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Araştırma Makalesi * Research Article

A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Gender Ideologies in Women's Magazines' Horoscopes

Kadın Dergilerindeki Burç Yorumlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet İdeolojilerine Yönelik Bir Söylem Çözümlemesi

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Abstract: Women's magazines are a means to create and reproduce women's identities by emphasizing particular topics like fashion, beauty, love, and horoscopes. In this sense, they convey some ideological messages – mostly cultural and gender-biased. Using the critical discourse analysis method of Van Dijk (2001), this study intends to compare the social and linguistic patterns of love and sexual themes in horoscopes in women's magazines in three cultures – English, German, and Turkish. The data were collected from 2023 yearly horoscopes published in online women's magazines in three languages. The macro-level analysis showed that in all three languages, horoscopes highlighted the place of love in women's self-improvement. German and English horoscopes reflected women as equal, independent, self-confident, and strong individuals, while Turkish horoscopes conveyed a more conservative perspective on love, partnership, and sexuality, emphasizing traditional gender roles and perpetuating stereotypes. Regarding the micro level of the analysis, left and right dislocation were frequently found in the German horoscopes, compared to Turkish and English ones. Questions and imperatives were mostly applied patterns in the three languages. The employment of plural and singular forms of "you" pronoun and the lexical strategies used to address readers showed variations in Turkish, German, and English horoscopes.

Keywords: Women's magazines, horoscopes, gender ideologies, critical discourse analysis.

Öz: Kadın dergileri, moda, güzellik, aşk ve burçlar gibi belirli konuları vurgulayarak kadın kimliğini yaratmanın ve yeniden üretmenin bir yoludur. Bu anlamda, çoğunlukla kültürel ve cinsiyete dayalı bazı ideolojik mesajlar iletilir. Van Dijk'in (2001) eleştirel söylem analizi yöntemini kullanan bu çalışma, İngilizce, Almanca ve Türkçe olmak üzere üç kültürde kadın dergilerinde burçlarda yer alan aşk ve cinsellik temalarının, sosyal ve dilsel örüntülerini karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Veriler, üç dilde çevrimiçi kadın dergilerinde yayınlanan 2023 yıllık burçlarından toplanmıştır. Makro düzeyde yapılan analiz, her üç dilde de burçların kadınların kişisel gelişiminde sevginin yerini vurguladığını göstermiştir. Almanca ve İngilizce burçlar, kadınları eşit, bağımsız, kendine güvenen ve güçlü bireyler olarak yansıtırken, Türkçe burçlar geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini vurgulayarak

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ve klişeleri sürdürerek sevgi, ortaklık ve cinsellik konusunda daha muhafazakâr bir bakış açısı yansıtmaktadır. Analizin mikro seviyesi ile ilgili olarak, Almanca burçlarda Türkçe ve İngilizce olanlara kıyasla sola ve sağa kaydırma sıklıkla bulunmuştur. Sorular ve emir kipleri çoğunlukla üç dilde de kullanılmıştır. İkinci şahıs zamirinin çoğul ve tekil biçimlerinin kullanımında ve okuyuculara hitap etmek için kullanılan sözcüksel stratejilerde, Türkçe, Almanca ve İngilizce burçlarda farklılıklar gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın dergileri, burçlar, toplumsal cinsiyet ideolojileri, eleştirel söylem analizi.

INTRODUCTION

Women's magazines have been playing an important role in the lives of many women throughout the world since the 19th century. Advice about fashion, beauty, love, motherhood, cooking, etc. comes to us from a dizzying array of women's magazines' sections in all cultures. As a prominent part of popular culture, the role and influence of these magazines on women have become an attractive topic for scholarly exploration. Gill (2010) emphasizes the feminist nature of these studies. Women magazines are mostly the legitimizer of unequal relations and a superficial template of femininity centered on fashion, beauty and 'how to get a man'. Besides, the ideological messages conveyed in these magazines are classed, racialized, and heteronormative. They opt for a more complete commitment of the readers and fewer readers' creativity. The ideological messages are often contradictory in different sections of these magazines.

It is now well established from a variety of studies that women's magazines are a key component of mass media that shapes the lifestyle and identity of women in many countries. Several studies attempted to explain the portrayal of women in advertisements (Brown & Knight 2015; Zhao & Zhu 2015). Other studies have examined the physical representation of women or their gender roles (Conlin & Bissell 2014; Alagappan & Selvarantam 2014; Basnyat & Chang 2014; Crusmac, 2013) and the construction of sex and power (Machin & Thornborrow, 2006).

There is a growing body of literature associated with love and sex themes in women's magazines. Erjavec (2006) examined the textual devices used in the construction of female identity in women's magazines in Slovenia. Farvid and Braun (2006) investigated how male and female sexuality were identified in *Cosmopolitan* and *Cleo*. Following the critical discourse analysis approach, Conradie (2011) studied the linguistic constructions of gender ideology in the advice articles of *Cosmopolitan*. Gill (2010) identified recurrent themes in the relationship and sex advice in *Glamour* magazine: a- the intimate entrepreneurship repertoire: the planning of the perfect relationship; b- men-ology: the knowledge of women on how to please men, c-transforming the self: the keys of sexual confidence are to change the body, sexual practices, and psychic lives. In the German edition of *Cosmopolitan*, Kauppinen (2013) examined a discourse of postfeminist self-management work and sex issues and found an encouragement for women to take responsibility for their own lives and make their dreams come true.

One of the sections in women's magazines is horoscopes as a part of popular culture, which is the focus of the present study. As for Campion (2008), nearly 70 % of the adult population in Western countries read horoscope columns, which makes them an essential feature of mass media. This section is widely read and some women even make their decisions based on the advice given in the horoscopes (Synder, 1974). To avoid conflicts, some women's magazines in the USA added a disclaimer in the horoscope sections (Blackmore & Seebold, 2001). Having such an influence, horoscopes have attracted many scholars. Most of the studies on horoscopes concentrated on the themes (Adorno, 1994, Evans, 1996, Svensen & White, 1995, Tondoc & Ferruci, 2014).

Much of the research about love and sex themes in women's magazines up to now has failed to address the cross-cultural analysis of these themes. There is little published data on love and sex themes from a cross-cultural perspective (Lulu & Alkaff, 2018). Drawing upon love and sexual themes in the horoscope columns in women's magazines in three cultures (English, German, and Turkish), the present study will generate fresh insights into the social and linguistic patterns in three cultures by following a critical discourse analysis approach (CDA, hereafter). According to Williams (2012), CDA enables us to comprehend the deployment of syntactic and lexical patterns. In addition, it shows the reinforcement of the thoughts through the repetition of these patterns. On a broader level, CDA investigates the patterns of thoughts and ideologies. Love and sex concepts are cultural and gender biased. We specifically focused on the horoscope sections because women are mostly akin to making decisions based on what

they read in their horoscopes. In this sense, they may be considered an important means of mitigation of love and sex in women's minds. Durham (1996: 19) considers women's magazines as "a powerful representations of women's lives".

Gender in Women's Magazines

Following Conradie (2011: 402), the present study approaches the themes of love and sexuality in terms of two assumptions: gender as a social construct and a variety of ideologically shaped discourses provide a baseline for the process of gender socialization.

Women's magazines have a gender-biased perspective. Gender is a phenomenon that is socially constructed. Based on their biological sex, individuals are expected to perform some gender-based roles of their cultures, which begin from their childhood. Performing these roles requires life-long socialization. Additionally, there exist variations in the performance of the "normal" gender in different cultures. Gender is influenced by both the present context and the life-long socialization process. The term 'gender ideology' refers to the perspectives on gender in this context and the process. Institutions shape their views about gender-based elements of these two concepts.

If gender is a social construct, then, gender ideologies are closely associated with both masculinity and femininity and the social conventions. In today's world, the mass media is the most powerful means of these ideologies. Magazines as one of the types of mass media are reflections of the capitalist movement. They impose on their readers a sense of identity and companionship to encourage consumerism. As authoritative tools, they have the potential to shape readers' perspectives on gender through the employment of particular linguistic features.

Williams (2012: 9) explains the relationship between language and feminine discourse. For her, the study of language can enable scholars to figure out the linguistic aspects of femininity. Languages are a means of "creating and perpetuating ideologies through both subtle and overt messages about how to act, what to strive towards and how to judge others and oneself". Conventions and attitudes are reflected through language. Individuals are exposed to some messages about what to believe and how to act to be members of cultural groups. Discourses convey prevailing ideas and cultural messages or ideologies that help us to identify ourselves as a part of a community. In other words, they have socially recognized ways of the employment of the language to mitigate an identity or ideology.

In the present study, women's magazines –grounded on cultural gender ideologies- are considered to limit and broaden readers' perspectives on love and sexuality from a feminine perspective since they are viewed as a powerful source of feminine discourse that has specific linguistic features. Therefore, a study of horoscope content should be mindful of revealing the potential cultural differences about love and sexuality. This study is an attempt to comprehend these differences across three cultures. It employs CDA to uncover latent social and linguistic norms associated with the reflection of love and sexuality.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of the present study is CDA which stems from a critical analysis of language in specific discourse. Each discourse includes social and linguistic conventions that classify and regulate individuals' identities, beliefs, and behaviors. As a specific genre of discourse, women's magazines are structured on cultural versions of femininity. In this qualitative study, CDA is used to identify cultural and linguistic variations concerning the representation of love and sexuality in horoscopes in women's magazines.

Data Collection

The data presented here was based on 2023 yearly horoscopes published in online women's magazines in English, German, and Turkish. We first identified the women's magazines including horoscope columns in the three cultures. We found 30 women's magazines published in the UK and Türkiye. In Germany, there were 23 women's magazines. The validity of the data was ensured by the choice of multicultural magazines published in various countries and local magazines published only in Germany, the UK, and Türkiye. We also concentrated on the readership profiles to create homogenous

groups of readers and excluded magazines targeting specific races and ages in the three cultures. In this way, we created homogenous data consisting of the same demographic of women. Some precautions to avoid the repetition of the themes were taken. The magazines in Turkish data in which the astrology columns were directly translated from English to Turkish were extracted from the data. Besides, the magazines whose astrology columns were written by different writers were chosen. At the end of this process, four magazines for each context were selected as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Women's magazines selected*

German Horoscopes	English Horoscopes	Turkish Horoscopes
Cosmopolitan	Allure	Elle
Vogue	Women's Health	Elele
Bunte	Marie-Claire	In-Style
Brigitte	Women & Home	Alem

Data Analysis

In general terms, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is about examining the use of language in social contexts to understand how it contributes to the maintenance or challenge of power relations. Specifically, CDA examines which linguistic means are used to convey certain opinions and views. The interactions between language, power, and ideology - the power relations that arise through discourse - can be analyzed through the CDA process. To investigate the social and linguistic patterns of horoscopes related to love and sexuality in the women's magazine under study, the analysis applies the CDA taxonomy of Van Dijk (2001: 354). CDA is a type of analytical research - especially from gender perspectives - that highlights social power abuse, dominance, and inequality in a social and political context. In this taxonomy of CDA, there are two main categories: macro and micro. The first one is concerned with "power, dominance, and inequality between social groups" while the latter one is related to "language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication". In our context, women possessed the power, so we follow a more feminist approach to CDA in macro analysis. In the microanalysis, we concentrated on the linguistic patterns (syntactic and lexical) of gender ideologies in the horoscopes of three cultures. Language is a tool to maintain certain social structures; it can be used to marginalize or exclude certain groups (e.g. women), and it can help to increase discrimination and inequality in society, especially between men and women.

Based on the suggestions of Cotter (2001) on media discourse studies, we mainly emphasized audience considerations (women in our context) and discourse features. We employed some particular methods of analysis:

- the implications of quotation: We gave some extracts from the horoscopes to deduce the themes related to love and sexuality in the three cultures.
- the exercise of power, bias, and ideology in the press: the data of the present study were gender-based. We presupposed that women are encouraged to have self-power regarding love and sexuality.
- the effects of the media in perpetuating social imbalance, notably racism, and immigration: it is widely accepted that horoscopes influence the way individuals think and behave. Therefore, in our context, horoscopes were likely to affect women's thoughts on love and sexuality.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the previous section, we conducted our CDA analysis on the macro and micro levels. This analytical approach will delve into the underlying ideologies, power relations, and socio-cultural dynamics embedded within the horoscope discourse of the three languages. By critically examining the language choices, rhetorical strategies, and discursive patterns employed in these texts, the study aims to uncover how horoscopes contribute to the construction and negotiation of social meanings, identities, and belief systems. The macro analysis of the horoscopes in three cultures gave insights into the culturally-biased gender ideologies in these cultures. At the micro level, we identified linguistic features of these feminine contexts in Turkish, German, and English cultures. We

demonstrated the schematization and formulaic nature of horoscope texts and the expressive means they are realized. It is necessary to briefly discuss how and which lexical, grammatical, and syntactic characteristics and constructions are used to address and influence the target reader profile of horoscopes in women's magazines.

Macro Analysis

Turkish horoscopes exhibit a more conservative perspective on love, partnership, and sexuality. They tend to reproduce stereotypical gender roles and traditional notions of love, portraying it as a means to *marriage, getting children, and having a family*, rather than *emphasizing pleasure, sexuality, and eroticism*. Marriage is depicted as a comfort zone for women (1), which should not be interfered with by the woman herself (2).

(1) Kader düğümleri burada size şunu anlatıyor; ev, konfor, aile, aile bireylerinin mutluluğu ile ilgili güvenli alanınızı oluşturun.

(2) Eşinizle ve evliliğinizde alaycı ve fazla uçarı davranmamaya çalışın.

Furthermore, women are often reminded of their maternal role while also being portrayed as dependent on male attention and financial support. Conversely, men are depicted as dominant and conquering figures (3). Seemingly, such reproduction of stereotypes contributes to the perpetuation of social inequalities.

(3) Güçlü erkek figürlerden şans gelecek.

The women in Turkish horoscopes are frequently objectified and addressed in terms of their physical appearance and attractiveness to men. Such objectification of women generally reinforces sexist beliefs within society. Horoscopes often employ a binary gender dichotomy and construct gender roles in a narrow manner, which is also evident in our Turkish dataset. Moreover, the Turkish texts emphasize self-improvement, conveying the notion that love is part of a larger process of self-optimization, whereby one strives to enhance and perfect oneself to maintain a successful relationship (4). This reinforces the perception of love and sexuality as something to be achieved or acquired.

(4) Hayatımızda kendimizi, isteklerimizi ve duygularımızı merkeze alamadığımız her türlü ilişki bu dönemde maalesef bitmeye mecburdur.

Similar to Turkish horoscope texts, the German data also emphasize that love is part of a broader process of self-improvement for women. However, unlike the Turkish dataset, German horoscopes depict women as equal individuals (5) and *independent* (6) concerning their partners.

(5) Da muss das Gegenüber erst mal mithalten können, denn Augenhöhe ist Ihnen in der Beziehung wichtig.

(6) Doch für Jungfrau ist es besonders wichtig, trotz aller Verbundenheit unabhängig den eigenen Weg zu gehen.

In contrast to Turkish horoscopes in which love is equated with marriage and having children, love is not approached from a conservative perspective in German horoscope. Instead, love is portrayed as an *amorous adventure*, a kind of *game or experiment* (7), something *temporary* (8), and even something *constraining* (9). In German horoscopes, love, and sexuality are mitigated as something vibrant, wild, and daring (10).

(7) Denn dieser Planet bringt die Hormone in Wallung und sorgt dafür, dass der Schütze noch mehr amouröse Abenteuer erleben kann, als ohnehin schon. Und so erwacht auch eine gewisse Experimentierfreude – neue Erfahrungen ziehen Sie fast magisch an.

(8) Abgesehen davon flattern sie gern wie Schmetterlinge von Blüte zu Blüte – gibt ja auch so viele schöne.

(9) Wenn dieses Sternzeichen vom Partner zu sehr eingeschränkt wird, besteht eine hohe Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass es irgendwann das Weite sucht.

(10) Es wird bunter, wilder und verwegen. Genießen Sie es!

Regarding English horoscopes, women are portrayed as individuals who are equal to their counterparts, *independent, conscious of their freedom, and self-reliant* (11). They address concepts such as sex, sexuality, and eroticism directly and openly, often without hesitation (12). In line with German and Turkish horoscopes, the English dataset also emphasizes that love is part of a broader process of *self-optimization* for women (13).

(11) As Pluto enters Aquarius, on March 23, it starts a new era, one where feminist issues will be center stage, and equality will be promoted.

(12) Explore each other's bodies and fantasies with abandon and let your inner sex goddess run wild and free.

(13) When you feel good about yourself, that same confidence spills into your relationships because the quality of your connections reflects your self-esteem.

The construction of love and sexuality in horoscopes in the three cultures reveals interesting similarities and differences in the portrayal of these concepts. While all three languages acknowledge the significance of love in the self-optimization process for women, the nuances in their approaches become evident. English horoscope texts strike a balance, positioning love within the realm of romance and emphasizing its connection to personal fulfillment. While German texts are more open and explicit, and Turkish texts tend to focus on traditional notions of love and family. These variations highlight the cultural influences and unique perspectives embedded in horoscope texts across different languages.

For Erjavec (2006), women's magazines are like the male-dominated sex manual. Women are responsible for the relationships. In our context, we observed this trend in Turkish horoscopes where femininity is a myth and the responsibilities of women are defined by the prescriptive discourse highlighting marriage rather than sexual pleasures, which is in line with Lulu and Alkaff (2018). Although horoscopes in women's magazines are created for women, the conceptualization of women regarding love and sexuality is constructed via masculinity in Turkish culture. The traditional norms of female sexuality are still present in this culture.

In their study, Basnyat and Chang (2016: 85) categorize femininity into some categories such as *giving, awareness of others' feelings, and sex appeal*. We see all the examples of *giving* – "female character showed an intention to please others or meet their needs" - in Turkish horoscopes, as stated below. The masculinity of women is labeled by *independence* "a female character's ability to think or act for herself", *dominance* "whether a female character was ruling, having power, or in control over someone or something", *activeness* of a female character in physical action and *self-confidence*. The gender ideologies in German and English horoscopes were created based on the masculinity of women. Images of being a woman depend on more masculine conventions in these two cultures. The comparison of the concepts of love and sexuality allowed us to claim that modern femininity includes certain aspects of positive masculinity in German and English cultures, which is not tolerated in the frames of femininity in Turkish culture.

Micro Analysis

Syntactic Features

In syntactic terms, every text is perceived by the reader as a linear sequence of ordered word forms. This sequence is never left to chance and always follows the rules of grammar. Each language, including German, English, and Turkish in the context of our study, has its own unique set of positional rules that dictate specific word orderings. These rules prescribe particular sequences, and sentence elements cannot be arbitrarily rearranged or dislocated.

Any alteration to word order will have a communicative effect on the meaning of what is said. This includes the technique of highlighting syntactic units by dislocating them from the main sentence structure. Left-dislocation and right-dislocation are examples of syntactic constructions in linguistics that involve moving a sentence element out of its normal position in the sentence structure to a more prominent position to emphasize it. Although left-dislocation (1) and right-dislocation (2) techniques

are particularly observable in German horoscope texts, they are less frequent in English horoscope texts. The dislocation techniques are also possible in the Turkish language but they are not commonly used in our context. As seen in the examples below, the use of these dislocations serves to accentuate particular sentence elements, drawing attention to them and emphasizing their importance.

(1) Mein Mantra: Ich bin Liebe, gebe und empfangen bedingungslose Liebe.

Remember: your heart deserves blissful love too.

(2) In einem Wort: Sex.

Go ahead and spoil yourself, Pisces – you deserve it.

Questions are also significant syntactic utilities in horoscope texts. By employing questions the reader is addressed directly, which creates a feeling of closeness and intimacy (3). Particularly short questions that provide information in the form of keywords can be individually interpreted by the reader (4) and strengthen this feeling. They are also thought-provoking tools (5) and used to request readers to follow implicit or explicitly formulated advice (6).

(3) Aşk ve çocuklar konusunda neler yaşamıştınız?

(4) Wohin will mein Herz?

(5) Ja, der Wunsch nach Entfaltung und der nach Harmonie im Miteinander können ab und an kollidieren, aber dann hilft folgende Frage: Was verliere ich, wenn ich mich auf gesunde Art abgrenze – und was gewinne ich?

(6) How far are you willing to go to accommodate someone else's needs? Relationships are given and taken, but make sure you're not tipping the balance in someone else's favor. Remember: your heart deserves blissful love too.

Imperatives are often used in horoscopes to provide advice, suggestions, or recommendations, which is similar to the findings of Erjavec (2006). They guide readers on how to navigate upcoming challenges or make the most of favorable opportunities indicated in the horoscope, as can be seen in (7).

(7) Set aside self-doubt and adopt an attitude of "if it's meant to be, it will be".

Pronouns and Nouns

Horoscopes often begin with a direct address to the reader, creating a sense of personal involvement. They commonly employ both personal and possessive pronouns to establish a sense of personal connection. The specific addressing and pronouns used in horoscopes depend on the writer's style and the intended tone of the text. In our English data, the predominantly used pronoun is the second-person singular *you* (8), which creates an informal and warm addressing. In addition to the aforementioned method of addressing the reader, horoscopes demonstrate the utilization of various forms of address involving individuals other than the reader. An example of this is the application of indefinite person designation, which is commonly observed in astrology terminologies, such as in the names of zodiac signs and planets:

(8) **You're** one of the big winners of this year, Leo. / La Luna wants you to take the initiative, **Cancer**.

Nevertheless, in the Turkish horoscope data analyzed, it was observed that the predominant pronoun employed for addressing the reader is the formal second-person pronoun *siz* (*you*), which carries an inherent sense of formality and respect. However, this linguistic strictness associated with the use of *siz* is mitigated by the inclusion of the term *sevgili* (*dear*), which serves to soften the tone and establish a warmer and more personal connection with the reader (9).

(9) Sevgili Yay; 2023 senesinde sizi güzel gelişmeler bekliyor.

Within the German dataset, a notable observation arises regarding the richness and diversity of personal pronoun usage. This encompasses a range of pronouns, the first-person singular pronouns *ich*

(I), the informal second-person singular pronoun *du* (you), as well as the formal second-person pronoun *Sie* (you). The inclusion of such a varied array of personal pronouns contributes to the linguistic intricacy and nuance found within the German language horoscope texts (10).

(10) Aber mal ehrlich: Möchten Sie, bei aller Liebe, nach dem Motto "Du und ich, der Rest der Welt bleibt draußen" leben?

While addressing individuals other than the reader, specific reference points in the context are usually not explicitly mentioned, so that an individual interpretation is possible and the concretization is left to the recipient of the horoscope (Burger 2005: 79). This phenomenon is most evident on the lexical level, particularly in the designations of person that remain indefinite and general, open to reader's interpretations. In all three languages, both singular and plural indefinite pronouns, as well as nominal forms, which are predominantly neutral in nature are used quite often. Giving some examples for indefinite pronouns of our horoscope data in German, Turkish, and English, we can state that *jemand/birileri/someone*, *manche/bazı/some* and *ein(e) andere(r)/ diğ er/ (an)other* are the most common ones. Besides indefinite pronouns, indefinite nouns are used within the framework of partnership, love, and sexuality. Nouns can be accompanied by adjectives or attributive clauses, also known as relative clauses. In German, nouns for indefinite person designations are *Partner*, *Ihren Menschen*, *Herzensemenschen*, *Liebsten*, *Sexpartner*, *seiner großen Liebe*, *einer neuen Flamme*, *dein neuer Herzensemsch*, 'der Person begegnet, die endlich die Schmetterlinge im Bauch flattern lässt'. In Turkish these are *sevgiliniz*, *eşiniz*, *aşk yaşadığınız kişi*, *hayatınızdaki kişi*, *birlikte olduğ unuz kişi*, *eski aşkınız*. In English, we observe namings such as *partner*, *lover*, *crush*, *admirer forever person*, *like-minded lover*, *your perfect match*, *the perfect person for you*, and *your soulmate*. Such attributions may appear to narrow down the meaning and thus provide a certain level of individualization. However, they represent a "perceived specification" (Furthmann 2006: 351), as the designated qualities are so general that the assignment to specific individuals or situations remains open and is left to the recipient's interpretation (Bachmann-Stein 2004: 291).

An additional noteworthy observation regarding our German dataset is the conscious use of gender-neutral language, commonly referred to as *gendern*, is particularly significant and deserves attention. *Gendern* refers to the linguistic consideration of gender diversity and the effort to make people of all genders visible in language. While in general an increasing recognition of the significance of gender-neutral language is evident across all three languages analyzed, German demonstrates a more apparent approach.

One way to gender language in German is to use the gender star (*) or a colon (:), for example in spellings such as *Lehrer*innen/ Lehrer:innen*. This type of writing is intended to express that the term applies to all genders. Another possibility in German is the use of the so-called *Binnen-I*, which is used in words such as *LehrerInnen* to include both genders. Another variation is the use of the underscore, for example in *Lehrer_innen*. Furthermore, both the third-person singular pronouns *er* and *sie*, including all grammatical variations, such as Akkusative and Dativ forms *ihn/ihm/ihr*, are utilized to indicate a gender-neutral application of pronouns. An example from our German horoscope data illustrates this phenomenon:

(11) Im April und Mai steht deine Leidenschaft noch etwas stärker im Fokus, **dein:e Sexpartner:in** und du entdeckt eure Lust noch einmal auf eine neue Art und Weise. Im Sommer geht es dir in der Liebe dann mehr darum, wieder mehr Zeit außerhalb des Schlafzimmers miteinander zu verbringen und euch gegenseitig noch besser kennenzulernen. Im Herbst könnte es passieren, dass **dein Partner oder deine Partnerin** dir deutlich macht, dass **er oder sie** gerade nicht so viel Zeit für dich hat.

Adjectives and Adverbs

Not just within accompanying indefinite pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs play in general a significant role in horoscope texts, as they contribute to the overall tone, mood, and description of the astrological predictions and advice. As tools of descriptive language usage adjectives and adverbs are frequently employed in horoscope texts to convey specific qualities, characteristics, or attributes related to the zodiac signs or the events being described. They are used to evoke emotional responses in readers

and create a sense of empathy or anticipation. Positive adjectives and adverbs are often utilized to inspire and uplift the reader. Some examples regarding partnership, love, and sexuality in the three languages of our horoscope data are:

German: lustvoll, amourös, aktiv, bedingungslos, emotional tief berührbar, verlockend, gemeinsam, konstruktiv

Turkish: kalıcı ve uzun, güzel ve keyfli, güçlü, tutkulu, kadersel büyük, bereketli, aşk dolu mutlu, buram buram aşk kokan

English: pretty sweet, praiseworthy, adventurous, romantically and platonically, fulfilling, blissful

By employing such descriptive and expressive adjectives and adverbs, horoscopes effectively captivate the reader's attention and stimulate their imagination. However, it should be noted that verbs and modal verbs also play a significant role in creating a sensory experience and enabling the reader to establish a more profound emotional connection with the content.

Verbs and Modal verbs

In horoscope texts, verbs, and modal verbs are often utilized to convey specific characteristics and influence the overall tone and meaning of the predictions. They can evoke specific feelings and sensations, enabling readers to relate to the predicted experiences on a deeper level. Horoscope texts typically employ verbs in the active voice to convey a sense of agency and directness. This active construction emphasizes the individual's role and ability to influence their destiny or respond to the astrological influences highlighted in the horoscope.

In German horoscopes, the modal verbs *können*, *sollen* and the modality verbs *brauchen scheinen* and *versuchen* are the most commonly observed (Bachmann-Stein 2004: 230-232). This pattern also holds for our German dataset. In English modal verbs, such as *need to*, *may*, *could*, and *might*, in Turkish the modality suffix *-ebilmek* and the modality verb *zorunda olmak* are frequently employed to express possibilities or potential outcomes. These acknowledge the uncertainty inherent in horoscope predictions and offer a range of potential paths or scenarios that readers may encounter. It's important to note that these characteristics vary depending on the specific style and approach of the horoscope writer or publication. However, verbs and modal verbs consistently serve as an essential tool to engage readers, evoke emotions, and provide guidance in horoscope texts.

CONCLUSION

Women's magazines have the potential to reach a larger female audience compared to other mediums of mass media. In this sense, they reflect cultural gender ideologies. Conveying messages and advice about several issues such as relationships, fortune, health, identity, marriage, sex, etc., horoscopes are one of the most interesting sections of these magazines. Concentrating on horoscopes in women's magazines in Turkish, German, and English, the present study aims to unveil the gender ideologies and patterns of feminine discourse related to love and sexuality in horoscope columns in women's magazines. The data was compiled from 2023 yearly horoscopes published in online women's magazines in English, German, and Turkish. Following the CDA analysis suggested by Van Dijk (2001), we intended to identify the cultural and linguistic properties of feminine ideologies about love and sexuality themes in horoscopes. Williams (2012) states that linguistics examines gender discourse on many levels like lexicon, intonation, pronunciation, and syntax.

CDA analysis at the macro level revealed that in all three languages, Turkish, German and English, horoscope texts emphasized the role of love in women's self-improvement. However, German and English horoscopes depicted women as equal, independent, self-confident, and strong individuals about their partners, while Turkish horoscopes displayed a more conservative perspective on love, partnership, and sexuality, emphasizing traditional gender roles and perpetuating stereotypes. On the micro level of the analysis, horoscopes in the three cultures employed some strategies. Left and right dislocation were frequently found in the German data, compared to Turkish and English data. Questions and imperatives were mostly applied in the three data sets. The plural and singular forms of you

pronoun were used differently in Turkish, German, and English horoscopes. They also showed variations in the lexical strategies of addressing their readers.

In conclusion, the analysis of horoscopes in women's magazines across Turkish, German and English languages highlight notable variations in the ideologies and patterns of feminine discourse related to love and sexuality. While German and English horoscopes portray women as equal, independent individuals, Turkish horoscopes tend to reinforce traditional gender roles and perpetuate stereotypes. Further research in the construal of femininity across genres may concentrate on certain time periods following a diachronic approach. Such studies will enable us to identify the dominant social and linguistic patterns in specific time periods. How femininity is constructed in different genres might be a fruitful area for future studies.

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