

Reseñas / Reviews

La construcción discursiva de la masculinidad. Un estudio de consultorios en revistas para hombres del Reino Unido. By Eduardo de Gregorio-Godeo. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM, 2009. Pp. 536. ISBN: 978-3-639-13799-6.
Reviewed by María Isabel Romero Ruiz, Universidad de Málaga

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Following the well-established interest in the study of men and masculinities dating back to the seventies within disciplines like sociology, psychology or anthropology, it was only in the late nineties that linguistics started to become fully concerned with the study of the masculine *per se*. The publication of Johnson and Meinhof's *Language and Masculinity* (1997) represented a turning point in the long-standing feminist linguistics tradition within language and gender research, where the masculine had been considered as a taken for granted category in the study of femininities and women's oppression in / through language, yet never actually explored as such. With an interdisciplinary approach, the book draws upon CDA as a methodology for the study of issues of language and masculinity within

a broader men's studies orientation. With an agenda greatly in common with Cultural Studies (Barker, 2003: 443; Baldwin et al., 2004: 17-18), men's studies are involved in the scrutiny of men's identities and concerns, making them visible in public forums of contemporary scholarship. Men's studies have been active for more than twenty years now and different masculinities have been acknowledged, following a non-essentialist approach which gives recognition to the existence of a plurality of identities. Although there has been some controversy over how to name the field, notions like «studies of men and masculinities» and «critical studies of men» reflect in a more accurate way the work that has been done in recent years, mostly inspired by feminist research on women (Kimmel, Hearn and

Connell, 2005: 1-3). In the context of work on language and masculinity conducted through CDA, de Gregorio-Godeo's work is fully representative of research in men's studies through its examination of how language and discourse contribute to the representation and construction of masculinities in print media. Given the fundamental concern of Cultural Studies with gender issues—and indeed with masculinity—(Baldwin et al. 2004: 17), the volume may be more broadly read as substantiating the potential of discourse analysis-oriented research for Cultural Studies as «an interdisciplinary [...] field of enquiry that explores the production and inculcation of maps of meaning» (Barker, 2003: 437).

Specifically, this publication is divided in seven chapters, including an appendix at the end with the textual samples examined in the study. The first chapter consists of an introduction to what the author considers the basic motivation for the writing of the volume and its hypotheses when it comes to the analysis of how the idea of masculinity is articulated discursively in men's magazines in the United Kingdom, focusing concretely on the problem pages that are very common in these types of publications. Chapter II is devoted to the contextualization of the work within the tradition of studies about language and gender in the Anglo-speaking world, with a

special emphasis on what has been done till now in relation to the issue of language and masculinity. Despite the fact that the non-discursive levels of analysis are also taken into consideration, the book focuses on the relation between language and masculinity at the level of discourse production, for example, in speech acts, politeness and conversation. In its overview of work on men's studies, Chapter III pays attention to important aspects such as the existence of multiple masculinities, the so-called masculinity crisis and the emergence of new models of masculinity in media-discourse vehicles of the UK. These images include the «new man» and his incorporation of dimensions traditionally associated with feminine universes (e.g. a closer contact with emotions and greater aesthetic concerns), and the «new lad» and his recreation of patriarchal values (e.g. women's sexual objectification and homophobia). In the same fashion, Chapter IV contains a detailed description of the process of discursive construction of identities, giving emphasis to the discursive construction of gender and the particularities of journalistic discourse in the process. In a study about the role of discourse in the construction of gendered ideologies in social life, CDA is subsequently justified as a methodological tool for the study of language, ideology and power. Hence, Norman Fairclough's

(2001) CDA model for the analysis of «socio-cultural change and change in discourse» (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) is presented through its consideration of discourse at three different levels: textual, interactional and socio-cultural. Fairclough's three-level analytical framework is employed methodologically in the volume to study discourse in three stages: the description of the textual, the interpretation of the interactional, and the explanation of the socio-cultural. In Chapter V, the corpus of data is presented and its selection criteria are established, doing a detailed genre and register analysis of the problem pages in men's magazines. Chapter VI shows the results of the empirical analysis of twenty textual samples, demonstrating that the choice of specific textual features (lexis, verbal processes, negations, modality, discourse markers, macrostructures, etc.) is determined by the power relations of the social formation where the magazines are published, for instance, the changing gender relations or the impact of consumerism upon men. Furthermore, the results substantiate that such textual options also contribute actively to shaping the masculinity ideology articulated in the reader-counsellor interaction, characteristic of problem pages in contemporary Britain. Chapter VII shows the conclusions and contains more general reflections from a men's studies perspective, in

particular about the process whereby magazines' readers come to negotiate their masculine identities with the ideological repertoires of the «new man» or the «new lad» by taking up or rejecting such subject positions in the act of reading the magazines.

The volume might be criticised for being somehow limited, concentrating only in problem pages and failing to consider other sections of men's magazines. However, the results of the study are revealing in themselves and provide major insights into the study of the genre explored. Alternatively, the detailed application of Fairclough's CDA model over each of the textual samples of the corpus is perhaps a bit too repetitive for the reader, so in future studies this type of analysis could be replaced with a thorough examination of just one or two texts, followed by a broader discussion of the rest of textual samples as a whole, thereby laying a stronger emphasis on the Cultural Studies overall implications of the discourse analysis-oriented examination of texts. In any case, the procedure employed may also be regarded as positive given the pedagogic dimension of the research experience conducted, which may methodologically inspire similar studies on the discursive construction of gendered subject positions in various print media genres.

All in all, in addition to the analysis of culture and power issues

in the construction of masculinities in media vehicles like men's magazines, the attempt to study the role of language and discourse as constitutively determined by and shaping socio-cultural phenomena like gender ideology is consistent with further theoretical work on the possibilities of discourse analysis as a tool for Cultural Studies research (Barker and Galasinski, 2001), as far as the study of various masculinities in media discourse is concerned. Thus, the study succeeds in shedding light on the role of text and discourse in the construction of masculine ideological constructs, which is illustrative of the major interest in men and masculinities, not only in the frame of the Social Sciences, where publications on this topic have proliferated, but also in the different disciplines in the Humanities, where not only Applied Linguistics, but also literature, visual arts, dance, music and many other cultural and aesthetic fields have made of men's issues their object of concern (Kimmel, Hearn and Connell, 2005: 3). In this respect, the volume incorporates a view of men and masculinities understood as socially constructed and reproduced in a Butlerian sense, and hence considered as variable through time and space within societies. Similarly, through its consideration of the socio-cultural dimension of discourses on masculinity in magazines, the

volume makes it clear that men's relations are seen as power relations following Foucault's theories both at the discursive and material levels, so that the interconnection between gender and other socio-cultural divisions becomes relevant.

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