Advertising language	3 (60%)	2 (100%)	8 (35%)
Text messages	1 (20%)	1 (50%)	6 (26%)
Spoken language	5 (100%)	2 (100%)	23 (100%)

As is apparent from Table 49, while features of spoken language occur in all the dialogic articles, features of advertising language and text messages are not as frequent. However, because *TOTP* and *WLP* have a very limited number of articles of the dialogic type, it is not possible to identify general patterns or occurrences typical of this group of texts. The findings, however, show that *TOTP* only has graphic variations and vague adjectives, *WLP* poetic uses of language and one neologism and *Shout* mostly poetic uses of language, followed by graphic variations, vague adjectives and comparatives.

Table 51. Features of advertising language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Graphic variations	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	3 (21%)
Vague adjectives	2 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (14%)
Poetic uses of language	0 (0%)	2 (67%)	8 (57%)
Neologisms	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)
Comparatives	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)
Total	4 (100%)	3 (100%)	14 (100%)

The only features of text messages occurring in the magazines are abbreviations; there are only 1 in *TOTP* and *WLP*, and 8 in *Shout* (see Table 50). Finally, as hinted at above, features of spoken language (mostly interrogatives) are present in all the articles of the magazines (see Table 52).

Table 52. Features of text messages in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Abbreviations	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	8 (100%)
Total	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	8 (100%)

Table 53. Features of spoken language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Interrogatives	7 (54%)	2 (50%)	30 (37%)
Imperatives	2 (20%)	1 (25%)	13 (16%)
Reference to interlocutor	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	7 (9%)
Hedges	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Interjections/discourse markers	1 (8%)	1 (25%)	16 (20%)
Informal words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (13%)
Ellipses	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (4%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
General words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Total	13 (100%)	4 (100%)	82 (100%)

To conclude, the dialogic articles mostly have features of spoken language, but sometimes also of advertising language and text messages. These two forms of communication are the most frequently exemplified in the *Shout* texts, the largest of the three sub-corpora considered in this study.

4.2.2.4 Articles with quotations

Articles with quotations include, or are completely made up of, a quotation or a tweet posted by a celebrity. Similarly to the dialogic articles, these articles do not form a wide corpus. In *TOTP* there is only 1 article of this type (3% of all the articles in the corpus), in *WLP* there are 2 (3%), and in *Shout* there are 26 (20%). In *TOTP* and *WLP*, all the articles have features of advertising language, text messages and/or spoken language, while in *Shout* 85% do (32% of which only have one feature). The *TOTP* and *WLP* articles, though, do not have features of text messages, while the *Shout* articles do. The features occurring the most in *TOTP* are those of advertising language, while the features occurring the most in *WLP* and *Shout* are those of spoken language (occurring in 100% and 73% of the articles, respectively).

Table 54. Clustering of features in articles with quotations

Articles with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
One feature	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (32%)
Two or more features	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	19 (68%)
Total	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	26 (100%)

Table 55. Frequency of features in articles with quotations

Articles with features of	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Advertising language	1 (100%)	1 (50%)	5 (19%)
Text messages	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (23%)
Spoken language	1 (100%)	2 (100%)	19 (68%)

The features of advertising language identified in *TOTP* only include adjectives, in *WLP* only graphic variations and in *Shout* mostly graphic variations, which always highlight the name of a celebrity, but also poetic uses of language and non-standard spellings.

Table 56. Features of advertising language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Vague adjectives	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Comparatives	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	14 (70%)
Poetic uses of language	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
Non-standard spelling	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
Total	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	20 (100%)

Features of text messages only occur in *Shout*, and consist of abbreviated words and non-standard spellings.

Table 57. Features of text messages in *Shout*

Features	*Shout*
Abbreviations	7 (64%)
Non-standard spellings	4 (36%)
Total	11 (100%)

Finally, features of spoken language are present in all the magazines, and are particularly prominent in *WLP* and *Shout*. As shown in the following tables, the features occurring the most frequently vary depending on the magazine, so that in *TOTP* the only

attested feature is the imitation of a sound, in *WLP* a recurrent presence is that of informal words, and in *Shout* particularly frequent are interjections/discourse markers.

Table 58. Features of spoken language in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Sounds	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Informal words	0 (0%)	3 (38%)	0 (0%)
Interrogatives	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	6 (26%)
Imperatives	0 (0%)	1 (13%)	4 (17%)
Graphic variations for prosodic reasons	0 (0%)	1 (13%)	1 (4%)
Ellipses	0 (0%)	1 (13%)	1 (4%)
Interjections/discourse markers	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (39%)
Reference to interlocutor	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (9%)
Total	1 (100%)	8 (100%)	23 (100%)

In conclusion, the scarcity or absence of features of advertising language, text messages and/or spoken language in *TOTP* and *WLP* correlates with the paucity of articles with quotations in these sub-corpora. *Shout,* instead, has more articles belonging to this group and thus has many features of advertising language and spoken language, and is the only magazine with features of text messages.

4.2.2.5 Short articles

Short articles make up a remarkable part of the articles in *WLP* (68%), but do not occur in the other two magazines. Unlike the articles of the previous groups, only 39% of them have features of the three forms of communication considered. The majority of the features identified belong to spoken language, which is mostly represented, as is shown in table 61, by interjections/discourse markers and informal words.

Table 59. Clustering of features in the short articles

Articles with	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Zero features	0 (0%)	22 (45%)	0 (0%)
One feature	0 (0%)	18 (37%)	0 (0%)
Two or more features	0 (0%)	9 (18%)	0 (0%)
Total	0 (0%)	49 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 60. Frequency of features in the short articles in *WLP*

Articles with features of	*WLP*
Advertising language	5 (10%)
Text messages	9 (18%)
Spoken language	21 (43%)

Table 61. Features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in the *WLP* short articles

Form of communication	Features	No. (Percentage)	Total
Advertising language	Poetic uses of language	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
	Non-standard spellings	1 (20%)	
Text messages	Abbreviations	9 (90%)	10 (100%)
	Non-standard spellings	1 (10%)	
Spoken language	Interjections/ discourse markers	9 (33%)	26 (100%)
	Informal words	6 (22%)	
	Graphic variations	5 (19%)	
	Interrogatives	3 (11%)	
	Reference to interlocutor	2 (7%)	
	Ellipsis	1 (4%)	

In conclusion, many articles do not have features of any of the three forms of communication considered (thus confirming the already noticed tendency of *WLP* to have textual components that are not as rich in features as are the textual components in *TOTP* and *Shout*). In the articles that do, however, spoken language is the most represented form of communication, and interjections/discourse markers are the most recurrent feature.

4.2.2.6 Conclusion

To conclude, *Shout*, *TOTP* and *WLP* display similarities and differences in their instantiation of features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language. For instance, across the three sub-corpora, graphic variations, and interjections and informal words are the most recurrent features of, respectively, advertising language and spoken language (with the exception of the group of the dialogic articles, in which the most frequent features of spoken language are interrogatives). On the other hand, while narrative articles in *TOTP* and *WLP* mostly have features of advertising language and spoken language, those in *Shout* have features of spoken language. If the frequency values of the various features are normalised (see Table 62a), it appears that, overall, *TOTP* is the magazine with the highest value of features of advertising language (27), followed by

Shout (24) and *WLP* (12). *TOTP*, though, is also the magazine with the lowest values of features of text messages (4, versus 8 of *WLP* and 11 of *Shout*) and of features of spoken language (27, versus 31 of *WLP* and 38 of *Shout*).

Table 62a. Normalised frequencies of forms of communication (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* articles

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Articles	Advertising language	27.0	12.0	24.0
	Text messages	4.0	8.0	11.0
	Spoken language	27.0	31.0	38.0

Table 62b. Normalised frequencies of features (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* articles

Forms of communication	Features	Normalised frequency in *TOTP*	Normalised frequency in *WLP*	Normalised frequency in *Shout*
Advertising language	Graphic variations	15.0	3.5	15.0
	Poetic use of language	4.0	4.0	6.0
	Adjectives	6.0	2.0	1.0
	Non-standard spellings	2.0	1.0	1.0
Text messages	Neologisms	1.5	1.0	0.0
	Non-standard spellings	2.0	1.0	1.0
	Abbreviations	5.0	7.0	10.0
Spoken language	Informal words	4.0	8.0	5.0
	Imperatives	3.0	2.5	6.5
	Interrogatives	8.0	4.0	11.0
	Graphic variations	0.0	2.5	1.0
	Discourse markers	5.0	10.0	9.0
	Reference to interlocutor	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Sounds	1.0	0.0	3.0
	Hedges	1.0	0.0	0.0
	Tags	1.0	0.0	0.0
	Ellipses	4.0	1.0	1.0
	General words	0.0	0.0	0.2

In the next section, I present the findings of the analysis carried out on the captions of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*.

4.2.3 Captions

Captions are phrases or sentences that generally appear within pictures, or next to tweets or quotations, and describe or comment on them. *TOTP* has 211 captions, *WLP*

212 and *Shout* 85. Despite having the shortest gossip sections, *TOTP* has almost the same number of captions as *WLP* and almost three times the number of *Shout*. This is due to the fact that some pictures in this magazine have more than one caption – for example, they might have a caption describing the scene captured, one indicating the name of the celebrity involved and another one indicating a curious object appearing in the picture.

I identified three types of captions based on the content they convey, that is, captions actually describing a picture (objective captions), captions giving a misleading interpretation of a picture (inaccurate captions), and captions commenting on a picture or a tweet/quotation (captions with opinions).

4.2.3.1 Objective captions

Objective captions, which convey objective information, occur in different quantities in the magazines – there are 100 in *TOTP,* 77 in *WLP* and 17 in *Shout*, that is, respectively, 47%, 36% and 20% of the total amount of captions. 80%, 62% and 76%, respectively, of the captions of this type in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* display features of advertising, text messages and spoken language. However, the frequencies of these features differ across the sub-corpora: in *Shout* only about a half of the captions with features have one, instead in *TOTP* and *WLP* almost all of them do. More specifically, features of advertising language are the most frequently instanced in these captions in all the magazines (see Table 63), followed by features of spoken language and those of text messages. However, while in *TOTP*, features of advertising language occur in almost all the captions, in *WLP* and *Shout* they only appear in about half of their captions. Also, while in *TOTP* and *WLP* the frequencies of features of text messages and spoken language are similar, in *Shout* the frequency is much higher.

Table 63. Clustering of features in the objective captions of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Captions with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	20 (20%)	29 (38%)	4 (24%)
One feature	71 (71%)	41 (53%)	7 (41%)
Two or more features	9 (9%)	7 (9%)	6 (35%)
Total	100 (100%)	77 (100%)	17 (100%)

Table 64. Frequency of features in objective captions

Captions with features of	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Advertising	80 (80%)	39 (50%)	10 (59%)
Text messages	1 (1%)	4 (5%)	4 (25%)
Spoken language	9 (9%)	11 (14%)	7 (41%)

Objective captions in all magazines mostly instantiate one feature, while captions with two or more features are quite rare. In addition, advertising language is the form of communication that is most frequently represented in these captions, especially in *TOTP*.

In *TOTP*, the most frequent features are those of advertising language (89 in 80 captions), while the other two forms of communication are not as frequently instantiated (see Tables 63, 64 and 65). The majority of the features of advertising, that is, 79, are noun phrases (e.g. *Tom's sweets*), while the others are 1 graphic variation (*It's Kendall Jenner*), 4 cases of poetic uses of language (e.g. **Wet and wild!**) and 5 vague adjectives (e.g. […] *poor Ashton*). In *WLP*, similarly to *TOTP*, objective captions mostly include features of advertising language. I identified 44 features of advertising language, which mostly comprise noun phrases (e.g. *early adopter*), but there are also 7 examples of poetic uses of language (e.g. **bright lights**), 2 cases of graphic variations (e.g. *FRANKIE's all green […]*) and 1 of non-standard spelling (*burrfect couple*). Also in *Shout*, finally, features of advertising language predominate, as is the case in *TOTP* and *WLP,* but, as was previously mentioned, features of text messages and spoken language are much more often instanced than in the other two magazines. I identified 12 features of advertising language, which include 5 graphic variations (e.g. *JAMES is put […]*), 4 noun phrases (e.g. *Bffs Taylor Swift and Karlie Kloss*), 2 cases of poetic uses of language (e.g. **Proud pal**) and 1 non-standard spelling (*Hazza*).

Table 65. Features of advertising language in objective captions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Noun phrases	79 (89%)	34 (77%)	4 (42%)
Vague adjectives	5 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Poetic uses of language	4 (4%)	7 (16%)	2 (17%)
Graphic variations	1 (1%)	2 (5%)	5 (33%)
Non-standard spellings	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (8%)
Total	89 (100%)	44 (100%)	12 (100%)

In *TOTP* features of text messages only occur in one caption in which 2 words are abbreviated (*Lil' bro, Romeo!*). The 5 features of text messages instanced in *WLP*, instead, include 3 abbreviated words (e.g. *Biebs*), 1 non-standard spelling (*burrfect*) and 1 emoticon (☺). Features of text messages in *Shout*, finally, include 4 abbreviated words (e.g. *Bffs*) and 1 non-standard spelling (*Hazza*).

Table 66. Features of text messages in objective captions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Abbreviations	2 (100%)	3 (60%)	4 (80%)
Non-standard spellings	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
Emoji	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)
Total	2 (100%)	5 (100%)	5 (100%)

There are 10 features of spoken language in *TOTP*, which are instanced in 9 captions. I identified 7 interrogatives (e.g. *Having a duvet day?*), 2 ellipses (e.g. *Having a duvet day?*) and 1 discourse marker (***Eww**, seaweed!*). The 13 features of spoken language I found in *WLP* are, instead, 4 informal words (e.g. *sassy*), 3 discourse markers (e.g. ***Sorry** Joey*), 3 imperatives (e.g. *Dribble*), 1 graphic variation signalling emphatic prosody (*REALLY*), and 2 direct references to the interlocutor (*Sorry **Joey***). In *Shout*, finally, spoken language is represented with 8 features, which include rendering of sounds (e.g. **cough**), occurring 3 times, 2 informal words (e.g. *snapping*), 1 graphic variation for prosodic reasons (*AND […]*), 1 ellipsis of subject and auxiliary verb (e.g. *and doubling on the […]*), and 1 reference to the interlocutor (*Louise*).

Table 67. Features of spoken language in objective captions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Interrogatives	7 (70%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Informal words	0 (0%)	4 (31%)	2 (25%)
Ellipses	2 (20%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)
Interjections/discourse markers	1 (10%)	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
Imperatives	0 (0%)	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
Reference to interlocutor	0 (0%)	2 (15%)	1 (12.5)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (12.5)
Rendering of sounds	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)
Total	10 (100%)	13 (100%)	8 (100%)

To sum up, there is similarity across the magazine sub-corpora in the preference for given features of advertising language and text messages across the magazines (noun phrases and abbreviations, respectively). Instead, each magazine has a different prominent type of feature of spoken language, that is, interrogatives in *TOTP,* informal words in *WLP* and rendering of sounds in *Shout*.

4.2.3.2 Inaccurate captions

Inaccurate captions represent a sort of misinterpretation of the picture they refer to. There are 75 captions of this type in *TOTP*, 67 in *WLP,* 38 in *Shout*. Interestingly, while *TOTP* and *WLP* have a lower number of inaccurate captions than objective captions, *Shout* has more inaccurate than objective captions. The frequency of occurrence of these captions in the sub-corpora, though, does not differ much (36% in *TOTP,* 32% in *WLP* and 45% in *Shout*). *WLP* and *Shout,* also, have similar percentages of captions with features. The feature that is instanced the most frequently, though, is advertising language in all the magazines; actually, the number of captions with features of advertising language and spoken language in *WLP* is the same, but there are more features of advertising language than of spoken language (see Table 68).

Table 68. Clustering of features in the objective captions of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Captions with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	37 (50%)	11 (16%)	5 (13%)
One feature	34 (45%)	27 (40%)	18 (47%)
Two or more features	4 (5%)	29 (43%)	15 (40%)
Total	75 (100%)	67 (100%)	38 (100%)

Table 69. Frequency of features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in objective captions

Captions with features of	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Advertising	22 (29%)	26 (39%)	32 (84%)
Text messages	6 (8%)	4 (6%)	5 (13%)
Spoken language	9 (12%)	26 (39%)	14 (37%)

As appears from Tables 66 and 67, in *TOTP* most inaccurate captions have zero features, while in *WLP* they have one feature and in *Shout* two or more features. However, a similarity can be detected in the form of communication that is mostly represented in

all the magazines, that is, advertising language. The specific features instanced in the captions are described below.

In *TOTP*, I identified 23 features of advertising language, most of which are noun phrases (e.g. *Connor at one with nature*), but there are also 4 neologisms (e.g. *chinny-chin-chin*), 3 vague adjectives (e.g. *bitter*), 3 poetic uses of language (e.g. *two buns twice the funs*) and 1 non-standard spelling (*s-p-l-i-t-s*). In *WLP*, I identified 33 features of advertising language, 4 features of text messages and 29 features of spoken language. Unlike *TOTP*, the features of advertising language occurring the most are poetic uses of language (e.g. *on board with this award*), occurring 16 times, while noun phrases (e.g. *fish fingers*) follow, occurring 13 times; finally, there are 3 non-standard spellings (e.g. *Carey-oke*) and 3 graphic variations. In *Shout* features of advertising language are prominently instantiated (36), while features of text messages (6) and of spoken language (14) occur less frequently. Almost all the features of advertising language instantiated in these captions are graphic variations (33 cases), while the remaining three are 1 vague adjective, 1 case of poetic uses of language and 1 neologism.

Table 70. Features of advertising language in inaccurate captions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	TOTP	WLP	Shout
Noun phrases	13 (57%)	13 (39%)	0 (0%)
Neologisms	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Vague adjectives	3 (13%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Poetic uses of language	3 (13%)	16 (48%)	1 (3%)
Non-standard spellings	1 (4%)	3 (9%)	0 (0%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	3 (9%)	33 (91%)
Total	24 (100%)	35 (100%)	36 (100%)

The 6 features of text messages occurring are 5 abbreviations (e.g. *appaz*) and 1 non-standard spelling. The 4 features of text messages identified include 3 non-standard spellings and 1 abbreviation (*Chez Fez-Vez*). Features of text messages only include 6 abbreviations (e.g. *cuz*).

Table 71. Features of text messages in inaccurate captions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Abbreviations	5 (87%)	1 (25%)	6 (100%)
Non-standard spellings	1 (13%)	3 (75%)	0 (0%)
Total	6 (100%)	4 (100%)	6 (100%)

Finally, the 13 features of spoken language identified are mostly informal words (e.g. *spam*) and interjections (e.g. *uh-oh!*), but there are also 2 cases of rendering of sounds (e.g. *sooo*), 2 imperatives (e.g. *Cram too many […]*), 2 ellipses (e.g. *and nits in his hair*) and 1 interrogative (*Sticking up […]?*). Finally, the 29 features of spoken language include imperatives and interrogatives (occurring 8 and 7 times respectively), 3 informal words (e.g. *lads*), 3 ellipses (e.g. *room for a little one?*), 2 interjections (e.g. *oh my gawd*), 2 graphic variations for prosodic reasons, 1 tag question (*isn't it?*), 1 case of rendering of sounds (*sooo*) and 1 direct reference to the interlocutor. Features of spoken language include 6 interjections/discourse markers (e.g. *eek!*), 2 imperatives (e.g. *Don't pick up […]*), 2 hedges (e.g. *a little bit […]*), 2 references to the interlocutor and 1 informal word.

Table 72. Features of spoken language in inaccurate captions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Informal words	3 (23%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
Interjections/discourse markers	3 (23%)	2 (7%)	6 (43%)
Imperatives	2 (15%)	8 (28%)	2 (14%)
Ellipses	2 (15%)	3 (10%)	0 (0%)
Rendering of sounds	2 (15%)	1 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
Interrogatives	1 (8%)	7 (24%)	0 (0%)
Hedges	0 (0%)	1 (3.5%)	2 (14%)
References to interlocutor	0 (0%)	1 (3.5%)	2 (14%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)
Tag questions	0 (0%)	1 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
Total	13 (100%)	29 (100%)	12 (100%)

There are very few similarities in the actual features exemplified in inaccurate captions, and they only involve *TOTP* and *Shout*, since they both have abbreviations and interjections/discourse markers as the most recurrent features of text messages and spoken language, respectively. Advertising language is the form of communication whose

specific features differ the most across the magazine sub-corpora, since *TOTP* mostly has noun phrases, *WLP* examples of poetic uses of language and *Shout* graphic variations.

Differences in the dispersion of features also occur in captions with opinions.

4.2.3.3 Captions with opinions

Captions with opinions comprise the editor's comments on a picture, an article, or, most frequently, tweets and quotations. There are 38 captions with opinions in *TOTP,* 68 in *WLP* and 30 in *Shout*, that is, respectively, 17%, 32% and 35% of the total amount of captions. The amount of captions having features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language is quite similar (the percentages of the three magazines are very close). While most of these captions have only 1 feature in *TOTP* and *WLP*, in *Shout* most have two or more features; more specifically, both features of advertising language and features of spoken language occur in more than half of the captions with features (53% and 67% respectively). Also, the frequency of features of spoken language is similar across the magazine sub-corpora: in *TOTP* they occur in 71% of the captions with features, in *WLP* in 78% of them, and in *Shout* in 80%.

Table 73. Clustering of features in the objective captions of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Captions with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	5 (14%)	18 (26.5%)	5 (17%)
One feature	24 (67%)	32 (47%)	10 (33%)
Two or more features	7 (19%)	18 (26.5%)	15 (50%)
Total	36 (100%)	68 (100%)	30 (100%)

Table 74. Frequency of features in objective captions

Captions with features of	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Advertising	11 (31%)	15 (22%)	16 (53%)
Text messages	1 (3%)	3 (4%)	5 (17%)
Spoken language	22 (61%)	39 (57%)	20 (67%)

Tables 73 and 74 reveal similarities across the magazines. For example, in *TOTP* and *WLP* there is a predominance of captions with 1 feature, and in all the magazines the form of communication that is represented the most is spoken language. Instead, there are not as many similarities in frequency of occurrence of the specific features.

In *TOTP*, I identified 12 features of advertising language. The features that occur the most frequently are poetic uses of the language (6 instances; e.g. *Fed up & fabulous*). Then, there are 3 vague adjectives (e.g. *angelic*), 2 noun phrases (e.g. *Mr Cool*) and 1 non-standard spelling (*zo*). In *WLP* I identified 16 features of advertising language. Noun phrases (e.g. *Alfie Deyes*), vague adjectives (e.g. *flappy*) and instances of poetic uses of language (e.g. *there's always **room** for maca**roon**s*) are the features of advertising language occurring the most frequently (5 times each). Besides these features, there is 1 graphic variation. In *Shout,* I identified 17 features of advertising language. The most recurrent features are graphic variations, occurring 14 times. The others are 1 vague adjective, 1 poetic uses of language and 1 non-standard spelling.

Table 75. Features of advertising language in captions with opinions in *TOTP*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Poetic uses of language	6 (50%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)
Vague adjectives	3 (25%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)
Noun phrases	2 (17%)	5 (31%)	0 (0%)
Non-standard spellings	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	14 (82%)
Total	12 (100%)	16 (100%)	17 (100%)

The only feature of text messages I identified in *TOTP* is a non-standard spelling (*zo*). The 3 features of text messages identified in *WLP* are all abbreviations (e.g. *v* for 'very'). Finally, the features of text messages identified in *Shout* are 5 abbreviations (e.g. *bro*) and 1 non-standard spelling (*k-i-l-l*).

Table 76. Features of text messages in captions with opinions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Non-standard spellings	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)
Abbreviations	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	5 (83%)
Total	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	6 (100%)

The features of spoken language that are exemplified the most in *TOTP* are interrogatives, occurring 11 times (e.g. *Didn't we […]?*). Other features of spoken language occurring in these captions are 5 interjections/discourse markers (*ouch*), 4 direct references to the interlocutor, 2 informal words (e.g. *cutie*), 2 imperatives (e.g. *Brace yourself […]*), 2 ellipses (e.g. *wish we were her*), and 1 rendering of sound (*partaayy*).

The 49 features of spoken language I found in *WLP* include 13 interjections/discourse markers (e.g. *erm*), 12 references to the interlocutor, 11 interrogatives (e.g. *A union bae?*), 7 imperatives (e.g. *don't drop her!*), 2 graphic variations rendering prosodic features, 2 informal words (e.g. *bum*), 1 tag question, 1 rendering of sounds (*too cuute*) and 1 ellipsis (*not sure what […]*). Finally, in *Shout,* features of spoken language are mostly made up of interrogatives (e.g. *Can Only The Young […]?*) and imperatives (e.g. *Step away from the flowers*), both occurring 7 times. Then, there are 6 direct references to the interlocutor, 5 interjections/discourse markers (e.g. *aww*) and 2 graphic variations for prosodic reasons.

Table 77. Features of spoken language in captions with opinions in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Interrogatives	11 (41%)	11 (22%)	7 (25%)
Interjections/ discourse markers	5 (19%)	13 (27%)	5 (18%)
Rendering of sounds	1 (4%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
References to interlocutor	4 (15%)	12 (24%)	6 (21%)
Informal words	2 (7%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
Ellipses	2 (7%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Imperatives	0 (0%)	7 (14%)	7 (25%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	2 (7%)
Tag questions	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Total	25 (100%)	50 (100%)	27 (100%)

As is manifest from Tables 76 and 77, similarities show up between *TOTP* and *WLP*, between *WLP* and *Shout*, and between *TOTP* and *Shout*. In particular, their most recurrent features are advertising language (poetic uses of language), text messages (abbreviations) and spoken language (interrogatives), respectively.

4.2.3.4. Conclusion

To conclude, the forms of communication that are most frequently instanced in the three groups of captions in all the magazines are advertising language in the first and the second group, and spoken language in the third group. On the other hand, in the first group of captions *TOTP* and *WLP* mainly have noun phrases, while *Shout* has graphic variations. Interestingly, graphic variations in *Shout* are the most recurrent features of advertising language in all the types of captions. Instead, *TOTP* and *WLP* alternate noun

phrases and poetic uses of language in the second and third group. Features of text messages are always scarcely instanced, and generally abbreviations are the most recurring features. Spoken language, finally, is the most frequently exemplified form of communication in the third group of captions. The four most frequent types of features in the magazines are interrogatives, informal words, imperatives and interjections, although their frequency hierarchy differ across the sub-corpora.

Overall, if the frequency values are normalized to 1,000 words, *TOTP* turns out to be the magazine with the highest number of features of advertising language (its value is 92), followed by *Shout* and *WLP*, whose values are 66 and 59, respectively. The prominence of advertising language in *TOTP* is due to the high amount of noun phrases, very frequent in the group of the objective captions. However, *TOTP* has the lowest value as concerns the presence of features of spoken language – 35 versus 57 and 48 of *WLP* and *Shout,* respectively. *WLP*, instead, has a very low value for the features of text messages, but it is very close to the *TOTP* value (6 and 7, respectively).

Table 78a. Normalisation of forms of communications (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* captions

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Captions	Advertising language	92.0	59.0	66.0
	Text messages	7.0	6.0	17.0
	Spoken language	35.0	57.0	48.0

Table 78b. Normalisation of features (to 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* captions

Forms of communication	Features	Normalised frequency in *TOTP*	Normalised frequency in *WLP*	Normalised frequency in *Shout*
Advertising language	Noun phrases	71.0	32.5	4.0
	Graphic variations	0.7	3.7	53.0
	Poetic use of language	4.0	17.0	4.0
	Adjectives	8.0	3.0	2.0
	Non-standard spellings	1.5	2.5	2.0
	Neologisms	3.0	0.0	1.0
Text messages	Non-standard spellings	1.5	2.5	2.0
	Abbreviations	5.0	3.0	10.0
	Emoticons	0.0	0.6	0.0
Spoken language	Informal words	3.7	5.5	2.0
	Imperatives	1.5	11.0	9.0
	Interrogatives	14.0	11.0	7.0
	Graphic variations	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Discourse markers	6.5	11.0	11.0
	Reference to interlocutor	3.0	9.0	9.0
	Sounds	2.0	1.0	3.0
	Hedges	0.0	0.5	2.0
	Tags	0.0	1.0	0.0
	Ellipses	4.0	2.5	1.0

4.2.4 Balloons

Balloons are textual components whose occurrence correlates with that of pictures. *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* have 125, 37 and 70 balloons, respectively. Interestingly, not all the balloons have features of the three forms of communication considered. The magazine with the lowest number of balloons exemplifying features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language (58%) is *TOTP*, while *WLP* and *Shout* have much higher figures (78% and 81%, respectively). Most balloons in *TOTP* and *WLP* only have one feature, while in *Shout* there is a slight preference for balloons with two or more features. This is due to the fact that while features of spoken language are very frequent, features of advertising language and text messages are rarely represented, with the exception of *Shout*, which, due to the presence of graphic variations (see Table 79) has quite a high number of features of advertising language.

Table 79. Clustering of features in the balloons in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Balloons with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Zero features	51 (41%)	8 (22%)	13 (19%)
One feature	67 (54%)	23 (62%)	28 (40%)
Two or more features	7 (5%)	6 (16%)	29 (41%)
Total	125 (100%)	37 (100%)	70 (100%)

Table 80. Frequency of features in balloons

Balloons with features of	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Advertising	12 (10%)	4 (11%)	13 (19%)
Text messages	6 (5%)	3 (8%)	8 (11%)
Spoken language	63 (50%)	26 (70%)	53 (76%)

The dispersion of the features in the balloons is rather similar across the magazines. Most balloons have one feature in *TOTP*, *WLP* and, often, also in *Shout*. Also, spoken language is the form of communication that is instanced the most in the balloons. Similarities are also found in the frequency of some of the features instanced in the balloons.

In *TOTP* I identified 12 features of advertising language, including poetic uses of the language (e.g. *We all **scream** for **ice cream***), occurring 8 times, non-standard spellings (e.g. *fanks*) and noun phrases (e.g. *Jacuzzi time*), both occurring twice. In *WLP* I identified 5 features of advertising language. These are 3 poetic uses of the language (e.g. *I shaved the day*), and 2 non-standard spellings (e.g. *ith*). In *Shout,* finally, there are 13 features of advertising language, 9 features of text messages and 79 features of spoken language. Similarly to the captions, in *Shout* the most recurrent features are graphic variations, occurring 9 times. Then, I identified 2 neologisms (e.g. *schamazing*), 1 case of poetic uses of language (*no pain no gain*) and 1 non-standard spelling (*fing*).

Table 81. Features of advertising language in the balloons in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Poetic uses of language	8 (67%)	3 (60%)	1 (8%)
Non-standard spellings	2 (16.5%)	2 (40%)	1 (8%)
Noun phrases	2 (16.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Graphic variations	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (75%)
Neologisms	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)
Total	12 (100%)	5 (100%)	12 (100%)

Besides the two non-standard spellings mentioned in the list of the features of advertising language in *TOTP*, the other features of text messages I identified are 4 abbreviations (e.g. *DIY*). 2 non-standard spellings and 2 abbreviations (e.g. *cos*) are the 4 features of text messages identified in *WLP*. In *Shout,* the group of the features of text messages consists of 1 non-standard spelling and 8 abbreviations (e.g. *bbz*).

Table 82. Features of text messages in balloons in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Non-standard spellings	2 (33%)	2 (50%)	1 (11%)
Abbreviations	4 (67%)	2 (50%)	8 (89%)
Total	6 (100%)	4 (100%)	9 (100%)

Finally, in *TOTP* spoken language is represented through a variety of features. There are 19 interrogatives (e.g. *Do I look good?*), 13 interjections/discourse markers (e.g. *ooh*), 11 imperatives (e.g. *Tickle my tummy!*), 9 references to the interlocutor, 8 cases of rendering of sounds (e.g. *parp!*), 4 ellipses (e.g. *Wish I'd packed […]*), 2 tag questions (e.g. *no?*), 1 general word (*thing*) and 1 graphic variation. In *WLP* I identified the following features of spoken language: 8 imperatives (e.g. *Don't be shy Jaymi*), 8 interrogatives (e.g. *Why does this never happen to Calum?*), 5 interjections/discourse markers (e.g. *Good lord*), 4 cases of rendering of sounds (e.g. *hfff*), 2 references to the interlocutor, 2 graphic variations for prosodic reasons (e.g. *that* girl), 1 case of tail (*light as a feather, **me***) and 1 case of ellipsis (*must. cough.*). The features of spoken language I found in *Shout*, instead, are 21 interjections/discourse markers (e.g. *oh*), 16 imperatives (e.g. *Get it away from me*), 14 references to the interlocutor, 11 interrogatives (e.g. *how do I look guys?*), 8 cases of rendering of sounds (e.g. **whistles**), 4 ellipses (e.g. *Just been out buying […]*) and 1 general word (*fing*).

Table 83. Features of spoken language in balloons in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Interrogatives	19 (28%)	8 (26%)	11 (15%)
Interjections/discourse markers	13 (19%)	5 (16%)	21 (28%)
Imperatives	11 (16%)	8 (26%)	16 (21%)
References to interlocutor	9 (13%)	2 (6%)	14 (19%)
Rendering of sounds	8 (12%)	4 (13%)	8 (11%)
Ellipses	4 (6%)	1 (3%)	4 (5%)
Tag questions	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
General words	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Graphic variations	1 (1%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)
Tails	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
Total	68 (100%)	31 (100%)	75 (100%)

Tables 81, 82 and 83 show that there are similarities across the magazines in the group of features typical of text messages – all the magazines have abbreviations. Instead, only *TOTP* and *WLP* share similar patterns as concerns the most frequent features of advertising language (poetic uses of language) and spoken language (interrogatives).

To conclude, even though the frequency of balloons without features in *TOTP* is much higher than in *WLP* or *Shout,* more than half of the balloons have features in all the magazines. Also, they all have some features of advertising language, few of text messages and many of spoken language. Normalised frequency values (per 1,000 words) show that *TOTP* has the lowest frequency of occurrence of features of advertising language (17), text messages (9) and spoken language (98), while *Shout* has the highest (30, 22 and 186 respectively). Thus, the *Shout* balloons turn out to be richer in features than the *TOTP* and *WLP* balloons, especially for the presence of features of spoken language.

The specific features instanced are not always the same across the magazines. Among the features of advertising language, for example, instances of poetic uses of the language are prominent in *TOTP* and *WLP* but not in *Shout,* which mostly has graphic variations, instead. There are, then, many more features of text messages in *WLP* and *Shout* than in *TOTP*. Finally, there are strong similarities across the magazines as concerns the types of features of spoken language, less so as concerns their frequency values, much higher in *WLP* and, most of all, in *Shout*, than in *TOTP*.

Table 84a. Normalisation of forms of communication (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* balloons

Textual component	Features	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
	Advertising language	17.0	21.0	30.0
Balloons	Text messages	9.0	17.0	22.0
	Spoken language	98.0	128.0	186.0

Table 84b. Normalisation of features (per 1,000 words) in the *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout* balloons

Form of communication	Features	Normalised frequency in *TOTP*	Normalised frequency in *WLP*	Normalised frequency in *Shout*
	Noun phrases	3.0	0.0	0.0
	Graphic variations	0.0	0.0	22.0
Advertising language	Poetic use of language	11.4	12.0	2.5
	Non-standard spellings	0.0	12.0	0.0
	Neologisms	0.0	0.0	2.5
Text messages	Non-standard spellings	0.0	12.0	0.0
	Abbreviations	5.7	12.0	20.0
	Imperatives	15.7	33.0	40.0
	Interrogatives	27.0	33.0	27.0
	Graphic variations	1.5	12.0	0.0
	Discourse markers	18.5	10.5	52.0
Spoken language	Reference to interlocutor	13.0	12.0	35.0
	Sounds	11.0	16.5	20.0
	Tail	0.0	4.0	0.0
	Tags	3.0	0.0	0.0
	Ellipses	6.0	4.0	10.0
	General words	1.0	0.0	2.5

4.2.5 Conclusion

The results of the analysis of the magazines' gossip sections are partially in line with my original hypothesis (see 2.5) in that they suggest that each magazine has its own distinctive style, but they also show that there are some similarities between them.

Each magazine turns out to have its own peculiar traits. For example, in *WLP* features of advertising language are much less frequently instantiated than in the other two magazines. Instead, *TOTP* is the magazine with the lowest values of features of spoken language and text messages. Finally, *Shout* is the magazine that is richest in features of the three forms of communication considered. Also, each magazine shows peculiar traits in its instantiation of the features of advertising language and text messages. That is, *Shout* privileges noun phrases, graphic variations and adjectives over other

features; the frequency of noun phrases is similar in *TOTP* and *Shout*, but the frequency of graphic variations and adjectives is much lower in *TOTP* than in *Shout*; finally, *WLP* has marginal occurrences of all the three aforementioned features. Interestingly, though, both *TOTP* and *WLP* have higher frequency values of poetic uses of the language, neologisms and non-standard spellings than *Shout*. On the other hand, the analysis of features of text messages shows that abbreviations have a much higher frequency value in *Shout* than in the other two magazines, and that *WLP* is the only magazines in which textual components also include symbols and/or emoticons.

At the same time, the magazines share some similarities. For example, features of advertising language and of text messages are the most and the least frequent, respectively, in all the magazines in all the textual components analysed, exception made for the articles and the balloons (which, instead, mainly have features of spoken language). In particular, noun phrases and abbreviations are the most recurrent features of advertising language and text messages in all the magazines. Additionally, the magazines generally turn out to have rather similar frequencies for all the features identified.

The other columns I analysed in my work are the readers' contributions published in the magazines, and the results of their analysis are reported in the following section.

4.3 Readers' contributions

When they write to magazines, readers usually send letters in which they talk about their experiences or ask for help on how to solve their problems. There are three types of readers' contributions (see 3.5), that is, letters about 'banal' problems, letters about more serious life problems, and short narrations of embarrassing experiences. As mentioned in section 3.5.4, I used AntConc to identify the most frequent words and phrases in these texts so as to check whether readers, as letter writers, adopt a similar communication style, as indeed evidenced by their use of their most frequent formulation patterns.

4.3.1 Letters about 'banal' problems

Letters about 'banal' problems occur in all the magazines. In *TOTP* (*Your say!*), there are 9 letters (317 words), in *WLP* (*Write here write now*) there are 8 (298 words), and in *Shout* (*#AskABoy with Joe Sugg*) there are 16 (563 words). The average length of such letters is thus, 35.2 words in *TOTP*, 37.25 words in *WLP* and 35.18 words in *Shout*.

There are recurrent content words distributed throughout the magazines' letters. I identified 19 word types in *TOTP,* 10 in *WLP* and 10 in *Shout*. There are also 5 recurrent phrases in these letters; more precisely, there are 2 recurrent phrases in *TOTP* (one occurring 9 times, one occurring 4 times)*,* 1 in *WLP* (occurring 4 times) and 2 in *Shout* (each occurring 4 times – see Table 85a). Besides one letter in *Shout*, which contains none of the recurrent elements identified, all the others share some words and/or phrases (see Table 85b).

Table 85a. No. of recurrent words and phrases in the letters about 'banal' problems

Recurrent patterns	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Words	19	10	10
Phrases	2	1	2

Table 85b. Dispersion of words and phrases in the letters about 'banal' problems

Letters with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
0 phrases, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)
0 phrases, 1 word	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)
0 phrases, ≥2 words	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (50%)
1 phrase, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1 phrase, 1 word	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1 phrase, ≥2 words	5 (56%)	4 (50%)	3 (18.75%)
≥2 phrases, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
≥2 phrases, 1 word	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.25%)
≥2 phrases, ≥2 words	4 (44%)	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)
Total	9 (100%)	8 (100%)	16 (100%)

4.3.1.1 *Your Say* in *TOTP*

The letters in the *Your Say* column share some words and phrases. There are 19 recurrent word types (see Table 86). Of these, 5 are adjectives: they include *dear* and *next*, and others which have a hyperbolic meaning and stress the reader's excitement for the situation she is referring to (i.e. *crazy, amazing, obsessed*). In addition, there are 10 nouns referring to the reader's personal relationships and her interests (e.g. *fan, friend, mag, issue*), 1 name (*Phil*), and 3 verbs (*love*, the most frequent, *make, spotted*). The recurrent phrases I identified, instead, are *Dear Phil*, occurring 9 times, one per letter, and *TOTP mag,* occurring 4 times (see Table 87). The former phrase is the opening formula in the letters (Phil is the deejay that answers the letters), and *TOTP mag* is the name of the magazine, one of the topics readers write about.

Table 86. Recurrent words in *TOTP*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Adjectives	*Dear*	9
	Amazing	2
	Crazy	2
	Obsessed	2
	Next	2
Nouns	*Mag*	5
	Totp	4
	Fan	2
	Friend	2
	Issue	2
	Minutes	2
	Mum	2
	Show	2
	Sos	2
	Vloggers	2
Names	*Phil*	9
Verbs	*Love*	3
	Make	2
	Spotted	2

Table 87. Recurrent phrases in *TOTP*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
Dear Phil	9 in 9 letters
TOTP mag	4 in 4 letters
Total	13 in 9 letters
Average number of phrases per letter	1.4

To conclude, there are several recurrent words across the letters. The nouns show readers' similar interests (the magazine, shows etc.), and the adjectives their enthusiasm. At the same time, there are only 2 recurrent phrases, one of which only serves as an introduction to the letters.

4.3.1.2 *Write here write now* in *WLP*

The letters in *Write here write now* share some words and only 1 recurrent phrase. As is shown in Table 88, the recurrent words include several nouns and a few verbs. The nouns all refer to the reader's interests (e.g. *mag*) or her relationships (e.g. *friend*), her appreciation for the magazine, or her excitement when they met their favourite star. The only 2 recurrent verbs are *love*, included in the phrase *Hi We Love Pop*, and *met*. The

most recurrent phrase is, instead, *Hi We Love Pop!,* occurring 4 times, used as an opening formula in the letters (see Table 89).

Table 88. Recurrent words in *WLP*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Pop*	9
	Day	3
	Mag	3
	Fan	2
	Friend	2
	Magazine	2
	Star	2
	Wlp	2
Verbs	*Love*	9
	Met	2

Table 89. Recurrent phrases in *WLP*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
Hi We Love Pop!	4 in 4 letters
Total	4 in 8 letters

In conclusion, there only is one recurrent phrase in *Write here write now*, used at the beginning of some letters. There are, however, some recurrent words, mainly nouns, which refer to the readers' similar experiences or interests.

4.3.1.3 *#AskABoy with Joe Sugg* in *Shout*

The letters published in the column *#AskABoy with Joe Sugg* generally concern girls' problems with boys. These letters share 10 words and 2 recurrent phrases. The words include one adverb, and a few verbs, adjectives and nouns. *Really*, the only recurrent adverb I identified, qualifies the meaning of adjectives or verbs. The most recurrent verbs express the reader's interests or feelings (*like*), or her doubts and requests (*know, help, ask*). The two recurrent adjectives are evaluative in meaning; one is *best*, sometimes associated with *friend*, and the other is *awkward,* which refers to the way the reader feels in some situations. The recurrent nouns are *boy(s), friend(s)* and *school*, which identify the people and the places involved in the situations described by the readers (see Table 90). The recurrent phrases are "built on" the recurrent individual words: they are *I don't know* and *really like*, both occurring 4 times (see Table 91). These

phrases express the reader's doubts about what to do in some situations (e.g. *I don't know, help*) and her feelings about or attitude towards something or someone (e.g. *really like, awkward*).

Table 90. Recurrent words in *Shout*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Adjectives	*Best*	4
	Awkward	3
Nouns	*Boy(s)*	11
	Friend(s)	7
	School	4
Verbs	*Like*	7
	Help	5
	Know	5
	Ask	5
Adverbs	*Really*	10

Table 91. Recurrent phrases in *Shout*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
I don't know	4 in 4/16 letters
Really like	4 in 4/16 letters
Total	8 in 16 letters

4.3.1.4 Conclusion

To sum up, some similarities may be identified among the letters of each magazine sub-corpus, as evidenced by their recurrent words and/or phrases, which are to be found in all letters except for one in *Shout*. Thus, in *TOTP* there are some recurrent 'hyperbolic' adjectives, some nouns about the readers' interests and an introductory phrase; in *WLP*, similarly, there are mostly nouns about the reader's interests; and in *Shout* there are words and phrases about the reader's everyday life (*school, friends*) and feelings (*really like*). As is shown in the following Tables (92a, 92b and 92c), the overall frequency of occurrence of the recurrent words and phrases is much higher in *TOTP* (178 and 41, respectively) than in *WLP* (122 and 13, respectively) and *Shout* (107 and 14, respectively); yet in the three sub-corpora the number of shared words is higher than the number of shared phrases. Of the three sub-corpora, only *TOTP* and *WLP* have some words in common, and these have very similar frequency values (e.g. *mag/magazine* – 16 in *TOTP*, 17 in *WLP*; *fan* – 6 in *TOTP,* 7 in *WLP*). This is due to the fact that the general topics mentioned in the letters of these two magazines are similar – the reader expresses enthusiasm and appreciation for the magazines or some celebrities. Both magazines, also,

only have one recurrent phrase, which is the letters' opening formula (*Dear Phil* in *TOTP,
Hi We Love Pop* in *WLP*). In *Shout*, instead, the letters are mostly focused on the boys
readers have a crush on, and so their recurrent words include *boys, school, friends*, while
the only two recurrent phrases are *I don't know* and *really like*, which, unlike the phrases
in *TOTP* and *WLP*, occur in the body of the letters and are not opening formulas. Thus,
the similarities in these columns are more relevant between *TOTP* and *WLP* than with
Shout, and concern words and phrases.

**Table 92a. Normalised frequencies (per 1,000 words)
of the recurrent words and phrases in *TOTP***

Part of speech	Word/Phrase in *TOTP*	Frequency
Adjectives	*Dear*	28.0
	Amazing	6.0
	Crazy	6.0
	Obsessed	6.0
	Next	6.0
Nouns	*Phil*	28.0
	Mag	16.0
	Totp	13.0
	Fan	6.0
	Friend	6.0
	Issue	6.0
	Minutes	6.0
	Mum	6.0
	Show	6.0
	Sos	6.0
	Vloggers	6.0
Verbs	*Make*	6.0
	love	9.0
	Spotted	6.0
Total		178.0
Phrases	*Dear Phil*	28.0
	TOTP mag	13.0
Total		41.0

Table 92b. Normalised frequencies (per 1,000 words)
of the recurrent words and phrases in *WLP*

Part of speech	Word/phrase in *WLP*	Frequency
Nouns	*Pop*	30.0
	Day	10.0
	Mag	10.0
	Fan	7.0
	Friend	7.0
	Magazine	7.0
	Wlp	7.0
	Star	7.0
Verbs	*Love*	30.0
	Met	7.0
Total		122.0
Phrases	*Hi We Love Pop*	13.0
Total		13.0

Table 92c. Normalised frequencies (per 1,000 words)
of the recurrent words and phrases in *Shout*

Part of speech	Word/Phrase in *Shout*	Frequency
Adverbs	*Really*	18.0
Adjectives	*Best*	7.0
	Awkward	5.0
Nouns	*Boys*	19.0
	Friends	12.0
	School	7.0
Verbs	*Like*	12.0
	Help	9.0
	Know	9.0
	Ask	9.0
Total		107.0
Phrases	*I don't know*	7.0
	Really like	7.0
Total		14.0

4.3.2 Letters about serious life problems

Letters about serious life problems occur in all the magazines. As is reported in Table 93a, in *TOTP* (*Your problems solved*) there are 9 letters (total: 799 words; average length: 88.7 words), in *WLP* (*Ask the brother Grimes* and *Speak to our Ed*) there are 9 (total: 484 words; average length: 53.7 words), and in *Shout* (*Ask Laura*) there are 27 (total: 2,870 words; average length: 106.3 words). There are 13 recurrent phrases in these letters; more specifically, 1 in *TOTP,* 1 in *WLP* and 11 in *Shout.* There are, instead, 46 word types occurring throughout the letters; more specifically, there are 17 in *TOTP*, 17

in *WLP* and 12 in *Shout*. All the letters in all the magazines have at least one of the recurrent words/phrases (see Table 93b).

Table 93a. Number of recurrent words and phrases in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Recurrent pattern	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
Words	17	17	12
Phrases	1	1	11

Table 93b. Dispersion of words and phrases in the letters about serious life problems

Letters with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout*
0 phrases, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
0 phrases, 1 word	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
0 phrases, ≥2 words	0 (0%)	5 (56%)	3 (11%)
1 phrase, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1 phrase, 1 word	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.5%)
1 phrase, ≥2 words	9 (100%)	4 (44%)	5 (18.5%)
≥2 phrases, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
≥2 phrases, 1 word	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
≥2 phrases, ≥2 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (59%)
Total	9 (100%)	9 (100%)	27 (100%)

In the following sub-sections, I present the results of the analysis conducted on the letters about serious life problems.

4.3.2.1 *Your problems solved!,* in *TOTP*

The letters in *Your problems solved* deal with many different problems (e.g. nightmares, anorexia, school, etc.), and share a number of recurrent words and one recurrent phrase. The recurrent words, as is reported in Table 94, include 8 nouns indicating the main topics treated in the letters (e.g. *school, boyfriend*); 2 adjectives, *dear*, appearing in the initial formula, and *bad*; 6 verbs, mainly used to express the reader's emotions (e.g. *feel, like*); and 1 adverb, *really,* used as an intensifier generally before negative phrases (e.g. *I have really bad acne*). The most recurrent phrase is *Dear Aled and Dr Radha*, occurring 9 times overall, at the beginning of each letter (see Table 95).

Table 94. Recurrent words in *TOTP*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns/names	*Aled*	9
	Radha	9
	Dr	9
	Boyfriend	3
	Girls	3
	Class	2
	Hair	2
	School	2
Adjectives	*Dear*	9
	Bad	2
Adverbs	*Really*	7
Verbs	*Feel*	5
	Help	3
	Want	3
	Like	3
	Know	2
	Think	2

Table 95. Recurrent phrases in *TOTP*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
Dear Aled and Dr Radha	9 in 9/9 letters
Total	9 in 9/9 letters

To conclude, the only recurrent phrase identified is the one introducing the letters, but there are other frequent words referring to such personal topics as friends and school.

4.3.2.2 *Ask the brother Grimes!,* and *Speak to our Ed!,* in *WLP*

Ask the brother Grimes and *Speak to our Ed* include letters discussing such topics as friendships, crushes and self-confidence. Their recurrent words (2 nouns, 2 adjectives, 12 verbs, 1 adverb) mainly refer to the people involved in the situations described by the reader (*friends*), her feelings (e.g. *scared, like, want feel*), or the consequences of her problems (she is *picked on* by people – see Table 96). There is only one recurrent phrase, that is, *want to,* which occurs 4 times, and prefaces the indication of the goal the writer wants to achieve or the problems she wants to solve (see Table 97).

Table 96. Recurrent words in *WLP*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Friend(s)*	8
	School	2
Adjectives	*Best*	2
	Scared	2
Verbs	*Like*	7
	Want	5
	Make	4
	Think	4
	Call	3
	Feel	3
	Keep	3
	Picked on	3
	Said	3
	Help	2
	Know	2
	Tell	2
Adverbs	*Really*	3

Table 97. Recurrent phrases in *WLP*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
Want to	4 in 4/9 letters
Total	4 in 9 letters

In conclusion, the *WLP* column about serious life problems has one recurrent phrase which expresses the reader's will to improve or solve the problems being discussed, and several recurrent words referring to aspects of the problems the reader is facing (e.g. people involved like *friends,* the fact that she is *picked on*, how she *feels*).

4.3.2.3 *Ask Laura* in *Shout*

The situations described in the letters about serious life problems are quite varied (epilepsy, panic attacks, jealousy of a mother's new boyfriend, etc.). Despite the differences in the topics covered, some recurrent words and phrases can be identified. As is reported in Table 98, the most frequent words occurring in the letters of this column are verbs, but there are also one adverb (*really*) and three nouns. The verbs refer to the reader's feelings (e.g. *feel, like*), her awareness of the situation she is living or facing (e.g. *know, getting + adjective*), and how she tries to find a solution to it (e.g. *want, help*). The adverb *really*, the most recurrent word in this column, is used to intensify the meaning of

adjectives or verbs. Finally, the nouns refer to the people or places the reader feels especially close to (*friends, mum, school*). As Table 99 shows, the most recurrent phrases are, instead, *I don't know,* occurring 10 times, *what to do,* occurring 9 times (generally functioning as the object of *I don't know*), *please help,* occurring 8 times (sometimes used as a closing formula in the letters), *my friend(s),* occurring 7 times, *I don't want to,* occurring 6 times, *my mum,* occurring 6 times, *what should I do?,* occurring 5 times (used as a letter-concluding formula), *I feel like,* occurring 4 times (generally followed by negative clauses), *I really don't,* occurring 4 times and *I've tried,* occurring 4 times.

Table 98. Recurrent words in *Shout*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Friend(s)*	16
	Mum	12
	School	12
Verbs	*Know*	22
	Getting	20
	Feel	18
	Help	16
	Like	16
	Told	16
	Want	14
	Make	12
Adverbs	*Really*	25

Table 99. Recurrent phrases in *Shout*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
I don't know	10 in 9/20 letters
What to do	9 in 9/20 letters
Please help	8 in 8/20 letters
My friend(s)	7 in 7/20 letters
I don't want to	6 in 5/20 letters
My mum	6 in 6/20 letters
What should I do?	5 in 5/20 letters
I feel like	4 in 4/20 letters
I really don't	4 in 3/20 letters
I've tried	4 in 3/20 letters
Total	63 in 20 letters

To conclude, the *Ask Laura* letters share a number of phrases and words, all relevant to the readers' difficulties in coping with certain types of situations.

4.3.2.4 Conclusion

To sum up, I identified recurrent expressions in the letters about serious life problems in the three magazines considered. The column with the highest number of recurrent words is in *WLP,* followed by *TOTP* and *Shout.* The quantitative difference is more pronounced between *TOTP* and *Shout* (94 vs 69) than between *WLP* and *TOTP* (116.5 vs 94). However, it is the *Shout* column that has the highest frequency value of recurrent phrases (21.8 vs 11 and 8). The recurrent words generally have similar frequency values across the magazines (e.g. *really* has a frequency of 9, 6 and 9 tokens in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*, respectively; *school* has a frequency of 2.5, 4 and 4 tokens, respectively; *feel* has a frequency of 6 throughout). These words identify people (e.g. *friends*), places (e.g. *school*) or feelings (e.g. *feel*) that are relevant to the reader's private sphere such as their personal relationships, feelings of disappointment or difficulties in coping with their problems. Tables 100a, 100b and 100c display the normalized frequency values of the most recurrent words and phrases occurring in the sub-corpora of the letters about serious life problems.

Table 100a. Normalised frequencies (per 1,000 words)
of recurrent words and phrases in *TOTP*

Part of speech	Word/Phrase in *TOTP*	Frequency
Adjectives	*Dear*	11.0
	Bad	2.5
Adverbs	*Really*	9.0
Nouns	*Aled*	11.0
	Radha	11.0
	Dr	11.0
	Boyfriend	4.0
	Girls	4.0
	Class	2.5
	Hair	2.5
	School	2.5
Verbs	*Feel*	6.0
	Help	4.0
	Want	4.0
	Like	4.0
	Know	2.5
	Think	2.5
Total		94.0
Phrases	*Dear Aled and Dr Radha*	11.0
Total		11.0

**Table 100b. Normalised frequencies (per 1,000 words)
of recurrent words and phrases in *WLP***

Parts of speech	Word/Phrase in *WLP*	Frequency
Adjectives	*Best*	4.0
	Scared	4.0
Adverbs	*Really*	6.0
Nouns	*Friend(s)*	16.5
	School	4.0
Verbs	*Like*	14.0
	Want	10.0
	Make	8.0
	Think	8.0
	Call	6.0
	Feel	6.0
	Keep	6.0
	Picked on	6.0
	Said	6.0
	Help	4.0
	Know	4.0
	Tell	4.0
Total		116.5
Phrases	*Want to*	8.0
Total		8.0

Table 100c. Normalised frequencies (per 1,000 words)
of recurrent words and phrases in *Shout*

Parts of speech	Word/Phrase in *Shout*	Frequency
Adverbs	*Really*	9.0
Nouns	*Friend(s)*	5.5
	Mum	4.0
	School	4.0
Verbs	*Know*	8.0
	Getting	7.0
	Feel	6.0
	Help	5.5
	Like	5.5
	Told	5.5
	Want	5.0
	Make	4.0
Total		69.0
Phrases	*I don't know*	3.4
	What to do	3.0
	Please help	3.0
	My friend(s)	2.5
	I don't want to	2.0
	My mum	2.0
	What should I do?	2.0
	I feel like	1.3
	I really don't	1.3
	I've tried	1.3
Total		21.8

The following subsection reports the results concerning another column with readers' contributions – the 'cringe' column.

4.3.3 The 'cringe' columns

Anecdotes about embarrassing situations occur in all the magazines. In *TOTP* (*Omg!*), there are 27 mini-narratives (1,127 words), in *WLP* (*Oh no you didn't!?*) there are 10 (940 words), and in *Shout* (*#cringe* and *Insta-gran*) there are 9 and 22, respectively (176 and 2,208 words, respectively). Their average length is thus 41.74, 78.3, 19.5 and 100.3 words, respectively.

As is reported in Table 101a, I identified a total of 55 word types (18 in *TOTP,* 11 in *WLP,* 14 in *Shout – Insta-gran –* and 12 in *Shout – #cringe* column) and 23 different phrases occurring throughout the letters (6 in *TOTP,* 3 in *WLP,* 1 in *Shout – Insta-gran –*

and 13 in *Shout – #cringe* column). All the letters share at least one recurrent word and/or phrases (see Table 101b).

Table 101a. No. of recurrent words and phrases in *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout*

Recurrent patterns	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout - #cringe*	*Shout – Insta-gran*
Words	18	11	12	14
Phrases	6	3	13	1

Table 101b. Dispersion of words and phrases in the letters about embarrassing anecdotes

Letters with	*TOTP*	*WLP*	*Shout Insta-Gran*	*Shout #Cringe*
0 phrases, 0 words	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
0 phrases, 1 word	0 (0%)	2 (16.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
0 phrases, ≥2 words	5 (18.5%)	2 (16.7%)	5 (56%)	3 (14%)
1 phrase, 0 words	0 (0%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1 phrase, 1 word	1 (3.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1 phrase, ≥2 words	9 (34.4%)	4 (33.3%)	4 (44%)	4 (18%)
≥2 phrases, 0 words	1 (3.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
≥2 phrases, 1 word	1 (3.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
≥2 phrases, ≥2 words	10 (37%)	3 (25%)	0 (0%)	15 (68%)
Total	27 (100%)	12 (100%)	9 (100%)	22 (100%)

4.3.3.1 *Omg!* In *TOTP*

The anecdotes in the *Omg!* column in *TOTP* supposedly concern embarrassing situations experienced by the reader, although this is not always the case. For example, one story reports what a dog would do with the presents under the Christmas tree, and the reader is not involved in the event described, nor does she express embarrassment for the episode. In another story, the reader comments that she *didn't mind too much* that *everyone laughed at* her, thus totally choosing not to show embarrassment.

As Tables 102 and 103 show, the *cringe* anecdotes in *TOTP* share some words and phrases. The recurrent words include: nouns that refer to the period or place in which the event being reported happened (*Christmas, stage*) or the people involved in the episode (e.g. *friends, people*); verbs that indicate the sequence of the events reported (e.g. *started*), what the reader was doing (e.g. *fell, walking*), and how the bystanders reacted (*laughed, saw*); and an adverb ,*suddenly*, which indicates the unexpected event that caused the embarrassing situation being reported. The most recurrent phrases are, instead, *when I,* occurring 14 times (it is one of the ways the reader starts reporting the episode), *my*

friend(s), occurring 8 times, *as I*, occurring 6 times, *so I*, occurring 6 times, *I had to*, occurring 5 times (generally used to introduce the conclusion to the episode reported), *I was at*, occurring 4 times. Some of these phrases are made up of a conjunction introducing a subordinate clause + a noun phrase, and help the reader reconstruct the sequence of the events making up the events reported. They thus have a narrative function.

Table 102. Recurrent words in *TOTP*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Friend(s)*	8
	Christmas	7
	People	5
	Dog	4
	Dress	4
	Head	4
	Mum	4
	Stage	4
Verbs	*Started*	10
	Like	6
	Saw	6
	Fell	4
	Gave	4
	Laughed	4
	Thought	4
	Walking	4
	Went	4
Adverbs	*Suddenly*	5
Pronouns	*Everyone*[10]	4

---

[10] Even though *everyone* is a pronoun, I included it among the most recurrent content words in that it can be considered a synonym of *people*.

Table 103. Recurrent phrases in *TOTP*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
When I	14 in 11/27 letters
My friend(s)	8 in 8/27 letters
As I	6 in 6/27 letters
So I	6 in 5/27 letters
I had to	5 in 5/27 letters
I was at	4 in 4/27 letters
Total	43 in 27 letters

In conclusion, both recurrent phrases and words indicate the sequence in which the events being reported happened. Words also refer to people and things involved in the episode, the reader's actions and the reactions of the people watching her.

4.3.3.2 *Oh no you didn't!?* in *WLP*

In the sub-corpus component relevant to the *Oh no you didn't!?* column in *WLP*, I identified a few recurrent words and three recurrent phrases. Similarly to those found in *TOTP*, the recurrent words indicate the people or places involved in the events reported (e.g. *friend(s), house*) and what the reader was doing at the time (e.g. *went, came*). They also include the adjective *embarrassed*, which expresses the reader's feelings at the end of the episode. However, there are no recurrent words referring to the reactions of the people watching the reader (see Table 104). The recurrent phrases are *my best friend*, occurring 5 times, *my brother*, occurring 4 times (these 2 phrases identify people relevant to the reader's private sphere and also involved in the episodes she reports), and *when I,* occurring 4 times (see Table 105).

Table 104. Recurrent words in *WLP*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Friend(s)*	11
	House	6
	Brother	4
	Car	4
	Time	4
Adjectives	*Best*	5
	Embarrassed	4
Verbs	*Went*	7
	Came	4
	Like	4
	See	4
Adverbs	*Really*	4

Table 105. Recurrent phrases in *WLP*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
My best friend	5 in 5/11 letters
My brother	4 in 2/11 letters
When I	4 in 4/11 letters
Total	13 in 11 letters

To sum up, the recurrent words and phrases in the *WLP* anecdotes basically refer to the people or things participating or involved in the event, or to the reader's actions, and less frequently to people's reactions or the sequence in which the actions happened.

4.3.3.3 *#cringe* and *Insta-gran* in *Shout*

#cringe and *Insta-gran* both include stories about embarrassing episodes. While the former refer to different types of situations, the latter only refers to social networks.

In the letters in the *#cringe* column, I identified several recurrent words and phrases. The most recurrent words in *Shout* indicate the people involved in the episode reported (e.g. *friend),* or the place in which it took place (e.g. *school*), the reader's feelings (*cringe, embarrassing*) and/or the reaction of the people observing the scene (*laughing*; see Table 106a).[11] The most recurrent phrases are *my friend(s),* occurring 11 times, *when I,* occurring 8 times, *everyone was*, occurring 7 times (generally followed by a verb in its –*ing* form indicating the reaction of the people around the reader), *my mum* and *and I were,*

---

[11] Here, too, I included *everyone* among the most frequent content words because, even though it is a pronoun, it serves as synonym for 'people' or similar words indicating groups of people.

both occurring 5 times (the latter being preceded by the word identifying the other person involved in the episode), *decided to, I started, my friend and I, the table, laughing at, my crush,* and *so embarrassing*, all occurring 4 times (see Table 106b).

Table 106a. Recurrent words in *Shout's #cringe*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Friend*	16
	School	13
	Christmas	11
	Day	7
	Time	7
Adjectives	*Cringe*	7
	Embarrassing	7
Verbs	*Started*	10
	Laughing	7
	Went	7
Adverbs	*Really*	7
Pronouns	*Everyone*	10

Table 106b. Recurrent phrases in *Shout's #cringe*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
My friend(s)	11 in 9 letters
When I	8 in 7 letters
Everyone was	7 in 7 letters
My mum	5 in 5 letters
And I were	5 in 5 letters
Decided to	4 in 4 letters
I started	4 in 4 letters
My friend and I	4 in 4 letters
The table	4 in 4 letters
Laughing at	4 in 4 letters
My crush	4 in 4 letters
So embarrassing	4 in 4 letters
Total	64 in 22 letters

On the other hand, as is indicated in Table 107a, the most frequent words identified in the *Insta-gran* column mostly include lexis specifically used in social networks (e.g. *page, status, wall, posted*); for example, *like* here indicates a Facebook follower's context-specific reaction to a post on a webpage. The other words identified indicate the people (generally belonging to the reader's family) involved in the episodes reported. Instead, the only phrase I identified in *Insta-gran* is *on my*, occurring 5 times, which

introduces the reference to the web page where the reader is posting or reading something (see Table 107b).

Table 107a. Recurrent words in *Shout's Insta-gran*

Part of speech	Words	Frequency
Nouns	*Facebook*	3
	Mum	3
	Page	3
	Photo	2
	Dad	2
	Daughter	2
	Nan	2
	Status	2
	Wall	2
Verbs	*Posted*	4
	Commented	3
	Asking	2
	Likes	2
Adjectives	*Embarrassed*	3

Table 107b. Recurrent phrases in *Shout*'s *Insta-gran*

Phrases	Frequency and dispersion
On my	5 in 4 letters
Total	5 in 9 letters

To conclude, both the cringe column and the *Insta-gran* column in *Shout* have recurrent words and phrases. These indicate people, places and actions mentioned in the episodes, and in *Insta-gran* they include the specific lexis used to talk about social networks.

4.3.3.4 Conclusion

To conclude, the anecdotes in the three magazines all refer to embarrassing situations, and their recurrent words and phrases are quite similar – they denote the reader's feelings, reactions of the people that were watching what was happening, or the sequence in which the actions happened. The normalised frequency values (per 1,000 words) of the words and phrases identified show that *Insta-gran* is the column where recurrent words occur the most (234), followed by the columns in *TOTP*, *WLP* and *Shout* (56). While the difference between *Insta-gran* and the #*cringe* column in *Shout* is

remarkable (234 vs 56), the difference between the latter and the columns in *TOTP* and *WLP* is marginal (56 vs 76 and 58). The findings also show that similar words and phrases occur in three out of four 'cringe' columns (i.e. with the exception of *Insta-gran*), and these generally have about the same frequency value (e.g. *went*: 3.5 tokens in *TOTP*, 7 in *WLP* and 3 in *Shout*; *laughed*: 3.5 tokens in *TOTP* and *laughing* 3 in *Shout*; *like*: 5 tokens in *TOTP*, 4 in *WLP*; see Tables 108a, 108b, 108c)

Table 108a. Normalised frequency values (per 1,000 words) of recurrent words and phrases in *TOTP*

Parts of speech	Word/Phrase in *TOTP*	Frequency
	Started	9.0
	Christmas	6.0
Adjectives	*Like*	5.0
	Saw	5.0
	People	4.5
	Suddenly	4.5
	Dog	3.5
	Dress	3.5
	Everyone	3.5
	Fell	3.5
	Gave	3.5
Nouns	*Head*	3.5
	Laughed	3.5
	Mum	3.5
	Stage	3.5
	Thought	3.5
Verbs	*Walking*	3.5
	Went	3.5
Total		76.0
	When I	12.0
	So I	5.0
	As I	5.0
	My friends	7.0
Phrases	*My mum*	3.5
	I had to	4.5
	I was at	3.5
	When I was	3.5
Total		44.0

**Table 108b. Normalised frequency values (per 1,000 words)
of recurrent words and phrases in *WLP***

Parts of speech	Word/Phrase in *WLP*	Frequency
Nouns	*Friend*	12.0
	Went	7.0
	House	6.0
	Best	5.0
	Brother	4.0
	Come	4.0
	Car	4.0
	Like	4.0
Verbs	*Really*	4.0
	See	4.0
	Time	4.0
Total		58.0
Phrases	*Best friend*	5.0
	My brother	4.0
	When I	4.0
Total		13.0

**Table 108c. Normalised frequency values (per 1,000 words)
of recurrent words and phrases in *Shout's Insta-gran***

Parts of speech	Word/Phrase in *Shout*	Frequency
Adverbs	*Really*	3.0
Adjectives	*Embarrassing*	3.0
	Cringe	3.0
Nouns/pronouns	*Friend*	7.0
	School	6.0
	Christmas	5.0
	Day	7.0
	Time	7.0
	Everyone	4.5
Verbs	*Started*	4.5
	Laughing	3.0
	Went	3.0
Total		56.0
Phrases	*My friend*	5.0
	When I	3.5
	Try to	3.5
	Everyone was	3.0
	My mum	2.0
	Decided to	2.0
	I started	2.0
	The table	2.0
	And I were	2.0
	My friend and I	2.0
	Laughing at	2.0
	My crush	2.0
	So embarrassing	2.0
Total		31

Table 108d. Normalised frequency values (per 1,000 words)

of recurrent words and phrases in *Shout's #cringe*

Parts of speech	Word/Phrase in *Shout's Insta-gran*	Frequency
Adjectives	*Embarrassed*	17.0
Nouns	*Facebook*	17.0
	Mum	17.0
	Page	17.0
	Photo	17.0
	Dad	11.0
	Daughter	11.0
	Nan	11.0
	Status	11.0
	Wall	1100
Verbs	*Posted*	22.0
	Commented	17.0
	Asking	11.0
	Likes	11.0
Total		234.0
Phrases	*On my*	28.0
Total		28.0

4.4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, I reported the findings of my analysis of the gossip sections and the readers' contributions in the three magazine sub-corpora considered.

The findings about the gossip sections show that features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language are instantiated in the magazine sub-corpora considered, but not to the same extent, that is, their frequency values vary across magazines and across the specific parts of the columns/articles considered. More specifically, *Shout* and *WLP* turn out to be the magazines whose textual components are the richest and the poorest, respectively, in the features of the three types of communication considered, while *TOTP* displays intermediate values. Also, not all my original hypotheses are confirmed by the findings. First, as expected, there are features of spoken language in the balloons, but contrary to my expectations, there are also features of advertising language and text messages in them. Second, I expected to mostly find features of text messages in captions and articles because of their brevity, but this is not the case. In fact, features of text messages are the least recurrent features in the textual components analysed. On the other hand, in the headers I mostly found features of advertising language, as originally hypothesized.

The findings of the analysis of readers' contributions show that there are some (types of) words or phraseologies frequently used by readers. More specifically, readers tend to emphasise their feelings or some aspects of the situations described through words that express high intensity of feelings. Also, they generally refer to events revolving around their daily routine, which tend to happen at school and in which *friends* or *boys* (either boyfriends or boys that readers fancy) are involved, or which have some negative emotional impact on by-standers (e.g. people *laughing* at the reader's mishaps).

In the concluding chapter I summarise and discuss the main findings of this work, I point out the limitations of my study, and provide suggestions on how to expand and improve the analysis of the topic investigated here.

Chapter 5
Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw the conclusions from my corpus-based analysis of a total of eight issues of three British girls' magazines. I will first summarize and discuss the findings. Then, I will assess my work as a whole. Finally, I will suggest additional avenues for research in this area.

5.2 Summary and discussion of the main findings

My dissertation has taken into consideration three, two and three issues, respectively, of *Top Of The Pops, We Love Pop* and *Shout*, three magazines for girls published in the UK. In particular, I have analysed two parts of these magazines – the gossip sections and the columns including readers' contributions.

My analysis of the gossip sections was meant to check whether these parts of the magazines contain features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language in their various textual components (e.g. headers, articles, captions etc.). The motivation for this research goal was that such texts include words that are graphically prominent (as in ads), are characterized by brevity (as text messages), and contain expressions typical of dialogic interaction (as in speech). I expected to find features of advertising language especially in the headers (i.e. the most prominent parts of articles), features of text messages especially in the articles (which are short), and features of spoken language especially in the balloons (which supposedly report a celebrity's words). To carry out my analysis, I first compiled a corpus of the textual components making up the gossip sections (headers, straplines, subtitles, articles, captions, balloons); secondly, I tagged the corpus manually for graphic variations and various features of the three forms of communication considered, and I also electronically tagged the texts for parts of speech; lastly, by using AntConc, a concordancing software, I identified, quantified and outlined the occurrence and dispersion of the features examined throughout the corpus.

My analysis of the readers' contributions (magazine components which, to my knowledge, had only been partially analysed before) was meant to check whether and to what extent the readers who write to magazines display similar writing styles. To this end,

I compiled an additional corpus consisting of letters about 'banal' problems, letters about more serious life problems, and letters about embarrassing anecdotes; then, by using the concordancing program AntConc, I identified the columns' most recurrent words and phrases. In each column, I considered the 50 most recurrent content words, and the 2-to-5-word-long phrases which occurred at least 4 times in the sub-corpus considered. In the following subsections, I summarise and discuss the results of both analyses.

5.2.1 The gossip sections

The analysis of the gossip sections has shown that features of advertising language, text messages and spoken language are not similarly frequent in the corpus as a whole and in its various components.

Of the three forms of communication considered, advertising language is the most represented throughout the magazines' textual components (normalised frequency values per 1,000 words: 597 tokens in *Shout,* 426 in *TOTP* and 218 in *WLP*); instead, spoken language comes in second (388 tokens in *Shout,* 304 in *WLP,* 230 in *TOTP*), and features of text messages occur rarely (118 tokens in *Shout,* 108 in *WLP,* 63 in *TOTP*). Additionally, while features of advertising language or spoken language are highly present in various textual components, features of text messages never do. More specifically, features of advertising language are mostly common in the headers, in the *Shout* straplines, and in the captions; features of spoken language are commonly found in the *TOTP* straplines, in the subtitles, in the articles, in the captions and in the balloons. On the other hand, the infrequently occurring features of text messages are attested mainly in the *WLP* subtitles, the only case in which they are as frequent as the features of spoken language.

The various features that I considered for each form of communication examined are not equally frequent in the corpus. In particular, the most recurrent features of advertising language are noun phrases and graphic variations in *TOTP* and *WLP*, and graphic variations and noun phrases in *Shout*. The most recurrent features of text messages are abbreviations, especially in *WLP* and *Shout.* Finally, the most recurrent features of spoken language are, instead, interrogatives, imperatives and interjections.

Overall, the magazine with the highest concentration of features of the three forms of communication considered is *Shout*, followed by *TOTP* and *WLP*. While in *Shout* each

form of communication has overall higher frequency values than in the other two magazines, *TOTP* has higher frequency values than *WLP* for features of advertising language and text messages, and *WLP* has higher frequency values than *TOTP* as concerns the features of text messages.

The analysis of the gossip sections of the magazines considered confirms only in part my hypotheses. I originally expected to find a concentration of features of advertising language in the headers, a high number of features of text messages in the articles and captions, and frequent occurrences of features of spoken language in the balloons (see section 2.5). The findings reveal that, as expected, the headers are rich in features of advertising language, and the balloons of spoken language. Unexpectedly, though, the balloons turn out to also have features of advertising language and spoken language, while features of text messages are hardly ever identified. Indeed, the language typical of text messages is the least represented form of communication of the three taken into consideration.

The massive presence of features of advertising language appears to correlate with the magazine editors' attempt to promote the celebrities they talk about, to draw attention to the things they say or do. Indeed, first of all, the names of celebrities are often (always in *Shout*) highlighted or written in different fonts or colours, so that they become more prominent (or even the most prominent words) within a textual component. Second, evaluative adjectives (the so-called *vague* adjectives described in Pennarola: 2003) are aimed at emphasising the style, beauty, events of the celebrities mentioned, either positively or negatively. Third, the presence of instances of poetic uses of the language, of neologisms and of non-standard spellings (more systematically in *TOTP* and *WLP* than in *Shout*) renders these textual components attractive and enjoyable. It is as if the editors were trying to make sure that their readers "use" the news they provide about celebrities like "consumable products".

Androutsopoulos (2000) and Gaballo (2012) observe that the language of fanzines is rich in abbreviations and non-standard spellings, which contribute to making the texts specifically accessible to the people who are similarly interested in the topics discussed in the fanzines. Instead, the publications I analysed are *mainstream* magazines with a wider target readership. The editors need to make all the contents accessible to as many readers as possible, and having a considerable amount of features of text messages might

render their language (and thus their content too) difficult to understand. The few abbreviations and non-standard spellings that occur in the texts are thus only meant to give a tone of informality to the content conveyed.

The fact that features of spoken language (the second most recurrent form of communication throughout the texts) have similar frequency values across the three magazines is probably a sign of the magazines' editors similar effort to establish a sort of dialogue with the reader, or to include her in a fictitious dialogue with a celebrity. Among the features identified, there are many imperatives and interrogative clauses, whose presence might be interpreted as a way to involve the reader and thus increase her interest in the anecdote reported – it is as if the editors expected an answer from the readers and/or the celebrities the questions are posed to. There are also discourse markers and interjections, which make the texts look as if they were produced on-line, and also indicate whether the editors like or dislike, or agree or disagree on the interpretation of, the events and opinions reported, respectively, thus further involving the reader in the virtual interaction.

To sum up, the gossip sections are informative and promotional texts about celebrities. Their promotional goal is sustained by means of features of advertising language, and devices typical of spoken language which make the reader feel involved in a virtual conversation with the editors.

5.2.2 The readers' contributions

The analysis of the readers' contributions has shown that they contain some recurrent words and phrases, but also that the amount and type of these formulations vary depending on the column and magazine considered.

Overall, in the magazines, I identified 140 recurrent word types and 42 recurrent phrases. The former are thus much more frequent than the latter, not only in the corpus as a whole, but also in each magazine sub-corpus. The magazine in which readers use the highest number of similar phraseologies in their writing styles is *TOTP*. This is due to the fact that the magazine has more varied types of recurrent words than the other two magazines; at the same time, the words it has in common with *WLP* and *Shout* appear to have about the same frequency values they have in the other two magazines.

Of the three columns in the readers' contributions, the 'cringe' column is the one with the highest overall number of common features across the texts; also, a sub-column of the cringe column in *Shout,* that is, *Insta-gran,* has the highest frequency values for individual words and phrases. The recurrent words of the 'cringe' column mostly instantiate two parts of speech: verbs and nouns. These generally refer to the reader's feelings, her reactions to events, her most intimate relationships or the places she often goes to, and which are among the causes of the bad situations she is facing (e.g. *embarrassed, friends, school, laughed*). The most recurrent phrases are combinations of a conjunction + a NP (e.g. *when I*), or a possessive pronoun + a noun (e.g. *my mum, my best friend*); the former have a narrative function, in that they indicate the sequence in which the events reported happened and their cause-effect relations, while the latter indicate the people involved in an event or those watching the reader going through an embarrassing experience. The letters of the other two columns, instead, have only a few words in common, such as *mag* and *fan,* which concern their interests, while the recurrent clusters are basically only the phrases introducing the letters in *TOTP* and *WLP* (*Dear Aled and Dr Radha* in *TOTP, Hi We Love Pop* in *WLP*).

The analysis of the readers' contributions of the magazines considered confirms only in part my hypothesis. I expected to see a similar writing style in the letters, but the data bears this out only in part. The similarities identified – that is, the recurrence of given words and phrases – are not equally prominent in the corpus as a whole, in every magazine sub-corpus and in every column considered: in general, there are a few words in common (such as *feel, really, like, know, want*) in the different sub-corpora, and these are characterized by similarly low frequency values. A possible reason for the partial confirmation of my expectations might be the fact that I did not originally take into account the range of topics covered in the letters. As previously stated (see 4.3.2.3), the highest frequency values for individual words and phrases are in *Insta-gran* (a sub-column of the *Shout* 'cringe' column), which is entirely focused on a single topic, that is, social media. Instead, the columns with the fewest similarities across the letters are those about readers' banal or serious problems. These are quite varied (e.g. relevant to school, boys, health issues, family relationships, etc.), and necessarily require a varied (i.e. non-topic-specific) vocabulary; it is thus not surprising that the frequency values of similar words and phrases are very low.

To sum up, the letters written by the magazines' readers do share some lexis, but not to the same extent across the magazines and the columns considered. A focus on similar topics determines a higher degree of similarity in the lexis of the texts covering those topics; this is why, for example, a column like *Insta-gran* entirely focused on social networks has the highest frequency values of its recurrent words.

5.2.3 Conclusion

To conclude, my expectations were only partially confirmed in the analysis of both parts of the magazines. On the one hand, I identified features of advertising language (especially in the headers) and of spoken language (especially in the balloons), and also noticed some similarities across the letters of the 'cringe' column. On the other end, I observed that features of text messages are hardly ever instantiated in the gossip sections, and that the letters written by readers have only a few shared elements.

In the following sub-section I draw the implications of the findings of my analysis, comparing them to previous works on the topic.

5.3 Assessment of the present work

My work focuses on a magazine section (the gossip section) not previously studied (see chapter 2), and on another one (readers' contributions) that has not been much analysed. More precisely, while the data reported in previous studies only applies to beauty sections, editors' introductory letters or anecdotes about embarrassing episodes, my analysis is relevant to the gossip sections and to readers' letters which also concern serious and banal life problems. In the former case (the gossip sections), my analysis quantifies and describes the uses of the features typical of advertising language, text messages and spoken language. In the latter case (the readers' contributions), my analysis quantifies and specifies the degree of similarity of readers' letters in three different columns.

My analysis of the gossip sections shows that the magazine components making up this part of the magazines mostly have features of advertising language (and these are generally concentrated in the headers); that there are many features of spoken language mostly distributed in articles and balloons, but are also present in other textual components; finally, that features of text messages are not frequently instantiated, and

that the presence and/or predominance of some forms of communication, or of some of their features, varies across the magazines considered.

Previous studies on the language and content of girls' magazines (see 2.3) are partially in line with my findings. Some aspects that scholars highlight as recurrent in (some sections of) girls' magazines are also found in the gossip sections of the magazines I analysed. For example, features of spoken language (McRobbie 1978), elements such as puns and alliteration (McRobbie 1978 and Teglová 2009), or non-standard spellings (Cotrău 2003, Androutsopoulos 2000 and Gaballo 2012) are among the recurrent features enriching the textual components analysed in the gossip sections. Also, Pattee's (2004) opinion that readers share lexis about embarrassing episodes is confirmed in my data relevant to the 'cringe' columns. In addition, those studies identify specific features which do not occur (or occur very rarely) in my findings, such as "hesitancy and apologetics" expressions (McRobbie 1978); at the same time, those studies claim that some features do not or hardly ever occur, which instead *are* found in my magazines – for example, Willemsen (1998) claims that adjectives are not frequent in girls' magazines; however, they are among the most recurrent features of advertising language in my magazines. Thus, my work suggests that it is probably better to describe the language of magazines as characterized by features that are typical of specific magazine components, than of magazines in general.

In the following sub-section, I outline possible indications for future research on the topic of girls' magazines.

5.4 Future perspectives

There are several ways in which the analysis reported in this work could be expanded and improved upon, by expanding the analysis to additional features of the magazines and by examining more data.

My work is based on magazine issues published in October, November and December 2014. I only carried out two types of possible analyses on them, but there are many more aspects of these magazines that could be explored. For example, the fact that in my work I identified some similarities across the readers' contributions analysed might raise the objection that these similarities are due to a revision of the texts by the magazines' editors. In this case, a comparison between the texts of the gossip sections

and readers' contributions would be useful – if words and phrases occurring both in the former and in the latter were identified, that would mean that the letters reported are not the *original* contributions of readers, but are rather modified by the magazines' editors. In addition, while I analysed readers' contributions only from the point of view of the lexis used, it would also be interesting to see whether the texts share rhetorical structures, whether information units are similarly combined, or whether each reader expresses her thoughts in her own personal way. The structures identified could later on be compared to the structures of the articles in the gossip sections. A comparison between readers' contributions and gossip sections (and maybe extended to the other columns or sections of the magazines) could also lend itself to more specific analyses, such as the examination of the evaluative lexis used (whether it is mostly positive or negative, whether it applies to people, entities, phenomena or events; whether it involves moral judgement, emotional impact, and/or aesthetic appreciation), of their recurrent metaphors (how frequent they are, what analogies are established between what source vs target domains), of the sentences making up the texts (their basic communicative function, length and structure), of the realisation and sequencing of themes and rhemes (so as to identify possible preferred patterns of topic development in texts).

More insights into the language of magazines could be gained by looking at more data. For example, more data could allow to study some aspects of these magazines from a diachronic point of view, or to draw comparisons with magazines with different (in terms of age, culture or language) targets. My corpus only includes issues published over a period of three months. Having a corpus including issues from a larger span of years than the one I considered would allow the researcher to examine possible diachronic variation in the frequency of use of features typical of text messages, or a possible development in the style of readers' contributions. It would also be interesting to extend the analysis to magazines for older girls – one could compare girls' magazines with the texts of magazines targeting women in their 20s and 30s. This would allow the researcher to see whether mainstream magazines for females have features/phraseologies in common, or if the differences between the texts are recognisable and relevant. By carrying this comparison in a diachronic perspective, the researcher could see whether there have always been linguistic differences/similarities between the two types of magazines across the years, or when and if differences/similarities started being relevant. The analysis could

also be extended to a comparison with girls' magazines published in non English-speaking countries. A possible study could be to check whether there are English loanwords in their texts, and whether these are just random words aimed at giving a more 'international' pattern to the magazine or whether they also are among the most recurrent in English magazines.

Thus, there are several aspects which can be further studied to expand on the analysis I carried, such as taking into account further features and columns of *TOTP, WLP* and *Shout,* besides those analysed in this work, or extend the analysis to magazines targeting older girls, or girls from other countries, or to magazine issues published over the previous years, in order to check whether there are similar linguistic patterns between the magazines, or whether similarities and/or differences, if any, have always occurred.

References

AA. VV. (2007) *Macmillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. Oxford: Macmillan.

Androutsopoulos J. K. (2000) "Non-standard spellings in media texts: the case of German fanzines." *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 4(4), 514-533.

Biber D. (1991) *Variation across speech and writing.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campbell J. A. E. (2008*) He's so dreamy, she's so beautiful: celebrities, the representation of (pre-)adolescent femininity in M, and self-perception*. BA dissertation, University of Victoria.

Carpenter M. L. (1998) "From girls into women: scripts for sexuality and romance in *Seventeen* magazine, 1974 – 1994." *The Journal of Sex Research*, 35(2), 158-168.

Carter R., McCarthy M. (1997) *Exploring spoken English.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Choudhury M., Saraf R., Jain V., Mukherjee A., Sarkar S., Basu A. (2007) "Investigation and modelling of the structures of texting language." *Ijdar,* 10, 157-174.

Chow J. (2004) "Adolescents' perceptions of popular teen magazines." *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(2), 132-139.

Cook G. (1992) *The discourse of advertising.* London and New York: Routledge.

Cotrău D. (2003) "Linguistic encoding of youth ideology by the Romanian teen magazines for girls." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 6, 29-48.

Currie D. (1999) *Girl talk: adolescent magazines and their readers*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Drotner K. (1983) "Schoolgirls, madcaps, and air aces: English girls and their magazine reading between the wars." *Feminist Studies*, 9(1), 33-52.

Eneas Lira L. C. (2009) *Como se constrói uma mulher: uma análise do discurso nas revistas Brasileiras para adolescentes*. MA Dissertation, University of Brasilia.

Evans E. D., Rutberg J., Sather, C. Turner, C. (1991) "Content analysis of contemporary teen magazines for adolescent females." *Youth and Society*, 23(1), 99-120.

Faulkner X., Culwin F. (2005) "When fingers do the talking: a study of text messaging." *Interacting with Computers,* 17, 167-185.

Finders M. J. (1996) "Queens and teen zines: early adolescent females reading their way towards adulthood." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 27(1), 71-89.

Gaballo V. (2012) "Language and culture in minor media text types. A diachronic, intralinguistic analysis from fanzines to webzines," in Hauser, S. and Luginbuhl, M. (eds.) *Contrastive media analysis: approaches to linguistic and cultural aspects of mass media communication*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Geis M.L. (1982) *The language of television advertising.* New York and London: Academic Press.

Gonick M. (1997) "Reading selves, re-fashioning identity: teen magazines and their readers." *Curriculum Studies*, 5(1), 69-86.

Grozdanova L. (2010) "Manipulative linguistic devices in the teenage press." In Frățilă L., Pârlog H. (eds.) *Language in use: the case of youth entertainment magazines.* Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Halliday M.A.K. (1989) *Spoken and written language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Horowitz R., Samuels S.J. (1987) *Comprehending oral and written language.* San Diego: Academic Press Inc.

Jones G.M., Schieffelin B.B. (2009) "Talking text and talking back: 'My BFF Jill' from Boob Tube to YouTube." *Journal of computer-mediated communication*, 14, 1050-1079.

Kang M., Cannon B., Remond L., Quine S. (2009) "'Is it normal to feel these questions…?': a content analysis of the health concerns of adolescent girls writing to a magazine." *Family Practice*, 26, 196-203.

Luff G. M., Gray J. J. (2009) "Complex messages regarding a thin ideal appearing in teenage girls' magazines from 1956 to 2005." *Body Image*, 6(2), 133-136.

Massoni K. (2004) "Modeling work: occupational messages in *Seventeen* magazine." *Gender and Society*, 18(1), 47-65.

McQuarrie E., Mick D. G. (1993) "Reflections on classical rhetoric and the incidence of figures of speech in contemporary magazine advertisements." *Advances in Consumer Research*, 20, 309-313.

McRobbie A. (1978) "Jackie: an ideology of adolescent femininity." *Women Series*, 53, 1-54.

Moskowitz H., Itty B., Ewald J. (2002) "Teens on the internet – commercial application of a deconstructive analysis of 'teen zine' features." *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 2(3), 296-310.

Myers G. (1994) *Words in Ads.* London: Edward Arnold.

Norton B. (2001) "When is a teen magazine not a teen magazine?" *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45(4), 296-299.

Pattee A. S. (2004) "Mass market mortification: the developmental appropriateness of teen magazines and the embarrassing story standard." *The Library Quarterly*, 74(1), 1-20.

Peirce K. (1993) "Socialization of teenage girls through teen-magazine fiction: the making of a new woman or an old lady?" *Sex Roles*, 29(1/2), 59-68.

Pennarola C. (2003) *Nonsense in advertising. Deviascion in English print ads.* Napoli: Liguori Editore.

Quart A. (2003) *Branded. The buying and selling of teenagers*. Cambridge: Basic Books.

Quintanilla M. (1989) "Pix! Fax! Flash! : That's What It Takes to Keep Bop on Top of Teenzine Scene." In http://articles.latimes.com/1989-08-18/news/vw-638_1_teen-star (online access 12 May 2015).

Schlenker J. A., Caron S. L., Halteman W. A. (1998) "A feminist analysis of *Seventeen* magazine: content analysis from 1945 to 1995." *Sex Roles*, 38(1/2), 135-149.

Sim M. A., Pop A. M. (2009) "English and the glossy magazines. Profitable or not…" *Annals of the University of Oradea: Economic Science*, 1(1), 563-568.

Slater A., Tiggermann M., Hawkins K., Werchon D. (2011) "Just one click: a content analysis of advertisements on teen web sites." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 50, 339-345.

Stevenson A., Waite M. (2011) *Concise Oxford English Dictionary.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Stubbs M. (1996) *Text and corpus analysis*: *computer-assisted studies of language and culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Talbot M. (1992) "The construction of gender in a teenage magazine." In Fairclough N., *Critical language awareness,* 174-199.

Teglová V. (2009) *Linguistic and content analysis of British teenage magazines for girls*. BA Dissertation, Tomas Bata University in Zlin.

Willemsen T. M. (1998) "Widening the gender gap: teenage magazines for girls and boys." *Sex Roles*, 38(9/10), 851-861.

Williams B. T. (2006) "Girl power in a digital world: considering the complexity of gender, literacy, and technology." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 50(4), 300-307.

Wray J., Steele J. (2002) "Girls in print: figuring out what it means to be a girl." In Brown J. D., Steele J. R., Walsh-Childers K. (eds.) *Sexual teens, sexual media. Investigating media's influence on adolescent sexuality.* Mahdwah and London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20140102005297/en/Research-Markets-Teenage-Pre-Teen-Magazines-Market-Update#.VT8zJ5Om2J8 (online access 28 April 2015)

http://www.magforum.com/glossies/teen.htm (online access 28 April 2015)

https://www.egmont.co.uk/magazine/love-pop/ (online access 28 April 2015)

www.oed.com

www.macmillandictionary.com

www.urbandictionary.com

Riassunto

La mia tesi consiste in un'analisi condotta su tre riviste inglesi per adolescenti, nello specifico *Top Of The Pops, We Love Pop* e *Shout*, che, sebbene siano rivolte a un pubblico di ragazze (pre)adolescenti, a volte leggo nel tempo libero.

Le riviste per adolescenti hanno una lunga storia – le prime pubblicazioni risalgono all'inizio del '900. Nel 1918, infatti, l'Education Act stabilì che i bambini sarebbero dovuti andare a scuola fino ai 14 anni; gradualmente si formò quindi un nuovo gruppo di adolescenti, la cui unica occupazione era diventata lo studio, e che costituivano il perfetto pubblico per *School Friend,* rivista economica che iniziò a uscire nel 1919. Tra i suoi contenuti c'erano racconti brevi e lunghi, e domande poste dalle lettrici. Nel corso dei decenni si assistette a una evoluzione dei contenuti: per esempio, a partire dagli anni '30, le eroine dei racconti iniziarono ad essere studentesse che diventavano star, e furono aggiunte rubriche che si occupavano di curiosità sulle celebrità. Il successo delle riviste continuò a crescere nel corso degli anni; ultimamente, tuttavia, internet e il cosiddetto 'fattore *kagoy'* (*kids are getting older younger*) hanno causato una diminuzione delle vendite di queste riviste.

Attualmente, esistono più tipi di riviste per ragazzine, ossia *teenzines, teen-fan periodicals* e *fanzines*. I *teenzines* sono riviste che si focalizzano su rubriche di bellezza e di moda, e le loro pagine sono quasi interamente occupate da pubblicità; i *teen-fan periodicals* contengono solo notizie e curiosità dal mondo delle celebrità, quiz e giochi, e sono quasi del tutto privi di pubblicità; infine, i *fanzines* si pongono per lo più come riviste alternative, che cercano di promuovere fenomeni culturali non di massa. Le riviste che ho preso in considerazione, tuttavia, non sono propriamente *teenzines,* in quanto non sono interamente occupate da pubblicità e da articoli su bellezza e moda; non sono neanche *teen-fan periodicals,* poiché gli articoli sulle celebrità non costituiscono la maggior parte delle riviste; infine, non sono neppure *fanzines*, in quanto non promuovono fenomeni culturali alternativi. In sostanza, condividono parte dei contenuti dei primi due tipi di riviste, ma non coincidono pienamente con nessuno di questi generi.

La ricerca condotta sulle riveste per ragazze comprende studi che fanno una panoramica sulla storia delle riviste per adolescenti, e altri che ne analizzano le specifiche caratteristiche. Tuttavia, se da un lato ne sono stati condotti molti che analizzano questi

media dal punto di vista del contenuto, meno numerosi sono quelli che si occupano del loro linguaggio. Questi ultimi, si concentrano principalmente su riviste che privilegiano articoli di moda e di bellezza e che non contengono articoli di gossip. McRobbie (1978) e Talbot (1992), per esempio, riferendosi alla rivista inglese *Jackie*, parlano di come i testi imitino la lingua utilizzata dai giovani negli anni '50, di come gli articoli sui prodotti di bellezza contengano giochi di parole o proverbi, e di come, per distinguere le opinioni delle lettrici dalle proprie, i giornalisti si avvalgano dell'uso del punto esclamativo a fine frase. Sono stati condotti anche studi su riviste per adolescenti pubblicate in altri stati. Willemsen (1998) confronta due riviste olandesi, una per ragazze e una per ragazzi, e nota che le frasi e la punteggiatura utilizzate sono diverse: frasi più lunghe ed enfatizzate da punti esclamativi nel primo caso, frasi più corte e con un uso della punteggiatura più regolare nel secondo. Cotrău (2003), invece, parla di come le riviste per adolescenti pubblicate in Romania abbiano molti neologismi formati con parole inglesi o con parole rumene modificate in modo tale da sembrare inglesi. Pattee (2003) conduce uno studio secondo il quale gli aneddoti imbarazzanti raccontati dalle lettrici sono simili tra loro, come se le lettrici gradualmente imparassero ad usare lo stesso lessico per riportare situazioni imbarazzanti simili. Grozdanova (2010), infine, parlando delle riviste pubblicate in Bulgaria dopo la fine della dittatura, dice che l'intento dei giornalisti è di manipolare le lettrici, fatto sottolineato dal particolare uso dei pronomi personali, dalla presenza di domande, o dalla tendenza ad ingigantire o edulcorare le situazioni descritte. Ci sono anche studi relativi al linguaggio dei *fanzines*. Quello di Androutsopoulos (2000), per esempio, analizza alcuni *fanzines* pubblicati in Germania a inizio anni '90, e specifica come nei loro testi ci sia una massiccia presenza di parole scritte in maniera insolita. Quello di Gaballo (2012), invece, sottolinea come il linguaggio usato sia comprensibile solo alle persone che condividono gli interessi esposti nelle pagine di queste riviste.

Ho deciso di effettuare un'analisi linguistica solo di alcune componenti delle riviste, nello specifico la sezione con le notizie di gossip e le rubriche con le lettere delle lettrici. Ho scartato le altre sezioni in quanto non contenevano testo a sufficienza (ad esempio i quiz o le pagine dedicate allo shopping), perché fatte di linguaggio orale editato anziché di testi interamente scritti dalla redazione o dalle lettrici (ad esempio le interviste), oppure perché si trattava di rubriche non presenti in tutte le riviste prese in considerazione (per esempio i lunghi racconti autobiografici delle lettrici).

Per quanto riguarda la sezione con gli articoli di gossip, avendo notato che certe sue componenti sono graficamente più visibili e marcate rispetto al resto della pagina, che i testi in generale sono brevi e che ci sono delle espressioni che suggeriscono una struttura di tipo dialogica, ho voluto verificare se effettivamente presentano aspetti tipici del linguaggio pubblicitario, degli sms e dell'interazione orale. Per quanto riguarda le rubriche con le lettere delle lettrici, invece, ho voluto verificare se hanno similarità stilistiche, partendo dalla considerazione di Pattee (2003) in merito alle lettere riguardo episodi imbarazzanti, ed estendendola anche alle lettere che riportano problemi delle lettrici. Mi aspettavo di trovare una concentrazione di tratti tipici del linguaggio pubblicitario soprattutto nei titoli degli articoli, di tratti tipici degli sms soprattutto negli articoli, e di tratti tipici dell'oralità soprattutto nei fumetti posti in alcune immagini; inoltre, mi aspettavo di trovare molte somiglianze linguistico-testuali tra le lettere scritte dalle lettrici.

Ho preso in considerazione un totale di otto riviste, ossia tre numeri di *Top Of The Pops,* due di *We Love Pop* e tre di *Shout*, tutti pubblicati nel periodo ottobre-dicembre 2014.

Per poter effettuare la mia analisi, ho anzitutto creato un corpus. Per quanto riguarda la sezione di gossip, ho separato le diverse componenti testuali (titoli, articoli, etc.) in file .txt diversi, taggando manualmente ciascun titolo, articolo, ecc. in modo da delimitarne l'inizio e la fine (non tutti infatti terminano con segni di interpunzione). Gli altri tag inseriti manualmente individuano le differenze a livello grafico di certe parole rispetto a quelle circostanti (ad esempio, <HIGHLIGHTED>, <BOLD>) e alcuni aspetti tipici del linguaggio della pubblicità, degli sms e dell'oralità (con i tag <ADS>, <TXT>, <SPOKEN>). Gli studi presi in considerazione per la selezione dei tratti tipici di questi tre registri linguistici e generi testuali indicano che le pubblicità sono tipicamente caratterizzate da aggettivi 'vaghi' (ossia aggettivi che non indicano caratteristiche oggettive ma sono soprattutto soggettivi e valutativi), figure retoriche, aggettivi alla forma comparativa, parole scritte in maniera 'deformata', neologismi e frasi nominali; gli studi inoltre evidenziano come gli sms vengano generalmente scritti con il cosiddetto *textism*, che consiste in parole abbreviate, errori grammaticali volontari, uso di numeri al posto di lettere, emoticons, errori di punteggiatura, finali di parola mancanti; infine, si apprende che il linguaggio tipico dell'oralità presenta parole generiche (ad esempio,

thing, stuff), omissioni di soggetti, interiezioni, anacoluti, perifrasi indirette, e neologismi semantici. Invece, i tag inseriti elettronicamente grazie al CLAWS POS-tagger, classificano automaticamente le diverse parti del discorso di ogni parola (cioè stringa di lettere) del corpus.

Una volta taggati, i testi della sezione di gossip sono stati caricati su AntConc, che, filtrando le ricerche per tag, mi ha permesso di individuare i tratti dei tre registri linguistici e generi testuali considerati, registrandone la frequenza e notandone la distribuzione.

Le lettere delle lettrici sono state ugualmente analizzate con AntConc, con lo scopo di individuare le espressioni linguistiche più ricorrenti e quindi vedere se le lettere hanno somiglianze stilisitche. Più precisamente, in questi testi ho individuato le 50 parole più frequenti e le espressioni da 2, 3, 4 o 5 parole con almeno 4 occorrenze. Questi testi non sono stati taggati manualmente perché non c'erano particolari componenti testuali che volevo identificare.

L'analisi ha confermato le mie ipotesi iniziali solo in parte sia per quanto riguarda la sezione con gli articoli di gossip, sia per quanto riguarda le rubriche delle lettrici.

Negli articoli di gossip, ho analizzato i titoli, i sottotitoli e gli occhielli, per poi passare agli articoli, alle didascalie e ai fumetti. I titoli costituiscono la parte più prominente della sezione ed hanno una predominanza di tratti tipici del linguaggio pubblicitario. Questi tratti sono presenti in quasi tutti i titoli di *Top Of The Pops* e *Shout*, e in poco meno della metà dei titoli in *We Love Pop*. Mentre *Top Of The Pops* e *We Love Pop* hanno soprattutto frasi nominali e variazioni grafiche, *Shout* ha per lo più variazioni grafiche, mentre le frasi nominali sono presenti in misura minore. I tratti caratteristici degli sms sono quasi del tutto assenti – si trovano in pochi titoli in tutte e tre le riviste, e generalmente ci sono abbreviazioni o parole scritte in maniera insolita. Infine, il linguaggio dell'oralità è meno ricorrente di quello pubblicitario ma più di quello degli sms, e il tratto linguistico più diffuso sono le parole informali.

Per quanto riguarda gli occhielli, ho identificato caratteristiche rilevanti solo in *Shout*, dove elementi tipici del linguaggio pubblicitario e orale hanno frequenza simile, mentre dei tratti tipici degli sms c'è solo una abbreviazione.

I sottotitoli hanno una predominanza di elementi tipici della pubblicità in *Top Of The Pops* (e ci sono soprattutto figure retoriche), elementi tipici degli sms e del linguaggio orale in *We Love Pop* (soprattutto abbreviazioni e interiezioni;), ed elementi tipici del

linguaggio orale in *Shout* (soprattutto frasi interrogative, interiezioni e variazioni grafiche che indicano cambiamenti prosodici).

Negli articoli, c'è una netta predominanza di tratti tipici del linguaggio orale in *We Love Pop* e *Shout*, mentre in *Top Of The Pops* essi hanno la stessa frequenza dei tratti tipici della pubblicità. In tutte e tre le riviste, gli elementi più ricorrenti sono interiezioni, frasi interrogative e verbi al modo imperativo per quanto riguarda il linguaggio dell'oralità, figure retoriche e aggettivi per quanto riguarda il linguaggio pubblicitario. Sono quasi del tutto assenti gli elementi tipici degli sms, e gli unici utilizzati sono, come nelle precedenti componenti testuali, abbreviazioni e parole scritte in modo inusuale.

Le didascalie poste sotto alle foto hanno una predominanza di tratti tipici del linguaggio pubblicitario in tutte e tre le riviste, e gli elementi più diffusi sono le frasi nominali in *Top Of The Pops* e *We Love Pop* e le variazioni grafiche in *Shout*. Sono quasi del tutto assenti i tratti tipici degli sms, sono invece più frequenti quelli del linguaggio orale (ci sono spesso frasi interrogative, interiezioni e imperativi).

Infine, i fumetti hanno chiaramente una predominanza di elementi tipici del linguaggio orale, ma hanno anche alcuni tratti tipici degli altri due registri linguistici e generi testuali, soprattutto del linguaggio pubblicitario, anche se in misura nettamente inferiore.

Sostanzialmente, l'analisi della sezione di gossip ha rivelato che *Shout* è la rivista con il maggior numero di elementi dei tre registri linguistici e generi testuali considerati, seguito da *Top Of The Pops* e *We Love Pop*. I registri linguistici che più vengono esemplificati sono il linguaggio pubblicitario e quello orale, mentre quello degli sms è poco o per niente presente. Le mie aspettative per quanto riguarda l'analisi di questa sezione sono state quindi solo parzialmente soddisfatte: se da un lato ho trovato un'alta frequenza di elementi del linguaggio pubblicitario e orale, rispettivamente nei titoli e nei fumetti, dall'altro ho scoperto che il linguaggio tipico degli sms non è quasi per niente esemplificato negli articoli e, in generale, nella sezione sul gossip. Inoltre, inaspettatamente, ho ritrovato alcuni elementi del linguaggio pubblicitario e degli sms anche nei fumetti, che credevo si limitassero a imitare il linguaggio orale.

Il fatto che ci siano elementi del linguaggio pubblicitario nelle varie componenti testuali è probabilmente un modo per enfatizzare le celebrità e quello che succede loro. Questo è visibile soprattutto in *Shout*, poiché i nomi delle celebrità sono tutti evidenziati

o scritti con un carattere diverso rispetto al resto del testo. Inoltre, i testi sono resi più piacevoli da leggere grazie alle figure retoriche, ai neologismi e alle parole scritte in maniera insolita. Il coinvolgimento delle lettrici nei testi è ulteriormente incrementato dalla presenza di formule interrogative e imperative – sia che siano rivolti direttamente a loro, sia che siano rivolti alle celebrità, si dà l'impressione di instaurare una conversazione fittizia con un altro interlocutore.

La seconda parte del mio lavoro riguarda l'analisi delle lettere scritte dalle lettrici. Ci sono tre rubriche che le riportano: la rubrica delle lettere riguardanti problemi 'di poco conto,' quella delle lettere riguardanti problemi gravi, e quella delle lettere in cui le lettrici raccontano situazioni imbarazzanti di cui sono state protagoniste.

Le lettere del primo gruppo sono quelle in cui ho riscontrato il minor numero di parole e/o espressioni frequentemente utilizzate. Le parole che si ritrovano in più lettere per lo più riguardano gli interessi delle lettrici (la rivista, le celebrità, i ragazzi), e si tratta generalmente di nomi, verbi e aggettivi dal significato iperbolico (questi ultimi solo in *Top Of The Pops* e *We Love Pop*). Le espressioni ricorrenti, invece (molto più rare delle parole frequenti), corrispondono alla formula introduttiva delle lettere in *Top of The Pops* e *We Love Pop,* o a *really like/I don't know* in *Shout*.

Le lettere del secondo gruppo hanno un numero leggermente maggiore di parole ed espressioni ricorrenti rispetto alle precedenti. In questo caso, le parole (nomi e verbi) indicano generalmente le persone a più stretto contatto con le lettrici e alcuni aspetti dei problemi che stanno affrontando (sentimenti, volontà di risolverli). Le espressioni, invece, corrispondono nuovamente all'introduzione delle lettere in *Top Of The Pops*, a *want to* in *We Love Pop*, ed espressioni simili a quest'ultima o che indicano richiesta di aiuto in *Shout*.

Infine, ci sono le lettere in cui le lettrici narrano situazioni in cui si sono sentite in imbarazzo. Questa è la rubrica con la più alta concentrazione di parole o frasi ricorrenti. Le parole indicano i luoghi in cui si svolgono gli episodi (generalmente la scuola), le persone coinvolte o che vi assistono (amiche, ragazzi, a volte parenti), le reazioni di queste ultime (risate), le emozioni delle lettrici (imbarazzo). Le espressioni più frequenti, invece, hanno funzione narrativa (indicano la sequenza delle azioni o i loro rapporti di causa-effetto) oppure sono costituiti dall'aggettivo possessivo + il nome della persona che partecipa o assiste alla scena (*my brother, my best friend*). Uno dei numeri di *Shout*

che ho analizzato aveva ben due rubriche di questo tipo; mentre una riportava episodi di vario tipo come negli altri numeri, l'altra si focalizzava su conversazioni imbarazzanti avvenute sui social. L'uso diffuso del lessico specifico dei social da parte delle lettrici fa sì che le singole parole o espressioni usate abbiano la più alta frequenza di tutto il corpus.

In generale, la rivista col valore totale più alto di parole/espressioni frequenti è *Top Of The Pops*. Tuttavia, ciò non è dovuto al fatto che ciascuna parola abbia un'alta frequenza, piuttosto al fatto che ce ne sono tante di (poco) frequenti. Invece, la rubrica in cui ho riscontrato la più alta frequenza di parole ricorrenti è quella delle situazioni imbarazzanti. Quindi, la somiglianza degli argomenti di cui parlano le lettrici determina una somiglianza del lessico usato: gli scenari sono molto simili (la scuola, una uscita con le amiche), così come i protagonisti (gli amici, il ragazzo per cui si ha una cotta) e le reazioni delle protagoniste e di chi le guarda (imbarazzo e risate, rispettivamente). Le altre due rubriche sui problemi più o meno gravi, invece, hanno a che fare con un ampio ventaglio di situazioni (cotte per i ragazzi, ansie, problemi familiari etc.), perciò il repertorio lessicale in comune tra le lettere è relativamente basso. Sostanzialmente, quindi, le mie aspettative iniziali sono solo parzialmente confermate: se mi aspettavo di trovare somiglianze negli stili scrittori in tutte e tre le rubriche, ho in realtà trovato analogie piuttosto rilevanti solo nella rubrica sugli episodi imbarazzanti, mentre nelle altre due rubriche le analogie erano inferiori.

In generale, il fatto che le aspettative iniziali siano state solo parzialmente confermate sia nell'analisi della sezione sui pettegolezzi, sia in quella delle rubriche delle lettrici, può essere dovuto a diversi motivi. Anzitutto, nella formulazione delle mie ipotesi, non ho tenuto in debito conto il fatto che gli argomenti discussi nelle lettere delle lettrici sono davvero molteplici, pertanto ognuna descrive le situazioni e le difficoltà che sta vivendo in maniera personale. Poi, soprattutto per quanto concerne l'analisi della rubrica di gossip, ho scelto di analizzare solo alcuni degli elementi tipici del linguaggio orale o pubblicitario, o degli sms; selezionando elementi diversi o ulteriori, avrei avuto verificare su un più ampio campione di dati le mie ipotesi iniziali. Il mio lavoro, comunque, ha portato un piccolo contributo alla descrizione delle riveste per ragazze: alcuni dei risultati degli studi precedenti (ad esempio, v. McRobbie 1978) sono stati confermati, ma relativamente a una rubrica diversa – la sezione dei pettegolezzi anziché le rubriche di bellezza. Altri invece sono stati confutati (ad esempio, v. Willemsen 1998,

che aveva trovato solo pochi aggettivi nelle riviste analizzate, mentre gli aggettivi sono tra gli elementi del linguaggio pubblicitario più frequenti nel mio corpus).

Ovviamente, la mia è solo una delle tante analisi possibili delle riviste per ragazzine. Ricerche future potrebbero effettuare confronti tra: a) le due rubriche da me analizzate (gossip e lettere delle lettrici), per identificare eventuali somiglianze stilistiche (ad esempio il tipo di aggettivi usati, lo sviluppo delle informazioni sia nelle singole frasi che nei testi, le metafore scelte), b) queste riviste e riviste che si rivolgono ad un pubblico più maturo (a livello sincronico, l'analisi potrebbe individuare punti di contatto e diversità tra i due tipi di riviste; a livello diacronico, si potrebbe cercare di vedere se queste similarità/diversità ci sono sempre state, o quando si sono manifestate), o riviste pubblicate in altre lingue (potrebbe essere interessante esaminare l'eventuale presenza di anglicismi nei loro testi, per verificare se sono termini usati anche nelle riviste inglesi o se invece sono scelti solo per dare una patina più 'internazionale' alla rivista).