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*I bought my son an iPad and my daughter an iPod. The  
wife got me an iPhone and I got her an iRon.*  
**Indirect Linguistic Sexism in Computer-Mediated  
Communication: An Analysis of *Cosmopolitan* and  
*Men's Health's* Online Forums**

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*Para mi hermano.*

*Porque solo tú puedes leer aquello que realmente hay entre estas líneas.*



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# Introduction

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Take a couple of minutes to relax and think about your personal history. Remember important dates, places, names, people, jobs, situations... What emotions are involved? How can you identify and express what you are thinking? Probably, the first answer that comes to your mind is *by means of words*. Yes, as the philosopher of language Austin (1962) claimed, we do things with words, “words are the tools of thought. We can use words to maintain the status quo or to think in new ways—which in turn creates the possibility of a new *reality*” (Kleinman, 2002: 300). This is the main premise on which we decided to carry out this investigation, that is, the claim of an intense, inseparable and dynamic connection between language, thought and society.

As human beings, we live in a particular society governed by specific rules and beliefs which are intrinsic to each community. However, if there is something that all societies share it is *dimorphism* (Cameron and Kulick 2003a: 4), that is, the biological fact that their members are divided into two different categories: that of *men* and *women*.

This biological differentiation is the seed that gave birth to what we know today as *Gender Studies* which, in very general terms, analyse the way in which those biological differences are treated and negotiated into the social dimension.

Without a doubt, one of the most important fields in which these social issues can be studied is that of language because, as we have experienced at the beginning of this page, it is by means of images and, more specifically, by means of language that we are able to do things. But, why is it that language is so relevant when dealing with social issues? What is the exact connection between language, thought and society?

Firstly, for many people, regardless of whether or not they are a specialist, language could be considered as a mere system of symbols with a representative function of reality that establishes no connection among them. For those who share this opinion, language is something that has been artificially created by human beings to serve a communicative function. This vision, as Pinker (1994) states, is based on the idea that language is a human instinct developed as an evolutionary advantage. According to this hypothesis, all human beings think identically in a language called *mentalese* which is later translated into the language used for communication in a specific community (Wasserman and Weseley 2009).

Secondly, on the other side of the spectrum, there are those who firmly believe in a connection between language, thought and reality. Nevertheless, in this respect, there are nuances to be delimited by differences in the intensity of this statement.

On the one hand, we can talk about a group of people that claim that languages are created and used by different communities as a reflection of the reality they experience. This theory is sustained by sociolinguists and anthropologists like Trudgill (2000), Labov (2001) or Milroy and Gordon (2003).

On the other hand, regarding the specific relation between language, thought and reality, there are those who believe that it is the language used by a specific community that determines how external reality is perceived. The theory created by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf states that human beings are not mere passive receivers of external stimuli of the real world, but rather, as a result of the language we use, we impose our own ideas on what surrounds us. Within this theory, it is also possible to find different shades of meaning depending on the intensity in which languages determine the perception of reality. While the supporters of the weak hypothesis state that language helps construct reality but, in no way, determines it –also known as the theory of linguistic relativity–, supporters of the strong version of the hypothesis –known as linguistic determinism– affirm that it is precisely language that determines thought. As Wasserman and Weseley (2009) state, while there is little empirical evidence that supports the strong determinist version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, there are a number of studies that support linguistic relativity. Some of the studies that back up this theory imply that when we acquire language, we also acquire different ways of thinking and different conceptual systems. Take as an example the case of bilingual people who have a plural perception of reality due to the languages they use and the cultures they belong to. Another example would be the case of lexical gaps existing in languages like Russian, where it is impossible to find two separate words for *hand* and *arm*, thus making its speakers unable to differentiate between these two parts of our limbs. Some other studies that support the idea that we codify reality depending on the resources of the language we are using claim that, for example, while native speakers of English can perceive up to 11 basic colours, people from New Guinea would only be able to perceive the distinction between dark and light colours (Goddard and Patterson 2000).

Halfway through these two opposing viewpoints about the relation between language, thought and reality, we find a third possibility which is nowadays sustained by the majority of theorists and thinkers on linguistic issues. This third stance postulates that language does not only reflect reality but it also helps construct it (Pauwels 1998). More precisely, this third standpoint assumes that

(l)anguage does indeed reveal to us the values of groups and institutions within our culture in the past who were instrumental in encoding their own perspectives within the language. However, the language as it is used at present and the resources available within it, reveal to us the struggles, both political and moral, over whose voices should be represented and mediated (Mills 2008: 9).

In this sense, languages are not seen as mere arbitrary sign systems that serve a representative function of reality, but they also serve a communicative function among human beings. This third position recognises both the informative and instrumental role of languages which can be considered both a reflection and a means of constructing reality. Languages serve to communicate both specific realities around us and more abstract realities like feelings or thoughts. In the same way, as Halliday (1973) explains, languages are not only used to describe the external objective world, but they are also a means to establish bonds with those around us, to maintain conversations and to make use not only of the referential function of language, but also the phatic, expressive, poetic or metalinguistic ones.

Therefore, language, thought and society are closely related. We project our experiences on the language we use but, at the same time, as it has been demonstrated in recent studies (see Cralley and Ruscher 2005), the language we acquire in our childhood provides us with a cognitive framework by means of which we catalogue reality. We do so because the human brain is not able to process all the information around us, we need to simplify the external stimuli by means of simple cognitive models –prototypes that are the basis of future stereotypes created by a few characteristics of the model applied to the whole category– that help us understand and relate to the external world.

This position helps us assert that there is a strong but dynamic dialectic connection between language, thought and society (Holtgraves and Yoshihisa 2008). Once positioned in this square of the board, we can therefore claim that there is a connection between language and the different social variables that human identity conforms to, such as race, class or gender, to name just a few.

As Del-Teso-Craviotto (2006) explains, an increasing amount of research is being carried out regarding how language specifically relates to the gender variable (see, for example, the volumes published by Johnson and Meinhoff 1997, Livia and Hall 1997 or Bucholtz *et al.* 1999).

Since the appearance of the constructionist approach within Gender Studies, which no longer considers gender a dualistic category, the concept of *gender* is now understood as the result of psychological and social constructs that reflect the cultural

context in which we live; as a fluid, dynamic and changeable identity feature that is adopted or performed (Butler 1990) by individuals through the appropriation and modification of established gender roles and stereotypes which are relevant to specific communities or communicative situations.

How to fit into each particular communicative situation an individual may come across along their life is a social ability that is learnt in the *socialisation* process (Bill 1992, Goddard and Patterson 2000). By means of this socialisation process we acquire the shared social knowledge and information needed to adapt the different variables of our own personal identity and make it fit into an accepted framework of interpretation in a particular community and communicative situation. This flexible and never-ending process, as Bill (1992) states, is regulated by what Foucault (1990 [1976]) calls different *sources of power* such as language, education, theology, employment, advertising, television, the media, science, research practices, etc. that inform our daily acts and interactions in specific communities.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992b) define a *community of practice* (CofP) as

an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations - in short, practices - that emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavour (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992b: 464).

As Mullany (2002) puts it, communities of practice can, therefore, develop out of formal or informal enterprises, their members can be either core or peripheral, their size and quality can also vary, they can either survive changes in membership or they can fall out of existence. As Eckert (2006) claims, the value of the notion to linguists lies in the fact that it identifies a social grouping not by virtue of shared abstract characteristics or simple copresence, but by virtue of shared practice. The importance of the communities of practice lies in the “recognition that identity is not fixed, that convention does not pre-exist use, and that language use is a continual process of learning” (Eckert 2006: 684). Individuals “participate in multiple communities of practice and their individual identity is based on the multiplicity of this participation” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992a: 93). This individual identity is, as Mullany (2002) claims, made up of different and interrelated variables such as gender, sex, class, race, age, etc. Our particular interest in this project is to analyse a particular instance of how

the relation between gender and language is manifested in a particular cyber community of practice.

Given a particular communicative situation, the interlocutor that has control over language, usually, controls the communicative situation as well. This hypothesis can be extrapolated to society as a whole and, as earlier research on gender and language has claimed, we can state that, up to relatively recent times, those that have had power over language, as well as other social dimensions at least in western countries, have been men. Schultz (1990 [1975]: 130) affirms that the analysis of language “tells us a great deal about the interests, achievements, obsessions, hopes, fears and prejudices of the people who created the language” but, taking a step aside from the fundamentalist vision of the *man-made language* hypothesis (Spender 1985), we have to claim that, when analysing a language, we do not only gather information about the creation process of that language but also about its users and their communities.

In this respect, Cameron (1990: 14) considers that language “could be seen as a carrier of ideas and assumptions which become, through their constant re-enactment in discourse, so familiar and conventional we miss their significance”. We could state that language routinizes (Ng 2007) or normalises different social practices by turning their scripts into an everyday discourse. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 9) argue, “gender is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires, that it appears to us to be completely natural” thus, transforming gender stereotypes and discriminatory gender relations into taken-for-granted social circumstances that govern particular communities of practice.

Our objective in this project is to analyse how the relation between gender and language is manifested, represented and created by means of subtle linguistic resources in particular communities of practice relevant to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) era in which we live.

In so doing, we are following the CofP framework in order to seek out communities of practice that are particularly salient to the sociolinguistic question we try to address in this project (Eckert 2006), that is, the representation of gender (in)equalities in language use. We will follow this framework because, as Mills (2008) and Eckert (2006) put it, communities of practice are perfect loci for a qualitative analysis of the experience of membership that can later be extrapolated to broader social categories. In Bourdieu’s (1977) terms, communities of practice could be considered the grounded locus of the habitus, local particular examples of wider and unapproachable

dimensions for sociolinguistic analysis because “using CofP as a theoretical concept renders community and identity non-essentialist, situated, and practice-oriented, as well as intricately connected and mutually constitutive” (Stommel 2008).

Thus, in our opinion, being interested in analysing, explaining and understanding social problems of a fundamentally dynamic nature, firstly, it is very important to explore in depth some conceptual issues relevant to the general framework of our investigation.

Being our main premise that of a dialectic relationship between language, thought and society that has important and diverse consequences related to the gender variable, it is important to establish and define some central concepts that expose that dynamic relationship.

Probably, the starting point of this three-fold relation would be the concept of *discourse*. In very general terms, despite being a very controversial issue, the predominant definition of discourse could be a dualistic one (Bucholtz 2003). On the one hand, within linguistics, discourse could be defined in terms of the structural organisation of languages into different levels or linguistic units such as phonology, morphology, syntax, etc. (Bucholtz 2003). On the other hand, in opposition to this structural definition, we find a functional definition of discourse which implies that discourse is language in context, that is, language as it is used in social and communicative situations. In this sense, *context* may be defined as the linguistic co-text, genre, social situation, cultural assumptions and understanding that creates and is created in a particular communicative situation. From a critical perspective, therefore, the definition of context refers to *discursive practices* (the production and reception strategies needed for communication) and, at the same time, as Wodak (2006) claims, it could also be used as a synonym for society or *social practices*.

Therefore, as Bucholtz (2003) claims, the post-structuralist definition of discourse incorporates the *Foucauldian discourse* (culturally and historically specific ways of organising knowledge) into the analysis of *linguistic discourse* (contextually specific ways of using language) providing a three-fold definition of discourse as (Tischer *et al.* 2000a):

- i) *textual* in the sense that it has a specific form, textual organisation and texture – linguistic and supralinguistic aspects–



- ii) *discursive practice* in the sense that it serves a bridging function between text and context, and
- iii) *social practice* in the sense that it is related to a specific social organisation, institution or group of people where concepts such as power and ideologies are crucial.

Coherently with this definition of discourse, and as we stated earlier, in this project we are following a CofP framework which will enable us to carry out a discourse analytic research about the new subtle forms in which the relationship between gender and language is created, perpetuated, manifested and / or modified.

For that purpose, it is crucial to introduce another vital concept, that of *ideologies*. Ideologies could be defined as multidisciplinary because they simultaneously relate social, cognitive and discursive components (Van Dijk 2006). More specifically for our purpose, we could define ideologies as:

'systems of ideas', ideologies are sociocognitively defined as shared representations of social groups, and more specifically as the 'axiomatic' principles of such representations. As the basis of a social group's self-image, ideologies organize its identity, actions, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups (Van Dijk 2006: 115).

This definition directly relates the multidimensional definition of discourse to the sociolinguistic CofP framework because it implies that ideologies, as Van Dijk (2006) explains, are produced and reproduced in social practices carried out by members of specific communities of practice who discursively polarise between *ingroups* and *outgroups*. "A number of social criteria about permanence, continuity, social practices, interests, relations to other groups, and so on, need to be satisfied, including the fundamental basis of group identification" for underlying ideologies to be revealed (Van Dijk 2006: 119).

Ideologies are acquired, confirmed, changed and perpetuated through discourse –understood from both its structural and functional definitions–. As Van Dijk (2006) claims, although general properties of language and discourse are not, as such, ideologically marked, the systematic repetition of underlying patterns of discourse could reveal the ideologies that frame a specific communicative situation and its participants.

What is also a fundamental feature of ideologies is their malleable nature. As they are beliefs systems which are socially shared by specific social groups and which can be gradually acquired and / or changed, it is not shocking to think that, sometimes, ideologies become so widely accepted and function in such an unconscious way that they become part of the “generally accepted attitude of an entire community, as obvious beliefs or opinion, or common sense... in that sense, and by definition, these beliefs thus lose their ideological natures as soon as they become part of the Common Ground” (Van Dijk 2006: 117).

This is why, as we claimed earlier, the relationship between gender and language is becoming more and more subtle in its linguistic manifestations. Having reached an era in which feminism has, sometimes, become a *post-* or, others, a synonym for *politically correct issues*, it is not unreasonable to suggest that new methods and loci for analysis need to be addressed. This derives from the routinization (Ng 2007) of specific linguistic practices or discourses that become, as Van Dijk (2006) claims, common ground and which, therefore, may pass under-considered by researchers but, most importantly, by language users. Therefore, as Mills (1997: 17) claims, it is very important to “‘detect a discursive structure’ because of ‘the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context’”.

This has very important implications because, as we are arguing in this project, the main function of language, discourse and ideology is that of organising power and social representations on the basis of recurrent patterns that are sociocognitively coded and decoded and that help maintain the sense of community and common endeavour. Social relations are created, established and maintained by means of power, which, in turn, is handled by means of ideologies. The ideologies of the groups in power may be integrated in different social organisations or institutions like laws, norms, habits, and, as we saw earlier, even in “a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci (1971) called ‘hegemony’” (Van Dijk 2001: 355).

But how is this achieved? How is power managed and negotiated within social groups by means of ideologies? As Lazar (2007) explains, modern power or hegemony is operative because it is mostly, although not exclusively, based on an internalisation of norms and acts which are routinized in discourses of everyday life. “This makes it an invisible power, ‘misrecognized’ as such, and ‘recognized’ instead as quite legitimate and natural (Bourdieu 1991)” (Lazar 2007: 148).

As Wodak (2006) puts it, the fluid and dynamic interrelations between discourse and society can only be scrutinised by means of the combination of linguistic and sociological approaches. However, although they play a crucial role in the “mediation between the social and the linguistic” (Wodak 2006: 181), notions on cognition are rarely taken into account.

It is by means of cognitive processes that ideologies become *recognised* and *misrecognised*. This routinization of ideologies is carried out by different conceptual tools (see Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999) which are relevant for specific communicative situations. As Wodak (2006) summarises, some of these conceptual tools include the concept of *context* (van Dijk 2001), which embraces both discursive practices and society or social practices as a whole. It is only within a particular context that a communicative situation acquires meaning.

Because of this, it is also important to think about *knowledge*. How we apply meaning to a particular communicative situation in a specific context is determined by our knowledge of how adequate it is to construct and deconstruct utterances within that particular environment taking into account our collective memories or experiences. But, why is it then that the same utterance can be understood differently by different interlocutors? This implies that, apart from a general and shared knowledge that bears cultural connotations, human beings also apply individual conceptual tools. This idea gave rise to vast amounts of research on text production and comprehension where cognitive strategies which underlie mental processes of text construction and deconstruction are assumed (Lutz and Wodak 1987, Wodak 1996).

The individual conceptual tools, therefore, include concepts such as *mental representations* that guide our understating and *mental models* that favour the storage of new information into pre-existing categories or areas of experience known as *cognitive frames* (Lutz and Wodak 1987) which are also structured into recurrent patterns called *schemata* (Van Dijk 1997a, Martínez-Guillem 2003). Both frames and schemas can be cognitively or emotionally modified; this is why they are particular to each individual regarding the specificities of their life and history.

Consequently, we can claim that ideologies are historically, cognitively and emotionally mediated and linked to language and society. Therefore, the “fundamental triangulation of discourse, cognition and society” (Van Dijk 2006: 115) has been established as being one of a reflective and replenished nature in the sense that all three elements are created, maintained, reproduced or changed in relation to one another.

This implies that changes in the linguistic structure may not, alone, derive in cognitive or social change or that social change may directly give birth to new linguistic or cognitive resources. This is the reason why the mediation between language, thought and society has to be explained and analysed in great detail to understand the complex ways in which power is negotiated in the social dimension. This is so because, as Martínez-Guillem (2003) claims, cognitive and linguistic analyses do not exclude the social dimension. In fact, cognitive and linguistic issues are social and, by means of the analysis of cognitive processes and linguistic mechanisms, we could straighten out social, ideological and discursive aspects in relation to the creation of identities and, specifically to our project, to gender identities.

The constructivist approach states that subject positions are discursively constructed,

individuals become social subjects with a certain identity as they are positioned in the discourses where their social activity takes place. Identity emerges as individuals take up - or resist - the subject positions which are made available in the discourses surrounding them in the course of their social life (Gregorio-Godeo 2006: 86).

Our gender identity, therefore, can be considered as the result of psychological and social constructs that reflect the cultural context in which we live because

gender identity is determined by a society's distinct sense of what is "essential" to, and "characteristic" of, one or the other sex class. Although distinct from "sex", a biological construct, gender is often confounded with - and viewed as inseparable from- being male or female (Kacen 2000: 346).

Within this constructivist approach, the concept of performativity (Butler 1990) provides the gender variable with a dynamic, changeable and fluid context-dependent nature. We perform and interpret gender depending on the community of practice in which we are interacting by means of the appropriation or modification of established gender roles or stereotypes adequate to our communicative intentions. In our society, these gender models or stereotypes can be found at different levels such as family environments, the language we use, educational systems and, of course, the media.

For example, McLoughlin (2000) provides a detailed analysis of the discourse of written magazines. She explains the difficult process by means of which writers of magazines must address a mass audience by means of the construction of an imaginary

addressee or ideal-reader (Gregorio-Godeo 2006) based on the abstract knowledge about their general readership –thoughts, attitudes, likes, dislikes, etc.

Magazines have been claimed to "construct an 'ideal' reader who is at the same time both produced and in a sense imprisoned by the text" (Caldas-Coulthard 1996a: 250). This has very important implications in relation to the construction of gender identities because, through this hegemonic means of power, gender identities and gender ideologies (Phillips 2003) will be created, transmitted, perpetuated or modified within the framework of gendered discourses (Sunderland 2004) which are later adapted by members of specific communities of practice. Consequently, although dominant gendered discourses can influence individuals' lives, they can also be fought against and modified by members of that specific community (Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002, Lazar 2005a). Thus, although dominant and privileged gendered discourses, for instance, can shape individuals' lives, they can also be resisted and transformed by individuals participating in social situations, institutions and structures which are partly constituted by discourse.

What tools, then, are needed to analyse the mediated and intricate relationship between identities, language, thought and society? Since we acquire, express and reproduce identity, power and ideologies largely by means of language, a discourse analytical method would be required. More specifically for our project, we will follow a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) where the concept of discourse is understood as "a site of struggle, where forces of social (re)production and contestation are played out" (Lazar 2005a: 4). Both from a structural and functional perspective, discourse is seen as the communication of meaning in context but also as the construction of identity, including gender, from a particular ideological perspective (Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002: 9-10).

FCDA also hinges on Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, according to which, members of specific social groups or communities of practice have different amounts of power in the negotiation and production of meaning (Lazar 2005a, Lehtonen 2007). This argument within FCDA also backs up other studies on the importance of agency within the construction of meaning in the creation-interpretation process (Martínez-Guillem 2003). The notion of agency, at the same time, opens the door for possible changes in the negotiation of power relations and social structures and, therefore, corroborates an intimate relation between identity, language, thought and

society. In fact, Fairclough's (1992, 1995a) three-dimensional conceptualisation of discourse as *text*, *discursive practice* and *social practice* has strongly influenced FCDA.

The main aim of FCDA is "to make connections between gender representations or gendered discourses in the text and social and cultural context" (Lehtonen 2007) although it also takes very much into account the instability produced by interlocutors' different interpretations of a given text (Mills 1994, Sunderland and Litosseliti 2002). FCDA examines "how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social practices, and through interactional strategies of talk" (Lazar 2005a: 10). "Within FCDA the ethnomethodologically-based concept of 'doing gender' and the post-modernist idea of 'gender performativity' can be found" (ibidem: 12).

The specific methods followed by FCDA are rather diverse and extensive but the general essence of this approach is the fact that it relies on traditional linguistic approaches such as stylistics or critical linguistics (Lehtonen 2007). It is the researcher who, depending on their objectives and corpus, specifies the adequacy of certain methods and not others both to top-down and bottom-up processes of interpretation (Stephens 2006: 137) –top-down processes are carried out by the analyst's understanding of the discursive and social contexts while bottom-up processes involve paying attention to the text's structural features (Lehtonen 2007).

But, when and why did the feminist vision start to be incorporated into the study of the relationships between language, thought and society? The notion of gender, although present in previous sociological and political movements, started to have a real impact on society in the 1960s-1970s, when the Women's Liberation Movement uncovered the blatant social inequalities between men and women in American society (Philips 2003). These inequalities were considered to be the result of a patriarchal gender ideology that, in general terms, rendered men as superior to women and, therefore, had the right to dominate them.

Gender can now be considered not as a binary sexual division but as individual and fluid personal characteristics which are

by nature relational, and constantly shifting, as analytical tools in the creation of knowledge about social relations the useful point of engagement is at the site of mediation between the structures of social categories and the embodied experiences of gender and sex (Baker 2000: 59).

Hand in hand with this constructivist vision of gender, and due to the linguistic turn towards pragmatics during the 1960s-1970s, linguists and many other scholars of other disciplines, started to see the potential role of languages in creating, expressing and perpetuating this patriarchal gender ideology. This was the beginning of what we know today as Gender Studies.

As Speer (2002) summarises, very generally speaking, we could delineate two main traditional branches within Gender Studies: 1) the study of how men and women use language and 2) the study of how gender is represented in language.

In relation to the first branch, numerous early investigations analyse, most of the time in very abstract and essentialist terms, how differences between women and men in speech and style can be quantified (see, for example, Kramer *et al.* 1978). For example, it was argued that men interrupt more than women, that men tend to be more competitive than their female counterparts or that women try to use a cooperative style by means of specific linguistic resources like questions or terms of endearment. These studies resulted in different interpretations and classifications of male and female speech styles which gave birth to what was known as *women's language* (Jespersen [1922]1990), which was considered a kind of sub-variety deficient and different from that of men thus, fostering the dichotomous division between male and female, domination and subordination (see Cameron 1998c, Stokoe 2000 or Santaemilia 2002 for detailed summaries). This first ideological approach to the relation between gender and language was known as the *deficit model* in which, as we have seen, men were considered the norm against which women's language should be evaluated. Trying to fight against this androcentric trend in cataloguing speech styles, a new group of authors appeared that tried to place men in a more down-to-earth dimension. Authors like Lakoff (1975) or Spender (1985) read the ideas in the deficit model from a different perspective and changed the focus of attention towards a *dominance model* in which the emphasis was reversed and men stopped being considered the standard against which women should be evaluated and started to be seen as a damaging force that had kept women apart from the *real* communicative sphere. After the dominance model, where the analysis of men and women's speech styles made a U-turn, a new and final model of interpretation appeared in tune with the new pragmatic vision of languages and society. In this vision, men and women were no longer considered as dichotomous and conflicting categories but as different members of a heterogeneous human group which socialises its members in different ways (Tannen 1991). In this view, human beings are

thought to use the same language but differently. Within the *difference model*, women and men are thought to be sub-cultural groups that use and interpret language in different ways due to their different socialisation processes (see Yerian 1997). In spite of all these interpretations of how women and men use language, more recent work on this area has shaded off because of the importance given to the social construction of gender in interaction (Cameron 1998a, Weatherall 2002a, 2002b).

In relation to the second branch of Gender Studies, the study of how gender is represented in language, it is important to mention that the appearance of the pragmatic shift had a great impact on the way these studies emerged and developed. The first movements within this branch were related to the use of particular phonemes, words or structures related to gender which were used in given communicative situations where gender was not a relevant feature. However, after the linguistic turn, languages started to be considered as dynamic, fluid and ideological instruments by means of which we relate to the external world in a reciprocal relationship reflecting and creating the reality around us. In this view, gender could no longer be analysed in particular and isolated elements but rather it had to be analysed in more indirect and subtle linguistic manifestations.

Research in both areas continues to date but certain intrinsic problems and criticism have made these two areas develop towards more modern perspectives (Cameron 1998c, Speer 2002). On the one hand, as we have mentioned, the constructivist theory of performativity (Butler 1990) has destroyed the previous dualism under which gender was analysed. Traditional dualism, ironically, has in many cases helped reify gender differences (Rodino 1997) because, as Baker (2000) demonstrates, instead of dissolving gender inequalities, gender dualism works in an opposite direction reinforcing and perpetuating gender roles and stereotypes in more subtle and indirect ways by means of the veiled transmission of androcentric and phallogocentric frameworks that permeate all levels of society. Men and women can no longer be considered as homogenous groups that use language in identical and specified ways because that assumption leads to simplicity and essentialism, overlooking a multiplicity of linguistic strategies that can be used in many different and varied ways when focusing on specific issues. On the other hand, gender is no longer conceived as an abstract and pre-existing condition but something that members of specific groups of people do in context. The linguistic turn brought about a change in the perception of language, which no longer was an exclusive element of study for linguists but also psychologists, philosophers,



ethnographers, historians, etc. who started to discern its importance over other dimensions. The interdisciplinary nature (Acuña-Ferreira and Álvarez 2003) that characterises Gender Studies, therefore, implies a shift towards discourse analysis (Cameron 1998a), where discourse should be understood as language structured above the sentence level and as “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (Foucault 1972: 49).

This shift towards language in use together with the non-essentialist constructionist view has made Gender Studies turn towards a more open framework in which the study of local and specific case studies serve a broader discursive and political enterprise.

As we have seen, gender does not exist in itself but is continually produced, reproduced and adapted to specific communicative situations through people’s performance of gendered acts (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 4). This gendering process takes place within specific communities of practice and communicative situations in different social contexts and even at different points within the same interaction. “In doing so they operate with an awareness of the wider social and political sphere, and of institutional pressures and societal expectations” (Holmes and Marra 2010a: 2).

Researchers have strongly argued for the importance of analysing how the relation between language and gender is carried out locally in specific communities of practice (Mills 2008, Holmes and Marra 2010a). However, the results of these anti-essentialist studies should not be seen in isolation but rather within a wider socio-cultural framework within which identities are constructed. Lemke (2008) and Cameron (2009) make the same point in arguing for the mediating nature of identity considering it a reciprocal channel of communication between the socio-cultural and the individual dimensions because “examining gendered discourse thus entails consideration of the interaction between individual agency and the larger constraining social structures within which that agency is enacted” (Holmes and Marra 2010a: 6).

These socio-cultural frameworks which, in great part, are constituted by language, include what Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 32) call the *gender order*, that is, the repressive ideology which ensures that deviation from gender norms (by women or men) entails penalties. We could claim that these penalties are social but also political in a way because social constraints should become political standards in the defence of human equality.

In this respect, feminism lacks a unitary definition and it is made up of different varieties and ideals depending on the researcher's political perspectives (Cameron 1992, Mills 1995, Mills and Mullany 2011). Nevertheless, feminism exists as a unitary concept under the flag of a common political cause, that of human equality. Although its beginnings were marked by a strong sense of women's liberation, feminism has now spread its objectives to defend humanity as a whole and dignify all groups that suffer discrimination based on race, class, age, religion or sex (Mills 1995), both in social and linguistic domains (Cameron 1992).

Language and Gender Studies have, therefore, been linked to feminism since its inception, in fact, "one legitimate goal for language and gender scholarship is political: to contribute to the wider struggle against unjust and oppressive gender relations, by revealing and challenging the ideological propositions which support and naturalize those relations" Cameron (2007: 16). However, not all the research carried out within this field has to be feminist (Mills and Mullany 2011). As we have seen before, early works on the relationship between gender and language were marked by a strong androcentric perspective –see, for example, Jespersen ([1922]1990)–, presenting essentialist descriptions of differences in language use. At the same time, the label *feminism* has suffered numerous attacks and has been subtly ridiculed by means of political correctness. This has led to feminism being considered as something outdated in an era in which gender equality is considered a reality, at least in Western societies which, conversely, seem to be taken as the standard against which progressiveness has to be measured. –

For these reasons, as Mills and Mullany (2011) claim, we consider that it is crucial to continue using the term *feminism* openly within *language and gender studies* that have an open political enterprise because

we do the research we do in order to change the way that women and men think about the language that they use and the way that others represent women and men in language; ultimately this has an impact on the way that women and men are treated and the way that they think about themselves. Feminism is central to these research goals. Overall, we define the specific political purpose of feminist linguistic studies as producing work which investigates the role that language plays in creating, sustaining and/or perpetuating unequal gender relations and discrimination against women and gay, lesbian and transgendered people (Mills and Mullany 2011: 3).

This kind of feminist language and gender research has been a visible reality in the past decades as, Mills and Mullany (2011) summarise; for example, Christie (2000) works on what she calls *Feminist Pragmatics*, Kitzinger (2000) deals with a *Feminist Conversation Analysis*, McElhinny (2003) and Mullany (2007) develop their work within *Feminist Sociolinguistics* and Lazar (2005b), as we saw earlier, develops a framework for *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis*. All these feminist approaches to the study of the relation between gender and language are politically motivated. In order to fulfil this political motivation, current researchers have started to argue for new methodological and interdisciplinary approaches that suit the new dimensions of this linguistic and social cause. For that purpose, for example, in recent feminist studies about gender and language, both traditional qualitative methods and newer quantitative ones are being merged (Mills and Mullany 2011).

Although it may seem inconsistent to talk about categories like *women* or *men* within this constructivist and discursive framework of feminist linguistic research, these are still very relevant terms to examine how the *gender order* is accomplished, in order to explain how the systematicity of the local works in favour of the structural discrimination (Mills 2003a). This is so because “political efficacy may entail the formulation of generalisations, and the identification of salient social categories in the interests of strategic essentialism” (Holmes 2007: 56).

Having explained how and why feminist language and gender studies emerged, it is important for our purpose to introduce a very important field of study within this framework, that of linguistic sexism.

First of all, it is important to highlight that, generally speaking, we can talk about three different waves within feminist movements. First Wave Feminism refers to a period of feminist activism in Anglo-Saxon countries which could be dated back to 1792 when Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, in which she highlights the underlying social, political and moral inequalities between the sexes in British society. After that moment, many other writers and political activists wrote pamphlets, articles or books arguing for the need of an organised movement that fought against the inequalities of the sexes. It was around the 1850s that the feminist movement emerged as such. Its key concerns were related to education, social issues (like the marriage or the property law) and employment. Their major achievements were, in fact, related to reforms and improvements regarding the education for women and the achievement of a greater freedom in the access to political, social and working life.

The germ of Second Wave Feminism can be traced back to 1949 when Simone de Beauvoir claimed that *one is not born but rather becomes a woman*. This statement raised the social awareness and the academic interest towards the creation of a concept that clearly differentiated between the socially constructed and accepted characteristics of what was essential of being a man or a woman. This was the moment when the concept of gender appeared as different, but linked, to that of biological sex which was, in turn, the birth of Gender Studies. During Second Wave Feminism, different authors, whether they were linguists or professionals from other disciplines like anthropology, psychology, philosophy or history, started to think about the relationship between language and reality. As we have seen earlier, many questions appeared in the academic field that tried to shed light onto this controversial issue. It was the theory of relativity that drop by drop started to soak the field of Gender Studies and the premise that language is a means by which we create and relate to the external world was adopted by many feminist linguists.

As we saw above, based on the idea of the dynamic relation between language, thought and society, feminist gender and language research has been carried out in two parallel branches, the study of how the sexes used language differently and how gender was represented in language. This last branch is traditionally known as the study of linguistic sexism.

Linguistic sexism can be considered as gender bias in language (Crawford and Fox 2007), “sexist language teaches us what those who use it and disseminate it think women’s place ought to be: second-class citizens, neither seen nor heard, eternal sex-objects and personifications of evil” Cameron (1985: 4). Therefore, the main premise of feminist language researches in this era was the fight against the exclusion and invisibility of women in language (Mucchi-Faina 2005).

As Holmes and Marra (2010a) explain, there is extensive research dating back to the 1970s on how linguistic resources and language use can create, reinforce and maintain unequal assumptions about what is normal and appropriate for each individual regarding their sex and gender in a given community (see, for example, Pauwels 2003, Hellinger and Bussman 2001, McConnell-Ginet 2003, Mills 2008). Some major areas of concern within the study of linguistic sexism in this period include, as Holmes and Sigley (2002) summarise, the use of pseudo-generics terms, such as *man* or *he*; the necessity of gender-neutral terms that included women, such as the case of terms like *chairperson* instead of *chairman*; the advocacy for the use of feminine suffixes like *-ess*

and *-ette* to make women more visible; the re-appropriation and redefinition of abusive terms or insults for women such as *bitch* or *stud*; and terms of address such as *Miss-Mrs.-Mister* or connotations of terms like *dear* (see Holmes 1993a, 1993b, 1997 or Pauwels 1998 for detailed explanations). All these examples led researchers to postulate that, in the English language, women appear as marked and, therefore, as subordinated to men under the constraints of an almost universalised patriarchal ideology. Generally speaking, feminist linguistic reformers argued that women were omitted, trivialised and devalued by means of linguistic elements, generally at a lexical or syntactic level (Crawford 2001).

The systematic analysis of linguistic sexism resulted in what is known as the Feminist Language Reform (Pauwels 1998). This movement is remembered as the outburst of *non-sexist language guidelines* regarding the substitution of sexist terms or structures by non-sexist alternatives and the creation of more inclusive linguistic resources.

However, the appearance of pragmatics and the discursive turn in linguistics, that is, the understandings of what languages are and how they work, started to change. As Mills (1998) explains, after Foucault's ideas on language, it was very difficult to maintain the binary model of power relations (men-women, domination-subordination, oppression-freedom...) and the understandings of power as an abstract institutional and social concept that restricts people could no longer be held. It was substituted by a more open definition in which power was understood as a force negotiated by individuals in context. This, together with new developments within Gender Studies, such as the theory of performativity by Butler (1990), gave birth, around the 1990s, to what we know today as Third Wave Feminism (Mills 2003c).

Context was now a key issue to understand the real working order and nature of languages. As Cameron (1998a, 1998b) explains, Feminist Language Reform started to visualise its limits in concrete cases where a substitution to break gender inequalities in language did not work in context or, as Ehrlich and King (1994) explain, discourse practices often frustrated feminists' attempts to cleanse sexist language because meaning is always contextually negotiated. As Toolan (1997) argues, discursive studies should move away from easy or direct examples of sexism and move to the subtler and more indirect ways in which the gender order is created and maintained.

A good example of this is the case of the pair *chairman* and *chairperson* where the second one, instead of being understood as an inclusive term is now being considered, in many contexts, as a synonym for *female chairman*.

The concept of discourse then appeared within linguistic studies and provided an open framework in which the Feminist Language Reform could no longer be applied as it had been done up to that moment. As Cameron (1998c: 87) claims, “sexism is best analysed at the level of discourse”. It is important to visualise more subtle and indirect ways –apart from lexical choice, collocation or syntactic structures–, in which language can be used to express sexist attitudes” (Mills 1998, 2008). It is crucial to analyse interactional resources that produce and maintain sexist practices in real life examples (Speer 2002) because sexism should be understood as “a participants’ concern and one that is attended to in more subtle and dynamic ways” (Speer 2002: 354).

Due to the achievements of the work carried out during Second Wave Feminism, we could claim that overt sexist practices are now not a common and accepted issue. However, sexist attitudes do still exist and speakers or communities who may want to express their opinions may find new and subtle ways to do so without having to be accused of or penalised by society. Speakers can make use of the “other” persona (Speer 2002: 361), they can use humour, irony or even conflicting messages (Mills 2008) to make their ideas accessible by means of discourse.

What complicates the picture a bit more is the fact that different authors or recognised social figures within academic or institutional contexts started to defend tradition and the natural evolution and adaptation of languages to society, an idea that was in total opposition to the ideas of Second Wave Feminism and the linguistic reform. What is more, the media started their own campaign against the linguistic reform by means of the creation, use and abuse of what is today broadly known as *political correctness*. This new discourse appears as a rejection to the attempts of attaining a non-sexist language. The appearance in the media of terms discussed by the feminist language reform together with those used by the movement of political correctness provides and awkward environment of ridicule and mockery.

Consequently, the achievements of Second Wave Feminism in prejudicing overt sexism together with the controversial appearance of political correctness (see Martín Ruano 2003 or Barreto 2005 for analyses of this phenomenon) has given birth to new forms of linguistic / discursive sexism which need to be addressed with Third Wave feminist methodologies, which will be the focus of attention of this project.

We have already talked about the existence of the relation between language, thought and society. What is crucial in current feminist language and gender research is, therefore, to analyse the ways in which that relation is manifested in new means of communication.

Due to technical limitations of the era, previous language and gender research had to be based on questionnaires, participants' observation, interviews, focus groups, the completion of tasks, etc. Also, due to technological issues, the focus on written language was previous to that on the spoken word. As time went by, researchers started to change the focus of attention towards unmediated spoken material and other types of language and language use which required more modern ways of organising data compilation and analysis (see Mills and Mullany 2011 for a complete account of gender and language methodologies and methods).

Nowadays, probably one of the most commonly used ways of interaction among individuals is that carried out by means of computers, the Internet and new technological devices. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are widely used nowadays by many people in industrialised societies. They form part of our academic and personal life, we make use of computers and software for our professional and personal duties and, therefore, computer-mediated communication has become one of the most popular forms of human interaction. This fact makes the area an unavoidable one for feminist language and gender researchers.

The appearance of personal computers marked the beginning of a new era in which the introduction of the Internet was the climax. As Herring (2003, 2009, 2010) explains, the late 1980s and early 1990s were witness to the birth of new forms of human interaction. The World Wide Web –known as the *www*, the *web* or the *Internet*– was introduced in the USA in 1991 but it began to attract worldwide attention in 1993, when the first graphical browser appeared. The web is, as Fletcher (2004) claims, “unparalleled for quantity, diversity and topicality”. The Internet can be defined as a multimodal content delivery system of interlinked hypertext documents (Herring 2009) which nowadays encompasses more than 10 billion web pages publicly available via links or URLs, with several times that amount of pages only accessible through database queries or personal passwords (Fletcher 2004). The beginnings of the Internet were marked by static HTML documents generally made up of text, links to other texts or graphics. However, nowadays, web pages have massively and rapidly introduced multimodal information such as sounds, animations or images that foster its

development towards virtual spaces in which individuals may interact by means of user-interface, user-content and user-user interactivity features –including emails, discussion forums, chats or Voice-over-IP, for example. What is more, web pages have also merged with other online and offline media to create new hybrid genres of global communication such as online news sites, blogs, wikis, photo-and video-sharing sites, Usenet newsgroups, MUDs and MOOs, Internet Relay Chats or social network sites (Herring 2009, 2010).

In such a context, textual computer-mediated communication (CMC) emerged as a new form of globalised social interaction. CMC can be defined as “predominantly text-based human-human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony” (Herring 2007) by means of different online genres like email, instant messaging, web discussion boards, listserv lists, newsgroups or chat channels (Herring 2001, 2004, 2008; Androutsopoulos and Beisswenger 2008). CMC provides visible and privileged data on human behaviour and the dynamic relation between language, thought and society or what is known as computer-mediated discourse (CMD).

If one feature characterises language used on the Internet it is variation (Herring 2001), which reflects the performativity of individuals’ identity –geographic location, ethnicity, class, age, gender etc.– on virtual environments through the use of linguistic and discursive resources. As Androutsopoulos (2006: 423) summarises, participants in CMC may make use of a great variety of linguistic resources to “interactively create identifiable personalities for themselves’ (Baym 1998: 56), including the choice of screen names and message signatures, use of in-group language, explicit self-disclosure, and the assumption of a particular role within the group (Baym 1998, 2000; Cherny 1999; Donath 1999)”. In this sense, textual CMC could be considered a *mask* (Danet 1998) that individuals choose depending on the communicative situation in which they interact.

Androutsopoulos (2006) suggests that, while other aspects of social identities have remained rather understudied, probably the majority and best analyses on the construction of social identities on the web has been in relation to gender.

Researchers’ interest in the interplay between gender and language on the web (see Rodino 1997 for a summary) have, as it happened in traditional feminist gender and language research, focused on both the study of gender differences in language use (see Herring 1996, Savicki *et al.* 1996) and the study of gender representation and performance in virtual environments (see Herring 2003).



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In relation to the study of gender differences in language use, much of this research follows the steps of previous gender and face to face (FTF) communication studies. This research on interactional styles is based on Tannen's (1991) rapport - report dichotomy, that is, in considering men as practical users and women cooperative interlocutors, women's use of language as a sub-variety of the norm or, in the best of cases, a variety dominated by male intervention (see Herring 1993, Jaffe *et al.* 1995 or Savicki *et al.* 1996 for some examples).

Nevertheless, this new approach to the relationship between gender and this new means of communication had to deal with the specificities of the medium and address additional and fundamental issues.

One of the most relevant ideas regarding gender and CMC communication is the notion of anonymity, which already appeared in CMC research in the 1980s (Herring 2003). The presupposed anonymity granted by new technologies in the creation of virtual identities is generally considered among CMC researchers as an intrinsic feature of the equation process carried out by ICTs. This equation view implies that CMC widens and evens information exchanges in a way that reduces social and ideological barriers to communication (Spears and Lea 1994). As Herring (2003) puts it, CMC and the Internet provide a communicative context that is absent of physical cues, that can be considered as empowering in the sense that it offers more opportunities to voice opinions and, finally, a context that allows self-publishing and the engagement in entrepreneurial activities which can lead to the re-negotiation of power relations.

In line with this equation view, Graddol and Swan (1989) presented the results of a research in which women and men contributed approximately the same number of messages on a university electronic conferencing system, thus neglecting any male dominance in this particular communicative situation.

However, going down the scale of support of the equation view, we find some other research indicating that, in specific contexts, more women than men may prefer to choose pseudonyms in order to hide their real gender identity when intervening in particular mixed groups computer-mediated conversations (Selfe and Meyer 1991, Jaffe *et al.* 1995). A factual explanation may be the liberating factor in hiding a female gender on a male dominated space, which, obviously, exports important social inequalities into the virtual space.

These studies imply that, although CMC is less revealing than FTF communication (Herring 2003), it can still bear some social inequality cues into the

virtual environment. However, CMC is generally considered a more democratic, egalitarian and liberatory space because it allows users to perform gender in multimodal ways that may be inconceivable in FTF communication (Rodino 1997). In that sense, “CMC helps disarticulate gender from ‘biological’ sex” (Rodino 1997), as it can be analysed in the cases of nicknames choices that *identify* the interlocutor in CMC (see Reid 1993, for example).

Other studies, however, argue against the equation view and even the democratising effect of new technologies. These critiques are based on the ideas that online gender construction does not discourage male domination over women in communication. For example, Herring (1993) found out that, even in mixed groups on academic lists, small male minorities tended to lead conversation and seemed to assume that they had the right to control discussion. In support of these results, Kramarae and Tylor (1993) claimed that this male domination can be extendable even to women-related and women-only bulletin boards.

In relation to the second branch of research, the representation of gender or linguistic sexism in the language used in CMC, it is important to mention how online gender construction does not eliminate the formation of gender bias in language and society, nor does it avoid its influence. A good example of how language, thought and society are interconnected in CMC is provided by Matheson (1991), who found out that women who knew that their computer-mediated interlocutors were female, expected them to act in a more cooperative way than did women who were unconscious of their interlocutors’ gender. This, as we can see, fosters gender stereotyping in language and society, thus, moving forward a dichotomous vision of the world that favours gender inequalities.

These differences in women and men’s treatment both on social and virtual environments can also be found in the results presented by Bruckman (1993), who discovered that, as it happens in many social contexts, women tend to be generally objectified and sexualised in CMC. What is more, the attention they receive in these environments is due to men’s perception of women as unable or in need of (male) assistance.

However, as Rodino (1997) claims, studies about the relation between gender and CMC should not be based on a dichotomous and binary vision of the world. Rather, gender and CMC studies should be based on a more performative consideration because “conceptualizing gender as performative helps expose the unnaturalness of binary

gender and allows binary gender to appear as a discursive apparatus rather than as a natural, taken-for-granted trait” (Rodino 1997).

Some studies that have tried to diffuse the male/female dualism in the way in which gender is experienced or presented in virtual environments are those presented by Curtis (1992), Reid (1993) or Danet (1996), who studied how gender is done online. The work we are using for presenting a summary of the research carried out regarding the relation between gender and CMC, that is, Rodino’s (1997), is itself a proof of how gender and CMC studies have evolved towards a consideration of gender as something that does not exist in itself but that is carried out in context because, as Butler (1990), based on Nietzsche ([1967]1989: 45), argues “there is no being behind doing”. And this is the line that we will follow in the present project.

Apart from the different ways in which individual variables may be conveyed by means of language, CMC users have also developed a number of strategies by means of which they can express social meaning traditionally conveyed by other channels in FTF interaction. Some of these strategies include the use of emoticons, sideways smiley faces or textual representation of actions or emotions which are performative in nature, as, for example, <grin> or \*yawn\* (Herring 2001: 623).

For the purpose of effective textual CMC, as it happens in FTF communication, participants need to perform their communicative action within a particular community of practice that shares the same meanings, beliefs and values. As McConnell-Ginet (2003: 72) claims, communities of practice are not “free-floating but are linked to one another and to various institutions. They draw on resources with a more general history -languages as well as various kinds of technologies and artefacts”. Therefore, CMC is socially constituted and, at the same time, it constitutes society because “technology obviously contributes to shaping human behaviour, but the uses we make of technological innovations are ultimately conditioned by broader social and historical processes” (Montero-Fleta *et al.* 2009: 771). As Herring (2003) puts it, although virtual environments may seem neutral in relation to social or ideological cues, certain relevant features of *real life* identity may appear (consciously or unconsciously) in the communication process.

This idea is intrinsically linked to that one postulated earlier about the importance of looking locally in order to undertake any political action. For that reason, we consider that an analysis of textual CMC may help us unveil new and subtle ways in which language users perform their identity and relation to gender and gender bias in

language. Some identity variables such as education, age, gender, religion, ethnicity, class, etc. may be present –even if they have been actively masked (Danet 1996)–, in participation structures, the topic of the interaction, the expression of understanding or even in norms (FAQ, netiquette). This shows that, although CMC can be considered as impersonal, it reflects and also (re)creates the social realities of its users. In that sense, CMC environments inherit power and gender asymmetries that can be analysed in detail by means of critical discourse analyses that expose the mechanisms used to create and maintain social and ideological inequalities in virtual and real spaces.

The ideas, notions and concepts described so far compose the theoretical and technical driving forces that motivated the work that we present here. However, as important as the theoretical motivations –or even more important than those–, the personal impulses underlying this project did lead us towards similar objectives.

I think that, being an English Philology graduate, my interest in language is already manifested. I have always been fascinated by languages and, specially, language use. I tended to observe and be absorbed by the way public figures, actors, politicians or even singers used their language to create things, to do things. I did also observe that *common* human beings, not just public figures, could do things by means of the way they used language, we could convince, suggest, order, offend... just by opening our mouths.

Apart from that, my observant and critical personality, as well as my own history, moved me towards an interest in gender issues. In fact, this drove me close to feminist ideas although, at that time, I did not even know that there was a word to define my experience. It was during the third course of my degree, when I was taking a module on gender and language taught by my supervisor, José Santaemilia, that I realised that my personal and my professional lives could easily merge. During the following years, I started reading and learning about feminist gender and language studies more in detail, in fact, I decided to continue studying it once I finished my degree. By that time, I had clear intentions of carrying out a research on the relationship between gender and language but I was not clear enough about my specific intentions. As a result, I decided to develop an initial research project that summarised the main publications in relation to gender and language studies within the Spanish (my mother tongue) and the English (that I had studied) traditions. This allowed me to form a general, panoramic and contrasting view of the most important authors, ideas, trends, concepts, methodologies and results in two important academic traditions.

This, together with my observation of the world around us, led me to the emergence of this project. By means of this study, our main purpose is that of analysing indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of gender (in)equalities in virtual socioideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online magazines: *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK consumers and participants of these discourses).

This project is thus located within the second branch of traditional feminist gender and language studies, that is, the analysis of the linguistic and discursive representations and negotiations of gender. Although we are aware of the fact that linguistic sexism can be found in every area of our everyday life, we consider that the discursive construction of social identities on the Internet will allow us to unveil modern, real and up-to-date manifestations of this phenomenon in the English language which, besides, is the *lingua franca* of the world and one of the most representative languages on the cyberspace.

“Discourse on the web is now a key factor in constructing representations of reality and social relationships, while also establishing new conventions for both textuality and intertextuality” (Mautner 2005: 821). For this reason, we consider that an analysis of specific communities of practice linked to certain gendered discourses on the web will allow us to unravel the dynamic and fluid ways in which the institutional and the local, the social and the individual, the theory and the practice melt in real life interactions regarding the negotiation of gender identities.

In order to do so, we will focus our attention on an institutional gendered discourse, that of traditional gendered magazines but with the innovation of the study of their online versions. In this particular case, we will focus on the online versions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*.

However, being consistent with the ideas expressed in this introduction, we will go a step further in our analysis. We will take advantage of the structural organisation of the web as a virtual public space and we will go into the analysis of online discussion forums allocated within the online versions of these magazines. In so doing, we will be coherent with the CofP framework described above and we will be able to decipher the ways in which these specific communities of practice negotiate, construct, maintain, reproduce or change the gender order traditionally associated to the institutional gendered space in which those communities of practice are located. It will be crucial to

unveil the ideal subject constructed by these specific mass media in their institutional discourse and analyse how that ideal subject identity is interpreted and negotiated by the local participants of that discourse (Talbot 1992). This convergence of the institutional and the local in the cyberspace will allow us to analyse, in a multimodal way, the interconnections established among language, cognition and society and their relation to the construction of social identities in CMC.

The importance of the Internet in contemporary social life makes it a relevant choice for projects interested in the discursive construction of identities because, as Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 60) state, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) “begins from some perception of a discourse-related problem in some part of social life”. But, as we have stated before, it is crucial for our purpose to overtly claim the feminist label of our CDA because the marriage of feminism and CDA “can produce rich and powerful political critique for action” (Lazar 2005a: 5) and “a feminist political critique of gendered social practices and relations is aimed ultimately at effecting social transformation... is itself a form of ‘analytical resistance’ (Van Dijk 1991)” (Lazar 2005a: 6).

This new FCDA approach to the multimodal construction of gender identities on virtual environments and their social implications is suitable for the newer and more subtle forms of gender representations and negotiations. As we explained before, previous feminist waves have made overt sexism less visible than it had been in the past years, however, new and more indirect ways have emerged to socially and linguistically maintain the gender order of specific communities of practice. In such a context,

the aim of feminist critical discourse studies, therefore, is to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities (Lazar 2007: 142).

With FCDA being essentially qualitative in nature, current researchers interested in the interplay between CDA and CMC have started to supplement their qualitative paradigms with quantitative data obtained by means of corpus linguistics tools (see Hardt-Mautner 1995 as an example) (Mautner 2005). Being the discourse created in online discussion forums our main focus of attention, it is reasonable to think that corpus linguistics tools will allow us to analyse the vast amount of information provided

in this context and scrutinise the most recurrent patterns of discourse in order to carry out an objective and representative discursive analysis.

By means of this kind of analysis we will like to detach ourselves from identity and CMC essentialism. By identity essentialism we mean the idea that gender is a dualistic concept, instead, we understand it as something which is non-existent out of context and that is socially and locally negotiated by individuals to suit their communicative intentions. In this way, we are positioning this analysis within Third Wave Feminism. On the other hand, by detaching ourselves from CMC essentialism, we are also locating this project within what has been called a Third Wave of CMC research (Lorenzo *et al.* 2011) which seeks to “demythologize the alleged homogeneity and highlight the social diversity of language use in CMC” (Androutsopoulos 2006: 420–21).

What we aim to achieve in this project is to unveil the “social construction of gender in its fullest extent” (Gaffney and Manno 2011: 193). In this light, it can be claimed that our investigation, therefore, can be included within one of the main branches of feminist gender and language studies, more precisely, the branch in which linguistic and discursive analyses of the representations and negotiations of gender are carried out. Even though we are conscious of the fact that indirect linguistic sexism can be found and manifested in every area of our everyday private and public life, we consider that the discursive construction of social and gender identities on the Internet will allow us to unveil modern, real and up-to-date manifestations of this phenomenon in the English language, which, besides, can be considered as an important *lingua franca* around the globe and one of the most representative languages in the cyberspace.

With all this in mind, our main objective in this study is that of analysing the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism from a discursive and pragmatic perspective typical of Third Wave Feminism and the most recent trends within feminist gender and language studies. We consider that the analysis of this linguistic-ideological-discursive phenomenon in a specific and local corpus of CMC will allow us to carry out the following objectives and to verify or reject the hypotheses included in them, namely:

- 1) To delineate the concept of linguistic sexism in an environment that we consider especially relevant in terms of its importance in the construction of social and gender identities in our contemporary society. We believe that a local analysis demarcated by the CofP framework will allow us to i) study what the phenomenon

of linguistic sexism is, ii) how it is defined within these specific contexts and iii) where and how it is manifested or experienced within concrete communicative situations.

- 2) To analyse concrete manifestations of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism in the English language. As far as we are concerned, the most pernicious and dangerous manifestations of linguistic sexism are carried out by means of indirect mechanisms, both at the level of institutional and local discourses. Because of this, a practical analysis of this phenomenon in a local gendered space (online discussion forums) which is ascribed to an institutional gendered space (online magazines aimed at [heterosexual] men and women) can provide a very rich account of real and up-to-date manifestations of this phenomenon in one of the most representative languages both around the world and the cyberspace.
- 3) To classify the main manifestations of indirect linguistic sexism in virtual spaces. Even though Mills (2008) provides a complete and detailed classification of what could be considered the most relevant manifestations of this phenomenon, we consider that the practical application of this model to a specific and well-delineated corpus, as it is our case, may lead us to delineate certain categories of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism, or even find new ones, which are specific to the context being analysed in this investigation, that is, that of social communication within virtual environments.
- 4) To study the repercussions of the use of indirect linguistic sexism at an institutional level (online gendered publications) in the maintenance or (re)creation of gender stereotypes and ideologies in specific communities of practice associated to these institutional discourses (online discussion forums). In this way, we will be able to study whether the discourses presented at an institutional level are (re)created and maintained by the communities of practice ascribed to them and whether the means and manifestations used to (re)create that discourse at a local level are similar or different. Besides, since this investigation will be carried out focusing both on men and women, this will allow us to study the impact and repercussions of indirect linguistic sexism from a global and inclusive perspective typical of Third Wave Feminism.



In order to be coherent with all the concepts that frame this project and to carry out our main objective, we will structure our work around three basic sections.

Section I, entitled *Basic Concepts*, which consists of three chapters, will be devoted, as it can be inferred from its title, to the presentation, description and analysis of the main theoretical concepts of our investigation.

Chapter 1, entitled *Indirect Linguistic Sexism*, will be dedicated to the presentation, location, definition and explanation of the main concept of our thesis, that of indirect linguistic sexism. For that purpose, we will firstly present a general panoramic view of Feminism and Gender Studies in order to highlight the main concepts and theories within them. In very general terms, we can claim that, without a doubt, the studies being carried out in the Anglo-Saxon world have been pioneers in relation to the study of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism and the first in proposing possible solutions, alternatives and ways to fight it back. Throughout this chapter, we will examine how different authors have proposed different alternatives and solutions to the problem of linguistic sexism, always regarding the historical moment and the linguistic advances of the time. Without a doubt, the linguistic and pragmatic shift that took place around the 1960s-1970s meant an inflexion point in the study of linguistic sexism because, from that moment onwards, the research carried out in this field was directed towards a more discursive perspective. Besides, we will analyse how aspects of gender and language do now merge with political and social domains and interdisciplinarity becomes an intrinsic feature of this field of study. This is the reason why the feminist critique has had a great impact on the political and academic discourses in English-speaking countries. What is of special relevance in this field of study is that diversity and proliferation of different discourses around this phenomenon are emerging on a current basis. The great variety of published works that deal with the phenomenon of linguistic sexism guarantee that this is a field of interest both for linguists and social researchers. However, new studies that go in depth into the analysis of this phenomenon and the changes it is enduring are needed, especially, those which deal with more recent ways of communication in order to understand and fight against the phenomenon of linguistic sexism. This first chapter will lead us towards the placement of the study of indirect linguistic sexism within its discipline and will allow us to have a clear image of the main concept under study in this investigation.

Chapter 2, entitled *Online Magazines and the Gender Perspective*, will be devoted to describe and delineate the main characteristics of the context where the main

concept under investigation (i.e. indirect linguistic sexism) will be studied. The Internet and the interactive features of digital media –whose vogue can be attributed to the decline in printed sales due to the exploitation, rapid expansion and easy access to digital media– do in fact favour the kind of discursive local and unmediated analysis that discourse analysts seek in order to investigate the ways in which institutions, hegemony, society and culture interact and affect each other in the negotiation of power relations. Bearing all this in mind, our project aims at being consistent both with current research on language and gender, where the notions of gender identity constructivism and gendered discourses are of especial relevance, and, at the same time, consistent with the public concern of critical discourse analysts with gender-related aspects. More precisely, our aim is to analyse indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of gender (in)equalities in virtual socioideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online magazines: *Cosmopolitan*, *Men's Health*) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK consumers and participants of these discourses). In this light, both the gendered institutional space of traditional magazines targeted at women and men and the gendered local space of online discussion forums will be studied in detail from the perspective of new ICTs, gender and critical discourse studies. Therefore, this chapter will allow us to have an insight into the context where the concept of indirect linguistic sexism will be analysed.

Having described the main theoretical concept under analysis in this study and the context where it is going to be analysed, the next step is that of presenting the methodological tools that will be used in order to carry out such an investigation. Chapter 3, the last chapter of Section I, entitled *Indirect Linguistic Sexism and Online Discussion Forums: Tools for a Critical Analysis*, will provide an account of the most appropriate tools of analysis for our objective. The notions of multimodality, computer-mediated communication (CMC) and computer-mediated discourse (CMD) would be considered as almost philosophical concepts that help define the context or frame of this study. We consider that the intrinsic features of our corpus and the nature of the phenomenon under analysis in this study claim for a kind of investigation that goes beyond strictly linguistic analyses. On the one hand, virtual spaces and online texts need to be approached from the point of view of multimodality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001), that is, the construction of meaning beyond linguistic mechanisms such as images, visual effects, typographical strategies, sounds, etc. Moreover, we consider that

the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism, due to its subtle and dynamic nature, must be approached from a critical perspective that takes into account discursive and pragmatic issues. In this light, Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) (Herring 2004) will be the theoretical framework around which we will structure the next chapters of our work. This is an approach to researching online behaviour that “provides a methodological toolkit and a set of theoretical lenses through which to make observations and interpret the results of empirical analysis” (Herring 2004). CMDA is carried out in 5 steps which will delimit our procedure in the following chapters: i) STEP 1, the presentation of our research questions and initial hypotheses; ii) STEP 2, the description of our data selection, compilation and organisation; iii) STEP 3, the explanation of the operationalization of the key concepts of our research; iv) STEP 4, the presentation of the specific analytical method or paradigm chosen to carry out our analysis; and v) STEP 5, the interpretation of the main results.

With all this in mind, we can claim that Section I constitutes the main theoretical body of our investigation. Section II, consequently, will deal with the practical application of the theoretical concepts and notions described so far because, as Herring (2008) suggests, there is a “need to move beyond description to theorize CMC effects on language. Theories should also be tested empirically on large corpora of contextually-classified (i.e., tagged) computer-mediated language samples that can be compared systematically across modes, contexts, and languages”, and the present work aims at being a proof of it. Section II of our investigation, entitled *Practical Study: A CM(FC)DA of Linguistic Sexism*, which consists of two chapters, will be devoted, as it can be inferred from its title, to the practical application of the theoretical and methodological notions described in Section I to a particular and well-demarked corpus.

Chapter 4, entitled *Corpus Description: Collection Process and Characterisation*, will be devoted, firstly, to state the main objective of our work, –i.e. the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of gender (in)equalities in virtual socioideological texts associated to institutional discourses targeted at specific communities of practice– and, secondly, to state the basic research questions that motivated this project (STEP 1 of the CMDA approach). More precisely, this investigation aims at 1) analysing how the phenomenon of linguistic sexism is manifested and negotiated within the discourse of online discussion forums ascribed to online gendered magazines aimed at men and women, and also 2) at studying whether

Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism can be applied to the concrete environment of our investigation or, on the contrary, whether it should be modified by delineating certain categories or adding new ones paying attention to the particular context of our study. Our main hypotheses in this respect spin around the idea that, in relation to our first research question, our analysis will in fact show that the phenomenon of linguistic sexism is manifested by different mechanisms, namely direct and indirect ones. However, we predict that, due to the social nature of the environment and the influence of the institutional framework where it is located, mainly indirect mechanism will be used to manifest and negotiate sexist attitudes through language. In relation to our second research question, we consider that our analysis will in fact demonstrate that Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism can be applied not only to institutional or formal contexts but also to informal and newly created technological spaces. Nevertheless, and due to the specificities of the medium, we consider that certain nuances of specific categories will be necessary and, most importantly, new categories should be added that take into account the concrete manifestations of the negotiation of meaning in this particular environment. In Chapter 4, apart from carrying out STEP 1 of our CMDA, we will also carry out STEP 2, that is, the presentation and description of our specific corpus of research together with the explanation of its adequacy to our research questions. More precisely, our empirical investigation will focus on a corpus consisting of more than 2.500.000 million words extracted from two online discussion forums ascribed to two online gendered magazines, *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*. In order to describe our corpus, we will make use of relevant concepts to CMC data compilation –such as location, selection criteria, data collection dates, browser or system, file format, file cleaning or nomenclature– but also organisational notions –such as macroscopic or microscopic structures– which will help us delineate our corpus and justify its adequacy to our purpose.

Chapter 5, entitled *Analysis of the Corpus*, will constitute the analysis of the corpus itself. In order to be coherent with the methodological toolkit selected for this investigation, STEP 3 of our CMDA, that is, the operationalization of the key concept of our research, will be carried out in the first part of this chapter. Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism will be used here in order to present a classification of the main discourse features that can be used in order to manifest or negotiate this phenomenon in discourse. Six categories –humour, presuppositions, scripts and

metaphors, conflicting messages, collocations and androcentrism— will be described and explained in detail. Following this, STEP 4 of our CMDA will be carried out, that is, the presentation of the specific analytical method or paradigm chosen to carry out our analysis and its implementation in our specific corpus. Because of organisational reasons, the detailed description of the paradigm chosen, which, in our particular case, and due to the specificities of our corpus and the nature of the phenomenon under analysis, will be a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) (Lazar 2005b, 2007; Lehtonen 2007, Marling 2010), will be done in Chapter 3, following the selection of the specific methodology. In so doing, all the theoretical and methodological concepts of our investigation will be included in Section I. However, in order to be coherent with our methodological approach, the specific paradigm selected to carry out our analysis will be shortly retaken in this chapter. The following stage within Chapter 5 will be the implementation of the chosen paradigm in our corpus and the presentation of specific and detailed examples.

Finally, Section III, entitled *Conclusions and Future Directions*, will allow us to present the main results of our investigation and some further suggestions. Chapter 6, entitled *Conclusions of the Project and Future Research Directions*, will be devoted to carry out STEP 5 of our CMDA, that is, the presentation and interpretation of the main results of our investigation. This will be done in three different stages. Firstly, the main and general conclusions extracted from our study will be presented in terms of a short summary of the main information presented in our research. Secondly, the specific answers to our research questions will be presented. More precisely, we will observe how the main hypotheses offered at the beginning of this study are corroborated. On the one hand, we will demonstrate how, although linguistic sexism is manifested both by means of direct and indirect mechanisms, subtle and covert ones can be claimed to be the most relevant, by far, in our investigation. We will also explain how, although Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism has served our purpose of analysing this phenomenon in a specific corpus of CMD, we have found out that specific categories or discourse features, such as humour or presuppositions, are more relevant in this specific communicative environment due to both medium and social factors. Furthermore, we will explain how the addition of an extra category, that of multimodal elements, should be included into Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism in order for it to be better suited for the analysis of this phenomenon in CMC. Finally, we will highlight some important notions that will try to shed light into the future directions

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that could be followed regarding the feminist analysis of the relationship between gender and CMC and its implications for language, cognition and society. In very general terms, we want to highlight that this study will point towards the importance of multimodality both for investigations interested in linguistic sexism and CMC; the relevance of going in depth into specific studies that help delimit the concrete but yet varied specificities of the medium and social factors of CMC; the importance of being consistent and systematic in carrying out localised studies that will, in turn, shed light into the institutional discourses that surround them together with diachronic investigations of a given phenomenon which will “give us a sense of how meaning and uses of words develop” (Baker 2010: 25); and, finally, the enormous benefits that different methodologies and paradigms could find in the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

All in all, we consider that this investigation is a humble contribution to the incipient but yet very rich field of feminist language and gender studies interested in the analysis of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism in CMC.

# **Section I**

## **Basic Concepts**





# **Chapter 1**

# **Indirect Linguistic Sexism**

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## 1. Indirect Linguistic Sexism

### 1.1. Feminism and Gender Studies

#### 1.1.1. *Feminism*

Feminism can be considered as a political movement originated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Anglo-Saxon countries. Theoretically speaking, we can refer to three different feminist periods or waves. In its inception, feminism was mainly concerned with the importance of revealing the social inequalities experienced by women in relation to their economic, political, educational and social status. This first era of feminism, known as *First Wave Feminism*, can be considered as a liberal, mainly political, movement directed at raising women's consciousness in relation to their oppressed social circumstances.

*Second Wave Feminism* started around the 1970s on the premise of the differences between men and women. By revealing social inequalities between the sexes the previous feminist wave had already made obvious an inaccessible breach. Authors from different academic disciplines started to analyse the reflection and influence of these social inequalities into different domains such as psychology, anthropology, philosophy, history, linguistics or culture. Scholars tried to provide empirical evidence that illustrated the homogeneous characteristics of men and women as opposing categories. At the same time, consciousness raising groups and academic works appeared that tried to make society aware of the different norms and standards that regulated the social behaviour of the sexes.

However, the 1990s witnessed a change in the conception of these, until then, static categories. Women and men started to be considered as dynamic, changeable and fluid categories that were context and culturally dependent. Although *Third Wave Feminism* does not consider women and men as single homogeneous groups, this idea is not contradictory with previous liberal feminist objectives such as the emancipation of *women*. In fact, the emancipating agenda makes for a praxis-oriented research based on the dialectical relation between theory and practice (Lazar 2005a). Third Wave Feminism fosters local and practical analyses in order to empirically analyse how power is exercised in different contexts in a way that maintains social inequalities in subtle and unconscious ways. This kind of analysis implies a strong sense of critical reflexivity

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both on the part of individual social agents and on the part of institutional organisations because it is precisely by means of our knowledge about social processes that we shape our subsequent social practices (Lazar 2005a). As a result of this interconnection between the local and the institutional in Third Wave Feminism, we can claim that, despite the fact that "the notion of 'women' [and 'men'] has been destabilised to a certain extent and is difficult to use except with provisos, it is still a concept which is important to retain in order to be able to describe the systematic nature of the discrimination that many women [and men] experience" (Mills 2003a: 241). In this sense, the analysis of the local will contribute to broaden our perspective on the social and cultural negotiations of power. This is of particular importance in our contemporary world because, as Mills (1998) claims, the objectives and aims of the first liberal feminist movements are, somehow, taken-for-granted or have become common sense at least in the Western world. However, newer and subtle forms of social discrimination have emerged that need to be addressed from a more pragmatic perspective. For example, *Laddism* has emerged as a backlash against feminist ideas, rejecting equality between the sexes based on traditional and sexualised views of society (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010). These practices, however, can only be observed and disentangled at a local level. Nevertheless, the critical reflexivity intrinsic in feminist works leads them to broaden their scope to offer a wider and useful social and political perspective for action. In this respect, Third Wave Feminism claims for the need of a "me-feminism" in order to unveil social problems, but also the need of a "we-feminism" that will have an impact on transforming political issues (Lazar 2001, Mills and Mullany 2011).

Having provided a brief and general overview of the main feminist movements, it is important for our purpose to highlight that it is within the Second and the Third Waves that the linguistic perspective plays an important role in relation to feminism (Holmes and Marra 2010a, Mills and Mullany 2011). In the first stages of the relationship between feminism and linguistic studies, it was understood that linguistic "usages can reify, reinforce and render invisible a range of inequitable assumptions about what is appropriate and normal" (Holmes and Marra 2010a: 5). More specifically, Second Wave feminists are interested in analysing linguistic instances that perpetuate, because of semantic or syntactic properties, the patriarchal and oppressive ideology in which women are forced to live. Third Wave feminists, on the other hand, are more concerned with the discursive construction of ideology and the negotiations of power relations in interaction. These ideas will be analysed in the following sections.

It is relevant to highlight, once more, the political agenda of feminism and feminist linguistics. Nevertheless, this political focus has often been criticised by authors, like Widdowson (1995), who reject overtly political research based on the idea that it is subjective and unreliable. To counteract this criticism, feminists have often claimed the subjective, socially and historically constructed nature of notions such as science itself (Lazar 2005a). In this respect, we subscribe to Segal's (1999: 232) argument on the relevance of continued feminism because "Why feminism? Because its most radical goal, both personal and collective, has yet to be realised: a world which is a better place not just for some women, but for all women [and men]".

What can be inferred from these ideas is the fact that feminism has been intrinsically related to the notion of gender since its inception. What is more, gender is a fundamental concept within feminist linguistics but... what is *gender*?

### 1.1.2. *What is gender? Feminism and the concept of gender*

What can be understood from the main ideas on feminism that we have highlighted in the previous section is that feminist thinking is based on a dualistic consideration, that of *sex* and *gender*.

Taking into account the innumerable definitions of the concept of *gender* provided by different authors within different disciplines, we could state that gender can be seen both as a grammatical and a socially constructed phenomenon. Regarding the second facet of gender as a socially constructed phenomenon, it is important to mention that different shades of meaning are provided in order to attain a precise definition (García Mouton 2002). However, in general terms, we could define the concept of gender as a set of social norms and conventions that are culturally attributed to the sexes within different communities of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992a, 1992b) and contextual circumstances.

This definition of gender emerged in the 1960s-1970s within the new-born tradition of Gender Studies initiated in the United Kingdom and the United States. However, it is possible to trace back earlier origins for this notion.

It was in 1949 when Simone de Beauvoir provided the feminist movement with a crucial idea for its development in the 20th century. This idea is encapsulated in the sentence *one is not born, but rather becomes a woman*, where the author claims that it is not the biological, psychological or economic features the ones that determine the role

of women in society, rather, it is society itself the one that stipulates what a woman is supposed to be.

Her reflection in this statement started a social debate about the education of women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the history behind that education, the social (in)equalities between men and women and it also paved the way for new fields of study, not just from the perspective of femininity, but also from the perspective of masculinity or, as Butler (1999) would claim, from the perspectives of femininities and masculinities. As Sunderland (2000a) explains, the 1990s were witness to a radical change in the conception of gender. Maggie Humm (1989) had defined the concept of gender as a group of attributes which are culturally modelled, as a set of social and cultural behaviours attributable to both women and men. However, this definition was regarded as essentialist and confusing because it left unanswered questions about the authorship of those attributes, their static or changeable nature, the level of acceptance by individuals, etc.

The concept of gender, therefore, started to be considered as something rather more complex and sophisticated. Nowadays, the concept of gender spins around the notion of social identity and one's own perception and projection of the self. As Butler (1999: 33) asserts, "gender is always a doing". The concept of gender is no longer understood as a stable feature, but as a changeable and context-dependent variable. Based on this consideration of gender, Gender Studies analyse the ways in which individuals perceive and project one's own and other's gender identities but... where can we perceive and project our own gender identity?

### 1.1.3. *Where is gender? The study of gender and language*

We could confidently state that gender can be perceived and projected in almost every area of our everyday life. Since the moment we are born, we are bombarded with and live within *gendered* spaces (Sunderland 2004). When a baby is born, parents and relatives shower the baby with presents, clothes and toys that are specific to the sex with which the baby has been born. Girls will live surrounded by all shades of pink colour, flowers, fairies, laces, baby dolls, pushchairs, shopping trolleys, cooking devices, aprons or dolls that display specific physical attributes. On the other hand, boys will live in a blue world in which sports clothes will be necessary to deal with

their dinosaur toys, cars, tricks, construction blocks, war warriors and even some mass destruction weapons.

These gestures, being isolated actions, may mean nothing in a person's life, however, as we grow up, we can observe how the ideas and connotations symbolised by those colours and toys are strengthened by the cartoons and films we watch, the tales that we listen to at bed-time, the games we play in our breaks or leisure time and the way we mock of our peers when we do something that, even if we like, we are not supposed to be doing because of the sex category we belong to.

The mass media; the news reports with the images and texts in them; the advertisements we live with; the social norms around social events, such as sitting at the table or even emergency protocols (*women and children first*), etc. every domain of our social life provides us with norms and standards of socially acceptable behaviours according to our biological sex as a discriminatory agent.

Nevertheless, we do not only communicate by means of toys, ads or clothes. Language could be considered as the most powerful and used source to communicate with other human beings. Even more, as Halliday (1973) explains in his widely used theory on the functions of language, we do not only communicate objective information but, by means of the language we use, we can also transmit values, feelings, judgements, appeal to our interlocutors when necessary or even sanction what we do not consider appropriate, for example.

Languages are said to be double-faceted. On the one hand, we use language to communicate feelings and ideas in specific communicative contexts. The elements we utter could be conceived of as being made up of mere grammatical and lexical structures; however, by means of uttering those linguistic elements, we also do things by means of language (Austin 1962). Therefore, languages are used both to transmit referential information (*The ball is under the table*) and abstract information (*I don't like Isma's ideas on that matter*), but also to do things with them (*I forgive you / I pronounce you husband and wife*). It is into this social facet of languages that Gender Studies go more in depth in order to analyse aspects related to the gender variable; the transmission, maintenance and even disappearance of gender roles and stereotypes.

Languages can hence be considered as double-edged weapons that, on the one hand, make us progress but, on the other, may also limit and imprison us.

As we mentioned earlier, it is within Second Wave Feminism that the analysis of the treatment and representation of gender and the sexes in society and language started

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to be considered as a relevant issue (Pauwels 1998). A new kind of reflexive and political linguistic discourse emerged in the 1960s-1970s. Our own experiences as members of societies make us aware of the importance of naming our own experiences and realities in order to legitimise our own voices within particular cultural groups. The power of language, in that sense, can be seen as intrinsically related to cultural and historical aspects related to power such as race or gender. It is broadly known that those who dominate language and the communicative context, in turn, have power over the ones who do not and, historically speaking, we could claim that those who have had power over language and other social dimensions have been, in general terms, men. Taking a step aside from the idea of *man-made language* (Spender 1985) as a complot to control and oppress women, we would suggest that male domination over language throughout history is, in fact, due to social issues related to the inner regulation of specific communities of practice.

Socialisation (Goddard & Patterson 2000) is the process by means of which human beings acquire social knowledge and information about our own social identity as members of a community, it is shared knowledge that works as a general framework to interpret the world around us. Languages, without a doubt, are a key element in this socialisation process because in the same way that we talk to other people, we can be talked about by other individuals of our own or other communities. Paying little attention to some linguistic resources –such as vocabulary expected to be used by men or women, or words that mean different things depending on the sex of the referent (García Meseguer 1977, García Mouton 1999)–, we would be able to identify a shared system of reference about accepted social behaviours appropriate for each individual according to the sex class they belong to.

Socialisation is a never-ending process and, as a result, we can affirm that we can change our vision and interpretation of the world in which we live along our lives. This is also the main premise on which feminist linguistic movements of Second Wave Feminism pleaded for linguistic reforms based on gender related aspects.

However, as we mentioned earlier, changes within the feminist movement also affected the way in which language and gender studies developed. The movement out from the essentialist vision of men and women as homogeneous social groupings, led feminism and feminist linguistic studies towards a constructionist and performative (Butler 1999) approach to gender identities which emphasises “the diverse, flexible, and context-responsive ways in which people ‘do gender’ (among other identities) in



different situations, and even from moment to moment within a situation” (Holmes and Marra 2010a: 1).

Gender doesn't just exist, but is continually produced, reproduced, and indeed changed through people's performance of gendered acts, as they project their own claimed gendered identities, ratify or challenge others' identities, and in various ways support or challenge systems of gender relations and privilege (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 4).

This constructionist understanding of gender is, therefore, intrinsically connected to the community of practice framework (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992a, 1992b). It is inferred that, within different social contexts, or even at different times of a concrete communicative interaction, individuals may perceive or project their social (gender) identities in different ways which are appropriate to the context in which they are interacting. In so doing, they are aware of the “highly rigid regulatory frame[s]” (Butler 1990: 36) of the “gender order” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 32) that constraint our performance of our social identity.

As a result of this new understanding of the negotiation of social (gender) identities, Third Wave Feminism takes a step aside from feminist linguistic reform at the lexical or syntactical level and advocates for a more pragmatic kind of approach to the study of the relationship between gender and language.

In fact, as we mentioned earlier, “one legitimate goal for language and gender scholarship is political: to contribute to the wider struggle against unjust and oppressive gender relations, by revealing and challenging the ideological propositions which support and naturalize those relations” (Cameron 2007: 16). Due to the political agenda, Third Wave Feminism is really conscious about the importance of analysing the relationship between gender and language by means of methodologies that are able to disentangle the newer and even more subtle and indirect ways in which that intimate relation is manifested. As Lazar (2007) suggests, gender ideologies and asymmetrical power relations represented and negotiated through language and discourse are currently adopting quite subtle and indirect forms in modern societies. This newer subtle and indirect ways of exercising power contribute to the hegemonic and acceptable nature of traditional and unequal gender ideologies.

Even in societies or communities where blatant sexism seems to be outdated, we should carefully analyse local practices shaped around broader cultural and social

contexts in order to unveil the subtle negotiations of power and their implications in relation to social gender identities.

We consider that newer forms of power negotiation require attention and analysis in order to understand and modify, if necessary and possible, any social and linguistic practice that helps maintain the traditional and unequal gender order. For that reason, before going in depth into a case study of this nature, let's analyse in detail the notion of indirect linguistic sexism. We will provide a definition framework together with a series of reasons that demonstrate the relevance of the study of this phenomenon. In order to do so, we will provide a literature review that aims at locating the reader in the centre of a panoramic vision of what the phenomenon of linguistic sexism is about.

## **1.2. Linguistic Sexism**

### *1.2.1. Definition*

As we have seen, one of the main fields of study within the feminist movement and Gender Studies is that of language, especially the phenomenon of linguistic sexism which is studied within the aforementioned social facet of languages.

Lameiras & Rodríguez (2003) define linguistic sexism as an attitude directed towards people in virtue of their belonging to a specific biological sex and, according to which, they must assume certain features and behaviours. These sexual and gender differences are also reflected and/or created by the language we use. Consequently, linguistic sexism exists.

The phenomenon of linguistic sexism has been widely studied within feminist circles since the 1960s and its understanding by society has been extended and developed through the years. Vetterling-Braggin (1981) defines linguistic sexism as the practices by means of which people in communicative situations highlight gender when it is not a relevant feature for communicative purposes. For Holmes (1996) sexist language involves the different ways in which language expresses negative attitudes towards women. Similarly, Pauwels (1998) suggests that linguistic sexism relates to linguistic practices and uses that express prejudices against women. Sau (2000), however, goes a step further and prefers to characterise this phenomenon as a set of means by which patriarchy maintains women in a subordinate and inferior position within society. However, for many other authors like García Meseguer (1977, 1996) or

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Català and García (1995), linguistic sexism is not an intrinsic problem of language, but of the use speakers make of it. In the same direction, one of the most recent definitions of linguistic sexism and, one which we particularly agree with, states that linguistic sexism can be seen as

a set of resources which individuals assume to be available to them, which are socially approved of by certain institutions and groups, but which, within particular communities of practice and institutions, may be contested. Thus the use of sexism by individuals may be a way of associating oneself with particular people within a group or distancing oneself from other people in a group and associating oneself with groups and values outside the group (Mills 2008: 33).

We can consider that a discourse is sexist if it contains old or outdated beliefs or stereotypes (for example, *Women are very delicate beings. They shouldn't lift heavy things*); if it takes men's experiences as the human standard (for example, *The military service was compulsory for Spanish people who were born before 1984* –when it was only compulsory for men); or if it considers that any activity related to women or femininity is trivial or unimportant (for example, *One could live without beauty products but not without a good TV and a football match*). These are stereotypical and conservative beliefs and, some of them, have even become institutionalised and belong to specific cultural backgrounds or shared knowledge of certain communities of practice. In fact, in the examples we have just seen, it is not the language itself that is sexist, it is the system of beliefs that sustains them that renders women as inevitably inferior to men (García Meseguer 1977, 1996; Català and García 1995; Calero 1999a; Cameron 2006; Mills 2008).

From its birth in the 1960s, the idea of linguistic sexism has evolved hand in hand with the concept of gender. In the 1970s-1980s, some important unthinkable-up-to-that-moment social changes took place which were related to the social status of women and, consequently, to language itself. The entrance of women in the working sphere, the breaking up with traditional stereotypes, the understanding of women and their abilities, the movement towards women's economic independence, together with other social changes created an atmosphere in which sexism started to be perceived as intolerable.

These social changes, which took place thanks to the efforts of First Wave Feminism, were the seaquake that caused Second Wave Feminism to appear (Suardiaz 2002). The Feminist Language Reform (Pauwels 1998) emerged in this new era and

many feminists paved different ways of action in relation to the conception and treatment of linguistic sexism that were dependent on their own interpretation of the relation between language, thought and society.

Pauwels (1998) explains in great detail what the Feminist Language Reform is about in relation to sexist language. This kind of reform is thought to be based on sociolinguistic methods because of its mainly social and political efforts. This reform consists in the analysis of an existing code or language and its modification because of aesthetic, functional, logical or political reasons.

Due to the fact that the Feminist Language Reform was mainly created by pioneers like Miller and Swift (1982, 1989) or self-organised groups of women (such as publishing houses like The American Psychological Association or The National Council of Teachers of English), this can be considered as a grassroots process (Pauwels 1998). However, governments, ministries and national or supranational organisations like UNESCO also play an important role in the spread of the objectives and achievements of the Feminist Language Reform. The main purpose of this kind of reform is the analysis of the representation of women and men in every linguistic level (phonology, morphology, lexis, syntax or discourse). It is mainly targeted at specific communities of practices or specialised audiences and the vehicles they use to promote their ideas are as extensive as the ideologies of the professionals who lead the reforms themselves.

Second Wave Feminism is characterised by the analysis of sexist practices at or under the sentence level, that is, especially the analysis of isolated words and meanings (Pauwels 1998) and some relevant authors of this era include Lakoff (1975) or Spender (1985). However, despite the fact that this is a global movement around the world, the reforms, proposals and the time when they were applied were different in different parts of the world.

According to Pauwels (1998), there are three main and indispensable steps to be taken in any linguistic reform and, by extension, in the Feminist Language Reform. The first thing linguistic reformers must do is identify the facts and the problem, in our case, sexist linguistic practices, in order for them to be described and documented. Among the main problems concerning sexist language we can highlight the invisibility and inferiority of women in language and the idea of men as the norm; the fact that women and women's status are usually represented in relation to the men in their lives; linguistic asymmetries to refer to both men and women or the stereotypical

representation of the sexes (López and Morant 1991, López 1999, Calero 1999b, Mills 2008). But, how is this reflected in language? Basically, by means of generic references, asymmetrical terms to refer to occupations, stereotypical words, titles and other addressing mechanisms or even sentences and whole discourses.

The second step to be taken in any linguistic reform is related to the reformers' view of change regarding the problematic issues. It is precisely here where the reformers' ideology and ideas on the relationship between language, thought and society will emerge. Reformers will identify the linguistic practices that need to be explained and those that need exemplification together with those that require the proposal of alternatives. At the same time, the social effectiveness of the linguistic changes proposed is measured against the linguistic viability of the proposal. It is very important for reformers to take into account the different varieties of the sexist linguistic practice in order to propose alternative elements or mechanisms that suit the same communicative contexts and therefore, will not be rejected by the community of practice in which they are supposed to be used.

The third step involved in the linguistic reform would be the implementation of the measures adopted by reformers. One of the main public manifestations of this stage of the linguistic reform is what is known as linguistic or stylistic guidelines published by institutional organisations that support the reformist movement.

The need of a linguistic reform that suits a social reality is the reason why the analysis and fight against sexist language emerged. The Feminist Language Reform defends language manipulation and the proposal of alternative mechanisms that prevent women from being less transparent in society (gender neutrality) but also mechanisms that highlight women's visibility in society (gender specificity) (Pauwels 1998). But, since its beginnings, the field of study of linguistic sexism has suffered from different problematic aspects.

The voices and quills of critics contrary to the Feminist Language Reform have been made publicly and widely available. Specially, the mass media have played with irony, puns and the tradition of political correctness in order to ridicule and make fun of these feminist campaigns. Many times, the field of language and linguistic reform has been considered as arbitrary, trivial and unimportant when compared to other social domains of gender equality or discrimination which also require detailed attention. Mills (2008) illustrates this situation with the example of words such as *manhole cover*, *small person*, *bald* and their possible non-discriminatory alternatives *personhole cover*,

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*vertically challenged* or *follically challenged*, which demonstrate how this anti-reform movements together with the trend of political correctness –created by the mass media– mock the feminist campaigns of anti-discriminatory language in order to publicly ridicule them.

What is more, even within feminist circles, the concept of linguistic sexism is problematic due to its anachronistic flavour. The idea of linguistic sexism entails a stable model of language in which sexism is transmitted by means of isolated elements unaffected by the context in which they are used (Schultz [1975]1990; Miller and Swift 1982, 1989; Spender 1985; Kramarae and Treichler 1985; Vargas 1998; Forgas Berdet 1999) and, as a result, it “sometimes feels outdated” (Mills 2008: 9) within certain spheres.

But languages are continuously changing and, consequently, the courses or guidelines about gender and the linguistic reforms on sexist language must be constantly updated (López and Morant 1991). For example, the sexual connotations added to the feminine form of *courtier* / *courtesan* cannot be considered as part of our everyday language in contemporary society and, for that reason, it would be unpractical to include it in current proposals of the linguistic reform.

Some authors like Toolan (1996) consider that the analysis of sexist language is no longer fruitful because finding examples of sexism in linguistic practices is too easy and, somehow, Toolan (1996) is not wrong. Second Wave Feminism has profoundly exploited the semantic analysis of words and new forms of analysis are required. It is indispensable to adapt the methods and methodologies of research to the natural flow of languages and their resources in order to unveil the linguistic mechanisms that users have at their disposal in order to solve the social barriers created against sexist practices. As Mills (2008) affirms, there is a need to analyse newer and more subtle forms of sexism and, from that perspective, the field of study of direct sexism should be complemented and enriched with that of indirect sexism. Although it is important not to forget about direct and blatant forms of linguistic discrimination, it is crucial that current research focuses on a more contextualised kind of sexism. Apart from studying the meaning of isolated linguistic elements, it is vital for researchers on the field of linguistic sexism to find new alternatives and tools that allow them to analyse the specific contexts of interaction and the social meanings produced in them. A good example of these new tools, for example, would be the ASI (*Ambivalent Sexist Inventory*) (Glik and Fiske 1997, Swim and Cohen 1997, Masser and Abrams 1999,

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Parks and Robertson 2000, Greenwood and Linda 2002, Lameiras and Rodríguez 2003, Swim *et al.* 2004, Barreto and Ellemers 2005, Cristopher and Mull 2006, Fischer 2006), which analyses different facets of social sexism (hostile sexism –HS– and benevolent sexism –BS–) which, although different in form and social representation, are equally and tremendously damaging for women.

In the 1990s, different authors started to claim the importance of redirecting the analysis of linguistic sexism towards a more discursive focus. As Mills (2004) explains, by that time the idea of discourse started to be considered as

something which produces something else (an utterance, a concept, an effect) rather than something which exists in and of itself and which can be analysed in isolation. A discursive structure can be detected because of the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving. Thus we can assume that there is a set of discourses of masculinity and femininity, because women and men behave within a certain range of parametres when defining themselves as gender subjects. These discursive frameworks demarcate the boundaries within which we can negotiate what it means to be gendered (Mills 2004: 14).

This kind of approach towards sexist linguistic practices is different from that traditionally used by linguistic reformers of Second Wave Feminism during the 1970s-1980s. These differences in approaching the phenomenon of sexist language are due to the emergence of newer and more subtle forms of sexism which are discursively enacted and whose presence cannot be identified by means of concrete and isolated analyses. In this respect, it is important to mention that, although the Feminist Language Reform has not been as successful as expected in its inception (Cameron 1998b), this political and linguistic movement has achieved important improvements that place sexism at a delicate position in most societies. One of the main principles that regulate any communicative interaction is that of linguistic politeness (see Mills 2003a) and the act of saving *face* (Goffman 1959, 1967). Interlocutors trying to conform to socially acceptable communicative situations would try to avoid aberrant forms of sexism. However, some users may also want to express their discriminatory ideas on gender in a way that is not socially punishable. In fact, certain reforms proposed by the feminist movement are being used at times by members of certain communities of practice in a humorous or ironic tone. In this way, as it is the case with the figure of the *New Lad* (Benwell 2007), they can express their ideas by means of indirect and subtle mechanisms. Humour, irony and political correctness are masks under which users and institutions hide in order to

avoid social judgement (Greenwood and Linda 2002, Mills 2003b, Martín Ruano 2003, Barreto 2005, Ford *et al.* 2008). On the other hand, certain communities of practice may also make use of specific blatant forms of sexism widely rejected by Second Wave Feminism in order to re-negotiate power and re-define negative attributes.

Therefore, as we have seen, the Feminist Language Reform, together with the feminist campaigns and relevant social and institutional changes (legal actions such as the Equal Pay Act, the Sex Discrimination Act or the legal reforms on divorce) have strongly influenced the Anglo-Saxon society. However, although we could affirm that current westernised societies –at least the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, where studies have demonstrated that “overt sexism has been driven underground” (Mills 2008: 21)– have a strong and fervent anti-sexist perspective, it is not difficult to find individual members or whole communities of practice within that societies who may want to express their contrary opinions and, in fact, have the right to do so, even if it is by means of indirect and subtle mechanisms (Chew and Kelly-Chew 2007). These new forms of sexism are equally damaging and, in some cases, are even supported by institutions or gatekeepers such as lexicographers, publishing houses or publicists whose approval is indispensable for the reform. As a result, it is important to claim that new forms of analysis of linguistic sexism –such as those proposed by Mills (2003c, 2008), Masser and Abrams (1999) or Parks and Robertson (2000)– are needed. In fact, we can claim that these new forms of analysis are already starting to take their first steps.

### 1.2.2. *Relevance of the study of linguistic sexism*

As we have seen, once the problem has been detected, the next step to be taken is to think about the possibilities of mitigating the inconveniences or, even, to consider if any solution would apply at all, to weight up the viability of the proposals and the possible acceptance on the part of the community of practice to which it is addressed (Pauwels 1998). It is precisely here where the experts’ ideology and idiosyncrasy, together with their view on the relationship between language, thought and society, would come into play.

As we have already seen, it is crucial to differentiate between the notions of sex and gender within feminism and Gender Studies. Although it has also been claimed to be socially constructed (Butler 1993), generally speaking for our purpose, sex could be



considered as a biological deterministic feature that categorises human beings into male and female. The concept of gender, on the other hand, could be understood as a set of social norms decided on by the members of specific communities of practice which are, in turn, opened to negotiation within the context or communicative situation in which they may appear.

As we explained in the introduction to this project, some people consider languages as mere arbitrary sign systems that serve a representative function of reality, that is, they do not claim any relationship between language, thought and society. For the supporters of this viewpoint, languages are artificial invented systems that do not establish any link with our reality as individuals. This position is held by those who reject the existence of linguistic sexism based on the rejection of a possible connection between language and reality, gender and sex.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are those who believe in a connection between gender and sex and, thus, recognise the potential power of languages as resources to improve, change or adapt human experiences and social life (Pauwels 1998). However, within this stream of thought that recognises a dynamic relationship between language and reality, there are various degrees of commitment, as we have already explained. Linguistic relativism and linguistic determinism stay as the two opposing considerations within this viewpoint. Linguistic determinism, as its name suggests, implies that the languages used by specific communities of practice determine the way in which they perceive and experience the external world. However, the softer position of linguistic relativism suggests that languages help shape our understanding of the world but, in no way, determine it.

However, where the majority of feminist linguists reach agreement today is at the fact that language both helps create the world around us and, at the same time, we are influenced by the resources of the language we use (Pauwels 1998). In this sense, the relationship between language, thought and society is thought to be of a fundamentally dynamic and changeable nature.

As Toolan (1996) explains, as members of certain and varied communities of practice, we get used to certain ways of talking, writing and interpreting that are embedded within institutional frameworks and our interactions with other members of our communities of practice and which we adopt and put into practice in more or less unconscious ways in our everyday interactions. For that reason, as Schultz (1990[1975]) proposes, a detailed linguistic analysis will provide us with information on those who

created that language, but not only that, a detailed linguistic analysis will also provide important information on those who use that particular language.

Our ideas about human nature and, therefore, about gender are embedded in our way of thinking (García Meseguer 1977, 1996) and the language we use but, at the same time, the intrinsic properties of the language we use have an influence on how we experience our human nature and, therefore, our gender identity. As Mills (2008) explains,

instead of seeing language as a neutral vehicle which represents reality, I will rather describe language as a tool which is drawn on strategically by both sexist and feminist campaigners and as a site of struggle over word-meaning, which is also often a struggle over who has the right to be in certain environments, speak in certain ways and hold certain jobs (Mills 2008: 2).

Therefore, depending on the authors' ideology and their particular view of the relationship between language, thought and society, a particular way of action will be taken in relation to language change and the anti-sexist language reform (Pauwels 1998). Without a doubt, for those who understand languages as mere and arbitrary sign systems, the language reform is unfeasible and absurd. This is so because this philosophical position does not conceive a relationship between language, thought and society and, therefore, does not conceptualise how language can be a reflection of a sexist society. In the same way, because of the lack of connection between them, the supporters of this view claim that no connection can be established between a possible linguistic change and a consequent social change.

For those who understand language as a reflection of reality, –like Cameron (1990: 14), who claims that it “could be seen as a carrier of ideas and assumptions which become, through their constant re-enactment in discourse, so familiar and conventional we miss their significance”–, the linguistic reform would not be of any validity either. This is due to the fact that, within this particular way of thinking, it is precisely reality and society the ones that are reflected into different languages used by specific communities of practice, not the other way round. However, arguments against the language reform are held within this position too. The triviality of language in comparison to other social issues becomes a strong point against feminist language reformers. According to Lakoff (1975), if what we aim for is the elimination of gender social inequalities, it would be therefore extremely important, in contrast to the unimportant issue of language, to instigate active social change. However, this point of

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view does not exclude or reject the idea of Feminist Language Reform in itself. Within this framework, it is also important to adapt the language used by different communities of practice to the new social changes that may occur. For example, the new social positions that women have started to attain in Western societies has had an impact on the form and use of titles and forms of address. What is more, some feminists – influenced by postmodernism, psychoanalysis and the theory of deconstruction, such as Cixous or Irigaray– strongly advocate for the study of languages as a means to understand women’s social status.

However, for the supporters of the determinist or interactionist vision, the linguistic reform would be translated into social change and, therefore, it will contribute to the extinction of sexism in societies that suffer from it. In this sense, language does not in itself hold the key for women’s liberation but, certainly, provides society with invaluable resources to raise people’s consciousness about this social issue and, at the same time, it serves as a vehicle for the transmission of new visions of the world.

In short, in order to evaluate the efficiency of any language reform, it is crucial to, firstly, analyse the conception of the relationship between language, thought and society. That is to say, whether or not sexism is understood as a reflection of social oppression or, alternatively, as a medium for social oppression. If the first position is accepted, that of languages being a reflection of reality, the subsequent idea is that the first action to be taken involves social transformation and, in due course of time, a linguistic adaptation in which sexism will be non-existent will follow. On the other hand, if the second viewpoint is considered as valid, linguistic sexism is perceived as mediation for social oppression and, therefore, the language reform will contribute to the visibility of the problem and will, in turn, help eliminate social discrimination. These two philosophical positions regarding the relationship between language, thought and society have long been considered as conflicting positions. However, they should be best understood as two sides of the same coin. Languages change in order to adapt themselves to new and emerging social and institutional structures and, in turn, linguistic changes, especially those backed up by social institutions, definitely have a social impact.

Whilst changing the language will not in itself solve the problems of women’s lack of power or improve their subordinate statuses in the wider society ... the provision of non-sexist options can contribute to the construction of a more positive female identity. Similarly, avoiding sexist language and challenging sexist assumptions

contributes indirectly to the construction of more positive images of women. Drawing attention to evidence of widespread male bias in conventional uses of language is a worthwhile activity in its own right. But it is also true that such changes can ultimately affect attitudes because in and of themselves they alter the status quo (Holmes 2001: 131).

Therefore, many researchers and feminist critics understand languages not just as mere arbitrary sign systems with a representative function of reality, but they also recognise their communicative function among human beings, that is, they recognise both the instrumental and informative roles of languages as a reflection and means by which reality is created. Languages are used to communicate concrete realities that surround us by means of referential sentences, but we can also communicate abstract realities like thoughts or feelings which do not have a tangible manifestation in the real world. In the same way, as Halliday (1973) explains, languages are not only used to describe the world that surrounds us, they are also the means by which we establish links with those around us, we are able to exchange information by means of, not only the referential function of languages, but also the phatic, expressive, poetic or the metalinguistic ones.

As a result, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis cannot be considered as reliable from its most extreme position. If languages were to determine reality, any linguistic change or language reform would never be possible. However, we have been –and still are– witnesses of new social practices that instigate linguistic change. People –not just women but also other historically socially discriminated groups or individuals– have the need to voice their experiences in order to legitimise their own voice. It is precisely here where the power of language can be observed. Languages, as the majority of feminists claim nowadays, are linked to gender and, therefore, to sex. The person who dominates language in any social or communicative situation is the one who holds the power. Up to relatively recent times, it was considered by many feminist language reformers that the ones who generally hold power over any communicative situation and, therefore, their interlocutors, were men (Spender 1985). But languages are not created as such by independent groups of users. Languages emerge in the course of time due to social and cultural negotiations and crises about whose thoughts and views of the world should be the dominant ones in the social and cultural dimensions.

Therefore, language, thought and society are intimately related to one another. Our experiences as human beings are projected onto the language we use but, at the same time, the language we acquire in our childhood as part of our learning experience

and socialisation process provides us with a cognitive model by means of which we understand the reality around us. It is from these cognitive frameworks from where we extract the shared knowledge that helps us decodify the encoded information transmitted in communicative situations, from where we can make use and understand implicatures, inferences and contextual predictions.

In addition, we are actually living the effects of Third Wave Feminism (Mills 2003c, 2008) and the transposition of the main focus of attention away from the institutional level towards the analysis of the local negotiations of power within communities of practice. Within Third Wave Feminism it is difficult to find references to the influence of society as a structural system –for example, with notions such as patriarchy– on language. Now, the focus of attention is on how the individual decides what kind of language is appropriate for each communicative situation and community of practice in which they interact in order to perform their own social identity at that particular moment. As a result, notions and analyses above the community of practice level are difficult to find within Third Wave Feminism. It is in discourse that we have to focus on in order to analyse the creation, defence, maintenance and negotiation of our own social and gender identity. And so as a result, the analysis of linguistic sexism still remains a crucial social aspect. As Talbot (1998) puts it, the analysis of languages denaturalises them and, therefore, allows the researcher to place himself or herself in a more objective perspective. In the same way, Gill (2007) also defends the importance of bringing the issue of linguistic sexism into the public domain. By leaving linguistic sexism unattended we are making it look like a fad, however, its subtle workings and consequences will still be a reality.

Consequently, we have to keep on working on the phenomenon of linguistic sexism. Even though the language reform is a complex issue, we need to be conscious of the importance of its existence in order for the negative effects of sexism not to pass unnoticed.

Once we have clarified one of the main reasons of the relevance of the study of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism, it is important for our research to highlight another main justification, that is, the diversity of social domains where linguistic sexism can be found.

As we have already explained, it is during Second Wave Feminism that a general awareness of the importance of the treatment and representation of the sexes in language starts to emerge. However, in spite of the relevance of this phenomenon, it is

surprising that not many experts have devoted their research to this social and linguistic issue (Portal Nieto 1999). However, as Pauwels (1998) claims, the study of linguistic sexism is a grassroots movement linked to other forms of social discrimination. Due to its origins, it is a phenomenon that is studied from many different disciplines. This fact provides the study of linguistic sexism with a multidisciplinary nature that produces and analyses a great diversity of discourses because, as Suardiaz (2002) explains, our past experiences and formation go hand in hand in any experts' research.

It is important to note here that different languages will depend on specific sexist features that are intrinsic to each system and community of practice. However, there are certain features of linguistic sexism that can be claimed to be universal (Pauwels 1998). A good example of the commonalities of linguistic sexism across different languages are, to name just a few, the focus of attention on the study of gender stereotypes, linguistic asymmetries, the invisibility of women in language and what have been called sexist discourses.

But these and many other focuses of attention have not just been studied from a linguistic perspective. Due to the different backgrounds that back up the scholars who have approached the issue of linguistic sexism, many other disciplines, apart from linguistics, have had a great impact on the development of this field of study.

In order not to blur the linguistic approach of this research, we would just mention a few relevant works within some of the most important fields of study that have approached the phenomenon of linguistic sexism from a perspective other than the linguistic one.

One important field of study that has approached the phenomenon of linguistic sexism has been that of teaching materials (García Gracia *et al.* 1993; Renner 1996; Beebe 1998; Calero 1999a, 2002a; Sunderland 2000a; Fernández Fontecha 2002; Ansary and Babaii 2003; Ferguson 2004; Tsheliska 2006). The focus of attention in this kind of research has been oriented towards the identification of the androcentric perspective generally in second language teaching environments and the teaching materials involved in them.

In relation to this field of study, it is also important to mention an area which has been widely exploited in Second Wave Feminism, the analysis of linguistic sexism in reference works such as grammar books, dictionaries, style guidelines or in lexicographic practices such as the definitions and examples that we may find in these works (Miller and Swift 1982, 1989; Kramarac and Treichler 1985, Vargas 1998;

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Alcántara and Gómez 1999; Forgas Berdet 1999; Rivero 1999; Calero 2002a, 2002b; Amare 2006).

On the other hand, the analysis of the mass media has also been, and still is, a prolific field of study for the analysis of linguistic sexism. Due to the great influence of the media on the formation of human beings as active members of a given community of practice, its study has been the main concern of linguists and experts on the mass media interested in the formation and transformation of social identities. A clear example is provided by the vast amount of research found on the representations of women –and men too, in more recent times– in advertisements, newspapers, news reports, magazines, TV series, job advertisements, etc. (Feliu *et al.* 1999, Bengoechea 2003, Martínez-Guillem 2003, Mullany 2002, Benwell 2007, Gregori-Signes 2007, Tolstokorova 2008).

The literary world has also been relevant within the study of linguistic sexism. The absence of women authors in the literary works previous to the 17<sup>th</sup> century and their supposed preferences from that moment onwards for certain genres was the concern of many feminist and experts on sexist language (Cameron 1990). The social constraints imposed on women made it extremely difficult for them to have access to the world of literature and culture. The dedication or submission of women to the private sphere and the genres which were typical of that environment –such as letters, diaries, etc.–, their lack of access to classical models due to their separation from the educational world, the silenced voices of women in their personal writings or the feminine grammar and feminine style are just some examples of the main concerns of feminists and experts dealing with the phenomenon of linguistic sexism within literature (Woolf [1929]1990, [1965]1990; Leclerc [1974]1990; Donovan [1980]1990; Kaplan [1986]1990; Nair 2003).

On the other hand, due to the peak of specialised languages, the analysis of linguistic sexism is also being analysed in a great variety of linguistic domains such as business English or the language used for public and institutional procedures (Díaz Hormigo 2007).

Moreover, from the 1980s onwards, other European and non-European languages, not just the English language, join the movement of analysing the phenomenon of linguistic sexism. International databases are created and the phenomenon starts to be looked upon from a contrastive and international perspective (Pauwels 1998, Mills and Mullany 2011).

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But these fields of study, although very relevant, are not the only ones, as we have mentioned earlier. Due to its origins, the analysis of linguistic sexism is an interdisciplinary phenomenon where old and new scenarios are constantly merging. However, it is crucial for our purpose to highlight the extensive reach of this field of study. Without a doubt, the main interpretation we can get from the intrinsic nature of this phenomenon is that in no way is it a fad or an issue that can pass unnoticed.

### 1.2.3. *Main aspects of linguistic sexism*

In the same way that the phenomenon of linguistic sexism can be found in different and varied domains, the main aspects of this phenomenon are not few either. Without a doubt, the different feminist waves and the different historical and cultural moments where specific studies were carried out have strongly determined the object of study. However, there are certain aspects of linguistic sexism that remain constant across different studies, times and cultures.

As Pauwels (1998) claims, gender differences are manifested in language and regulated by it by means of different and common resources, for example:

- men are considered as the standard or norm against which women are measured;
- women are treated as invisible members of society;
- the asymmetrical representation of men and women, in the case that they are made visible;
- the linguistic representation of the repeated dependence of women on men;
- the stereotypical representation of the sexes.

Moreover, certain features of linguistic sexism are also common to many languages. Their main manifestations are carried out basically by means of:

- specific terms to refer to women and generic terms to refer to men;
- semantic asymmetry;
- lexical gaps;
- positive comparisons of women in relation to men but negative and even insulting comparisons when it is men the ones who are measured against women's standards.



On the other hand, to analyse the phenomenon of linguistic sexism it is not enough to differentiate between sex and gender. This is so because, even the concept of gender is not clear-cut (De Andrés Castellanos 2002, García Mouton 2002).

As García Meseguer (1996) or Pauwels (1998) claim, gender can be considered both as a grammatical and as an extralinguistic category. From a pure grammatical perspective, gender is a linguistic category that affects nouns and pronouns in relation to their behaviour regarding concordance with other parts or elements of the linguistic structure.

From a feminist perspective, the main concerns regarding this category are located in languages that display grammatical gender (masculine, feminine), where the arbitrariness of gender assignation to nouns is the cause of several problems. A good example of the problems that this grammatical category may cause can be found in languages like Spanish, for example, where the masculine generic has been attributed to the fact that men were socially and culturally considered as the superior sex. This grammatical prescriptive phenomenon can be found in ancient documents. For example, in 1533 the grammarian Wilson claimed that it is men that should precede women linguistically. This argument was later validated in 1646 when Pole stated that the most valuable gender is the masculine gender (Bodine [1975]1990). Besides, these views were consolidated by institutional prescriptions on the part of the British Parliament when, in 1850, the use of the dual pronouns *he / she* was eliminated, which was substituted by the masculine generic *he* in any linguistic manifestation, thus validating previous androcentric prescriptive perspectives.

These androcentric prescriptions are due to the extralinguistic connection between grammatical gender, social gender and biological sex. In spite of the fact that many linguists and lexicographers rejected, and still do, any possible connection between grammatical gender and sex, for many years and in specific social contexts and communities of practice, men have been considered as socially and culturally superior beings. Therefore, although done unconsciously, we cognitively establish a bond between grammatical gender and its extralinguistic referent. However, the majority of feminist researchers do support the idea of an intimate connection between sex and gender, whether social or grammatical. As a result, the masculine gender is to be considered the dominant one, the one which is highly valued linguistically speaking. In linguistic systems that are based on grammatical gender, like Spanish, masculine generic is the one that dictates the concordance models and, besides, it is the masculine

gender the one that is used as a generic. For the majority of feminist authors, the concordance of different parts of the sentence with masculine gender renders women invisible. They are, somehow, pushed into the background of femininity and, therefore, are hidden behind the mask of generic reference terms. Different studies have been recently carried out along this line trying to demonstrate in a scientific way how this false generic works in our cognitive system literally hiding or making women invisible (Dodd *et al.* 2001, Cralley and Ruscher 2005). These studies about masculine generic terms prove that, in the majority of cases, generic referents are not invoked, hence making it a false generic under which men are overwhelmingly made visible. In the case of the English language, different alternative options have been proposed in order to unveil that false generic reference and make women more visible and included. Some well-known examples are the use of the plural pronoun *they* with a singular meaning, terms like *human* or the recovery of the dual pronouns *he / she*. However, even when these inclusive alternatives are used, because of its unmarked nature, we tend to think in masculine terms and visualise male extralinguistic referents. The abovementioned studies demonstrate that we firstly think in masculine terms and it is the generic reading that comes later, thus needing an extra and additional cognitive and social effort on the part of the interlocutor to recognise women in language.

The discriminatory nature of this false generic is mainly studied in two major areas of research: lexical gaps and morphological asymmetry. A prolific area of study in this respect is that of occupational nouns where the feminine term is either non-existent (lexical gap: *fireman / \*firewoman*) or it is formed, because of social needs, from a masculine term (morphological asymmetry: *author / authoress*), thus providing it with an extra connotative load.

These two phenomena contribute to the invisibility of women in language and strengthen their social role in relation to men both in language and society. However, asymmetries are not only to be found in the morphological level, it is also possible to find asymmetries in the semantic field. In many languages and terms, the masculine form is used to refer to both the male members but also to the species as a whole. In that case, the feminine form is consigned to designate the feminine world in an exclusive manner. But this is not the only source of women's denigration. When feminine terms are used in a comparative way with masculine ones, they primarily tend to acquire sexual connotations which, in turn, reflect and create gender stereotypes (Schultz [1975]1990, López and Morant 1991, Calero 1999a). On the other hand, many studies

(Pearce 2008) have focused on the definitions and uses of words such as *man / woman* as a dual pair. In this case, men are considered to be norm and women are defined as dependent on them in many social and cultural domains. The human race is shown as generally masculine but, besides, the semantic differences between *man / woman* affect other words and their meanings. For example, the sentences *X is a professional* will acquire different connotations depending on whether the extralinguistic referent is thought to be a man or a woman, acquiring a sexual meaning in the second case.

Many of the words that were brought to light by Second Wave feminists are now old-fashioned or are no longer real uses of everyday language, however, they are perfect examples to show how languages are fluid and dynamic systems that adapt themselves to the needs of their users. Nevertheless, those terms, sometimes treated as old-fashioned, have in no way disappeared from language. They are still available for users to retake whenever they feel the need to in order to perform their social and gender identity.

Within the semantic field, another main aspect within the analysis of linguistic sexism is the study of sex-related terms. Historically speaking, the sexual role of women has been claimed to be that of sexual objects or properties to be possessed and conquered by men (see Pauwels 1998, Santaemilia 2005). Furthermore, according to the ideas within Second Wave Feminism, men have been the ones that have had power over language and any social or cultural situation. In that sense, the masculine perspective on language widely accepted by certain feminists (see Schultz [1975]1990, Spender 1985) can be observed, for example, in the field of metaphors in expressions like *He screwed her* or even in metaphors where the active agent is feminine *She fucked him*.

Another relevant aspect of the study of linguistic sexism, especially during Second Wave Feminism, has been the analysis of naming practices, forms of address and titles. Nouns are not the only symbols of masculinity and femininity, neither are they the only forms that portray and create stereotypical features (Calero 1999b), titles and forms of address are also a proof of it. Good examples of this domain are the studies that deal with the unequal treatment and use of titles such as *Miss*, *Mrs* and *Ms* in contrast to the situation of the masculine form *Mr*. where, again, there is a need to offer alternatives that do not portray or create women as dependent beings. The same happens in studies that have analysed formal social situations where titles are substituted by polite forms of address in the case of women but not in the case of men, hence, highlighting the difference of social status (Pauwels 1998). In the same way, the

way we address woman and men in social contexts, the way in which they address to each other in mixed or single groups is also a prolific field of research for linguistic sexism. For example, social situations where women and children are trivialised by means of terms of endearment are usually analysed.

In relation to collocations, that is, words that tend to appear next to other words in context, these are also revealing pieces of information in the field of linguistic sexism in relation to the acceptance or rejection of this phenomenon. The fact that adjectives qualify and describe the nouns they refer to seems a simple process. However, adjectives convey both denotative and connotative meanings that depend on the individuals' experiences and the groups in which they interact and how the term is used in specific communicative contexts. For example, it is not the same to refer to someone as *childless* or *childfree*, or the fact of being a *bachelor* is socially different to that of being a *spinster* (Mills 2008). Adjectives, nouns and the collocations we use reveal quite a lot of information about our hidden thoughts, our cultural background and our own social and gender identity.

However, especially relevant for our purpose in this project are the aspects that relate linguistic sexism to other levels of linguistic structure. Due to speech acts (Austin 1962; Searle 1969, 1975), linguistic politeness (Mills 2003a) and our shared cultural and social knowledge, we are able to express sexism by means of certain linguistic resources other than those found at a morphological or lexical level. Implicatures, inferences, humour and irony are discursive elements that have become the focus of attention in recent times (Mills 2008). The stereotypical representation of the sexes at a linguistic level is not limited to lower organisation structures of the language, and higher linguistic domains such as syntax and discourse are also affected.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of linguistic sexism is not only analysed in itself, reaction to sexist language uses are also being the subject of recent studies (Parks and Robertson 2000, Dodd *et al.* 2001, Greenwood and Linda 2002, Benwell 2007). This domain, in fact, is crucial for what Pauwels (1998) calls the documentation stage in which the effectiveness of the alternatives proposed by language reformers are evaluated. In this respect, several reactions may appear (Pauwels 1998, Mills 2008). On the one hand, the rejection of the existence of linguistic sexism is, in itself, a reaction. This, however, is not politically correct in many Western societies and, therefore, a new discourse has been created in which people who do not consider sexist language a problem, prefer to accept its existence but subjected to the idea of feminists' confusing

association of gender and sex. This, of course, creates a discourse in which feminist are discredited and, in a way, ridiculed. The defenders of this opinion emphasise the arbitrariness of linguistic issues in relation to more important social aspects and claim feminists' mental blur between the linguistic system in itself and the use that speakers make of it (see Català and García 1995, García Meseguer 1996). On the other hand, those who believe in a relationship between language and reality and, therefore, accept the existence of linguistic sexism, do reject the idea of language neutrality and, therefore, are interested in analysing or getting to know how languages are used in different ways to create the so-called feminine and masculine communicative styles and the representation and re-creation of gender identities by means of language. Some studies that analyse this kind of reaction against sexist language make use of psycholinguistic tests in order to analyse the impact of the use of specific terms such as generics and their relation to images, compound nouns with the suffix *-man*, the use of the masculine generic pronoun, etc. (Pauwels 2001).

Taking all this information into account, we could briefly summarise that the main aspects that are studied within the field of linguistic sexism in different languages across the globe involve:

- the stereotypical representation of the sexes in language (nouns, titles);
- androcentrism in language (false generic nouns and pronouns);
- linguistic myths regarding the relation between women and language (insults);
- linguistic and communicative strategies different for the sexes in different communities of practice (interruptions, questions, addressing forms);
- proposals for the elimination of gender differences and sexist bias in language.

Nevertheless, as we have already explained, due to the dissatisfaction that simplistic notions on the relation between language, women and men brought to the academic field of Gender Studies, there has been a trend in recent years to move away from overt generalisations in gender and language research. Essentialist thought involving the stable binary opposition between *man / woman*, *male / female* has been dismissed (Butler 1999). Consequently, researchers in this field have come across the difficulty of having to explain their ideas on gender without relying on a dualistic world in which, for example, the idea of words being sexist in themselves had to be rejected.

In spite of that, Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003) claim the need of making generalisations about research data in order to disclose the need for change. From the 1960s, feminists have been claimed to overtly state political generalisations over women but Mills (2008) clarifies this statement by claiming that the attention to specific contexts may also be used in order to make political statements about the way women are treated in particular contexts and propose actions or changes against those problems. In this way, we will bring particular cases to light that are, without a doubt, connected to social and institutional higher structures that govern local practices.

With that aim, Cameron (1990) suggests looking at sexism as a complex phenomenon that, in turn, makes its analysis a challenge in itself. Researchers need to battle with linguistic and extralinguistic elements, they need to analyse the processes by means of which certain elements become sexist in specific environments, they need to trace back the history of their usage but also, they need to investigate how those elements are accepted or contested on the part of interlocutors and institutions in specific communicative situations.

In order to facilitate these tasks, Mills (2008) distinguishes between direct and indirect sexism or, what the new contributions of the *ASI* (Ambivalent Sexist Inventory), have termed hostile sexism (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS) (Glik and Fiske 1997, Swim and Cohen 1997, Masser and Abrams 1999, Parks and Robertson 2000, Greenwood and Linda 2002, Lameiras and Rodríguez 2003, Swim *et al.* 2004, Barreto and Ellemers 2005, Cristopher and Mull 2006, Fischer 2006)

In very general terms, we could claim that overt or direct sexism can be identified with specific linguistic elements or markers which bear the load of historical and cultural background related to gender stereotypes. This kind of direct sexism has been overtly contested by feminists and language reformers and, in turn, has become a social stigma that does not respect the basic notions of human rights. However, it can still be found in different communicative practices that define the speaker as anachronistic and conservative in the eye of more progressive interlocutors. On the other hand, covert or indirect sexism can be understood as a response to direct sexism, as the answer to the need of new ways and discursive levels in which sexist thoughts could be expressed without having the fear of being socially judged (Greenwood and Linda 2002, Ford *et al.* 2008). This is generally achieved by means of linguistic resources such as humour or irony that depend on shared experiences, cultural knowledge and complex cognitive processes. Broadly speaking, it is also associated

with young men (Benwell 2007) or public figures or personas that are created by the mass media in order to publicly express and spread sexist ideas under the mask of indirectness and subtlety.

Having explained what the phenomenon of linguistic sexism is about, let's now take a closer look at the evolution of this phenomenon and the development of research tools and methods to approach it.

### **1.3. From Direct Linguistic Sexism to Indirect Linguistic Sexism**

As we have already mentioned, it was mainly in Anglo-Saxon countries where Feminism and Gender Studies firstly emerged because of specific cultural and historical circumstances.

Once the problem of linguistic sexism was identified, different authors approached the issue from different perspectives taking into account the historical or cultural moment in which those studies were carried out. It is, therefore, extremely important to analyse the cultural and historical moment in which certain ideas, positions and possible solutions took place in order to understand them. In fact, the researchers, their objectives, ideology, commitment to the cause, their view of the relationship between language and reality and the audience to which the investigations are aimed at are crucial in determining and explaining the development of the study of the field of sexism in language.

As a matter of fact, within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, we can find two main positions or attitudes regarding the language reform: the traditional and the radical positions (Suardiaz 2002). The liberal feminist tradition, in which Miller and Swift (1982, 1989) can be considered the main exponent, is based on the idea of making language more representative and reliable in relation to specific and poorly symbolised social groups such as women. In order to carry out such an objective, language should be changed by introducing new and invented terms that portray reality in a truthful way; by modifying the use of false generics like *man*; by solving the problem of the use of pronouns and the implicit discrimination in occupational nouns; by changing stereotypical ways of talking about women paying particular attention to their appearance or childlike nature or, on the other hand, the stereotypical way of talking about men attending to their courage and achievements; by modifying linguistic

collocational usages in which men are always placed first giving a repeated model of importance and value (*he / she, husband / wife, men / women*), etc.

In contrast to this position, the radical feminist attitude rejects the idea of language reform by means of small lexical or grammatical changes based on the argument that women are forced to use a language from whose creation process have been excluded and which, therefore, does not represent them at any level (Spender 1985). This can be easily observed in the semantic field of sexuality in which a great variety of lexical gaps disclose the socially constructed passive role of women in the sexual act, for example, *penetration* implies an active male referent but, how do we name women's action? There are also lexical gaps when referring to women's vital sexual activity which lack negative connotations that show up the double standards used to judge women who enjoy their sexuality out of what is socially considered as appropriate feminine behaviour, take as an example terms such as *tart* or *slag*. Even more institutionalised fields, such as that of medicine, may show an androcentric perspective when describing women's sexual organs as having a mere reproductive function while men's organs are, apart from functional, also a ground of pleasure. For these reasons, many authors claim that a language reform in the terms that Miller and Swift (1982, 1989) propose will not be successful in an androcentric system and, therefore, there is a need to unveil the hidden mechanisms of language by means of disruption. Mary Daly (1979) and Suzette Hayde Elgin (1988) are two examples of authors within this radical feminist tradition that defy our way of thinking by redefining certain existing terms, inventing new ones or making use of poetic licenses. Of course, this tradition does not aim at the real adaptation of their alternatives in real linguistic usage, rather, they understand this as a strategy to call people's attention and raise social consciousness about this problem. Some of these radical terms, as we will see later on, have been ridiculed by different academic circles, by the mass media and by language users themselves seeking protection under the argument that these terms were created for everyday and real use. Obviously, this is the most problematic tradition and under the shade of which the trend of political correctness will burst forth.

Nevertheless, in spite of this apparent amalgam of ideas and attitudes, the feminist objectives could be summarised in three main points (Pauwels 1998):

- 1) revealing linguistic sexism,



- 2) creating a new language or changing the existing one in order for it to fit the perspective of women, and
- 3) achieving an equitable and non-discriminatory language in relation to the sexes.

In relation to the first objective, that of revealing linguistic sexism, there are different fundamental strategies that are aimed at that purpose (Pauwels 1998). One of the most relevant would be that of causing linguistic disorders by means of disruption. Its main purpose is that of raising people's awareness and consciousness about the relevance of this phenomenon. Goddard and Patterson (2000) undoubtedly back up this strategy as a fundamental means of fighting against sexism in language. They propose the disruptive use of sentences like *swearing like a nursery nurse* or *nice boys don't swear*, where sexism is unveiled and stereotypes are inverted. Going back in time, we can find Mary Daly (1979) who, through linguistic creativity and experimentation, tries to break rigid structures of the system in order to raise people's awareness and consciousness. Some strategies by means of which we can carry out this first objective are (Pauwels 1998):

- the elimination of gender inequalities in pronouns and the change in the use of generic references;
- the creation of new terms (like *herstory*, which explicitly mark the masculine perspective that can be hidden in words like *history*);
- orthographical disorders (like *gyn/ecology*, Daly 1979);
- deliberate changes in accentuation patterns in spoken English;
- the use of metalinguistic comments in spoken and written interaction by means of asymmetric expressions (*Are there ladies and no gentlemen left?*);
- the inversion of sexist expressions with humorous ends (like the use of *bitch* by some women to refer to other women close to the speaker);
- the inversion of stereotypes;
- the claim and redefinition of pejorative expressions or terms (Daly 1979, Mills 2008);
- the creation of new expressions that reveal society's discontent with patriarchy (such as *sexism*, *phallogentric*, *pornoglossia*, *maskulinguistik*);
- the extension or limitation of the use of patriarchal words (like *girl* or *prostitution*);

- the exposure of euphemism and subtle meanings that hide the negative actions that men may cause.

In relation to the second objective, the language reform or the creation of a new language that both reflects and is truthful to women's experiences, there have been different proposals developed by different authors. According to Pauwels (1998), the most important ones would be:

- the creation of new words that reflect women's experiences,
- the emergence of new meanings for existing words,
- the innovation in relation to graphemes and feminine discourses.

With that objective in mind, disruption comes again into play as a strategy by means of which we can create new terms such as *malestream* or *shevolution* that, once again, state the androcentrism prevalent in language. By means of these new or reformed languages, scholars try to demonstrate how linguistic structures and lexical items of the English language, in this case, are modelled according to one's perception of the world or the particular vision of reality that a specific community of practice may have. For many years, and favouring from the non-negative connotations that the difference model offered, feminist have been claiming that women's perceptions of the world are different to those of men and, therefore, require a different language. In that sense, many authors have argued in favour of the creation of (Pauwels 1998):

- new morphemes that show differences in sensorial information;
- new terms that encapsulate the feminine perspective;
- the liberation of women's language from a poststructuralist vision (Irigaray 1992, López 1999);
- a feminine kind of writing that reflects women's sexuality and feminine sensibility away from androcentric and prescriptive grammar (Cixous 1995, López and Morant 1991);
- new syntactical structures, new nouns and the re-evaluation of existing negative terms in specific semantic fields, such as that of sexuality or feminine life

experiences, in order for women to be able to name their perspectives (Spender 1985).

Finally, Pauwels (1998) also summarises the main strategies used in the search of the third objective of the Feminist Language Reform, the struggling for linguistic equality of the sexes without causing structural changes in the linguistic system itself. She highlights the following strategies as the most relevant ones:

- gender neutrality based, essentially, on linguistic arguments –by means of abstraction and minimisation techniques that alter gender specific expressions;
- gender specificity based, essentially, on social arguments –that is, the feminisation of terms making them visible and marking the feminine sex.

In the case of the English language, which is the main subject of study in this project, the neutralisation strategy is mainly used (Pauwels 1998). However, due to the possible social and linguistic resistance to change, this strategy runs a higher risk of failure. Those who back up gender specificity, on the other hand, may run the risk of trivialisation critiques coming from certain social domains where, for example, the specificity of gender in occupational nouns may look redundant and against the language economy law.

Without a doubt, once the problem of linguistic sexism has been identified and some alternatives have come to light to try to solve the problem, the next step, consequently, involves the assessment and evaluation of the strategies proposed in the language reform. For this purpose, reformers take very much into account the linguistic viability of the alternatives –by means of gathering together information about the past and natural changes of languages; studying, for example, if the adoption of a particular alternative may drive towards disruption or whether, on the other hand, it may be integrated into the normal use of language taking into account the functional and stylistic variables of language– but also their social effectiveness –by means of the use of psycholinguistic tests, experiments and questionnaires that aim at analysing the inner workings of the human cognitive system in relation to, for example, the use of masculine generics, the pronoun *he* as a generic reference, the perception of dual pairs or the use of *man* as a generic, whose main limitation lies in the fact that they analyse the English language while other languages remain under-documented (Pauwels 1998).

However, according to the same author, there are relatively few cases of studies that specifically analyse the assessment and evaluation of proposals and their social effectiveness and linguistic viability but, from our point of view, and after some years since the publication of this work (Pauwels 1998), different authors have attempted to shed light onto this field, see, for example, the works of Pauwels (2001) or Schwarz (2003).

What we have presented here are the main objectives and strategies put forward by the Feminist Language Reform movement in order to fight against the phenomenon of linguistic sexism. However, for our purpose of analysing the presence, manifestations and consequences of the use of more subtle forms of linguistic sexism in the specific medium of computer-mediated communication and in a specific community of practice (online forums) related to an institutional field (online gendered magazines), we consider that a chronological overview of the development of this phenomenon, taking into account the historical moment and linguistic relevant aspects of that moment, is crucial to locate our main purpose and the main concepts of our project. As we have mentioned earlier, the historical, cultural, professional and personal circumstances that surround researchers in the field of gender and language are of extremely high importance in order to understand the proposals and solutions that these authors set out in relation to the phenomenon of linguistic sexism. A chronological presentation of the evolution of this field of study within the Anglo-Saxon world and, taking the English language as its main focus of study, will help us have a clearer idea of the evolution of this phenomenon towards more indirect and subtle forms and the way this situation affects the feminist efforts of fighting against this phenomenon<sup>1</sup>.

### 1.3.1. *Second Wave Feminism*

As we have already explained, the 1960s-1970s were witness to the birth of Second Wave Feminism in Anglo-Saxon countries. From that moment onwards, authors like Spender (1985) focused essentially on the analysis of lists of words, their denotative meaning and connotations, lexicographical works, syntactical structures out of context and on how to avoid that kind of sexist language (see Miller and Swift 1982,

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<sup>1</sup> Mill's (2008) work on language and sexism –in which the author provides a clear and organised structure and classification of linguistic sexism into *direct sexism* and *indirect sexism* together with the main manifestations of this phenomenon– has been a great inspiration and the basis for the next two sections regarding both their content and structure.

1989; Kramarae and Treichler 1985), therefore, the perspective on the phenomenon of linguistic sexism was rather limited. Moreover, this era, although characterised by its fight for human equality, it is mainly focused on the language used by and about women as a subordinate social group. This, of course, had serious implications because women were, therefore, considered as a homogenous group and this kind of research, thus, had a globalising effect because it was mainly based on white middle-class women (Mills 2008). The radical and liberal feminism from 1960s to the 1990s achieved many and important changes in relation to language use. It was successful at raising social consciousness by means of campaigns, it changed people's attitudes towards gender roles and different and relevant legislative reforms in relation to gender equality were also accomplished in the public sphere.

Therefore, from the three main objectives (Pauwels 1998) that the Feminist Language Reform pursued, we could claim that the revelation of the problem of linguistic sexism, together with the reform or creation of new linguistic systems were the basis of this period.

In this first era, where what Mills (2008) calls direct or overt sexism is studied, the main aspects and alternatives proposed in order to eliminate sexist use of language were focused on three fundamental fields: the importance of naming and the construction of gender, women's silence and the exclusion of feminine voices from language and, finally, the differences in linguistic behaviours related to masculine domination and the feminine culture (Cameron 1990). In short, both i) words and their meanings, together with ii) basic linguistic processes were the main source of resources in this kind of approach to linguistic sexism (Mills 2008). Out of these domains, the research on sexism and language was basically non-existent. In the following paragraphs we will follow Mills' (2008) account on the main fields of study of linguistic sexism during Second Wave Feminism.

In relation to words and meanings, researchers directed their efforts towards different aspects. One of them was that of naming practices. In the 1970s-1980s, many feminists considered that languages were *man-made* systems that forcefully excluded women from the creative process (Spender 1985). Languages were understood as systems that reflected a patriarchal reality where languages were mainly used as a tool in favour of men's social status. Therefore, this point of view implies that the linguistic system is something fixed and, consequently, from a determinist point of view, a linguistic change would give rise to social changes.

As a result of this, another field of study where feminist researchers of this era worked hard was that of lexicographical practices. Dictionaries and grammar references are places where normative language is encoded and, therefore, they have a fundamental role in the acquisition and use of languages (see Kramarae and Treichler 1985). In the 1980s-1990s, the critiques against authoritative uses of language on the part of gatekeepers proliferated. This was considered as a kind of institutional sexism that, by means of the definition of words, sexist and androcentric examples, false generics, asymmetric gender marks and stereotypical gender roles reinforced social sexism and hindered the securing of social equality. In order to solve this problem, feminists working in this field proposed the use of objective descriptive tools, the creation of truthful lexicographical collections, the appearance of personal dictionaries, the production of feminist reference books, the inception of neologisms (see Kramarae and Treichler 1985) and the conception of feminine and feminist writings that substituted or co-existed with traditional ones. It was thanks to these feminist efforts that this field, where sexism was a norm, has now changed towards more egalitarian practices.

The domain that has mostly been subjected to scrutiny within the field of language and sexism and which has produced the greatest amount of proposals is, probably, that of generic nouns and pronouns. The need to talk about ourselves and others, the necessity to identify people and specific groups implies the use of these lexical elements. The linguistic choice we make from a variety of resources in order to refer to someone bears, undoubtedly, revealing information about ourselves, our own social identity and about our conception of others. This is due to the negative or positive attitudes we may reveal by linguistic choices in relation to models and schema that relate a specific lexical item to our perception of the world (Martínez-Guillem 2003). Furthermore, lexical choices may also have consequences at a psychological level because certain terms or references may make us feel inferior, included or excluded from what is being referred to in a given communicative situation. The same happens with generic pronouns, that is, when *he*, *him* or *himself* are used in English in order to make reference to collective groups of people made up of men and women (for example, *When the worker has finished his job he should go out of the building*). The use of these pronouns strengthens the marked feature of feminine forms and, therefore, makes men appear as the norm and, at the same time, contributes to the invisibility of women in language and society. Without a doubt, when we name or refer to something we are making it real in our cognitive system. As a result, if androcentric pronouns are

used, consequently, our view of the world will also have a limited perspective (Pauwels 1998). Hence, many authors consider that the elimination or substitution of generic pronouns is crucial in the English language. In relation to the social effectiveness of this particular reform, it is important to mention that it limits users' vision of the world and renders women invisible (Pauwels 1998). However, in relation to the linguistic viability of this proposal, some alternatives launched by feminists have been more successful than others. Obviously, due to the intrinsic functioning of the English system, the omission of the pronoun is almost impossible. Nevertheless, out of the different alternatives proposed by feminist language reformers –such as the substitution of generic *he* by the feminine pronoun *she*; sentence recasting or the use of the passive voice instead of the active; the replacement of the generic pronoun by the second person singular pronoun *you*, by the first person plural form *we* or other third person pronouns like *one*, or *it*; dual pronouns or even the creation of new forms (Stotko and Troyer 2007) such as *E*, *CO*, *Thon*– the use of the pronoun *they* with a singular meaning in order to refer to indefinite referents seems to be, according to recent research, the most viable option (Bodine [1975]1990, Pauwels 2001, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003). However, this option has not been uncontested and different authors like Lakoff (1975) make negative hypotheses about its viability based on the idea of unproductive, agrammatical and almost unnecessary changes (see Balhorn 2004). Unquestionably, the passing of time has proved that common sense and the strong desire and need to feel equally reflected in language have dominated our ideas about prescriptivism and, nowadays, it is easy to find the pronoun *they* as a true generic or even compound words with the suffixes *-person* substituting those with *-man*, as in *businessperson* or *salesperson*.

Within what Mills (2008) called the analysis of words and meanings, feminism has also been extremely interested in studying insults directed to and those that refer to women. Certainly, the main point within this field of study is that insults are highly sexualised when referred or directed to women. For example, the terms *bitch*, *ho*, *pimp* or *faggot*, that so commonly appear in rap songs, objectify women and glorify violence against them (Mills 2008). Moreover, the way the mass media cover this type of images and stereotypes is a way of making them institutionally available and acceptable. On the other hand, the breaking up of gender stereotypes and the issue of not fitting into what is culturally considered as appropriate for a woman in a particular communicative situation is also an unquestionable cause for an insult. Not appearing feminine enough,

not being a good mother, not having maternal instinct or even the fact of not liking children at all, not taking care of oneself or the household duties, and of course, that of sexuality (López & Morant 1991), are the spheres where insults towards women more easily proliferate (Mills 2008).

Similarly to insults, the terms that historically or culturally have been associated to women or femininity have also been broadly treated as pejorative. Schultz ([1975]1990) refers to this process as the *semantic derogation of women*, that is, the process by means of which words or phrases associated to women, even the words *woman* or *girl* themselves in contrast to *man* or *boy*, acquire negative connotations and can, therefore, be used as insults.

if terms designating men are used to denote a woman, there is usually no affront. On the other hand, use a term generally applied to women to designate a man and you have probably delivered an insult (Schultz [1975]1990: 135).

A good example of this would be the use of occupational nouns that are used to refer to contexts where women are the majority. In these cases, these jobs tend to be trivialised and acquire negative connotations. If we have a look at the use of suffixes in order to create feminine terms from masculine existing ones, we can observe how, apart from the fact of accentuating men as the norm and women as external elements, suffixes also ascribe negative connotations to the original item. For example, the adding of the suffixes *-ette* or *-trix* in words like *aviator* / *aviatrix* or *usher* / *usherette* are a living proof of it. Because of its androcentric features, according to feminist specialists on the field, the semantic derogation of women could only have been caused by men. And as if this were not enough, some terms not only acquire negative connotations, but are also used specifically to refer to the feminine world, as it is the case with words like *landlady*, used only to refer to female owners of B&B; *manageress*, to refer to female owners of shops; or *priestess*, used to refer to female priests in pagan groups (Mills 2008). According to Schultz ([1975]1990) there are three main reasons for the origin of the semantic derogation of women: i) the association of the term with pollutant terms (as in, for examples, the cases where men think in a sexual way about women and, therefore, the term ends up acquiring sexual connotations as it is the case of the term *woman* or *female* meaning *prostitute*); ii) the use of euphemisms (for example, in spite of the great variety of terms at our disposal to refer to prostitutes, the tendency to use euphemisms makes us use words that refer to other women as dysphemisms); and iii)



prejudice (as the main motivational element, that is, the need to construct women as an external group by means of focusing on their sexuality).

Another aspect that characterises Second Wave Feminism is the analysis of titles, names and surnames. The imbalance with which women were treated in this specific field by means of being constantly defined in relation to the men in their lives and their social status was revealed. The opposition of the terms *Mr* to *Mrs* and *Miss* makes it evident that women are always defined in terms of their civil status while men remain unalterable (Schwarz 2003, Mills 2003b). It is also important to note that other social variables, like age, for example, may also determine the choice of one term or the other but, generally speaking, it is the relation that the woman has with the man that makes us refer to her with a specific term. In order to eliminate this imbalance, feminist reformers proposed the creation of a new title that made reference to the civil status of men, the creation of universal titles (*Pn*, *Per*, *Pr*, *Masir*) or the equilibration of feminine terms by means of the appearance of the term *Ms* to make reference to women regardless of their civil status. As many authors have demonstrated, it has been this last option the one that has been mostly accepted in English-speaking communities (Mills 2003b, Schwarz 2003). However, the use of the aforementioned title is contemporary with its predecessors and, besides, it is not always used in the sense it was aimed at when it was created, its meaning sometimes depends on the interlocutors, the contextual situation, the intention with which it is used and how it is interpreted, as we will see later on. Moreover, personal names have also been a prolific place for gender roles and stereotypes and the adoption of surnames became a battlefield for many feminists. Until 1930, the adoption of the man's surname by the women was also a symbol of possession because, up to that moment, the men that got married acquired all their new wife's possessions by law. However, in the 1970s, there were great advances regarding the social relations between men and women thanks to the freedom that new laws –such as those related to divorce– and the appearance of couples who decided not to get married but had children caused a great impact on the decisions made in relation to the adoption of surnames. But, as recent studies demonstrate (Mills 2003b, 2008) and, as we will see later on, these different social practices in the adoption of surnames in marriages and for children are not just the result of feminist efforts and campaigns for women's equality and dignity, and many other cultural and aesthetic aspects are also involved in that process.

Without the shadow of a doubt, nouns, adjectives, pronouns or titles are lexical elements where sexism is relatively easy to locate but, on the other hand, verbs, or what Mills (2008) prefers to call processes, are also crucial in this feminist wave in order to locate and fight against linguistic sexism. Long lists of verbs were published that, because of collocational patterns, tended to be associated with feminine or masculine subjects. For example, *answer*, *hurt*, *shout*, *think* or *work*, because of the kind of activity they project, tend to be associated to masculine subjects while others like *play with*, *talk to* or *walk with* tend to refer to masculine objects. This can be specifically analysed in the study of teaching materials of English as a second or foreign language where sexism could still be easily found.

Within the processes section, a relevant aspect that has also called experts' attention in this feminist wave is the study of transitivity, that is, who makes what to whom (Talbot 1997, Lillian 2007). Literary works have been a perfect place for this kind of analyses because, in them, feminists could observe and justify in a real way how, by means of processes or verbs used in narrating a specific fact, women were relegated to a second perspective or hidden not only at a lexical level. Women have, generally, been the receivers of the creation, the ones that have been saved by heroes and the passive target of the action. Furthermore, the passive voice is broadly used in English in formal or literary styles and, therefore, female agents are commonly absent. By means of this grammatical structure, the object becomes the focus of attention and the agent can be easily skipped because of its absence of importance. Obviously, this fact contributes to the invisibility of women who are also objectified in sexual or erotic scenes. This kind of linguistic sexism also contributed to the transmission of specific ideologies and gender roles. But this mechanism is not only used by men; women also visualise themselves as victims or passive agents in the action and this is reflected in the use of verbal tense, voices or metaphors, for example.

On the other hand, the use of direct speech styles was also criticised by many feminists at the time because it was considered a technique by means of which writers or news reporters could easily silence women's voices and, moreover, they could also be evaluated or mediated without much difficulty.

Finally, jokes can also be considered as linguistic processes that need special attention within the study of direct sexism and Second Wave Feminism although, as we will see later on, these need special attention and further specialisation within Third Wave Feminist Studies. By means of common jokes and idioms in the folklore tradition,

we may construct minority groups as alien. These minority groups in which women were included within Second Wave Feminism can be easily criticised and mocked at by means of these linguistic mechanisms. They may be contextually used in order to socially punish inappropriate social behaviour by means of linguistic mechanisms which, in turn, become institutionalised by everyday language or the media.

All these aspects had a great impact on linguistic and social domains. The main effect could be observed within working environments and institutions where the concern for the effects and influence of sexist language made them work towards the creation of language and style guides that helped them avoid sexist and discriminatory uses of language. However, the problems in the replacing of certain elements by others made this a complicated task. Cameron (1990) exemplifies this issue with the case of the word *spaceman* and its alternative term *astronaut*. Despite the alternation being linguistically viable and culturally effective, the objectives have not been completely reached. Subsequent studies have revealed that terms like *astronaut* make reference to men specifically from a cognitive perspective and, therefore, should be used alongside the term *female astronaut* in order to obtain a perfect linguistic and cognitive equality.

As a result, feminism was obliged to reconsider the Feminist Language Reform made available up to that moment. The substitutions of certain sexist elements by non-discriminatory proposals was not enough to eliminate sexist bias in language because, as we have seen, those neutral alternatives could become cognitively biased elements that still lead to an androcentric perspective. Therefore, a new movement was needed that could go in depth into the objectives of the feminist movement within gender and language studies and the field of linguistic sexism.

### 1.3.2. *Third Wave Feminism*

The 1970s-1980s were witness to the birth of new authors that, within the pragmatic shift in linguistic studies, started to aim at new directions. But it was not until the mid-1990s when a real change of perspective in the study of linguistic sexism can be noticed.

The discursive analysis of sexism burst onto the stage and changed the interpretation and the nature of the phenomenon itself which was now directed towards the third objective stated by the Feminist Language Reform as summarised by Pauwels (1998), that is, the struggle for the linguistic equality of the sexes without causing

structural changes in the linguistic system itself. Taking advantage of this situation, the mass media started their own personal crusade against anti-sexist studies and proposals. The emergence of political correctness made it even more difficult for feminist reformers to fight against sexist language. This fact, together with the old-fashioned scent that Second Wave Feminists Studies were acquiring, hindered the development of the original task (Mills 2008).

When we look through a kaleidoscope, we can observe how colours mingle and form shapes of light and colour that vary depending on the position of the tube through which we look at. This is exactly what happens when we try to understand the methodological movement in relation to the analysis of sexist language at that time. The fact that feminist campaigns took effect and linguistic sexism became, step by step, and up to a certain degree, a stigmatised phenomenon in institutionalised environments and society as a whole, this did not prevent social sexism from existing. As a result, language users needed new resources that allowed them to express their biased and sexist opinions and ideologies by means of language without being judged for it. Consequently, the mass media, at an institutional level, started to make use of what is today broadly known as political correctness and language users, on the other hand, started to make use of what is known as new sexism (Benwell 2007), subtle sexism (Chew & Kelly-Chew 2007) or indirect sexism (Mills 2008).

As we have already explained, the kind of analysis and reform taken up by Second Wave feminist did not cover all areas and requirements of a broad feminist movement that attempted to eliminate sexist bias from language. Although many alternatives have remained as social conscious-raising strategies, some of the solutions proposed by different authors during the Feminist Language Reform have been successful in relation to both viability and effectiveness (Pauwels 1998), as it is the case of singular *they* to refer to indefinite referents, for example (Pauwels 2001, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003). However, there is a third case in which alternatives, such as those of lexical substitutions, the creation of new titles or terms to refer to occupational references, have ended up making a U-turn in favour of linguistic sexism.

A clear case of this shift back towards sexism can be brought to light by means of examples where the proposal of generic options was considered the best anti-sexist alternative but which, in the contextual negotiation of language, become gender specific and, therefore, lose their anti-discriminatory sense. For example, as we mentioned earlier, the term *chairperson* was created to refer to people in general in a position of

power, regardless of their sex, however, it has ended up as a gender specific term used to designate almost exclusively women in power positions (Cameron 1990). The same happens with the way some mass media treat generics to exclusively refer by default to male referents, as it is the case of *villager*, *Muslim civilian*, *members of the social order*, *the settlers* or *Brazilians* in anthropological texts (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2003).

This is due to the fact that, undoubtedly, the creation and negotiation of meaning is carried out in context. Following the pragmatic theory and Jakobson's primary but fruitful model of communication, we could argue that languages are meaningless systems out of a context. For languages to serve their functional and social nature, they need to be used in particular communicative contexts in which two or several interlocutors share the same linguistic system. One of them encodes the message, which is transmitted by means of a specific channel of communication, and it is decoded by other interlocutor(s) that participate(s) in that communicative situation and that can, therefore, interpret, although not always in the same way as it was intended, what the sender tried to communicate. This model of communication, used up to recent times for different purposes, allows us to understand the basic but crucial shift within the study of linguistic sexism. The options proposed in the previous era remain insubstantial in the light of this new perspective. The substitution of sexist terms by non-biased lexical elements does not prevent the appearance of discriminatory situations against women from a linguistic point of view. Language users can make use of a wide variety of linguistic mechanisms –such as intonation, implicatures, deductions, irony, jokes, humour, images or cultural reference, to name just a few– in order to express sexist bias.

These resources are away from the scope of Second Wave Feminism. The main focus of attention is no longer that of specific or universal lexical or grammatical elements, but that of discourse and context. Hence, in this new era of Third Wave Feminism (Mills 2008), it is practically impossible to make generalisations or universal statements about what can be considered as sexist language or not. In fact, it is interlocutors themselves who must give expression to their impressions and discern what is being said in discourse because “whereas some individuals may be damaged by sexist discourse, others will recognise it for what it is, resist it, laugh at it and / or become empowered in the process” (Sunderland 2004: 194). This new era, for example, is characterised by the contextual analysis of terms such as *bitch* or *slag* which can be contextually used in different ways by different interlocutors and different communities of practice to refer to different things but, it is the interlocutor who must interpret and

assign a specific contextual meaning to that particular term. This last step of the procedure in which the receiver must apply a particular contextual meaning to a discursive event is the one that will be crucial in determining a particular discursive event as offensive, neutral, humorous, etc. More precisely, Sunderland (2004) talks about *damaging discourses* in the sense that it is not only individual elements that damage the individual or the groups being referred to, it is the whole discursive practice that may produce damage. Even if a single word is considered as sexist in particular contexts or discourse, it may not be considered so in other different contexts or discourses or in the light of other interlocutors involved in the interaction who may interpret them in a different way (Sunderland 2004). Therefore, in this new era, the famous practice of 1980s and early 1990s of publishing language or style guidelines – against which Cameron (1995) directs a critique due to their simplistic view of languages – has fallen considerably in estimation because of their unsuitable nature to the present discursive environment of struggle against sexism in language. On the other hand, women and men who desire to fight against this emerging phenomenon have a great variety of resources to battle against sexist discourses. However, it is precisely this variety of resources the one that sets up a heterogeneous and unstable battle ground where the analysis of the phenomenon and the reformist task become comprehensive.

The term Third Wave Feminism is often preferred to the term *post-feminism* (Cameron 2005) because of the positive connotations of the waves as continuing processes which do not consider that the primary objectives of feminism have yet been achieved (Mills 2008, Mills and Mullany 2011). Women are no longer considered as a homogeneous and isolated group within society. In this new era which so strongly adheres to discursive analysis, the notion of women is now understood as a heterogeneous and unstable concept, women are now seen as forming part of sub-groups which also take very much into account other variables of the social identity such as race, age, culture, ideology, etc. Third Wave Feminism is related to a constructionist model of identity in which the simplistic and binary view of gender identities is no longer valid. Social identities and, more precisely, gender identities are not biologically acquired at birth, rather, they are socially constructed and fluidly developed in specific contextual and communicative situations (Butler 1999).

Identities are now understood as plural, changeable, dynamic and even conflictive discursive practices that take place in an individual's interaction (Butler 1999). The gender variable is now understood from a discursive perspective and it is,

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therefore, intrinsically related to other social variables of our social identity (Mills and Mullany 2011). While gender was considered a pre-existing condition that affected our interactions in Second Wave studies, this new feminism understands gender in the light of Butler's (1999) notion of *performativity*. Gender is now perceived as a verb and, therefore, is made in interaction, it is constructed and adapted to particular communicative situations. In the same way that we choose the clothes that fit a particular communicative situation, we choose to perform and adapt our social and gender identity to specific communicative situations. Nevertheless, the institutional and contextual frameworks that govern every communicative situation limit both the clothes we wear and the identity we may choose to perform by means of linguistic resources.

Third wave feminism focuses on the way that participants in conversation bring about their gendered identity, thus, seeing gendering as a process; in the process of construction and interpretation of texts, gender is one of the elements which is forged from ideological knowledge which it is assumed is accepted or challenged (Mills 2008: 25).

Therefore, from this particular viewpoint, it is rather difficult to make global and universal statements about the language used by and about women. Third Wave Feminism is based on detailed analyses that try to specify how meaning is produced, negotiated and interpreted in context. The kind of analysis carried out in this new wave focuses on contextualised case studies that provide living evidence of how sexism in and by means of language is produced, negotiated, interpreted and contested.

Nevertheless, this new approach to gender and language is not unquestionable. It is precisely this indeterminate nature that becomes the main focus of critiques by those who approach language and gender from this discursive and contextual perspective. The contextual and local analysis of the gender variable has made it almost a non-existing concept in itself. Therefore, there is a fierce need to establish a link between this new feminist wave and its predecessors. The local and unstable characteristics of the gender variable in this framework make it crucial to create a new model of sexism and another of feminism that work together both at a local and at a global level (Mills 2008). The main objective of this feminism is analysing and understanding how words, structures and linguistic mechanisms come to work in context. Therefore, notions such as patriarchy are no longer valid, this movement tries to understand how people perform and negotiate gender in conflictive local contexts governed by global and broader social and cultural frameworks (Cameron 1998a).

From this perspective, sexism can be considered as “a particular case where in interaction or in texts gender is drawn attention to and where it makes a difference for participants” (Mills 2008: 25) in the negotiation of power relations.

We mentioned earlier the powerful importance of language in society and in the formation of social identities but, power is no longer considered, linguistically speaking, as men’s domination over women, rather, power is understood as interaction, as the negotiation of our social status by claiming or contesting through linguistic and behavioural components. According to Mills (2008), there are two main types of status, the institutional status, basically studied within Second Wave Feminism, and interactional or local status, that is, the one that is created and manifested in context.

Due to the local focus of Third Wave Feminism, the alternatives and solutions proposed will vary depending on this new approach to language and gender in which context, constructivism and performativity are so relevant. The answers to the new emerging forms of linguistic sexism can, and should, take place at a local level. However, the more stable institutional status should not be abandoned in order to be able to make generalisations that help fight these new and more subtle manifestations of the phenomenon.

In relation to these ideas, the notion of community of practice is essential within this framework. This concept will be crucial in defining how the specific values of a particular group may affect individuals and their notion of what is linguistically correct in given communicative situations. A community of practice may be defined as “an aggregate of people who, united by a common enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs and values” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999: 186) such as communicative styles or shared knowledge. Third Wave Feminism is, therefore, not centred upon the analysis and characterisation of oppressing structural systems such as patriarchy or ideology. Rather, it focuses on the community practice level because, although the analysis of higher contextual levels is considered as almost impossible (Mills 2008), it is vital to have them in mind in order to study how broader social frameworks delimit our performance in particular discursive instances.

One of the main aspects of this new approach to gender and language is that of social identities as products that are created and emerge from interaction among individuals of one or various communities of practice which, in turn, are modulated by gender ideologies and social constructs. The way to counteract these biased ideologies is by means of discursive practices that, while sometimes defy dominant ideologies,



other times reproduce them. In this way, while society produces new generators of resources, language users may represent or produce new social and gender identities that are generally characterised by their temporary and changeable nature.

The notion of community of practice is of special importance in this new approach to the study of language and gender because their specific and intrinsic norms and values do derive from broader social frameworks that, as we said, constrain the performativity of our social and gender identity. Therefore, although Third Wave Feminism defends research at a local level in order to critically and fruitfully analyse how new and more indirect ways of sexism are being created, maintained and negotiated, the fact of analysing the intricate and complex relations between the local and the institutional at a discursive level is also of extreme importance.

Therefore, our suggestion here is that this new model of analysis for linguistic sexism represents an inverted structural pyramid in relation to Second Wave Feminism. In that era, the analysis of higher social and institutional levels was the norm as it could be observed, for example, in the numerous studies about dictionaries, lexical choices or the notion of patriarchy in relation to male social domination without exception. Nevertheless, Third Wave Feminism does focus on local analyses at the community of practice level where social identities are scrutinised in different contextual situations in order to, with a broader perspective, have a critical thought about the social and institutional constraint over our performance at a local level. Languages can be considered, therefore, as a place where the status quo may be created, negotiated or contested by means of contextual challenges to sexist practices. These local performances may, in turn, bring about changes at a higher social level.

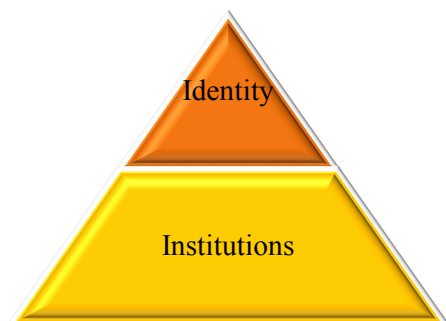


Figure 1. Second Wave Feminism



Figure 2. Third Wave Feminism

Mills (2008) warns us of the negative consequences of looking at this model of Third Wave feminist analysis against sexism as a chronological subsequent model to that of Second Wave Feminism. These should not be considered as separate and chronological approaches to the study of the relation between gender, language and sexism, instead, researchers should ideally merge both models taking into account both, the sophistication of the first one and the contextualisation of the latter. This will allow us to fight against local and more subtle manifestations of sexism on the one hand, and against higher and broader levels that legitimise sexism on the other. It is, therefore, extremely important to keep “a balance between recognizing the institutional nature of sexism and recognizing that individuals can intervene” (Mills 2008: 35).

In order to achieve such an objective, and due to their clearly stated political positions and motivations, the blending of pragmatic models of analysis –like Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)– with traditional feminist linguistics is required. The main focuses of attention within this new approach to gender and language research would be both the phenomenon of political correctness and that of indirect (Mills 2008) or subtle (Chew & Kelly-Chew 2007) linguistic sexism which are, because of its intrinsic characteristics, almost impossible to analyse just from the perspective of Second Wave Feminism.

In relation to political correctness, this is a phenomenon that permeates our everyday life and that is present in almost every domain of our everyday interactions due to its presence in the mass media (Tshehelska 2006) where we can easily listen to statements like *this is not politically correct* or *that is very politically incorrect*. We could define political correctness as

an excessive attention to the sensibilities of those who are seen as different from the norm (women, lesbians, gays, disabled people, black people). This attitude is crystallised in a set of media-invented apocryphal terms (such as ‘vertically challenged’ instead of ‘short’; ‘follically challenged’ instead of ‘bald’; ‘personhole cover’ instead of ‘manhole/inspection cover’; ‘coffee with milk’ rather than ‘black coffee’) which no anti-sexist or anti-racist campaigners have argued should be adopted (Mills 2008: 100).

From this point of view, without a doubt, political correctness is a response from the mass media, or the institutional level as a whole, to language reforms proposed by feminist researchers in the field during Second Wave Feminism. From an institutional level, invented and ridiculed terms are used together with those proposed by feminist

language reformers in order to discredit them and lead feminist efforts and campaigns to a social loss of prestige.

Undoubtedly, this creates confusion among language users who, due to the coexistence of politically correct and anti-sexist alternatives, may not be clear as to whether one or the other is socially and culturally acceptable in a given communicative situation in which a specific social and gender identity wants to be performed. This is one of the reasons why the reforms proposed during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s are not as visible as they used to be. The fear of researchers or language users recognising such alternatives as political correct guidelines in which the freedom of speech is limited by the suggestion of certain elements that may substitute others, sets feminists apart from this easily assailable methods.

In fact, political correctness is a political response in itself because, when somebody attributes the label *politically correct* to something or somebody, they are already participating in a broader social and political scenario. As Mills (2008: 101) explains, “thus, we should see the actions of those who characterise anti-discriminatory reforms as ‘PC’ as a form of political intervention” because that means that, in a way, they are contrary to the language reform. To label something or someone as politically correct or incorrect is a way of attacking political activism by means of trivialising and simplifying certain aspects in order to mislead language users and discredit feminist campaigns.

In such a complicated framework where anti-sexist terms coexist with political correctness and incorrectness –Mills (2002, 2003b, 2008) presents detailed studies about these terms–, accusations of being politically correct are used to discredit feminist campaigns.

These critiques are unaware of the profound impact that discriminatory language, as it is the case of sexist language or *Hate Speech* (Lillian 2007), may cause on individuals and society as a whole. For this reason, what is needed is an exhaustive and critical analysis of political correctness in order to get to know its intrinsic mechanisms and what social or cultural needs it is supplying. Only in that way could researchers develop new ways and campaigns to fight sexism in language.

Whilst, in the past, sexism seemed to many feminists to be a clearly defined set of practices which reflected a particular set of attitudes towards women, in fact now sexism, anti-sexism and ‘PC’ are all contested terms and have a range of meanings for different people. This has led many feminist to develop other forms of anti-

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sexist campaigns, since overt challenging and calls for reform cannot be effective in relation to these indirect practices (Mills 2008: 118),

as it is the case of recent studies such as those presented by Swim and Cohen (1997), Swim *et al.* (2004) or Chew and Kelly-Chew (2007).

In the same way, in relation to indirect sexism, it is important to highlight that, in order to analyse this phenomenon, the first step to be taken is to understand it as “a resource available within the language” (Mills 2008: 124) (see Swim *et al.* 2004) about which many studies are needed in order to understand its working order and how it is used both linguistically and culturally.

The basis of indirect sexism lies in the fact that languages are not static sign systems, rather, they are the products of historical contextual negotiations where even words which are considered anachronistic are maintained in order to supply the needs of specific members or communities of practice that may want to use them in order to perform a particular social and gender identity in a given communicative situation.

Languages are “pool[s] of available meanings” (Mills 2008: 124), some of which are ratified by institutions and others that, in spite of not being ratified, continue existing in order to be used in specific contexts and for specific purposes. Because of this, although they have become stigmatised, the fight of Second Wave Feminism has not eliminated these explicitly discriminatory words from the linguistic system. Even though, language users have at their disposal a great variety of mechanisms and resources such as irony, humour or multimodality that allow them to make use of these biased terms without being judged for it. Hence, this new kind of sexism can be defined as “a resource which is available to individuals to affirm or contest in the construction of their own identity” (Mills 2008: 126).

The ways in which this new kind of sexism is linguistically or discursively materialised are rather diverse. For example, the mass media is now portraying a new image of women as having a double role in society, that of mother and worker. Although, at a first sight, this new way of portraying women may seem a break with traditional gender stereotypes in which women were constantly constrained to the domestic sphere, this new image of modern women does, in fact, emphasise that traditional role hiding it under the mask of the apparent public and social status of modern women (Mills 2008). Moreover, these apparently modern, innovative and anti-sexist discourses coexist with other discourses, like that of advertising or magazines, in

which the importance and almost requirement of the aesthetic value in women's lives becomes a must that, subtly, stress the traditional and stereotypical role of women. In view of the great variety of sexist discourses, apparently anti-sexist ones and the clash of stereotypes, it is the interlocutors who must position themselves in order to extract an interpretation of the message making use of their cultural background and their relation and commitment to the anti-discriminatory cause (Martínez-Guillem 2003).

In addition, language users come across an interplay between positive and negative connotations of newer and older gender stereotypes. Years ago, the representation of middle-class femininity was considered as the norm against which other kinds of femininities were judged, however, nowadays, this is not so. Stereotypical middle-class femininity is now usually referred to in a mockery way, above all in the mass media, where this traditional image appears masked under invented characters or in the speeches of comedians that try to avoid any responsibility in the projection of discrimination (Mills 2008).

In view of these new discursive demands, we discover that the main problem emerges when different interpretations arise from a single discourse or context by different interlocutors (Martínez-Guillem 2003). Probably, the greatest sense of discrepancy is found among male interlocutors who, although they do try not to be censured because of the use of sexist and stigmatised language, neither do they adopt the position of the New Man (Benwell 2007). This has often been projected by the media as a feminine man, ridiculed at times because of the fear of being identified with minority groups such as homosexuals or women. The main solution for men in this position is that of embracing traditional sexist positions from the point of view of indirect linguistic mechanisms such as irony or humour (Greenwood and Linda 2002, Benwell 2007, Ford *et al.* 2008) in order to avoid being negatively judged by any community of practice.

Therefore, this new sexism is much more difficult to locate, analyse and fight against because

[it] is not just a question of individual use, but is a complex negotiation between an individual's sense of what is appropriate within a particular context or community of practice, and the routines and resources available to them, which are affirmed or challenged by the institutions such as the media, the government and educational institutions (Mills 2008: 132).

On account of that, if sexism is now considered a matter of opinion and hypothetical individual positions that we may attribute to others in different communicative situations, hence, it becomes almost impossible to describe linguistic sexist practices in the terms it was being done during Second Wave Feminism. Nevertheless, certain guidelines can be traced in order to facilitate its identification.

One of the directions that can be followed is that of stereotypes and conflicting messages that do not necessarily include explicit sexist lexical items. The British press, for example, commonly publishes articles about women who have access to public domains or that hold positions of power. In many cases, although it is difficult to find any sexist word or discriminatory grammatical structure, the discourse leads towards sexist interpretations. The special attention given to women's dresses and clothes, their gestures or the unnecessary references to their private lives make the maintenance of traditional roles associated to women quite clear. Nevertheless, unless new kinds of analysis different to those proposed by Second Wave feminist were to be used, we would never be able to classify these texts as being sexist. The fact that different discursive and institutional frameworks exist to talk about men and women in different ways is a kind of indirect subtle and modern sexism that is based, not on lexical or grammatical elements, but on linguistic mechanisms such as metaphors, repetition or the routinization of messages and discourses that transmit sexist bias in a very subtle way.

The same happens with collocations. These were studied and analysed during Second Wave Feminism but, in that approach, collocations were studied that referred to sexist or discriminatory words. Now, within Third Wave Feminism, different recurrent patterns and collocations are studied that do not necessarily collocate with sexist words, it is the specific context of words and collocations that provides the discourse with a sexist or discriminatory tone. Certain adjectives, for example, typically collocate with nouns that refer to a male referent –*rich, poor, brave, short, lazy, important, famous, pleased, happy*– while others, that generally bear more negative connotations, do typically collocate with nouns that refer to female referents –*angry, beautiful, pretty, busy*– (Carroll and Kowitz 1994, Renner 1996). In this way, as important as collocations is the position of the subject within the sentence because they have a great indirect impact in the way women and men are represented and perceived by means of language.

Without a doubt, humour is an essential element in the analysis of indirect sexism (Greenwood and Linda 2002, Benwell 2007, Ford *et al.* 2008). Nowadays, due to the increasing use of new technologies and computer-mediated communication, it is not difficult to find texts in the form of personal e-mails or jokes in different web sites in which gender differences appear. The humorous essence of these texts lies in the fact that both sexes are equally ridiculed and, at the same time, opposed to each other. It is precisely because of this supposed equality that these discourses are not considered as sexist. However, this kind of humour should be considered as indirectly sexist because it usually hides an androcentric perspective that leaves women in a secondary and subordinate position. This can be found in examples where women are, for instance, represented as contradictory beings in nature, manipulative, materialist or sex revealing while men tend to be represented as more direct, positive, simple or sex obsessed. Other times, we may come across statements that are so extremely sexist in contexts where discriminatory practices would not be socially acceptable that we tend to perceive or interpret them as jokes. Nevertheless, these *inoffensive* jokes are, in fact, being uttered.

Thus, it is possible to make overtly sexist statements in a very knowing, ‘post-modern’ way, drawing attention to the ludicrous nature of such attitudes, but at the same time keeping those sexist attitudes in play (Mills 2008: 145).

The fact that we interact within different communities of practice makes presuppositions –understood here as the common ground which is taken for granted by all participants in a given communicative situation (Levinson 1983)– to come into play in relation to indirect sexism. In this particular case of indirect sexism, counter-arguments are even more difficult to express in order to fight sexist attitudes back. This is due to the fact that, when dealing with presuppositions, offended interlocutors would need to make their interpretations explicit and, therefore, the person who stated the sexist claim is offered the opportunity to neglect accusations. Here lies the main difficulty in counterattacking advertisements, for example. Due to their subtle working order at the level of presupposition and inferences it is extremely difficult to argue that specific adverts are being sexist or discriminatory because there is always the possibility of a counterargument on the part of the sender of the message relying on individual, incorrect and subjective interpretations of the message (Cameron 2006).

Finally, the androcentric perspective still remains a reality in sexist words and discourses. Many feminists have claimed that certain words etymologically give off a masculine vision or perspective, as it is the case of words like *penetration*, *fuck* or *screw* –although these last terms are currently being used from a feminine perspective as well– that implicitly denote an active role of men and a passive role of women in the sexual act. *Foreplay*, on the other hand, denotes that stimulation cannot be considered as a fundamental part of the sexual act because it is just a prelude to real and complete sex which, of course, involves penetration. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) explain how many reports on rapes have a clear masculine perspective and different resources like the lexical elements chosen and the general context of interpretation, contribute to the elimination of the masculine responsibility in the acts which, obviously, is extremely difficult to locate and analyse in order to counterattack.

Without a doubt, this new kind of sexism may be, and in fact is, much more difficult to fight from an individual level and, also, from an institutional level. For this reason, it is really important to bring to light the presuppositions we may infer from certain sentences or comments that we may experience as sexist or discriminatory.

With that purpose in mind, the solutions and proposals coming from this approach to gender and language in context vary in nature –from counterarguments in the interaction itself, to the publication of letters in the media showing the discontent with specific practices. It is just by means of

metastatements about underlying sexism that indirect sexism can be exposed. The fact that there are so many comments by individual members of the public to newspapers and magazines about such instances of indirect sexism indicates that this type of sexism does not generally go uncontested and is resisted by many women (Mills 2008: 153).

In fact, one of the most recent proposals within the Anglo-Saxon world in relation to this new phenomenon comes, as we mentioned earlier, from Mills (2008) who claims that a pragmatic analysis is vital in order to analyse and fight against this new type of sexism, that is, an approach to gender, language and sexism

which attends to an analysis of the meaning of utterances and words in context. However, my approach allows for an analysis which is both *localised*, i.e. analysing how gender is addressed / oriented to / constructed within a particular interaction / text, and *generalised*, i.e. analysing the general and fairly regular patterns of production and interpretation of discourse. This type of analysis examines the relation between these two views of gender: gender as constructed



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within each particular context and gender as a variable (without assuming that this variable is fixed or static). Through focusing on context, we can see that each particular context is informed by and negotiates with notions of what is appropriate / acceptable within that community of practice. Indirect sexism therefore is a complex negotiation between participant's assessments of what is stereotypically appropriate, or what they assume is appropriate within a particular community of practice and their notion of their own gendered identity (Mills 2008: 140).

Before we finish this section, let's analyse –following again Mills (2008) study– some examples of how these new ways of sexism can be contested and scrutinised from this new perspective. In relation to gender stereotypes or conflicting messages, we find that, apart from representing women regarding their appearance, sexuality, their not fitting into traditional women's role, the mass media also contribute to air these images and insults by means of TV series, advertisements or invented characters or personas that participate in different shows or entertainment programmes. An example is provided by how the media play with the image of working mothers who, while trying to transmit an idea of transgression and social development, strengthen the social position of women as mothers and care providers within the private sphere as their main constituent role. In this sense,

I am not trying to claim here that altering naming practices in the media, introducing the term working father or changing stereotypically negative representations of the working mother would result in a more equal situation for all women and men within and outside the workplace. However, exposing the ideological nature of these representational practices is still an important first step as a means of recognising that they can (and some might argue should) be reconstructed (Page 2005: 576).

Another example of how fighting against sexist practices from this perspective can be offered is the specific case of surnames adoption practices. Nowadays, men's surname is not adopted by women as a common practice. However, as we anticipated earlier, feminist campaigns are not the mere originators of this change. Many different decisions may come into play when deciding whose surname is going to be adopted, for example, the desire to maintain the woman's family name, the idea of creating and constructing new surnames by putting both family names together, inverting the traditional order or simply the choice of most aesthetic alternatives (Mills 2003b). If this was not enough, there is a new fad in the United Kingdom that promotes the adoption of the man's surname among celebrities. This fact, which is generally perceived as a negative backwards movement in relation to feminist achievements (Mills 2003b),

makes it even more difficult for researchers in this field to bring about the desired cultural changes. Many women from the street are copying these celebrities and their social practices. This is why any person with a public image should take great care of what kind of discourses are being created by their performance and the social influence or repercussions these may have.

A similar example is provided by the use of titles and forms of address. Many women adopt the term *Ms.* without being certain of its meaning or social implications and, in those cases in which it is clear, these women come across a difficult social situation in which they have constantly to explain and justify their choice due to the negative connotations that this term has acquired because of its use by the mass media – generally speaking, this term has been relegated to divorced women, feminists, lesbians or man-haters. The best way to analyse sexist practices in these contexts is related to the use of a metalanguage that expresses our position. Many motivations for the selection of this specific term are not feminist in their origin (Mills 2003b, Schwarz 2003), on the contrary, they are owed to different social or aesthetic values such as affiliation, culture, tradition, individual feelings regarding family issues or just what is socially more acceptable in a specific time and place. Even though, it is vital to make our choice explicit in order to bring to light the stigmatisation process to which they are submitted. Nevertheless, many women supporters of feminist campaigns express the difficulties they come across when trying to justify their choices in a constant public way. As a result, many of them decide to change their surnames and, therefore, their identity, according to the context in which they are participating and the community of practice they are interacting with. This fact, consequently, strengthens the idea that a local and specific analysis of sexism may have repercussions at higher institutional and social frameworks.

Strategically, choosing particular options for particular contexts, and inflecting those choices positively is a more productive model than the utopian notion that sexism can be reformed out of existence. However, it must still be remembered that interpretation of these practices can still be sexist. Working on sexism is not a once-and-for-all process, but rather an ongoing process of attention to discrimination. Rather than focusing on individual language items, we need to see tendencies and patterning over the text as a whole (Mills 2008: 69)

because we must not only observe if there is “evidence of the adoption of non-sexist alternatives but also evidence that these alternatives are being used in a manner promoting linguistic equality of the sexes” (Pauwels 2003: 566).

The last example of how indirect linguistic sexism can be analysed and fought against that we are going to mention is that of jokes, where the analysis of this phenomenon becomes even more complex due to the intrinsic characteristics of these communicative events where, as important as the sender’s intention and the receiver’s interpretation is the reaction in the interactional process (Dodd *et al.* 2001, Greenwood and Linda 2002, Benwell 2007, Ford *et al.* 2008). Moreover, many times it is almost impossible to discern between direct and indirect sexism, because of this, the responses to many of these jokes –laughter, counterattacking with other sexist or anti-sexist jokes, etc.– must be studied within the framework of indirect sexism but also, within the pragmatic theory of linguistic politeness because many, if not all, of our contextual responses are limited by our sense of *face* (Goffman 1959, 1967). This is why our reaction to particular instances of sexist practices may leave us in the underprivileged position of the victim.



# **Chapter 2**

## **Online Magazines and the Gender Perspective**

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## **2. Online Magazines and the Gender Perspective**

### **2.1. Magazines as Gendered Spaces at an Institutional Level**

#### *2.1.1. Magazines*

As we have already postulated in this investigation, our main aim is to analyse the intricate and subtle ways in which indirect linguistic sexism is manifested and negotiated in new means of communication, in this case, online public forums dependent on online magazines targeted at specific communities of readers.

In order to attain our objective, firstly, we presented, as a general framework, some basic notions and relevant concepts to our analysis in the introduction of our study. Secondly, we thoroughly disentangled the concept of linguistic sexism by means of a panoramic view of its history, manifestations and current developments into more subtle forms of linguistic expression. The third and necessary step to be taken in our procedure, therefore, is that of explaining the context in which we are going to carry out our analysis. In order to do that, we will, first of all, try to define what magazines are and specify their main characteristics as a genre; secondly, we will demonstrate the intricate relationship between the genre of magazines and gender and, finally, we will move a step further into new mass media manifestations and the consequences of the technological turn in relation to the working of this particular genre.

We shall, first of all, define magazines as “immensely popular cultural form[s] (McLoughlin 2000), mass culture text[s] (Caldas-Coulthard 1996a) whose discourses are globally marketed by powerful multinational corporations (Machin & Thornborrow 2003)” (Alabarta 2005:88). More precisely, we could claim that magazines may be understood as periodical publications –consisting of articles, advertisements, illustrations, graphics, etc.– aimed at a particular readership and usually focused on a concrete subject matter or a collection of subjects that may be of interest to the particular readership they are aimed at.

On the basis of this global definition, and following McLoughlin (2000), we could enumerate some essential characteristics of the genre. On the one hand, and very much related to their defining feature as marketed products –started on the post-World War II consumer boom of the 1950s (Johnson 2009)– their popularity is measured in circulation figures that aim at pointing out the high sales of the product (Alabarta 2005).

On the other hand, the target audience to which they are addressed is very difficult to estimate since many different people, not only buyers, can have access to these publications in different and varied public spaces such as a doctors' waiting room, for example.

In relation to their purpose, we could claim that magazines, depending on whose viewpoint we are taking into account –namely producers' or readers' perspective–, can aim at different objectives. Regarding magazine producers, as we mentioned earlier, the economic benefits are the main reason of existence of this kind of products. However, the actual money achieved from magazines sales is not the main source of benefit for magazine producers. Advertisements and the promotion of commodities are the main source of income for these companies. Truth be told, the audience of this kind of product is exposed to the persuasive function of magazines even in a non-imposing way by means of subtle commercial strategies. On the other hand, if we take into account the readers' viewpoint, we could claim that the main purpose of magazines is a three-fold one. Entertaining, informing and instructing can be considered the main objectives of magazines in relation to their audience. This is carried out by means of different linguistic resources such as puns on words, grammatical structures, images or different specific sections of the magazine.

The fourth aspect we should mention when defining the essential features of magazines is that of their organisation and structure. There is no common or specific rule in this sense and magazines may organise their contents in varied and heterogeneous ways. However, we can consider some common elements to all, or many, types of magazines, for example, they usually have an easy-to read format that emerges from the absence of need to read the magazines from cover to cover. This is the reason why the table of contents is extremely helpful for orienting the reader through the contents of their magazine paying particular attention to individual interests of the audience. Heterogeneity is also a common feature of magazines because, regardless of the main topic or focus of the publication, magazines are generally considered as storages of information which may include many different sections such as specialised articles, news, horoscopes, readers' letters or problem pages. Advertisements play also a crucial role in the structure of magazines because they sometimes merge with the content itself in subtle and unconscious ways to fulfil the main role for text producers. Both in relation to advertisements and content itself, many different linguistic resources are used in order to fulfil the three main objectives regarding magazine readers, that is,



entertaining, informing and instructing. Different typographical fonts, texts genres, images or visual information are commonly used, and generally work together, in order to attract readers' attention and invite them to join the community promoted by the magazine.

Despite this apparent inconsistent skeleton of magazines, habitual readers may easily identify a common discourse that is to be expected in future issues of the same magazine. This is so because the contents, images, language and organisational structures of magazines reveal ideological messages that permeate their essence. Very often, however, readers may come across contradictory or conflicting messages but, however, this is not inconsistent with the transmission of specific discourses.

This feature is very much related to the type of magazine we are dealing with. Nowadays, it is very easy to find magazines on almost every topic we may be interested in, such as computing, DIY, household crafts, music, decoration, plants, babies, hobbies, etc. in which, obviously, specialised language plays an essential role. Currently, it is also common to find general interest magazines which are targeted at a wider audience, Sunday newspaper supplements which make magazines more available or even in-house magazines published by supermarkets.

Another characteristic feature of magazines is the way they can be easily classified in relation to the material they are made with and their frequency. Generally speaking, magazines are made with different kinds and qualities of paper which intrinsically bear some social connotations regarding the quality of the magazines itself. However, generally speaking, most magazines are published in what is known as glossy paper. In relation to their frequency, magazines are issued at regular intervals, that is, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly or even yearly.

Very much related to this essential feature of magazines is the new way in which magazines are being presented to their audience. Magazines on the Internet or online magazines have become a common element in our modern everyday life. More and more magazines are producing their own websites which, apart from their printed issues, try to, and in fact do, get to a wider audience. In this case, instead of turning over the pages, readers have to click on icons in order to access the information they want. As we can see, the main relationship established between reader and magazines is maintained, the magazine offers a heterogeneous discursive product through which the reader surfs. In this case, it is even truer because the reader becomes a user and, as we will see later, interacts more cooperatively with the magazine.

Once we have defined what a magazine is and once we have highlighted its main defining features, it is important to dedicate a few lines to the agents involved in this process and their relationships.

On the one hand, it is crucial to talk about the text producers. As McLoughlin (2000) claims, this term suits better our objective since the term writer would not be appropriate to determine the great variety of authors that may be involved in the production of a single text. Text producers must, as magazine readers, construct an identity for themselves which, in turn, may vary across different or the same text. Text producers play different roles along their discourse, that of friend, adviser or entertainer being the most prevalent ones along this genre.

On the other hand, these text producers come across the difficult situation of having to address –presenting an analogous term– the text receiver, the reader of the magazine. Text producers must address a mass audience which cannot be identified on an individual basis. Text producers, in the same way that they construct their own identity in the discourse of their products, also construct the identity of their audience making use of what is known as ideal reader (McLoughlin 2000, Gregorio Godeo 2006), superaddressee (Bakhtin 1981) or virtual interpreter (Verschuere 1999). This ideal reader is not always coherently projected in the pages of a single issue of a specific magazine, these virtual interpreters may find conflicting messages about their own identities, what is coherent, instead, is the way readers are expected to consume and perform such identities (Matheson 2005), as we will see later on. Here lies the power of the individual in choosing and adapting their own social identity based on the discourses projected by a specific magazine they are consumers of.

What is vital, therefore, is the relationships established between text producer and consumer. Both producers and consumers are fragmented and multiple at the same time, they are individuals but, at the same time, members of specific and varied communities of practice within society as a whole (Talbot 1992). The way this intersection of voices is managed within the discourse of magazines is, basically, by the feature of synthetic personalisation, that is, a “compensatory tendency to give the impression of treating each of the people ‘handled’ *en masse* as an individual” (Fairclough 1989: 62), addressing anonymous consumers as a bunch of identical people, almost clones, to which certain attitudes, values, preoccupations and beliefs are ascribed. This camaraderie is offered to the consumer by the producer by means of two basic features, that is, i) the simulation of friendship (through the use of personal

pronouns, relational and expressive values of lexis, punctuation, shared presuppositions, projected facts, assumptions, etc.) and ii) the simulation of reciprocal discourse (through the use of interpolations, demanding utterances, adjacency pairs, representation of dialogue, etc.) (Talbot 1992).

The camaraderie or friendship being offered is crucial for the economic objective of magazines. Minimising the social distance and presenting the relationship as necessary and pleasant is crucial for producers' aims. However, this relationship could not be considered as totally symmetrical (McLoughlin 2000). Text producers could be considered as being in a more powerful position, which allows them to mould the minds of their audience –however, as we will see later on, recent developments in the field of the production of magazines related to the digital and technological era highlight the active role of the audience where, production and consumption can even merge. Nevertheless, accepting or rejecting the subject position offered by text producers is probably one of the most important roles of the audience. We all have a particular cultural knowledge or heritage influenced by our age, sex, class, ethnicity or race that can, definitely, determine our interpretation of a given text.

Our social identity, we could claim, “emerges in relationships with others and with social structures rather than [being] an originary essence with which people are born” (Matheson 2005: 58). In that sense, we could claim that identities are cultural and social constructs that depend, among other things, on language. By means of language use, text producers and consumers perform their social identities projecting, accepting, modulating or rejecting the discourses available to them, in this case, by means of magazines.

Thus, every use of language is a performance, a rhetorical achievement, and involves our orientation to certain identity positions available in discourse and genre. When we perform in discourse, we are signaling to listeners, viewers or readers which discourses are relevant, how we are mixing or juxtaposing discourses, where we fit within them and therefore what kind of self we are, for the moment, projecting. [...] we might regard people not so much as talking the way they do because of who they are, but as ‘who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk’ (Matheson 2005: 65).

This statement would lead us to think that the performance of text producers in magazine discourses is more relevant or visible than that of text consumers. However, and as we mentioned earlier, new changes in the ways we communicate and interact in society and innovations in the field of mass media production and consumption that are

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related to the digital era, favour, to a large extent, the analysis of the performance of the audience, as we will examine later on.

Let's now analyse in detail the relationship between magazines and gender in order to locate the objectives of our analysis in a more specific manner.

### 2.1.2. *Magazines and gender*

As we have already mentioned in previous sections, probably the main purpose of magazines spins around economic interests. In order for corporations and texts producers to ensure their continued markets, lifestyle magazines emerge as a source and resource that works on the basis of “identity as a style of living, and a style that can be performed primarily through consumption – the idea that to have is to be” (Matheson 2005: 65). This consumerist vision of human existence is very much related to a golden rule of economic interest, that of the maintenance, although in subtle ways, of traditional gender roles that ensure the continuation of specific markets for their products (Alexander 2003).

This approach to gender is based on the coexistence of modern notions of equality and more traditional ideas on gender differences. This *Mars and Venus* approach, together with massive changes in the economic system around the 1980s – that involved consumerism fevers, marketing and an astonishing selling orientation of every aspect of human life– could be considered the spine of the current and most common lifestyle magazine discourses (Gill 2003).

This economic interest is, therefore, based on sexist discourses that promote consumerism in the aim of making people better members of their own communities (Coulthard-Caldas 1999, Weatherall 2002b) following discourses that are globally marketed for the benefit of powerful multinational corporations (Machin and Thornborrow 2003, Alexander 2003). Historically speaking, the female reader could be considered the first target audience of lifestyle magazines (Walker 2000, Jackson *et al.* 2001). Domestic and beauty products were being advertised and suggested to women all around the world under the promise of making them better mothers and wives, their primary social role around the 1950s, when lifestyle magazines started to be commercialised. In this way, up to the 1980s, lifestyle magazines were constrained to a female audience. The few existing publications targeted at men focused on traditional masculine hobbies or interests and did not talk about masculinity or the social and

cultural role of men (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010). The 1980s witnessed economic, social and cultural changes that made men become a new target audience for lifestyle magazines. Slowly but firmly, these made their entrance onto the stage in order to help men with their growing anxieties about the construction and performance of their masculinity in this changing social and cultural arena (Cameron 1992, Mills 1995, Winship 2000, Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010).

The socialisation process, as we have already noted, is a fluid and constant one that depends on several and coexistent cultural and social elements. The well-studied power of the mass media (Talbot 1992) is an example of how magazines, addressed to specific groups, contribute to this socialisation process in very specific ways (Willemsen 1998). This, inevitably, favours the existence of what we know as gendered spaces (Sunderland 2004) at an institutional level.

But, what is a gendered space? In general terms, we could claim that “when women and men, boys and girls are represented and/or expected to behave in particular gendered ways” or the fact of “positioning women and men in different ways, i.e. as constitutive” (Sunderland 2004: 21), that could be regarded as gendered spaces. In other terms, “we can assume that there is a set of discourses of femininity and masculinity” (Mills 1997: 17).

Lifestyle magazines could be regarded as textual genres that are stereotypically gendered (Motschenbacher, 2009). They can be considered as having a fundamental role in constructing, maintaining and spreading various and different gendered discourses of femininities and masculinities. Paraphrasing and extending Jackson *et al.* (2001:196) definition of men’s magazines, we can assume that lifestyle magazines, both for men and women, can be conceived as sources providing them with a kind of social and cultural comfort zone that offers readers the discursive resources to manage their changeable social experiences and circumstances. When readers approach a particular lifestyle magazine, they are temporarily taking or resisting particular discursive construction of subject positions (Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza 2007) that they may later on use, adapt or avoid in specific contextual situations within their own communities of practices.

The mass media and, especially, lifestyle magazines addressed at specific communities of men and women, create and project social gender-related stereotypes (Fairclough 1995b). As Talbot (2003: 470) claims, this populist dualistic division of

gender is based on “simplification, reduction and naturalization” and this, in turn, contributes to the routinization of unequal gender relations.

And how can this be achieved? In the discourse of lifestyle magazines, structures, contents and the language used in these publications inevitably leads the consumer towards particular gendered spaces or gender ideologies. Van Dijk (1997a) defines ideologies as self-representations of a particular community of people that are structured around mental schemas such as values, tasks, aims, identity or interests of that particular group that exert influence over the social identity performance of its members. In this way, gender ideologies are created, maintained and reproduced through the powerful tool of lifestyle magazine discourse and it is the role of the habitual consumers of these discourses, who are part of that community, to accept, reject or adapt those gender ideologies in order to engage in larger social practices.

Since they are textual products, magazines strongly depend on language to construct gender ideologies because, as McLoughlin (2000) claims, our social identities are basically constructed through language. “The reiterative use of certain linguistic strategies, to the extent that we stop questioning the assumptions upon which the underlying ideologies are built, has a powerful ‘naturalizing’ effect” (Del-Teso Craviotto 2006: 2018). This dialectical relationship between language and ideologies often favours the appearance of multiple and contradictory linguistic resources and ideological messages that, in certain ways, may work to discredit magazines as ideological products, however, closer and deeper content and linguistic analyses have revealed that this is not the case (Gill 2009). Fashion and beauty sections, celebrity news, sex and relationships stories or articles, advice columns and advertisements create, sometimes in a very subtle way, gendered discourses and gender ideologies where the reader can surf in order to find all the resources needed to perform their own gender identity that fits into a particular community of practice or communicative situation. In other words, these gendered discourses at an institutional level create the idea of gender itself which, in turn, is also negotiated in local practices where individuals engage in acts of “transgression, subversion and resistance” (Cameron 1998d: 272).

It is precisely this cultural, social and local negotiation of institutionalised gender ideologies and gendered spaces the one that favours what has been called gender discourse democratisation (Holmes 1992, Caldas-Coulthard 1996a, Connell 2001), that

is, a blur of boundaries between genders and the reshaping of masculinities and femininities.

In order to understand this concept in its broader sense, let's first have a look at the development and the most common institutional representations of gender, more specifically, the representation of hegemonic masculinity and femininity in lifestyle magazines.

Dellinger (2004: 547) understands hegemonic masculinities and femininities as the "legitimate and protected versions" of these genders in society. This idea is based on Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony which, in general terms, determines that all social groups are active in the production and negotiation of meaning (Lehtonen 2007). It is true that the power of dominant groups can be said to be integrated into institutional structures such as social rules and habits or even governmental laws, however, this is generally considered as general agreement in every democratic state. This is the reason why van Dijk (1997b: 19) defines hegemony as the power that "makes people act as if it were natural, normal, or simply a consensus", that is, involving control by social agreement rather than by force (Talbot 2003). In relation to hegemonic forms of masculinities and femininities, it is important to remember that these institutionalised hegemonic gendered forms articulated "through a variety of positions, languages, institutions and apparatuses" (Berger *et al.* 1995: 2) are created and represented through different and complementary discourses such those on appearances, affects, sexualities, behaviours, occupations or dominations (Pringle 2005), to name just a few. However, what can be considered as a fundamental intrinsic feature of any form of hegemonic gender identity is the fact that they all remain as ideal and unrealisable forms for the majority of individuals and, therefore, are left to represent a standard against which individuals measure their own performances (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010). Nevertheless, these hegemonic representations of gender can be, and in fact are, negotiated at local levels making use of other counter-discourses –such as feminism– that come from different generational conceptions in relation to gender practices or even broader structural changes in society (Connell 2005, Connell and Wood 2005).

Let's now analyse what are the major hegemonic forms of masculinities and femininities created and represented by the general discourses of the most common lifestyle magazines in the current Anglo-Saxon world.

On the one hand, in order to be fair with the chronological appearance of these identity constructions, let's start with hegemonic forms of femininity spread by

lifestyle magazines (see Ferguson 1983, Winship 1987, Ballaster *et al.* 1991, McCracken 1993, Caldas-Coulthard 1996a, Hayashi 1997, Peirce 1997, Caldas-Coulthard and Martín Rojo 1999, Triage 1999, Del-Teso-Craviotto 2002 for detailed analyses).

The history of women's magazines, as they are commonly known, shows an evolutionary movement from more traditional publications in the 1960s and 1970s – whose main emphasis was on beauty, finding and keeping a husband or household duties– towards a broader conception of the modern woman as sexy and independent in the 1980s and 1990s (Gauntlett 2004) –as it can be appreciated in the large amount of popular women's publications which nowadays enjoy similar levels of success and readership in the Anglo-Saxon world, for example, titles such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, *Marie Claire*, *New Woman*, *Elle*, *Vogue* or *She* are well-known instances–.

Since their inception, women's magazines have generally claimed their generalist position, that is, the idea that they are created in an eclectic way to conform to the ideals and expectations of every individual reader. However, this generalist pretension of women's magazines is just a facade that hides an ideal market of readership that constitutes the ideal consumer group to which the products and ideologies present in the magazine can be addressed (Del Teso-Craviotto 2006).



Image 1. *Women's magazines*

In other words, under the generalist pretension of women's magazines, text editors and corporations address a limited portion of women's interests that are considered the minimal standards of any woman boast of being a proper modern inhabitant of the world. Different women's magazines such as *Good Housekeeping*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Working Woman* or *Ms.* have in fact been found to present different dominant gender ideologies in relation to women and femininity (Del Teso-Craviotto 2006). A quantitative and qualitative study of the vocabulary of different issues of different women's magazines revealed that the most common lexical elements of different



periodicals contribute to the creation of different discourses of femininity which were enhanced by the contents of the publications and the advertisements present in them. However, these common lexical elements could easily be classified into a few distinct semantic fields that “corroborate the hypothesis that women’s magazines are not truly generalist” (Del Teso-Craviotto 2006: 2015) and relate to traditional and stereotypical visions of women. In Ferguson’s (1983: 6) words “the picture of the world presented by women’s magazines is that the individual woman is a member not so much of society as a whole but of *her society*, the world of women”.

In this way, women’s magazines can be said to share some very basic characteristics in order to address these similar concerns about women and femininity (Machin and Thornborrow 2003, Gauntlett 2004, Alabarta 2005), that is, what Gill (2009) calls intermingled and coexistent repertoires. These publications are, in general terms, all about the social construction of women’s identity and, as a result, some of their contents will be rather explicit and will be directly related to gender representations in society.

Firstly, the ideas on women and femininity portrayed in these publications commonly portray women as doing trivial or non-relevant things, that is, it is implied that without their performance, the world will continue spinning around.

As a complementary idea, the feminine world, which implies a sexist differentiation in itself, is traditionally depicted as simple. No great problems, discussions or events will ever interrupt the fluid and soft world of these women and their primary concerns. From time to time, issues dealing with working fields or economic aspects will appear throughout the magazine’s discourse, however, the way they are presented is, generally always, submitted to the major recurrent themes within women’s magazines and, by extension, within any woman’s world.

These common and recurrent themes within women’s magazines are, for example, those dealing with relationships, sex or beauty which, without much effort, lead us towards traditional and stereotypical conceptions of feminine gender identity.

Relationships could probably be considered the topic which is most commonly addressed in women’s magazines and from which the other ones derive. The basic key to happiness for every modern woman is, despite the underlying notions of independence, the fact of being in a stable (and heterosexual) relationship. As we can observe, this is an old-fashioned idea coming from traditional conceptions of women’s role in society. Nevertheless, there has been a discursive turn in the treatment of this

topic and, nowadays, women are expected to find their prince charming but, in contrast to previous models, they have now become active agents in the search. Women are no longer expected to keep on waiting in their fairy-tale castle for Mr. Right to come. Now, women are instructed in the basic strategies that will lead them to attain their goal.

This discursive turn lead us directly to the issue of sex and sexuality in women's magazines. Feminist criticism dealing with women's publications in their early stages continuously claimed the passive depiction of women's role in society. As a result, modern women are now being portrayed as independent and active in relation to their social roles and relationships. This has lead women's magazines towards the treatment of sex and sexuality as a mechanism by means of which women can achieve this new active social role. For modern women, sex is the regime of truth (Caldas-Coulthard 1996a) and, by becoming either sex objects or sex experts, they will attain the eternal bliss. In this sense, the movement towards women's liberation and freedom has led to a reversal of basic concepts because in many of these publications it is now men the ones who are being portrayed as sex objects through language and imagery. However, we also find some forms of objection to this new treatment of sex and sexuality. One of the most common forms of opposition comes from more traditional and conservative positions of society which claim that these magazines are rather too open and explicit about sex. The other most common form of objection comes from feminism itself which, although aware of the great step taken towards women's liberation and agency, it still considers that this way of treating sexuality is too limited because, either consciously or unconsciously, it favours and makes heterosexuality visible in detriment of other forms of sexuality.

Apart from sex, as we have already explained, the physical appearance is one of the most relevant tools that women possess to achieve their basic objective. Again, this is a traditional and conservative notion related to women and femininity. The repetitive praising of beauty through the contents and advertisement of women's publications inevitably leads women to an unstable feeling of their own inadequacy to physical perfection and, therefore, to the non-achievement of their basic objective.

Within this simple, trivial and fantasy world presented by modern women's magazines, as we can observe, traditional ideals about women and femininity are still being subtly transmitted although hidden under the mask of modern independent and active roles of women. Following the imagery of this metaphor of fairy tales, in current women's fantasy world there is also a monster, the monster of contradiction (Winship,

1987). Readers of women's magazines, as we have already explained, are provided with different and often contradictory images or ideas of the perfect modern woman. For example, being a caring and attentive wife is usually in contradiction with being a cosmopolitan sex machine which, in turn, is essential to attain happiness in this constantly changing world. In this way, the idea of being happy with one's own body and image is, at the same time, dilapidated by the recurrent advertisements that try to sell products to the reader in order to improve their personal appearance. Obviously, these contradictory images and ideas damage women's self-image –because of stereotypical conceptions that are subtly but continually being displayed– but also their particular performance of their own social and gender identity –by means of sending contradictory and conflicting messages.

This contradictory nature in the identities and roles of women is, however, dissipated with the global mode of consumption offered by these magazines (Machin and Leewen 2004). The discourse presented in these lifestyle magazines for women is structured around the idea of providing “(temporary) solutions to social and personal conflicts” (Farvid and Braun 2006: 296) presented by unstable identity roles. For example, Machin and Leewen (2004) found out that what unites each international issue of *Cosmopolitan* is the motto of the *Fun, Fearless Female*. By means of text, images, multimodality and intertextual references the magazine creates a deep and implicit structural discourse organisation that glues the supposed eclectic nature of the magazines into a united product.

As we can observe from this explanation, modern women's magazines are, in fact, non-generalist products aimed, in a way, at specific and traditional conceptions of femininity displayed under the disguise of indirectness and modernity. The numerous studies dealing with women's magazines, apart from studying language, content and advertising, have also been interested in the way the constructions created and presented by these publications have been understood by their readership (Gauntlett 2004, Farvid and Braun 2006). In the 1970s, McRobbie conducted a study dealing with a magazine for teenage girls and concluded that the stereotypical, traditional and patriarchal ideology of these publications was being directly absorbed by its readers. However, this statement was proved wrong a few years later when Frazer (1987) demonstrated that individual readers often laugh at the stories presented in the magazines or consider them unrealistic. Unfortunately, this and similar studies were being mistakenly taken to prove that readers are not affected or cannot be influenced by texts. In fact, Hermes

(1995) complicated the picture a bit more by claiming that, because of the informal essence of magazines, that is, their easy-to-pick-and-easy-to-put-down nature, magazines could almost always be considered as significant texts. In the 1990s, McRobbie re-emerged as a commentator on women's magazines and, in fact, assumed that their structure, content, philosophy and ideologies have changed since the 1970s. In fact, an essential idea of modern analyses of women's magazines is that these, as any other piece of information, are meaningless out of a communicative situation in which the receiver has a crucial role. In general terms, current women's magazines consumers can be considered as sharing a "pick and mix approach" (Gauntlett 2004: 196), that is, the idea that they tend to have ambivalent feelings towards these publications. Sometimes, they feel pleasure or enjoyment when reading them; at other times, they learn things they may consider relevant in order to perform their social and gender identities in particular contexts; and, other times still, they may laugh at the contents and consider them hilarious. What is implied then is that, in general terms, women's magazines are, in no way, considered as perfect or ideal lifestyle manuals that readers follow uncritically when performing their social or gender identity.

Following the chronological appearance of these models of identity construction, we will now deal with the hegemonic forms of masculinity spread by lifestyle magazines targeted at men (see Nixon 1996; Edwards 1997; Jackson *et al.* 2001; Benwell 2003 for detailed analyses). The market of men's magazines is relatively new compared to that of women's magazines. In the past, women were considered the primary source of consumption due to their primary social roles as mothers and wives and, as we have already explained, women's lifestyle magazines emerged as a printed genre aimed at making women consumers of specific products (and ideologies) appropriate to their role. During these years, men were considered the main source of production and, therefore, the main economic objective of lifestyle magazines as products of identity constructions left men out of their market perspective (Alexander 2003). Besides, the prevalent patriarchal gender ideology at the time, around the 1960s and 1970s, established men as firm and stable identities based on worldwide historical values and events which, obviously, accredited them with reasons enough not to need a regular publication to tell them how to perform their well-established social role. As a result, the main publications targeted at men were devoted to traditional masculine hobbies or interests, such as cars, electronic devices, science, sport, economy or

pornography. Glossy magazines, as they were also commonly known, were considered a rather feminine product which was inadequate for *real men*.



Image 2. Men's Magazines

Nevertheless, the 1980s can be considered a fruitful period for the emergence of a new market for lifestyle magazines as crucial sites “for the articulation of aspects of modern masculinity and addressal of the masculine consumer” (Benwell, 2003: 6). Edwards (1997) and Nixon (1996) trace the emergence of men’s lifestyle magazines in the UK back to 1986 when *Arena* popped out as a specialised upmarket fashion and style magazine for urban men (Gauntlett 2004). The emergence of this new periodical was

due to marketing strategies and analyses that revealed that general style magazines such as *The Face* were being sold to more men than women. In this direction, a few years later, in 1988, *GQ* (*Gentlemen's Quarterly*) also emerged as a publication addressed to men driving an expensive and stylish lifestyle centred on fashion, design and music. However, the market for men’s lifestyle magazines really took off in the 1990s. *Loaded*, for example, which is widely recognised as one of the most relevant British lad culture magazines targeted at an audience of “twenty-something, beer-drinking, football-loving, sex-obsessed male stereotype” (Gaultnett 2004: 155) was launched in 1994. In the 1990s, other titles such as *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Esquire*, *Stuff for Men* or *Men's Health* followed their predecessors in this market with varying degrees of success. Nowadays, men’s lifestyle magazines are well-established within the market and, according to public figures, they should not envy the success of women’s publications at all.

As it is the case with women’s magazines, lifestyle publications targeted at men do also claim a generalist vision trying to cover a wider readership. However, men’s lifestyle magazines do also restrict their potential consumer market by depicting a limited number of gendered aspects. For example, although they do not rely on traditional men’s interests –as they could be so extensive–, they all try to cover, in more or less detail, some other areas that are, therefore, considered to be of reference for men,

such as, for example, review of films, music, video games and books (Gauntlett 2004). This variety of topics, as it happens with women's magazines, could project a generalist and broad conception of men's magazines which, as it happens with their feminine counterpart, is highlighted by contents and advertisements which end up portraying different discourses of masculinity in different magazines.

However, as it was the case with women's publications, "different men's magazines represent different forms of masculinity but elements of hegemonic masculinity (culturally normative ideals of masculinity within a structure of social relations where some men are subordinated) are woven throughout" (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010: 64). Nevertheless, while women's magazines can be claimed to depict a quite homogeneous image of hegemonic femininity, publications targeted at men generally create two main areas of hegemonic masculinity.

Different forms of masculinity or masculine subjects have emerged during the past years, for instance, the figures of the "new father", "the superwaif", "the black macho", "the soft lad", "the new boy", "the modern romantic" or "the metrosexual" (Gill 2003, Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010) are just some examples of how manhood can be experienced nowadays. However, while some of these subject positions disappear quickly from the public arena, some others are rather permanent across different sites (Gill 2003).

The first form of hegemonic masculinity emerged in the 1980s with the birth of men's lifestyle magazines. The "new man" is generally thought to be "sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women, and egalitarian in outlook -and, in some accounts, as narcissistic and highly invested in his physical appearance" (Gill 2003). From a more metaphorical perspective, this new identity construction could be considered as "the ideal partner for the modern, liberated, heterosexual woman [...] a softer, more sensitive and caring individual, who also avoids sexist language, changes nappies and loves to shop all day for his own clothes" (Edley & Wetherell 1997: 204). This masculine subject position is generally considered as a product of the media and a direct response to Second Wave feminist campaigns together with economic and demographic changes that related to political and ideological instability of the time (Edward 1997, Gill 2003, Gregorio-Godeo 2006).

The second main form of hegemonic masculinity appeared a decade later, in the 1990s. The subject position of the "new lad" defines his maleness by means of women's objectification, the expression of his violence in order to achieve sexual

success and pleasure and the renegotiation of his social status through the acquisition of gadgets and fashionable clothes and accessories (Matheson 2005). The “new lad” is traditionally thought to be sexist, homophobic (Gregorio-Godeo and Plaza-Molina 2007), “hedonistic, post-(if not anti) feminist, and pre-eminently concerned with beer, football and ‘shagging’ women” (Gill 2003). This, together with his anti-aspirational ideas on life and his “ironic relationship to the world of serious and adult concerns” (Gill 2003) make of laddism a “model of consumerist masculinity” (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010: 65) based on the absence of responsibilities and the focus on traditional masculine “interests such as sports, cars and video games, as well as more risky health behaviors, such as binge drinking, drugs, and promiscuous sexual practices” (Ricciardelli 2010: 65). Its emergence is generally considered as the result of a double influence (Jackson *et al.* 2001, Gill 2003). On the one hand, the “new lad” can be considered as a reaction to the “new man” discourse, a nostalgic revival of traditional patriarchal ideals and as a backlash against feminism and the idea of the changeable and adaptable nature of gender. On the other hand, the hedonistic, egocentric and pleasure-seeking attitude of the “new lad” can also be understood as a reaction against the historical figure of men as breadwinners and providers.

The “new man” and the “new lad” subject positions should, therefore, be understood as discourses or repertoires which are presented and performed in different contexts at different times and which, sometimes, create a discursive tension. These, together with other less hegemonic forms of masculinity coexist and are constantly being recycled and redefined (Gill 2003). However, as we have already claimed, and as it was the case with women’s magazines, men’s lifestyle publications, regardless of the discourse on masculinity being projected, can also be claimed to share a limited number of basic semantic fields or themes that pinpoint to the fact that these publications, instead of being truly generalist, do in fact portray a rather gendered and stereotypical vision of men in society.

Jackson *et al.* (2001) presented a rigorous examination of men’s lifestyle magazines, their market, and how gender relations and identities were negotiated in them and concluded that these publications provide men with a “conceptual map for navigating safely through their contemporary gender anxieties, whether in relation to their health, their careers, their sexual relationships or their place in ‘consumer culture’ more generally” (Jackson *et al.* 2001: 14), thus tracing some of the basic features that conform a non-generalist and a rather gendered vision of men in society. Some of these

basic features or themes (Alexander 2003, Gauntlett 2004, Gregorio-Godeo 2006, Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010), that may lead us to consider these magazines as gendered and restrictive to more traditional conceptions of gender, are similar to those present in women's publications but, obviously, with a change in the colour of the lenses, from pink to blue.

One of the features or major themes that is commonly present in all men's lifestyle magazines is the idea that men commonly live a leisure lifestyle based on one's own financial success. This is usually reflected or presented in interviews with famous icons or articles about music, art, fashion, clothing, accessories, travels, aesthetics and grooming.

This constructed identity is, consequently, led towards an increasing interest in the care of the male body. "Just as the thin-ideal is unattainable for most women, bulging and well-defined muscles and washboard stomachs are not easily attainable for men" (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010: 65). Recent research (Featherstone 1991, Shilling 1993, Davis 2002, Gill *et al.* 2005, Robertson 2006) suggests that this new constructed subject position of men is driving them towards the same "appearance-orientated cultural trap that women have experienced for years" (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010: 66). As Frederick *et al.* (2005: 81) suggest in their Physical Trait Overvaluation Hypothesis "gender-specific media fuel emphasis on certain body parts in within-gender prestige competitions", that is, just as women overestimate the degree of thinness that is attractive to men, in this case, men tend to overestimate the degree of muscularity that women tend to find attractive. The conclusion, in any case, is that the mass media constructs gendered subject positions which are rather unrealistic and unattainable for both sexes and which drives them towards a compulsory consumption ethic.

At the same time, as it was the case with women's publications, the idea that men's happiness is attainable by means of financial and social success is strongly reinforced by contents and advertisements. However, in this case, the underlying idea is rather different. In the case of women, their primary objective was that of getting a man for life; in the case of men, their main purpose in life is to live it to the full either with or at the expense of women. In this sense, advertisements about clothing, accessories, tobacco, alcohol, technology, watches, sports and equipment reinforce the idea that the real man should be free in order to be adventurous, a risk-taker and develop his work and pursue his hobbies at the same time.



In relation to this idea of free time and hobbies, men's lifestyle magazines tend to project the idea that relationships and sex are just part of men's free time and not a special experience as it was the case in women's magazines. However, the emphasis placed on relationships, almost exclusively from a heterosexual point of view, of course, can vary from one publication to another depending on the hegemonic form of masculinity being projected. In this sense, something similar happens with sex which, very frequently, is depicted as a free time activity which is worth the challenge involved in attaining it. This challenge is related to women's primary objective of getting a man. In men's publications, generally speaking, men are taught how to get sex without getting trapped in women's hands (Benwell 2005). So, as it can be inferred, in both types of publications, the gender war is being subtly intensified as it can be appreciated in the problem pages where men and women try to find clues for their unanswered questions in relation to how to deal with the opposite sex.

This gender and sex war inevitably places lifestyle magazines in an unstable ground. Sexism, understood as any social practice that may render a person differently on the basis of their sex or gender, could, therefore, easily be detected or sensed in these publications. In the case of men's lifestyle magazines this problematic and political incorrect issue is dealt with basically by means of a discursive strategy, that of irony. As we have already claimed, men's lifestyle magazines emerged dressed up in a disguise that tried to prevent *real men* from feeling that they were being told what to do and how to behave. Historically speaking, this was unthinkable due to men's social prestige in many cultures and societies in which men's social position and hegemonic identity was taken for granted. However, the social, cultural and economic changes of the time made that different and alternative masculine identities, as we have seen, also appeared onto the stage. This created a sense of instability among men who felt that the rules they had been following through history were changing. Therefore, men were in need of a social and cultural tool that offered them the answers to their questions but, obviously, in a way that was not threatening to their hegemonic masculine identity, already challenged by new gendered constructions. The solution to this problem was the appropriation of the "mate" figure and the friendly and ironic tone used by text producers and corporations. As Jackson *et al.* (2001: 76) claim, magazines "are careful to avoid talking down to their readers", they try to make the reader feel that he is in control of the situation and that nobody is imposing on him. As Benwell (2005) suggests, these

publications use irony and humour as a normative code that prevents men from feeling subordinated to the power of advertising or gender ideologies.

What can be inferred from this is that men's lifestyle magazines use humour and irony as "an ambiguous and continually oscillating movement between various types of masculine identity and between the approval and disapproval therefore [...] to continually destabilize the notion of a coherent and viable masculine identity" (Benwell 2004: 4). This reinforces our claim that men's lifestyle magazines, just as women's, are not truly generalist and, therefore, present the reader with contradictory ideas and conflicting messages of what is essential to or characteristic of their readers to perform their desired social and gender identity in a particular communicative situation. The problem, however, is that, as we have been trying to explain in this section, individuals are not truly free to perform their social or gender identity because conflicting messages and subtle hegemonic forms and constructions delimit our possibilities at a higher institutional level.

Finally, to finish with this brief explanation of what men's lifestyle magazines are, it is also important to retake an issue that was already discussed when dealing with women's magazines. As we have seen, many studies have focused on the contents, language and images that constitute the discourse of these publications targeted at men. However, as it is the case with women's magazines, recent research on men's magazines is carried out that tries to unveil the way this social and gender constructions are understood and negotiated by the readership. Benwell (2005), for instance, is an example of how ethnographical methods can help discourse analysts disentangle the complex and subtle workings between text producer and text receiver and the way that influences individuals' social and gender performances.

What can, therefore, we infer from this explanation of the social and institutional relationships between magazines and gender? Generally speaking, we should emphasise the idea that, as Goffman (1976) –preceding Butler (1990)– claimed, women and men read images of masculinity and femininity that, later on, try to mimic, adapt or renegotiate during their gender performance in particular communicative situations. This, obviously, leads us to the idea that gender, as it has been claimed by the constructivist model, can no longer be considered as a stable identity variable but as a "*construction* of a range of masculinities and femininities through a range of gendered discourses in a range of topically-related texts" (Sunderland 2000b: 250). In this sense, magazines as institutional discourses contribute to the creation, presentation and

availability of different forms of masculinity and femininity (McRobbie 1996, Farvid and Braun 2006) that, however, end up sharing basic and common features that allow individuals to identify hegemonic gendered forms acceptable for their own communities of practice because, as Caldas-Coulthard (1996a: 250) suggest, magazines “construct an ‘ideal’ reader who is at the same time both produced and in a sense imprisoned by the text”.

Nevertheless, as Alexander (2003) claims, moving to a macrolevel analysis, what all this information implies is that these changing and changeable ideas on gender identities and performance indicate that a major transformation of the social and cultural structures and organisation is continuously being carried out and it, in turn, implies that our daily actions are conformed by but also contribute to the development of our world in one or another direction.

## **2.2. Online Magazines and Discussion Forums as Gendered Spaces at a Local Level**

### *2.2.1. Online magazines*

Having explained and described the main characteristics and purposes of this printed genre and its relationship to gender, we consider that it is important now to focus on current and crucial social and technological developments that are transforming both the genre and its relationship to gender.

As we have already mentioned in previous sections, the 1990s were vital in the history of human communication. The emergence of the Internet around the 1980s, when the World Wide Web had not yet been invented, was generally considered as a kind of media where computer-mediated communication (CMC) was almost limited to the transmission of files and information by means of emails and Usenets. This implies the idea that the Internet was being perceived as an outside and unreal world far away from the social or cultural reality of its users. As Herring explains,

Many early researchers believed that computer-networked communication was a ‘cool’ medium well suited to the transfer of data and information, but poorly suited to social uses [...]. Others saw in CMC a utopian, egalitarian potential – with social status cues ‘filtered out’, anyone could participate freely in open, democratic exchanges [...] The social life that teems on the Internet in the late 1990s bears out neither of these idealized visions, but it does provide a rich source of data for the study of discourse and social practice (Herring 2001: 620).

Nowadays, the Internet has become a very important part of our daily lives and practices –including work, leisure, relationships, etc.–, at least in Western countries and cultures. This, consequently, leads towards a change in the way we carry out and negotiate our social practices both on and offline. This is so “partly because of the cybercultural expectations which people have about some parts of the Internet, leading to distinctive discursive practices, and partly because the medium itself provides different opportunities” (Matheson 2005: 159).

Within the great variety of opportunities that the Internet offers to its user, we should emphasise, because of its adequacy to our purpose, the adaptation of more traditional genres to this new and technological environment. In our case, we are going to focus on how magazines have been incorporated and reinvented in this new territory.

As Wright (2001) states, there are different technical terms to refer to the different adaptations that printed magazines have undergone in their moving towards the cyberspace (zine, ezine, online magazine), however, in order not to distort the purpose of our work, we will only focus on the case of online magazines.

Online magazines, as Gill (2000) explains, emerged around 1991 when Internet use started to spread as a result of the elimination of the ban on commercial use. Online magazines –some of them are online versions of well-known printed editions while other are online-only publications– are one of the uncountable and ever expanding Internet genres which enjoy great social and cultural health.

In terms of contents, as it was the case with their printed counterpart, each publication is a different world and, each online lifestyle magazine, despite creating and perpetuating elements of hegemonic masculinities and femininities, do also project different gendered subject positions according to the (gender) ideologies that sustain each publication.

In relation to their structures, however, there are some aspects which have remained unaltered –such as interviews, articles or advertisements that play an important role in fulfilling the economic purpose of the corporations– while others have been changed or created in order for magazines to fit into this new environment. Online magazines, unlike their printed counterpart, tend to be published in an ongoing basis rather than in periodic editions –although some of them may do so–. Apart from that, they also contain interactive features which allow online magazine users to have a more direct and even relationship with the publications.

These new media, or digital media, connect straightforwardly with the readership who, due to the intrinsic characteristics of the new genre, should be better referred to as users (Livingston and Lievrow 2002). This new concept of digital media makes evident some questions in relation to the relationships between producers and audiences (Matheson 2005), between the institutional and the local, as the new digital environments favour the independence of users in choosing the contents and answering back or commenting on them if they wish to do so.

Digital media users are directly connected to and involved with the genre by means of two major dimensions, that is, i) the wider control over the navigation and the content and ii) the interactivity with them (Matheson 2005).

In the area of globalisation, the ideas of freedom of choice and independence stand out as essential features of any decent individual. As printed media, digital online magazines offer their users the possibility of constructing their own information according to their individual interests or even the mood of the moment, however, technological elements provide digital users with a greater amount of choices and faster alternatives. This revolutionary feature allows digital media, and online magazines, to be perceived as non-imposing genres that respect the individuality of the users and their independence as human beings. Nevertheless, as it happens with their printed counterpart, this freedom of choice is, in a way, manipulated or subordinated to broader structural and ideological conceptions that, as we have seen, are present in every feature of magazines. Therefore, although allowed to choose and navigate through magazines, we are still participating in an institutional context that delimits, in certain ways, our relationship with the genre and the input that we will get from it for our subsequent social performances. In this sense, control over content and the freedom of choice have always been a primary feature of lifestyle magazines, as we saw earlier, however, what may be claimed to characterise these new forms of digital media would be the broader and wider options offered to their media consumers thanks to technological advances.

On the other hand, interactivity can easily be found in every form of digital media. Jensen (1999: 201) defines interactivity as the degree to which media forms “let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication”. In other words, digital media can be characterised as a two-way communication process in which media users interact with media producers by means of technological resources, that is, in a way, they can also create their own contents. In that sense, we could claim that the relationship between text producer and text receiver is more

democratic and builds on new models of power and communication. Therefore, as Matheson (2005) states, digital texts are interactive, firstly, in the sense that they give users greater power to choose what they do and when and, secondly, in the sense that these new digital forms allow the material and information to move in both directions. This new digital media, therefore, differ from more traditional forms not that much in the offering of different contents (which is wider) but, more precisely, in the inversion of the relations of power in the industry of media production. The way this is achieved in these new media genres, such as online magazines, is by means of, for example, discussion boards, email contacts or interactive chats that contribute to a more even distribution of power.

As discourse analysts, our interests are centred upon not just the technology and its influence on media texts, but also on the uses that are made of it and how identities and new forms of knowledge and social relations are produced and negotiated thanks to these new environments. “From a discourse analytic perspective, a key issue is the way a discursive context is negotiated between participants online and the way participants perform particular selves in their interactions through the forms of language deployed” (Matheson 2005: 169). In other words, what seems to be of particular relevance to discourse analysts centred upon the interaction between new technologies, language and society would be the manifestations of the interactions between the institutional (provided by online magazines) and the local (provided by new technological resources embedded in these new genres).

### 2.2.2. Discussion forums as gendered spaces at a local level

In this investigation, the relationships between the institutional and the local are analysed in the context of online lifestyle magazines where the gender variable is especially relevant.

Alexander (2003) recalls Cohen’s (2001:5) definition of a *gender ideal* as “the shared beliefs or models of gender that a majority of society accepts as appropriate masculinity or femininity”, and a *gender display* as “the variety of ways in which we reveal, through our verbal and nonverbal demeanor, that we fit in with masculine and feminine ideas”. These concepts are especially relevant for our purpose because the gender ideal could be claimed to be created and reproduced in the institutional level of (online) lifestyle magazines while the gender display could be claimed to emerge thanks

to the new interactive features of online magazines where the actual performance of social and gender identities can be discursively analysed. In Gill's (2003) words, "ideologies or discourses are real and have material effects, and it is these discourses that I take as my object of study".

As Talbot (1992) puts it, the role of (digital) media is basically that of addressing a mass audience and, in order to do that, the necessity to construct an ideal subject as addressee emerges. This places media producers in a powerful position that reveals and exposes mental representations to the world. On the other hand, the role of the (digital) media consumer is, therefore, that of interpreting and negotiating with the representations and positions offered by media producers. As far as we are concerned, this interpretation and negotiation stage has hardly been analysed, except from ethnographical approaches, because of the intrinsic and technical drawbacks that the idea entails. Nevertheless, the appearance of digital media, in which public and traceable interactivity is one of its main intrinsic features, presents discourse analysts with new and expanding fields for the analysis, for example, of the relationships between language, gender and society, as it is our case.

As Farvid and Braun (2006) explain, early research on lifestyle magazines has primarily been focused on content and representations. Nevertheless, more recent investigations are starting to be based on ethnographical approaches that try to have an insight into the ways readers make sense of these publications. What can be inferred from this new trend in the analysis towards a broader comprehension of this genre and its relationship to gender is that discourse analysts suggest that ideas are not straightforwardly and automatically absorbed by the audience. Readers, depending on their schemas (Martínez-Guillem 2003) or knowledge of world, will offer critiques, negotiations or adaptations of particular (gender) representations and ideas.

For example, Benwell (2005) presents a detailed analysis of readers' responses to the discourse of men's lifestyle magazines by means of ethnographical approaches that tried to expose the mental processes through which consumers of these publications understand and make use of the resources present in them. The results primarily pointed to the use of humour and irony as a defensive mechanism or normative code that male audiences have at their disposal to negotiate the power relationships between media producers and their own masculine gender identities in specific communities of practice. However, "the drawback of a strict ethnomethodological approach [...] is its limited ability in recreating the original context of reading" (Benwell 2005: 147). As Benwell

(2005) claims, these kinds of research, in a way, rely on the inferences that the researcher extracts from the interaction of the participants in a non-natural medium. As it has always been the case with ethnographical research, the unnatural elicitation of data leads the researcher to interpret the results in relation to the design of the study. In contrast, what new technologies used in the creation of digital media permit is the fact that researchers can observe, even from an unknown position, the natural negotiation of power relations, including those related to language, gender and society.

This new perspective, offered by computer-mediated communication (CMC) embedded in new forms of digital media, permits to carry out what Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza (2007) consider a research gap in the past, that is, the analysis of how language and gender interplay in the constitution of different versions of gender identity. “Although accounts of gender discursively constructed through written texts (particularly media texts and popular fiction) are relatively common [...], their relationship to the constitution of gender in the social world has rarely been explicitly demonstrated” (Benwell 2005: 147-148). In other words, trying to fill in this research gap, our primary concern in this dissertation will be the unmediated study of how gender identities are performed by individuals within certain communities of practice and the extent to which they incorporate the ideological repertoires of the institutional or social frameworks that delimit a specific interaction.

New forms of digital media favour the acquisition of this objective by discourse analysts thanks to technological resources and digital tools that allow a closer insight into the relationships between the institutional and the local, such as it is the case with what is commonly known as online discussion forums.

If we are to think about the origins of the digital space of online discussion forums and the form they may have in printed magazines, we could claim that, probably, their origins can be traced back to traditional problem pages in lifestyle magazines. In these spaces, readers ask questions about a wide range of topics that have to do with their everyday life and concerns. Obviously, depending on the publication, the interests and concerns are, in the same way as the publication, gendered. This gendered space is based on the nature of advice, where “pre-feminist, feminist and anti-feminist ideas are entangled in such a way as to make gender ideologies more pernicious and difficult to contest” (Gill 2009: 345). This space is opened by magazines creators to the public soliciting readers’ questions about their main interests and concerns. These questions, which are screened by editors based on the (gender)



ideological essence of each publication, are later on answered by a panel of supposed experts (Alabarta 2005, Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza 2007). In a rapidly changing world, problem pages and advice columns provide a space for individuals to talk, although quite indirectly, to each other. New media forms, however, provide even newer spaces where media users can directly interact with each other by means, of, for example, online discussion forums which, generally speaking, can be claimed to cover the same basic needs. What is more, in these public spaces individuals do not only share their primary concerns and interests while trying to offer help in a concise way, in contrast, these spaces are evolving into social and virtual communities where individuals can establish and negotiate power relations by means of social and gender performances.

As Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza (2007) suggest, the publication of questions and answers in the discursive context of lifestyle magazines can be perceived as involving some degree of editorial manipulation based on the ideological policy of each publications. This manipulation, however, could be harder to exert in the context of online discussion boards where the flow and amount of information is so extensive that absolute control could be considered a utopia. Nevertheless, it is in fact true that online discussion forums do have a common and public series of guidelines that delimit individuals' participations in order to assure democratic and unoffending interactions. The figure of the moderator is essential in these digital spaces although, in cases of massive discussion forums, the moderator figure stands out more as a police officer that is there to control and respond to individual consumer's complaints or reports on other participants' non-compliance of the forum basic rules.

What is of particular relevance for our purpose is the fact that media users participating in these interactive platforms do make use of "gendering mechanisms and dominant discourses relevant for [...] specific communities and must not be directly transferred to huge target groups of all women or all men" (Motschenbacher 2009: 9). This is the reason why the concept of community of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992a, 1992b) is crucial in this discursive kind of analysis where identity constructivism is understood as a local practice embedded within broader institutional frameworks.

Identity performances or self-representations through discursive mechanisms such as, for example, linguistic manifestations in computer-mediated communication, are contextually carried out following the intrinsic and often constantly shifting rules of

specific groups or communities. These unstable virtual environments “require users to consciously work on the self being projected” (Matheson 2005: 169) by adhering to the norms, rules and conventions of each community in which an individual is interacting. A good example of how this sense of in-group membership is created and maintained is the case of specific linguistic manifestations or group markers such as abbreviations (Herring 2001) –for example, as we will see in the next chapter, abbreviations such as *OW* (other woman), *bf* (boyfriend), *gf* (girlfriend) are very frequent in the discussion forums adhered to well-known lifestyle magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* or *Men’s Health*–. “These matters of identity and relationship must be actively negotiated because of the fluidity of computer-mediated communication, where personal and public meet in complex combinations, and where there is some leeway with respect to social rules and practices” (Matheson 2005: 170).

The main question, therefore, is no longer “who says something?” but rather “what does saying something produce?” (Motschenbacher 2009: 6). To bring out just an example, we can think about habitual social circumstances where women are, for example, offered to leave a room first, to get into a car before anyone else, or when they are asked if they have any children. Of course, these situations can take place in non-discriminatory contexts where the atmosphere, in no way, may let us perceive an instance of sexist attitude. However, more detailed analysis may reveal that, in certain cases, these situations are, in fact, sexist and discriminatory because they are based on historical assumptions and beliefs that place women in an inferior social position. Because of this, we could claim that performativity or self-representation and our interaction with others is, therefore, tightly linked to the discursive intertextuality and historicity of the linguistic and contextual elements of the communicative situation.

As Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza (2007) suggest, we would need more evidence to demonstrate how these local interactions are both recreating wider social structures and, at the same time, transforming social and gender identities in different communities of practice because identity performativity or self-representation is “neither a matter of free choice (owing to its dependence on hegemonic discourses) nor of production only”; instead “gender construction is effective only if the recipient recognizes a performance as intelligibly gendered” (Motschenbacher 2009: 19).

**Chapter 3**  
**Indirect Linguistic Sexism**  
**and Online Discussion**  
**Forums: Tools for a**  
**Critical Analysis**

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### **3. Indirect Linguistic Sexism and Online Discussion Forums: Tools for a Critical Analysis**

#### **3.1. Multimodality, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), Computer-Mediated Discourse (CMD) and Gender**

Having explained the main theoretical ideas (indirect linguistic sexism) that we are going to deal with in this study and, having also described the contextual communicative situations (online discussion forums ascribed to online gendered magazines) in which those ideas are going to be analysed, we consider it of special importance to explain the main tools for critical analysis that we are going to implement in order to carry out such an investigation.

The notions of multimodality, computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC) and computer-mediated discourse (henceforth CMD) are treated as, almost, philosophical concepts that help delimit the context or general frame of this project. This general frame will be addressed with several tools for critical analysis that will be described in theoretical terms in this chapter. Future chapters will later on analyse the theoretical notions approached in this chapter from a practical perspective.

##### *3.1.1. The rise of the Internet and CMC*

As we have already mentioned in this study, new forms of communication have emerged in the last twenty years that are linked to new technological breakthroughs which are constantly being updated and re-developed (Wodak and Wright 2006). The appearance of personal computers can be said to represent the beginning of a new era in which the emergence of the Internet can be considered as the climax. As Herring (2000, 2009) explains, the Internet was introduced in the USA in 1991 and it was in 1993 when the introduction of the first graphical browser broadened cyber users' actions online. The uncountable number of hyperlinked hypertext documents, known as the World Wide Web, provide a context where users can exchange information and negotiate social power by means of, generally speaking, linguistic mechanisms supplemented by multimodal resources. Since their inception as basic HTML documents –which basically consisted of text, links and graphics–, web pages have evolved into multimodal dimensions that commonly feature, apart from textual elements, sounds,

videos, animations, user-interfaces, user-content and user-user interactivity features that promote online communication and which have made them fit into quite eclectic genres.

Within this context, CMC<sup>2</sup> can be described as “predominantly text-based human-human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony [which] provides an abundance of data on human behavior and language use” (Herring 2007). CMC “comprises a variety of interactive socio-technical modes including e-mail, discussion lists and newsgroups, chat, MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions) and MOOs (MUDs, Object Oriented), ICQ (I Seek You), and IM (Instant Messaging)” (Herring 2003) which are, mostly, based on textual communication. However, other semiotic modalities (Lazar 2005a) or multimedia elements, such as video, songs, emoticons smileys or layouts, may also contribute to provide communication with a complete meaning for the interlocutor.

In this way, Lemke (2001, 2003) suggests that the type of communication and activities that can be carried out on the Internet should be labelled as transversal, that is, they should be understood as transcending traditional patterns of human communication and constructing newer and hybrid models of action. This author claims that every user, in every online interaction, is creating their own and unrepeatably text by making use of their freedom to choose among the wide variety of links, subtexts, videos, symbols, icons or images available in the web. Therefore, in Lemke’s (2001, 2003) words, multimodality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996) becomes hypermodality. This hypermodal nature of web sites provides the perfect locus for the emergence of discourse, understood here as “a site of struggle, where forces of social (re)production and contestation are played out” (Lazar 2005a: 5) by cyber users.

Since its inception in the 1990s, research based on the Internet has covered areas dealing with the semiotic, textual and interactive properties of CMC together with the analysis of the social connections and intertextual knowledge provided by this hypermodal context of communication. These have been frequently addressed using different methods of analysis such as the Social Network Analysis (SNA), Discourse Analysis (DA), Conversation Analysis (CA), or even theoretical approaches such as critical theory or sociology (Mautner 2005, Herring 2009).

The appearance of the Internet and the emergence of CMC provide a highly dynamic and interactive space for critical research related to the analysis of multimodal

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<sup>2</sup> The term CMC was first coined in 1995. Nevertheless, research about CMC from a general perspective started in the 1970s and its analysis from a linguistic point of view emerged in the 1980s (Herring 2001).

and contextual performances of social and gender identity because “if it was not for the internet, many representations of reality and social relationships would not be articulated at all” (Mautner 2005: 813). CMC is nowadays experiencing a change in the main focus of attention of the research carried out in this field (Lamerichs and Molder 2003, Androutsopoulos 2006, Lorenzo-Dus *et al.* 2011). The excessive focus on the influence of the technological medium on the different forms of CMC has now changed towards a broader perspective in which users variation within that medium and the role of social context are scrutinised. Away from technological determinism, it can be claimed that medium features exert certain influence on CMC but, at the same time, the human and social interactive patterns and connections cannot be left aside. The lack of physical presence and the supposed anonymity that governs this communicative context does not impede individuals to perform their social identity by means of, generally speaking, polylogal (rather than dyadic) communicative exchanges (Lorenzo-Dus *et al.* 2011). This, given the technological environment in which the exchanges take place, leads to the assumption that deindividualisation is the main feature of online social performance.

[D]eindividuated contexts are conducive to individuals constructing themselves mostly as members of relevant social categories, i.e. to social or collective identity construction. This tends to be enhanced, furthermore, in the face of perceived opposition from out-group(s) and may lead to polarisation and hostility (Lorenzo-Dus *et al.* 2011: 2581).

This is the reason why the notions of community and identity are so relevant in the context of CMC (Androutsopoulos 2006, Stommel 2008). In this way, social identities may refer to individuals’ identification with specific social groups while personal identities could be considered as those performed attending to unique individual attributes (Lamerichs and Molder 2003).

The term community is a conflicting one when dealing with online interaction. It can be considered as an aggregate of individuals who interact in a virtual environment subordinated to certain conditions (Herring 2004, Androutsopoulos 2006) such as regular and active interaction, a core of regular participants, shared interests and objectives, solidarity and support in conflict resolutions, the creation and negotiation of social roles and norms, a sense of commonness and historicity and a group conscience that makes it possible to negotiate in/out-group (dis)affiliation (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich *et al.* forthcoming 2012).

In relation to the notion of identity in CMC, many studies have emphasised the individual freedom provided by anonymity when performing virtual or social identities online (Androutsopoulos 2006). Some authors (Danet 1998) have suggested that the online environment could be considered as a mask under which individuals are freer to perform the social identity that best suits a particular communicative situation. The variety of resources that individual users have at their disposal to perform the chosen identity range from addressivity, nicknames, signatures or in-group language to the adoption of a particular role within the communicative context (Androutsopoulos 2006, Montero-Fleta *et al.* 2009).

In line with the argument that the Internet and CMC provide a highly dynamic and interactive space for critical research related to the analysis of multimodal and contextual performances of social and gender identity, it is important to mention that the Internet and the different forms of CMC can be understood, from the researchers' point of view, as a locus filled up with opportunities and challenges. As Mautner (2005) summarises, each advantage of this new medium has a flipside to be considered, for example, on the one hand, the Internet amazes researchers because of the vast size of information it contains and the easy accessibility to that online social knowledge. However, this implies a challenge in its own right and researchers must be very conscious when establishing their corpus selection criteria paying attention to the specific requirements of their projects.

Moreover, the Internet and CMC offer a myriad of different voices which are traditionally claimed to be less prejudiced than those present in more traditional media forms. However, the use of technologies implies a degree of digital competence that creates a division that reflects social patterns of disadvantage affected by social variables such as class, sex, geographical origin, education, etc. At the same time, this multiplicity of voices can be considered a blessing for specific purposes of social and critical analysis but a curse when trying to delimit and classify specific parts of online data for particular projects.

In addition, the social information and the different forms of CMC in the web have long been categorised as highly dynamic and ephemeral. The immense variety of topics that the web offers to its users is unrivalled and it may sound quite appealing to researchers' ears. Nevertheless, this dynamism and ephemeral essence of online information and CMC raises different methodological and technical problems which, however, are being locally dealt with in specific projects and designs. Besides, the



constant creation and development of technological tools and new software, such as HTTrack or the Wayback Machine<sup>3</sup>, provide researchers with alternative options to save and classify their data.

Finally, the hypermodal nature of the web –that is, its open-ended textual, interactive and multimodal features–, present researchers with newer and richer discourses that favour critical and social analysis, in our case, related to social and gender performance. However, the borderless dimension of the web and the individuality of each user's actions online make linearity a fuzzy feature in CMC. At the same time, the great semiotic potential of the web presents analysts with newer challenges that relate to multimodality and new forms of representation and constructions of social identities and relationships.

As we mentioned earlier, these specific aspects can only be dealt with within specific frameworks and projects and it is the researchers' hypotheses and objectives the ones that will determine the line of action to be taken in relation to each of the abovementioned issues of CMC.

So far, we have discussed how the Internet and CMC have changed the course of human relationships and we have also described the main characteristics of CMC and some of the most important advantages and disadvantages of this new field of study for researchers interested in the analysis of social and gender identity. Nevertheless, before closing this section, we should point out another relevant issue in relation to these new forms of communication. In the same way that notions such as community or identity are fuzzy terms within this online environment, the notion of *genre* does not remain uncontested. The information exchange and the negotiation of power and social identities implied in this new technological sphere is carried out in specific virtual genres which do not fit into traditional classifications. Online virtual genres are, sometimes, hybrid genres which are, in turn, created by means of multimodal elements and the interplay between traditional and newer forms of communication. As Montero-Fleta *et al.* (2009) summarise, there are many different forms of CMC and its classification is a rather complex question. A great problem may arise if individuals or researchers in the field assume that the findings from specific types of CMC can be universally extrapolated to other different forms of online communication. Again, away

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<sup>3</sup> HTTrack allows its users to download complete webpages into personal computers while the Wayback Machine is an online archive that saves webpages in light of their constant update. These two elements can be used as substitutes or complements to more traditional forms of data collection such as freezing core sections by means of screen shots or saving html pages using the browser's options.

from technological determinism, it is cyber users the ones who give form to specific CMC manifestations according to their primary communicative needs. This is the reason why CMC classification remains a debatable subject that still needs further analysis. However, as we will see in the next section, some attempts (see Herring 2007) have been made to try to provide a general framework for CMC genre classification.

### 3.1.2. *CMD: the case of CMC with a specific focus on language*

So far, we have explained how the Internet has received massive analytical attention from a variety of disciplines and how the study of the medium itself, paying special attention to its semiotic potential, is a major focus of research. However, as it has already been claimed, online communication and interaction can be said to take place, overwhelmingly, by means of linguistic mechanisms (Herring 2004, 2010) sustained by multimodal elements. In other words, nowadays, most CMC manifestations are text-based messages that are typed on computer keyboards by certain individuals and read on a computer screen by other individuals who are usually in a different location to that of the original sender of the message (Herring 2001, 2004). In this way, it is important to specify that

*computer-mediated discourse* is the communication produced when human beings interact with one another by transmitting messages via networked computers. The study of computer-mediated discourse (henceforth CMD) is a specialization within the broader interdisciplinary study of computer-mediated communication (CMC), distinguished by its focus on *language and language use* in computer networked environments, and by its use of methods of *discourse analysis* to address that focus (Herring 2001: 612).

The emergence of CMD is a rather recent phenomenon that took place during the 1990s thanks to the worldwide spread of the Internet. The general perception of computer-mediated language, at least as it is understood by the common people in the streets, is that it is a different variety of language or, as Androutsopoulos (2006: 420) explains, as being “distinct, homogeneous, and indecipherable to ‘outsiders’”. It is usually claimed to contain non-standard or even non-correct linguistic features but, in fact, only a small percentage of online language mistakes can be considered as results caused by a lack of attention or a low level of cultural knowledge. In fact, the majority

of these “mistakes” are deliberate choices made by online users in order to economise or adapt their language use and performance to the medium (Herring 2001).

Language and (or 'on') the Internet refers to human language (or language intended to be human-like, such as the linguistic output of artificial intelligence agents) produced and displayed through computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems that are mostly text-based and mostly reciprocally interactive, such as email, listserv lists, newsgroups, chat, instant messaging, text messaging via mobile phones (SMS), blogs, and wikis (Herring 2008).

Cyber users have to adapt their online interaction and language use to the specific channel of communication they are using and, consequently, this implies specific and varied mechanisms such as, for example,

- a) economising language –which is determined by the synchronicity medium variable and its relation to temporal constraints;
- b) mimicking spoken language features –by means of, for example, changing orthographic conventions in the benefit of representing auditory information;
- c) expressing themselves creatively –for example, making use of neologisms or performative symbols such as emoticons or smiley faces–, or even
- d) modifying or creating new discourse patterns –including, for example, politeness norms, the performance of speech acts or interactional phenomena such as topic management, turn taking or repairs (Herring 2001, 2008).

CMD is also broadly known as text-based conversations (Herring 2010) on the basis of their linguistic raw materials. These interactions –carried out by means of, for example, emails, IM (instant messages), chats, discussion forums, mailing lists, MUDs, MOOs, text messaging, blogs or wikis– are often experienced as conversations, as it can be inferred from the use of verbs such as *talk*, *say*, or *hear* instead of *type*, *write* or *read* when analysing the main performative verbs in these environments –this could appear to be more clearly perceived in synchronous CMD because of its immediacy and real-time perception, however, this is also the case for asynchronous CMD. In that sense, the idea of *conversational* should be understood not just to be related to orality, but also to “the interactive and social dimensions associated with face-to-face communicative exchanges” (Herring 2010). Therefore, conversations could be claimed to not be restricted to the oral interaction but they could be “broadly defined as any exchange of

messages between two or more participants, where the messages that follow bear at least minimal relevance to those that preceded or are otherwise intended as responses” (ibidem). In fact, nowadays, CMD has overcome face-to-face communication in many areas of our personal and professional spheres as it is the case of SMS, Whatsapps or emails, for example.

Without a doubt, CMD offers researchers interested in the analysis of the dynamic relationship between language, thought and society an immeasurable fruitful field for research. The access to direct data of authentic interactions avoids past questions related to researchers having an impact on or influencing the data collection process. At the same time, these data do not require transcription and can be easily analysed by some software tools, however, although the downloading process may result quite uncomplicated, the editing part requires much more time and digital skills. Furthermore, it is important to mention that CMD presents both a private and a public domain that makes it possible for researchers to lurk into text-based conversations in order to proceed to certain investigations, however, this may raise ethical or moral dilemmas. Together with this, CMD offers researchers the opportunity to open up new fields of research and shift away from the great presence of the English language on the web to its coexistence with other languages from across the globe (Mautner 2005, Herring 2008, Eisenchlas 2012).

Having defined what CMD is and having also stated some of its main identifying features and advantages and disadvantages for researchers, it is now important to pinpoint that how to classify CMD remains a rather unanswered question. As Herring (2001, 2007) explains, various attempts have been made by linguists, since the inception of this field of study, to present a structural classification that facilitated researchers the analysis of this new communicative context. During the 1980s and 1990s, many investigations tried to look at this new field from a dualistic perspective, that of written or oral language. The language on the Internet made scholars reconsider its nature: Is it written language? Is it spoken language on a written form? Is it a third and new modality of language –Netspeak (Crystal 2001)? These first efforts at classifying CMD resulted in quite abstract generalisations that considered computer-mediated language as homogeneous within well-established genres in which the study of the technological influence on language use was prioritised –this is generally known as the First Wave of linguistic CMC or CMD (Androutsopoulos 2006, Androutsopoulos and Beisswenger 2008). However, the mode and genre approach have proved to be rather limited when

approaching online interactions and, in the 1990s, together with the popularisation of the Internet as a means of communication, researchers started also to focus on individual linguistic differences present in different virtual genres –this is generally known as the Second Wave of Linguistic CMC or CMD (Androutsopoulos 2006, Androutsopoulos and Beisswenger 2008).

In this line of action, Herring (2007) presents a faceted classification scheme for CMD based on multiple categories intended to complement mode and genre approaches. This CMD faceted classification scheme is one of the main elements of the computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) developed by Herring (2004), which is the basic approach taken on in this investigation, as we will see in the next section.

The faceted classification scheme is based on the organisational method originated in the field of library and information science. Here, “facets are categories or concepts of the same inherent type. A faceted scheme has several facets and each facet may have several terms, or possible values” (Herring 2007). The main purpose of this classification is that of facilitating data selection and analysis in CMD research. In order to carry out such an objective, the classification approach to CMD is based on the assumption that CMD is determined by two main sources of influence: i) the medium or technological factors and ii) the situation or social factors. “Under each influence type, a number of categories (facets) are posited, along with several possible realizations (terms) for each” (ibidem). These two types of influence, apart from being open ended categories, also shift away from technological determinism and move towards more pragmatic and discursive outlooks on communication and human interaction. In order to have a better insight into these two categories in order to classify CMD, let’s have a look at this figures based on Herring’s (2001, 2007) suggestions.

On the one hand, Figure 3 shows some of the most common medium factors that may influence CMD. Synchronicity (M1) refers to the time of the interaction and it is divided into synchronous and asynchronous types of CMD. The first one, synchronous CMD, refers to interactions where interlocutors are communicating in real-time while asynchronous CMD refers to interactions where interlocutors do not need to be sending and receiving messages at the same time. Whether the message transmission (M2) is 1-way or 2-way depends on technological devices that allow interlocutors to provide feedback while communicating or, rather, prevent them from communicating when another interlocutor is sending a message. The persistence of transcript (M3) refers to how long and in what ways messages remain in the system available for data collection.

The size of message buffer (M4), moreover, refers to the total number of characters that the system allows interlocutors to use in a single message. The channels of communication (M5) that a particular web site may offer to its users are also relevant for the interaction because, being able to use, for example, videos, graphics, videoconferencing or audio, provides the interaction with multimedia elements that will also need to be taken into account in any CMD research. Besides, anonymous messaging (M6), private messaging (M7), filtering (M8) and quoting (M9) all refer to technological affordances of CMC systems by means of which users can engage in different interactional behaviours. Finally, the message format (M10) refers to how messages are visually displayed on the screen, for example, in chronological order.

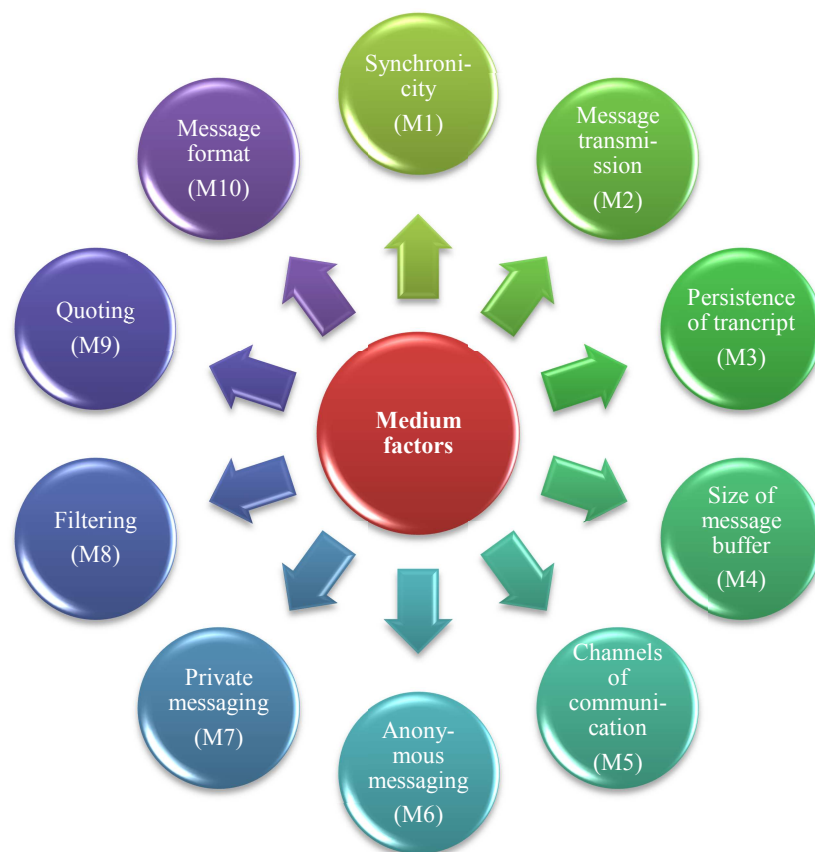


Figure 3. *Medium factors for CMD faceted classification*

On the other hand, Figure 4, also based on Herring's (2007) suggestions, shows some of the most relevant social factors that may influence CMD. These, as we mentioned earlier, are relevant factors within newer forms of CMD analysis in which technological determinism needs to be replaced for a pragmatic and discursive view in which online interactions are affected both by technological and social influences.

Firstly, the participation structure (S1), refers to the number of participants, the amount of participation, the distribution of participations among interlocutors and whether the interaction is public or private. In relation to participants' characteristics (S2), these refer to the interlocutors' background, experience, skills and real life norms and values that they may bring into the online communication. Purpose (S3) in CMD may be regarded as a double-faceted concept which may refer to the group purpose, that is, its reason for existence, but it may also refer to individuals' purpose for communicating. Activities (S4) are discursive means used in order to obtain a particular interactive objective, that is, it is the form interactions take in particular communicative situations such as, for example, debates or flirting situations. The notions of topic and theme (S5) are used to refer to the contents that are appropriate within a communicative context at the group level. Besides, the tone (S6) of the interaction provides information on the spirit and attitudes of the interlocutors. On the other hand, norms (S7) refer to conventional practices within CMD and they may be classified into norms of organisation, norms of appropriateness and norms of language. Finally, the code (S8) refers to the language or language variety in which the interaction is taking place.

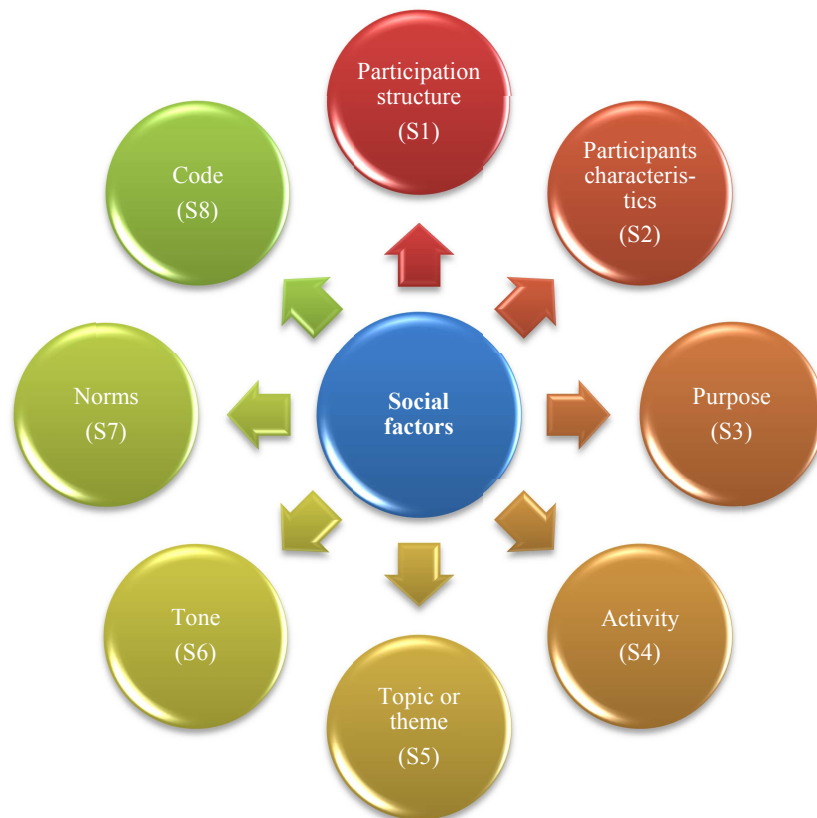


Figure 4. *Social factors for CMD faceted classification*

It is important to highlight, therefore, that computer-mediated language should be considered as highly sensitive to technical and contextual factors. The search for typical and homogeneous features of computer-mediated language has been replaced for a contextual and local focus that has contributed to establish the importance of contextual parameters, together with technical ones, in the discursive negotiation within different types of CMC (Georgakopoulou 2003). Having described both the medium and social factors that may influence CMD, it is also important to mention that, although in practice they are independent, they tend to combine in predictable ways thus establishing or creating different kinds of CMD.

Having a look back at previous chapters, we can see how this new wave in the study of linguistic CMC or CMD has a parallel structure to that of newer waves of feminist linguistic analysis. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, current language and gender research focuses on the performative nature of social and gender identity and how this performativity is embedded within particular communities of practices. As we can observe, a similar pattern takes place within the recent studies on CMD where local approaches try to shed light onto the discursive and contextual nature of CMC. In the same way that languages were considered as “pool[s] of available meanings” (Mills 2008: 124) and linguistic sexism was seen as “a resource which is available to individuals to affirm or contest in the construction of their own identity” (ibidem: 126) within language and gender studies, in current CMD studies “characteristic features of ‘the language of CMC’ are now understood as resources that particular (groups of) users might draw on in the construction of discourse styles in particular contexts” (Androutsopoulus 2006: 421). Therefore, the move away from determinism both in gender and CMC studies has crucial implications for the theory and methodology that would be needed in order to approach these fields from a sociological and discursive point of view.

So far, we have defined what CMD is, we have also mentioned some of its main advantages and disadvantages for researchers and we have also outlined a method for its classification. However, despite the general characteristics mentioned so far, some people, as Herring (2001) suggests, could be driven to consider that CMD is a limited medium restricted to typed text only or mostly available through the visual channel and, therefore, an inappropriate medium for social interaction. Nevertheless, ample evidence demonstrates how cyber users counterbalance the possible missing cues of face-to-face communication. The active social life that has been created since the 1990s in and



through the Internet presents evidence that traditional visions of the medium as cool or as a utopian egalitarian place are just idealised perceptions. In fact, CMD is one of the richest and updated loci of the study of discourse and social practice.

One of the arguments that contribute to unveil CMD as a highly productive field for discourse and social analyses is the fact that language use is extremely variable across different CMC environments. This, again, corroborates the influence of social factors, as well as medium factors, on CMD. In this way, the origin of users, their social class, race or ethnicity can be considered as relatively invisible or difficult to trace on the Internet although in intra-group analyses the results may be different (Herring 2001). Contrary to this, other social variables of real life identities may seem more evident even when users try to mask them for specific communicative purposes. This is the case, for example, of users' educational level, age or gender which can be revealed through their purpose for communicating, the choice of topic, the participation structure or their experience. This fact demonstrates how, despite being a technological medium, CMD strongly bears into play the social variables of its users.

On the other hand, CMD, apart from being influenced by social factors, also “constitutes social practice in and of itself” (Herring 2001: 622). Interactional work is done through CMD and different actions such as joking, insulting, flirting, negotiating, helping or asking for advice can be carried out through CMD. New strategies and mechanisms have been developed by CMD users to compensate for the absence of social cues that are normally present in face-to-face communication. In this sense, and of particular importance to our investigation on how social and gender identities are negotiated through the use of indirect linguistic sexism in CMD, is the idea that “language emerges as a powerful strategic resource –indeed, the primary resource– for creating social reality in text-based CMC” (Herring 2001: 623).

### 3.1.3. *An example of CMD: the relationship between CMC and gender*

In the previous sections we have dealt with how CMC emerged thanks to the appearance of the Internet as a medium for online interaction. We have also introduced the notion of linguistic CMC or CMD and some of its general features have been highlighted together with the presentation of a faceted classification scheme that may contribute to future research in this field. Apart from that, we have also explained how, despite being a technological medium, social factors are vital for its existence and how

CMD facilitates and, at the same time, constitutes, social practice. It is precisely this aspect, the social facet of CMD, the one that is directly linked to our purpose in this study.

Related to this social dimension of CMD, both the popular press (Tannen 1994) and research studies (Herring 1996) have made explicit the relationship between gender and language in CMC (Savicki *et al.* 1996, Rodino 1997).

The first research on gender and CMC was first published in the late 1980s. This decade was characterised by general optimism based on the supposed inherent democratic nature of a new technological medium that could provide equal-opportunity interaction to all those with the minimal digital skills to go online –see Smith and Balka (1988) for an analysis of how networks can be used to create and strengthen grassroots feminism, or Graddol and Swann (1989) for an analysis on how participation in online environments can be said to be equalised (Herring 1996, 2001; Eisenchlas 2012). This equation view, as Rodino (1997) puts it, is based on the supposed absence of social cues on the Internet and the apparent liberatory effect it produces on certain individuals wishing to create or perform their social identities based on the disarticulation of the gender-sex dichotomy in online environments.

It is precisely the supposed association between biological sex and social gender, typical of Second Wave Feminism, the one that characterises subsequent studies on gender and language in CMD. The 1990s witnessed the increasing entrance of women into the digital world and, therefore, studies on the relationships between gender and language in this environment started to increase. In contrast with the optimism of the previous decade, the empirical studies carried out in this new period started to problematize the democratising nature of CMD (Herring 2000). For example, early studies on the relationship between gender and language in CMD tried to extrapolate the results obtained in studies carried out regarding face-to-face communication to the digital environment. It is the case of the studies about interactional styles that support stereotypical gender dichotomies (Herring 1992, 1993, 2000, 2003; Savicki *et al.* 1996; Lee 2007).

According to these studies, the *gender-invisibility-in-CMD* hypothesis is destabilised by findings that, as we mentioned, resemble earlier research on face-to-face interaction. For example, male cyber users are said to write more and longer messages and to receive more attention, thus, dominating online environments, even those which are women-centred. In relation to their discourse style, it is characterised by strong

assertions, exclusive pronouns, few politeness forms, overt disagreement, they tend to use more violent verbs, offensive vocabulary, sarcasm, self-promotion, the use of impersonal language and fewer multimodal elements. On their part, female cyber users are said to participate less in online interactions and, when they do, they receive less communicative attention. When, in fact, they receive more responses than males in online interactions, it is usually a situation in which they are becoming objectified or sexualised, especially in online chats. In relation to their discursive style, it is characterised by support, inclusive pronouns, the search of agreement, the expression of personal feelings, the use of verbs that show emotions, politeness strategies or the use of emoticons and multimodal elements (Rodino 1997, Herring 2000, Herring and Paolillo 2006, Androutsopoulos 2006, Lee 2007). These findings suggest, as previous investigations on offline gender and language interaction do, that there is “a tendency for Internet users to display features of culturally-learned gender styles in their typed messages, and for gender differences to work to the disadvantage of women” (Herring 2000). These studies, in fact, reinforce the dichotomous vision of different interactional styles for men and women and the different communicative ethics or values that they have in relation to what is appropriate in different communicative situations (Herring 1996). These gendered styles, in fact, dismantle the equation view because “if our online communicative style reveals our gender, then gender differences, along with their social consequences, are likely to persist on computer-mediated networks” (Herring 1996).

Apart from the study of interactional styles, the relationship between gender and language in CMD, as Herring (2003) points out, is also studied in relation to other variables such as graphical or multimodal representations that may include, apart from language, other semiotic elements; also in relation to the commercialisation focus of the web and, finally, in relation to the creation and maintenance of a sense of community that, in turn, relates to social variables, including that of gender representation and performance.

With all this in mind, the question of how gender inequality can persist in CMD (Herring 2000, 2003) is answered by referring to the Third Wave feminist notion of performativity. The studies on gender and language in CMD noted so far consider gender a pre-existing category or social variable that determines individuals' online, as well as offline, interactions. A different focus on the study of language and gender in CMD has been applied focusing on the idea of gender performativity in online

interactions (Androutsopoulos 2006), that is, the idea that “gender is often visible on the Internet on the basis of features of a participant's discourse style, features which the individual may not be consciously aware of or able to change easily” (Herring 2000). In this sense, gender is not a pre-existing category that influences the communicative situation, rather, gender is understood as being constructed in and along the interaction making use of social, intertextual and historical references that are adapted to the particular communicative situation.

In the same direction, Herring and Paolillo (2006), for example, investigate how female and male interactional styles are different but, in this case, they introduce a new aspect that allows performativity to be analysed. They study different interactional styles in relation to the genre approach according to which interactional styles are not used in relation to the participants' gender but regarding the communicative genre used for the interaction. This, in fact, destabilises previous assumptions that established a direct and stable relationship between linguistic uses and social categories like gender in favour of more dynamic approaches to the study of the relationship between language and gender in CMD.

Furthermore, Del-Teso-Craviotto (2008: 251), for example, provides a research on how “participants in online dating chats become authentic gendered and sexual beings in the virtual world” by means of linguistic and discursive practices. The importance of being a member of a specific gender or sexual group is a vital issue when establishing personal relations and participants make use of identity stereotypes negotiated at social levels and used, adapted or challenged in discursive practices in order to become social and gendered beings in online interactions.

In this way, Rodino (1997) analyses online interaction in virtual environments in order to provide a study that reconceptualises gender as performative breaking out binary categories and conceiving social and gender identity as a constant discursive construction. As Bing and Bergvall (1996) or Baker (2000), Rodino (1997) suggests that certain research questions, aiming at shedding light into the social oppression of women, can in fact help reinforce those oppressing structures by accentuating traditional gender differences. In contrast to this idea, researchers have been claiming that gender, as it is the case in offline interaction, is also performed in online communication (Curtis 1992, Bruckman 1993, Danet 1996, Rodino 1997).

However, the *gender-as-performance-in-CMD* hypothesis does not neglect gender polarisation and the social inequalities that its performance may entail. In this

sense, the performative approach to the research of the relationship between language and gender in CMD would be, as it is the case in the analysis of offline interactions, a compensatory tool that may contribute to the analysis of the interplay between language, thought and society. This performative approach to the relationship between gender and language in CMD is, as we mentioned, a key issue within Third Wave Feminist Studies where the analysis of gender creation is more suitable for social and linguistic purposes than the analysis of gender effects (Rodino 1997). This performative approach carried out in online environments, however, raises certain criticisms that emerge from the supposed fantasy space that the Internet may entail. This supposed imaginary world may not be considered as a suitable place for the analysis of social and gender performance in the eyes of certain researchers, however, as Rodino (1997) puts it, the online environment constitutes a reality in itself for online participants and

gender should also be recognized as a virtual reality [...] the binary gender system has effects; it oppresses. In this sense, gender is real. On the other hand, gender is performed and is culturally constructed. In this sense, gender is intangible and is thus, virtual. On line and off, gender is a virtual reality.

Therefore, studies related to the relationships between gender and language in CMD from a performative perspective should continue to be carried out from a feminist perspective. In so doing, the intricate connections between language, thought and society will slowly come to light and will allow language users to be more informed on the most common discursive practices that surround them and the social implication they may entail, and the other way round. What is really important at this point, however, is to establish a method that allows researchers to submerge into such an analysis of gender performativity through discursive practices. In the next section, we will explain what the general framework of analysis is and the particular method chosen in this specific work to carry out an analysis of the relationships between language and gender in CMD from a performative perspective. More precisely, on the one hand, we will explain the general toolkit that is used in order to approach the complex and dynamic space of online interactions by means of CMD. On the other hand, we will also explain the specific paradigm chosen for the analysis of the relationship between gender and language in CMD –the case of online discussion forums associated to gendered online magazines– taking the notion of performativity as our main premise.

### **3.2. Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA): a Tool for the Critical Analysis of Indirect Linguistic Sexism in CMD (Online Discussion Forums)**

#### *3.2.1. CMDA: a toolkit for the analysis of CMD*

As we have already mentioned, in this section we will explain in detail the general framework that sustains our investigation, that is, the computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) proposed by Herring (2004). Since this a specific approach to the study of CMD, the CMDA appears as the most suitable option for our main research objective, that is, that of analysing the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the use of indirect linguistic sexism in virtual socioideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online gendered magazines) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK consumers and participants of these discourses).

As we have already explained, the emergence and fast spread of the Internet favoured the appearance of linguistic CMC or CMD. The creation and negotiation of social practices online constitutes a social practice in itself that leaves a textual and multimodal trace that makes online interactions more accessible to researchers, who can implement empirical “micro-level methods to shed light on macrolevel phenomena” Herring (2004). In order to do so, Herring (2004) presents the CMDA as an approach to researching CMD.

CMDA applies methods adapted from language-focused disciplines such as linguistics, communication, and rhetoric to the analysis of computer-mediated communication [...]. It may be supplemented by surveys, interviews, ethnographic observation, or other methods; it may involve qualitative or quantitative analysis; but what defines CMDA at its core is the analysis of logs of verbal interaction (characters, words, utterances, messages, exchanges, threads, archives, etc.). In the broadest sense, any analysis of online behavior that is grounded in empirical, textual observations is computer-mediated discourse analysis (Herring 2004).

Being an approach with a linguistic focus, CMDA pays particular attention to micro-level phenomena –such as word formation, lexical choice or sentence structure–, but also to macro-level phenomena –such as coherence, the sense of community, gender or social identity– that may contribute to the negotiation of meaning in particular communicative situations. In so doing, CMDA works with social and psychological questions that enable it as a potential and powerful tool for discourse analysis.

In general terms, CMDA can be said to apply to four domains or levels of language: 1) structural phenomena, including aspects of, for example, typography or orthography, word formation or syntax; 2) the meaning of words, utterances, or larger functional units; 3) the interactional level, where notions such as turn taking, topic development or negotiation are taken into account; and, finally, 4) the social level, which includes the analysis of notions such as conflict, power or group membership. A fifth additional level could be added where participation patterns, for example, the frequency or length of the messages could be analysed.

Instead of considering CMDA a theory or a method, CMDA should be better understood as an approach “to researching online behavior [which] provides a methodological toolkit and a set of theoretical lenses through which to make observations and interpret the results of empirical analysis” (Herring 2004).

The theoretical assumptions that underlie CMDA go hand in hand with those of linguistic discourse analysis, namely (adapted from Herring 2004),

- i) the idea that *discourse exhibits recurrent patterns* which are consciously or unconsciously projected and related to ideology; and
- ii) the idea that *discourse involves speaker choices* conditioned by the linguistic, cognitive and social considerations of the communicative situation. Nevertheless, the intrinsic characteristics of CMD make it necessary for CMDA to add a third assumption about online interaction,
- iii) the idea that *CMD may be, but is not inevitably, shaped by the technological features of computer-mediated communication systems.*

Having described what CMDA is about, we will now describe the specific way in which it is put into practice, that is, its procedure, which is based on five basic conceptual skills involved in every research process (adapted from Herring 2004).

The first step within the CMDA is that of formulating a research question<sup>4</sup> that presents a problem to which the researcher wants to find a solution. Research questions are, typically, based on common observation and, in order to be considered fruitful and adequate, they need to adhere to four basic characteristics. Firstly, research questions must be *empirically answerable from the data available* on the basis of analytical

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<sup>4</sup> The first step of the CMDA for our investigation will be carried out in the next chapter. Before describing and explaining our corpus, the research questions that motivated this analysis will be stated.

evidence as opposed to purely subjective evaluations, inferences or presuppositions. Secondly, research questions must be *non-trivial*, that is, apart from not being known in advance, they must be of some notable interest to at least a relevant number of people within academic circles or society as a whole. Thirdly, research questions must be *motivated by a hypothesis*, that is, the research questions must posit some prima facie plausible evidence although, obviously, it is not necessary to posit a hypothesis that is expected to be confirmed. Finally, research questions must be *open-ended* in the sense that they should answer questions like *what, why, when, where, who, how* rather than *yes/no* questions aiming at leaving the door open to unexpected findings.

The second step within the CMDA approach is that of the data selection<sup>5</sup>. The data selection process must be appropriate to the research questions, that is, adequate in terms of size and nature to provide a possible solution to the research questions. In CMD, data are produced naturally by participants communicating in online interactions which allow the researcher to collect it rather than elicit it experimentally. As it may be inferred, it is impossible to analyse all the possible phenomena of relevance to answer a specific research question. As a result, researchers must select data samples in order to scrutinise them in great detail. Being context a fundamental element in any discourse analysis, random sampling is rarely carried out. Instead, data sampling tends to be motivated according to different criteria.

Sampling technique	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Random</b> (e.g., each message selected or not by a coin toss)	representativeness; generalizability	loss of context and coherence; requires complete data set to draw from
<b>By theme</b> (e.g., all messages in a thread)	topical coherence; a data set free of extraneous messages	excludes other activities that occur at the same time
<b>By time</b> (e.g., all messages in a particular day/week/month)	rich in context; necessary for longitudinal analysis	may truncate interactions, and/or result in very large samples
<b>By phenomenon</b> (e.g., only instances of joking; conflict negotiation)	enables in-depth analysis of the phenomenon (useful when phenomenon is rare)	loss of context; no conclusions possible re: distribution
<b>By individual or group</b> (all messages by an individual or members of a group)	enables focus on individual or group (useful for comparing across individuals or groups)	loss of context (especially temporal sequence relations); no conclusions possible
<b>Convenience</b> (whatever data are available to hand)	convenience	unsystematic; sample may not be best suited to the purposes of the study

Table 1. *CMDA data sampling techniques (Herring 2004)*

<sup>5</sup> After having stated the research questions that motivated this investigation in the following chapter, we will also proceed to the description and explanation of our corpus and its collection process.



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Table 1 summarises some of the most relevant sampling techniques used in CMDA as presented by Herring (2004). It is important to mention that both temporal and thematic sampling, because of its characteristics, are favoured by CMDA and are, in fact, the ones that will be used in our investigation, as we will see in future chapters. On the other hand, the question of how much data is required to conduct a successful CMDA has no specific or simple answer, the only indispensable rule would be that any CMD corpus should be extensive to be able to address and answer the research questions successfully.

The third step within CMDA is that of operationalizing key concepts<sup>6</sup>. The key concepts of our research objective must be operationalizable in empirically unambiguous and measurable terms in CMD. In order to do so, the researcher must define the key concepts of their research in terms that other researchers examining the same data would, hopefully, arrive at similar conclusions. To define a concept in concrete textual or multimodal terms is crucial in order to be able to code it in the data sample. It is precisely the operationalization of key concepts what provides CMDA with rigour “and makes it a useful tool for getting an empirical grasp on otherwise slippery or intractable concepts” (Herring 2004). However, concepts vary in the degree to which they can be operationalized depending on their more abstract/subjective or concrete/objective nature. As we mentioned earlier when dealing with research questions, those which posit more abstract ideas may turn out to be more interesting for an investigation, however, in order to address them scientifically using CMDA, they must be defined and operationalized in terms of textual or multimodal phenomena that can be directly observed, counted and coded in the CMD sample. Given the fact that very few studies could cope with all the possible analysable evidence that is relevant to their specific research questions, the features thought to be more productive and convincing in relation to the posited research questions will need to be coded by researchers. More precisely, for our objective of analysing the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the use of indirect linguistic sexism in virtual socioideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online gendered magazines) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK consumers and participants of these

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<sup>6</sup> In chapter 1, the basic concepts of *indirect linguistic sexism* were explained and exemplified in terms of textual phenomena, therefore, operationalized. However, this issue will be retaken in the chapter specifically devoted to the corpus analysis in order to facilitate its comprehension.

discourses), it is extremely important, as we have tried to do, to present a detailed classification of the textual or multimodal phenomena that may constitute indirect linguistic sexism in this specific mode of CMD.

The fourth step within CMDA is that of defining and applying a particular analytical method<sup>7</sup> to the specific CMD corpus selected in order to address the specific research questions that motivate an investigation. The analytical methods that are commonly used within the CMDA approach are, because of its main principles, those drawn from discourse analysis and other language-related paradigms although adapted or modified to address the specificities of CMD. Table 2, also based on Herring (2004) presents five discourse analysis paradigms commonly used in CMDA.

Paradigm	Issues	Phenomena	Procedures
<b>Text Analysis</b> (cf. Longacre 1996)	classification, description, "texture" of texts	genres, schematic organisation, reference, salience, cohesion, etc.	identification of structural regularities within and across texts
<b>Conversation Analysis</b> (cf. Psathas 1995)	interaction as a jointly negotiated accomplishment	turn-taking, sequences, topic development, etc.	close analysis of the mechanics of interaction; unit is the turn
<b>Pragmatics</b> (cf. Levinson 1983)	language as an activity—"doing things" with words	speech acts, relevance, politeness, etc.	interpretation of speakers' intentions from discourse evidence
<b>Interactional Sociolinguistics</b> (cf. Gumperz 1982, Tannen 1993)	role of culture in shaping and interpreting interaction	verbal genres, discourse styles, (mis)communication, framing, etc.	analysis of the socio-cultural meanings indexed through interaction
<b>Critical Discourse Analysis</b> (cf. Fairclough 1992)	discourse as a site in which power and meaning are contested and negotiated	transitivity, presupposition, intertextuality, conversational control, etc.	interpretation of meaning and structure in relation to ideology, power dynamics

Table 2. *Five discourse analysis paradigms (Herring 2004)*

According to this table, and as we will see in the next section, the paradigm that best suits our objectives in this research is that of Critical Discourse analysis on the basis of its intrinsic relation to social behaviour, the consideration of discourse as a site for the negotiation of power, its relation to the intertextual and historical elements of the communicative situation and the importance of ideology and the socialisation process in

<sup>7</sup> Because of organisational and structural reasons, although this step should follow the operationalization of key concepts and precede the analysis itself, we will include a specific section dealing with this step at the end of this chapter. In so doing, we aim at offering a coherent explanation of the general approach followed in this study together with a detailed explanation of the main methodological ideas of the specific paradigm chosen to carry out such an analysis.

any productive or interpretative action. However, it is important to highlight that, although researchers following a CMDA approach rely on these –or other– discourse paradigms, their common starting point is far from being the selection of a specific methodology but, rather, the observation of CMD behaviour. As a result, CMDA can be considered as an inductive approach rather than a deductive one based on its primary concern with social and interactive observation.

Finally, the last step within the CMDA approach is that related to issues of interpretation<sup>8</sup>. Ideally, the interpretation of results within CMDA should take into account both medium and social factors and, in so doing, three levels should be taken into account: the data, the research questions and the possible future directions. However, there is a slippery concept when dealing with CMD and it is that of generalisation because, trying to go beyond the specific corpus of data being analysed in order to extend the results to other CMDs might result extremely complex and misleading. In this sense, although every generalisation dealing with CMD should be undertaken with stated and understood with caution, no generalisations at all could be perceived as excessive conservatism in the interpretation process. One way of balancing these two positions in the interpretation process could be that of advancing explanations related to both the specificities of the medium and social variables under scrutiny. Another way could be that of interpreting the research findings in the light of multiple levels, namely,

- i) the *interpretation close to the data*, which implies summarising and synthesising the main information;
- ii) the *interpretation close to the research questions*, which involves formulation of answers to the research questions; and
- iii) the *broadest level of interpretation*, which requires the researcher to extrapolate their specific findings to prospective alternative situations that may contribute to enriching the field of study.

In short, the five conceptual skills needed to carry out a CMDA –summarised in Figure 5– allow us to claim that “this approach enables a level of empirical rigour, and reflects a heightened linguistic awareness, that sets it apart from other approaches to the

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<sup>8</sup> The fifth and last step will be carried out in the last chapter of this study, that is, in the answers to the research questions, the conclusions and the notes on possible future directions.

study of Internet behavior” (Herring 2004). This approach seems to suit perfectly our initial intentions in this project because of its discursive, social and cultural focus and its specificity on CMC related phenomena. However, as Herring (2004) puts it, the CMDA toolkit as presented here “is lacking in methods for analyzing meanings communicated through semiotic systems other than text”. In this sense, we will try to complement this CMDA approach with a multimodal analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001) and explore other means and ways suggested by the specificity of the material under study when it reveals itself as relevant for our main purpose in this project.

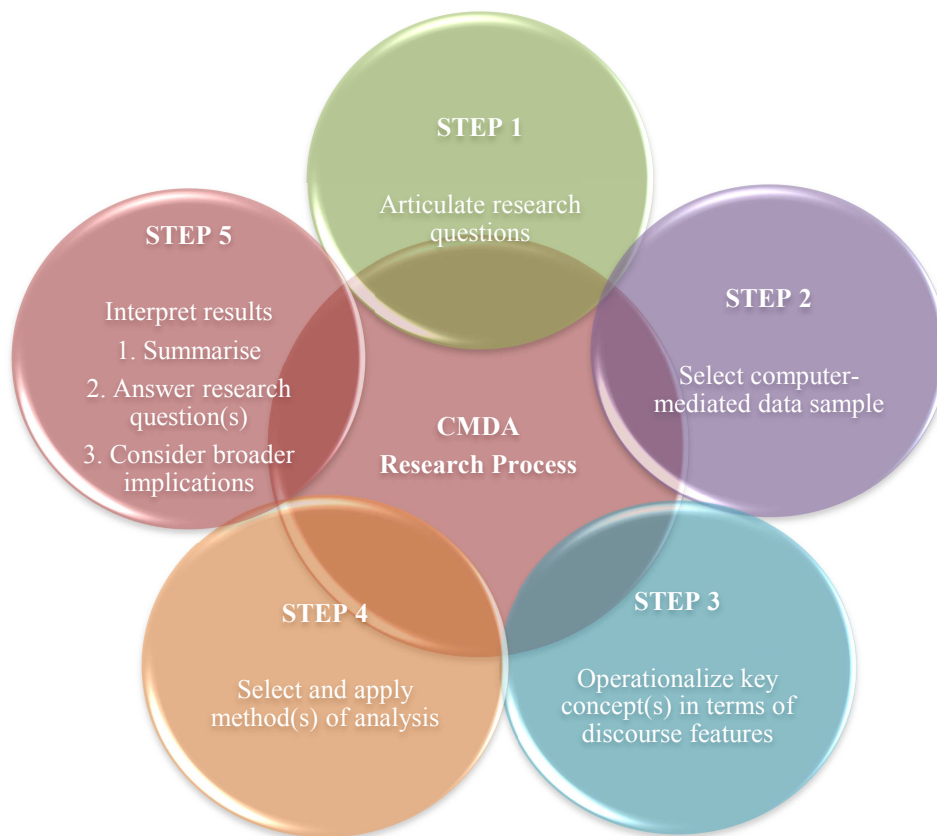


Figure 5. Steps in CMDA research approach

### 3.2.2. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA): selected paradigm for our CMDA

The previous section has served to present and describe the general framework or approach that we are going to follow in this investigation. As we have already stated, the five-step procedure of the CMDA will be applied to our objective of analysing the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the use of indirect linguistic sexism in online discussion forums associated to online gendered magazines. However, because

of organisational and structural reasons, we consider that it would be more suitable to present STEP 4, that is, the selection of the appropriate method of analysis within this chapter. This reason is motivated by our comprehension of the organisational structure of this study. Since it is divided into three main sections, Section I being devoted to the basic concepts or theoretical notions that sustain this project, we consider it relevant to include the selection of the chosen paradigm after the description of the general framework that sustains it. However, the division of the project into strategic sections will not distort the natural flow of the five-step procedure of the CMDA. Section II will be devoted to the practical application of the basic notions explained and described in Section I. In so doing, the presentation of the specific research questions (STEP 1), the description of the specific CMD corpus selected for our investigation (STEP 2), a compilation of the operationalization of the key concepts of our research (STEP 3), the selection and application of the analytical method that best suits our intentions (STEP 4) and, finally, the interpretation of results (STEP 5) will be followed in the footsteps of the procedure presented by Herring (2004). Nevertheless, in spite of following an inductive method in the selection of the specific paradigm or analytical method that we are going to follow in this project, in order not to distort the practical nature of Section II, we consider it a good option to present it after the description of the general framework or approach that sustains this research. In this way, the theoretical notions, the practical application and the main results will be clearly identified in the project.

After having explained the reasons that motivate the inclusion of this final section in this chapter, we can proceed to the description of the specific paradigm or analytical method that we will follow in order to approach our objectives.

As we anticipated earlier, because of its intrinsic characteristics, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seems the most suitable method for our research intentions.

Following Tischer *et al.* (2000a), the birth of CDA –whose theoretical framework is very much related to the ideas postulated by Althusser, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Halliday, Foucault, Habermas, The Frankfurt School, Marxist theories, cognitive models of text planning (Hammersley 1997, Tischer *et al.* 2000a)– can be traced back to the 1990s. As we can observe, this coincides with the emergence of Third Wave Feminism within gender and language studies and, as we will see, their coexistence will result in a very fruitful coalition.

But, what is the general definition for CDA? Among the vast literature that deals with CDA (see, for example, Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Hammersley 1997, 2001,

2003; Tischer *et al.* 2000a, 2000b; van Dijk 2001, 2008; Meyer 2002; Wodak 2002, 2006; Gregorio-Godeo 2006; Wodak and Kendall 2007; Lehtonen 2007; Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza 2007) the general idea is that CDA is a well-established paradigm within language studies that, despite being heterogeneous in terms of theory or methodology, is bound together by its research agenda and programme (Wodak 2002). Generally speaking, CDA can be considered a type of discourse analytical research whose main focus of attention is the study of the negotiation of power, dominance and inequality within particular discursive practices taking an explicit position in trying to understand, expose and resist social inequalities (van Dijk 2001). For critical discourse analysts, public and widely available discourses such as those presented by institutions, politics or the media are an evidence, in more overt or covert ways, of the relationships established in the negotiation of power relations and of the possible struggles that may arise from them. Because of this, CDA could be considered

an academic movement of scholars specifically interested in the analysis of fundamental social problems, such as the discursive reproduction of illegitimate domination. This obviously implies that scholars who claim to engage in CDA should also critically examine their own academic discourse, because as academics they have power, if only theoretical, analytical and ideological power, over the minds of students (van Dijk 2008: 821-822).

What is of particular relevance within CDA is the idea of criticism and self-reflection. Critical researchers analyse particular texts that are embedded within certain contexts that relate to wider structures of society as a whole. These texts are produced and received in communicative situations where certain assumptions are held about the nature of society which in turn have social consequences on the basis of ideological conceptions. One of the social consequences of the negotiation of meaning in particular communicative situations subjected to ideological and societal assumptions is the emergence of inequalities of power in the social order. As Wodak (2002) puts it, the idea of *critical* within CDA inevitably links the social and the political in its intention to investigate how language use expresses, signals, constitutes and legitimises social inequality in discourse. Hammersley (1997: 238), besides, explains that the term *critical* is especially relevant for discourse analysts because this idea implies

- (1) that we can only understand society as a totality, that any particular phenomenon must be analysed against the background of its wider social context;

- (2) that in producing knowledge of society critical research reveals what is obscured by ideology, such ideology being seen as pervasive and as playing an essential role in preserving the status quo;
- (3) that a critical approach not only produces knowledge which enables us to understand how society is but also how it can and ought to be;
- (4) that by acting on the basis of critical theory we can change the world for the better;
- (5) that the change produced will be fundamental in character, such as to eradicate oppression and emancipate all human beings.

Having defined CDA and having also highlighted the importance of self-reflection and critical thought for its purposes, we consider it important to deal now with some of the basic theoretical assumptions of this paradigm. As we have already mentioned, CDA focuses on texts as objects –where discourse is seen as the instrument of power– but it also focuses on the social process and structures related to specific texts which delimit the creation and negotiation of meaning by individuals or groups in particular interactions –where discourse is seen as a means to construct reality (Wodak 2002). Ideologies, understood as structures that stabilise and naturalise concepts and conventions, are thought to be the basis on which dominance and social inequality is historically created in discourse. Therefore, the main standpoint of CDA is a strong, dynamic and multifaceted relationship between social and linguistic structures, that is, between language, thought and society because “every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing and/or transforming society and culture, including power relations” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 273). In this light, language is understood as a social phenomenon used by individuals, groups and institutions to create and negotiate meanings and values which are systematically expressed through discourse in communicative situations and interpreted by receivers. It is precisely the active role of the receiver that has moved critical discourse analysts towards more cognitive models of analysis (Martinez-Guillem 2003, Wodak 2006, van Dijk 2008). Notions such as *collective memories*, *knowledge*, *mental representations*, *mental models*, *frames* or *schemas* are a proof that the *mediation between the social and the linguistic* implies cognitive processes which are relevant for individuals and communities in the socialisation process (Wodak 2006). As a result, the main concepts that sustain the basic theoretical assumptions of CDA are terms such as power, dominance, history, ideology, hierarchy, hegemony, context, discrimination, interests, reproduction, institutions, social variables, social order or intertextuality (Tischer *et al.* 2000a, van Dijk 2001, Wodak 2002, Meyer 2002). These main concepts, in turn,

establish some basic general principles of CDA as a paradigm (Tischer *et al.* 2000a: 146):

- 1) concerned with social problems;
- 2) where power is seen as a force negotiated in discourse and over discourse;
- 3) where society and culture are seen as dialectically related to language and discourse;
- 4) where language use may be ideological;
- 5) where discourses are seen as historical and contextual;
- 6) where the relationship between text and society is indirect and mediated by cognitive processes;
- 7) where discourse analysis is understood as being interpretative, explanatory and open to new contexts for further investigation; and, finally,
- 8) where discourse is also understood as a form of social behaviour

As it may be inferred, these general principles posit for a multiplicity of methodologies (see Wodak and Meyer 2002 for a detailed presentation). There is no single form of CDA and its manifestation depends on different variables such as the theoretical position or the main concepts being analysed. However, despite the heterogeneity, there is an underlying concern with the relationships between language, thought and society that bounds CDA together. In this sense, generally speaking,

CDA focuses on both macro- and micro-level discourse patterns that signify power and the legitimization of ideas. Macro-level features include organizational and contextual features of discursive events that restrict speakers and their ideas from being heard and limit speakers' control of context. These macro-level features are discursive effects of institutional power structures such as social status, expertise, and race, and are discerned from contextualized descriptions of the speech event. Micro-level features include pragmatic, semantic, syntactic, and phonological properties. These features are examined for elements including, but not limited to turn-taking strategies, social meanings, politeness, use of hedges, affinity markers, intonation, and laughter. In addition, critical discourse researchers often include analyses of genre, rhetorical style, and argumentation to determine the production and reproduction of power and dominance (Remlinger 1999).

With this in mind, it can be claimed that the general objectives of CDA spin around political interests by attempting to make individual language users aware of the reciprocal influences of language and society (Tischer *et al.* 2000a. Wodak 2002). In so



doing, they aim at demystifying discourse by unveiling the underlying ideologies permeated in discourse practices by means of interdisciplinary research. By means of detailed analyses of language in use, critical discourse analysts have as their main objective that of studying the various representations that power negotiations may adopt. This is so because power is not only signalled by linguistic mechanisms but also by communicative patterns that may determine who holds power in a particular interaction (Wodak 2002). These two focuses of attention –the discursive/linguistic and the societal– lead us to suggest that CDA principally aims at producing or extending knowledge in order to include practical and political purposes (Hammersley 2001) “to deal primarily with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it” (van Dijk 1993: 252).

However, CDA is not exempt from criticism. The main attacks come from conversation analysts who claim that only what is observable in a text can be analysed and any attempt to politicise the results can be labelled as biased (Tischer *et al.* 2000a). Additionally, other authors suggest that CDA is in need of a better definition of discourse and it is broadly criticised for being considered an ideological interpretation rather than an analysis (Widdowson 1995). In reply to this criticism discourse analysts claim that their work is no less scientific than other approaches and, actually, the fact of openly stating their ideological and political position renders CDA as a useful tool that produces open-ended results (Hammersley 1997, Meyer 2002).

The main areas of application of CDA are, because of its intrinsic characteristics, those that inherently deal with social issues –such as gender identities or racism– as reproduced and legitimised by language use. As we mentioned earlier, individuals become social subjects by negotiating their social identity within particular discourse practices that take place in the framework of broader social and structural contexts. This, as it can be inferred, is a perfect reasoning for the application of CDA to gender and language studies.

Several works have demonstrated the appropriateness of CDA to study gender and language issues (see Thorne *et al.* 1983; Seidel 1988; Cameron 1990, 1992; Kotthoff and Wodak 1997; Wodak 1997). Approaching gender and language from the performative perspective typical of Third Wave Feminism perfectly fits within the framework of CDA (Remlinger 2005) and its vision of the dialectical relationship between discourse, thought and society. However,

this approach offers a very powerful way of analysing the dynamic way that gender is constructed in context-embedded everyday talk, but it is not entirely unproblematic for those interested in examining the diverse ways in which sexist and discriminatory behaviours disadvantage women as a group (Holmes 2007: 54).

This, in fact, is what Baker (2000) claims about the subtle maintenance of gender inequality by certain discourse structures that, actually, reinforce gender imbalance. Nevertheless, as we mentioned earlier, the newest movements within gender and language studies do in fact reclaim the need of analysing particular instances of gender construction while retaking broader notions such as that of *women* and *men* in order to present viable and valuable studies based on the idea that our social and gender performances are embedded within socially constructed categories that form part of our collective imaginary (Holmes 2007). In order to attain such an objective, CDA and its relation to gender must be, as Remlinger (1999) suggests, placed within the context of everyday practice –as it is our case with the analysis of the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the use of sexist language in online discussion forums ascribed to gendered online magazines.

Precisely because of the fruitful coalition between CDA and gender and language studies, we have witnessed the emergence of a specific kind of CDA, the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). As Lazar (2005a: 1) explains, new trends within gender and language studies are moving the concept of gender away from differences in conversational styles into the evolution of the concept as related to ideology, performance and power relations which “are assuming more subtle forms in the contemporary period”. Lazar (2005b, 2007), as Holmes (2007) and Mills and Mullany (2011), states the importance of retaking the label *feminist* in doing CDA. This will allow researchers to join around a shared perspective and a common focus of attention on gender identity construction. At the same time, using the specific term of FCDA will permit researchers to be identified under a distinct political perspective that will favour their discourse analyses under the idea that “a feminist political critique of gendered social practices and relations is aimed ultimately at effecting social transformation” (Lazar 2005a: 6). The main aim of FCDA, therefore, “is to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities” (Lazar 2007: 142). This objective, in turn, points at a praxis-oriented research which

suits both Third Wave feminist and CDA ideas on the dialectical relationship between language, thought and society, between theory and practice, between the institutional and the local. These dialectical relationships, however, are becoming more and more subtle and indirect in the light of recent developments related to human rights. Nevertheless, despite the supposed social and gender equality that human beings enjoy at an institutional level can often be contrasted with the analysis of local practices where covert discursive mechanisms legitimise, reinforce and maintain gender imbalance. At the same time, the analysis of local examples of resistance by individuals is also of primary importance for the objective of FCDA of examining how “power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social practices, and through interactional strategies of talk” (Lazar 2005a: 10). With the objective of focusing on “how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, negotiated and contested in representations of social practices, in social relationships between people, and in people’s social and personal identities in texts and talk” (Lazar 2005a: 11), several studies –such as those presented by Lehtonen (2007) or Marling (2010)– stand out as relevant examples of how FCDA works from a theoretical and practical point of view.

Because of the reasons stated so far, in order to carry out our objective of analysing the way in which gender (in)equalities are negotiated by means of the use of linguistic sexism in CMD associated to specific institutional gendered practices, we consider that making use of FCDA is the best option. In this case, our FCDA will be based on the paradigm presented by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), more specifically, we will adopt the main principles of CDA presented by these authors and we will interpret them from the perspective of feminism and language and gender studies. As Lehtonen (2007) highlights, many feminist discourse analysts follow Fairclough’s (1992) model in their analysis, however, depending on the research interests, objectives and corpus, methodological guidelines in FCDA may vary. In our case, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) will be the paradigm for our FCDA. According to these authors, CDA – from a feminist position, in our case, therefore, FCDA– is based on eight principles of theory or method (Table 3) that we will follow as the paradigm to carry out or CMDA of indirect linguistic sexism in online discussion forums adhered to gendered magazines.

CDA addresses social problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analysis of the linguistic character of social processes</li> <li>• interdisciplinary nature</li> <li>• analysis linked to particular struggles or problems</li> <li>• develop critical awareness</li> </ul>
Power relations are discursive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• linguistic and discursive nature of social relations of power in contemporary societies</li> <li>• power is exercised and negotiated in discourse</li> <li>• there is power negotiation in and over discourse</li> </ul>
Discourse constitutes society and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there is a reciprocal relationship between discourse, society and culture.</li> <li>• three broad domains of social life are discursively constructed: representations, relations and identities</li> </ul>
Discourse does ideological work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ideologies are understood as ways of constructing society by reproducing unequal relations of power</li> <li>• it necessary to analyse both the text itself and the interpretation of that text</li> </ul>
Discourse is historical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discourse is not produced without context</li> <li>• discourse related to past situations</li> <li>• discourses are always connected to other discourses, (intertextual) and form part of social knowledge</li> </ul>
The link between text and society is mediated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are connections between social and cultural structures and processes on the one hand, and properties of text on the other</li> <li>• there is a cognitive component in the mediation</li> </ul>
Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discourses can be differently interpreted due to the receivers; their schema, emotions, attitudes, knowledge; identity variables; the context, etc.</li> <li>• results are open-ended</li> </ul>
Discourse is a form of social action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the main objective of CDA and FCDA is to uncover opaqueness and power relationships</li> <li>• researchers are politically active in explicitly stating their interests</li> </ul>

Table 3. A FCDA paradigm based on Fairclough and Wodak (1997).

**Section II**

**Practical Study. A**

**CM(FC)DA of**

**Linguistic Sexism**



**Chapter 4**  
**Corpus Description:**  
**Collection Process and**  
**Characterisation**

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## **4. Corpus Description: Collection Process and Characterisation**

### **4.1. Why this Corpus? Our Objectives and Research Questions**

Section I served as a presentation and explanation of the main theoretical concepts that sustain this project. Section II, on the other hand, will make up the practical application of those theoretical basic concepts into an adequate corpus in order to fulfil our objectives.

As we have already seen in Section I, questions have been raised in relation to the legitimacy and viability of analyses based almost exclusively on texts without taking any notice of readers' interpretations of messages within the communicative context (Farvid and Braun 2006). The practical and methodological problems regarding this kind of analytical approach are, as we have already explained, related to the dynamic and flexible relationship between language, thought and society as articulated by and among text producers and text interpreters. The conception of texts being polysemic objects, however, does not reject the idea of ideological messages underlying them which, in turn, may reflect, create and perpetuate certain hegemonic forms of normative behaviour (Gill 2009), in this case, related to the gender variable. As a result, it is extremely important to analyse the way in which meaning is negotiated in context within particular communicative situations and specific communities of practice. As we have already mentioned, CMC and the Internet provide the perfect locus for researchers to analyse, from a less controlled way, how meaning is produced and negotiated in context. In this sense, as Mautner (2005) claims, whatever the method used, the Internet and CMC have become major fields of research for sociological and linguistic studies and, despite it being a shifting and vast field, researchers should not be deterred from analysing web-based data because of its benefits for social and linguistic research.

Online forums, as explained in Chapter 2, represent a multimodal environment in which users can negotiate meaning by means of linguistic and extralinguistic resources characteristic of the medium. These linguistic and multimodal characteristics of the medium are starting to draw the attention of scholars from around the globe in the search of analysing how meaning and identities are constructed in online environments. In the case of online discussion forums, researchers come across a territory where membership is probably large and unstable, where participants merge with lurkers who just intervene in the interaction as passive interpreters of the communicative situation in

order to fulfil particular objectives, where the main “task is not to produce a specific result, but rather to generate ideas and discuss them” (Savicki *et al.* 1996). In this sense, many of the participants in online discussion forums limit their interventions to single exchanges,

McGrath and his associates [...] indicate that cognitive tasks such as generation of ideas and discussion not resulting in group decision require less cooperation and collaboration and thus are more likely to call forth individually oriented responses or [...] "collective monologue[s]" rather than group oriented responses from group members (Savicki *et al.* 1996)

and, in this light, it could be difficult to talk about communities (Eisenclas 2012) in online environments. However, their reliance on pre-existing norms or common broader institutional frameworks embraces them under common practices which guide, although sometimes in very subtle ways, their identities and meaning negotiations.

In this communicative process, topics and arguments are not only permanently exchanged, but also altered in order to adapt them to new interlocutors / arguments / situations. This process, in linguistic terms referred to as “recontextualisation” (Wodak 2000; Iedema 1999), is of central importance when the processes in which social power is negotiated are being analyzed (Wodak and Wright 2006: 254-255).

“Technology obviously contributes to shaping human behaviour, but the uses we make of technological innovations are ultimately conditioned by broader social and historical processes” (Montero-Fleta *et al.* 2009: 771). Online forums tend to be ascribed, but are not restricted to, institutional and broader general frameworks that determine and help define the community of practice that takes part in those online interactions. It is precisely online forums the ones that allow researchers to bridge some of the practical problems regarding the analytical approach pursued in this study, that is, the relationship between language, thought and society (see for example the works by Savicki *et al.* 1996, Lamerichs and Te Molder 2003, Wodak and Wright 2006, Salonen 2007, Wright 2007, Stommel 2008, Montero-Fleta *et al.* 2009, Eisenclas 2012). Online discussion forums provide the perfect scenario for the analysis of the relationships between the institutional and the local, between the *gender ideal* and the *gender display* (Cohen 2001). At the same time, being consistent with the Third Wave feminist approach pursued in this project, this analytical approach will distance us from identifying changes and will move us closer to a focus on the prevalent constructions

and negotiations of specific communities of practice at particular cultural moments (Farvid and Braun 2006). In order to do so, as we explained in Chapter 3, we will follow a CMDA as a general approach and a FCDA as a specific paradigm for our purposes. This will allow us to study the way social and gender identities are constructed and negotiated within particular forms of CMD in specific online discussion forums. This local perspective, at the same time, breathes into and is framed by broader institutional structures which also determine the way in which meaning and identities are negotiated.

As we mentioned in Chapter 2, the discursive construction of identities in CMC has mainly been studied from a gender perspective (Androutsopoulos 2006), that is, there are numerous studies that tackle the relationships between gender and language in CMC. This can be considered the broadest field of study in relation to identity and CMC, but also in relation to CMC and language. However, as far as we are concerned, there are no studies that directly embark on the study of the relationships between language, thought and society from the perspective of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism, as it is our case.

As we have already stated, the main objective of this project is the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of gender (in)equalities in virtual socioideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online magazines) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK consumers and participants of these discourses). In so doing, we will focus on the main hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity that are projected from the institutional frameworks of online gendered magazines and how those hegemonic forms are negotiated at the local context of online discussion forums.

In order to do so, two main research questions (STEP 1 of the CMDA) will guide our study:

- 1) How is indirect linguistic sexism manifested and negotiated in the context / discourse of online discussion forums ascribed to specific gendered online magazines?
- 2) Are there any differences or different categories of this phenomenon (indirect linguistic sexism) to those established by Mills (2008) that have to do with the specific features of the context / discourse?

Regarding the first research question, references to direct linguistic sexism will be taken into account if they are considered to be relevant for the analysis as well. Additionally, the study of how indirect linguistic sexism is manifested and negotiated in this context or discourse has tacit implications related to the specific effects that this phenomenon may produce, that is, is it a permitted, agreed to and maintained phenomenon or is it rather fought against? If so, how is it done? This part of the analysis can be considered as rather innovative because the specificities of CMD allow researchers to study non-mediated negotiations of specific meanings.

In relation to the second research question, this study will allow us to apply the model of indirect linguistic sexism proposed by Mills (2008) to a specific context, that of CMD in online discussion forums associated to specific gendered online magazines. This will provide a practical application of that model and will allow us to identify specific elements or categories of indirect linguistic sexism, if they apply, to this specific context or discourse.

Therefore, this project contributes “to a linguistic model of discourse that integrates linguistic and social theoretical perspectives, so that discourse can be analyzed both as interaction between individuals and as socially reproductive and constitutive of subjectivity” (Talbot 1992: 573).

## 4.2. Corpus Collection Process

Having explained the reasons that sustain the selection of our corpus, this section will be devoted to the presentation of a detailed description and an explanation of the adequacy of our specific corpus to our research questions (STEP 2 of the CMDA).

As Farvid and Braun (2006) claim, recent academic interests in gender studies and gendered spaces have suffered a shift from the study of women’s place and women’s representation to studies focused also on men, masculinities and male sexuality, especially as represented in the media. Being consistent with this new focus of research, we decided to centre upon two general lifestyle magazines which are different in respect to their gender target groups, the online versions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men’s Health* will provide our main ground for analysis.

The reason for choosing a women’s and a men’s magazine was to ensure a context of high gender salience in which the features identified can be more plausibly

related to gender than in gender-undifferentiated magazines. However, the present study does not intend to make general assumptions about the genre of women's and men's magazines, but specifically about the two synthetic communities of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* (Motschenbacher 2009: 7).

More specifically, we aim at presenting a study about the discursive negotiation of social and gender identities by means of the negotiation of indirect linguistic sexism that emerge in the online communities of practice in the public online discussion forums of these two publications.

#### 4.2.1. *Methodological principles*

Firstly, it is crucial to talk about the **location** of our corpus: Where is it? Our specific corpus has been collected, as we have already made explicit in previous sections, from the publicly available interactions carried out in two online discussion forums ascribed to two online magazines, that of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* which are, in turn, gendered spaces aimed at specific communities of practice of (heterosexual) women and men. In our particular case, we decided to delimit our analysis to the study of these communities of practice in the geographical location of the United Kingdom because we will focus on the British online version of these publications. However, as we have already seen in Chapter 2, the Internet is an open virtual space which can be accessed to from any part of the world and, therefore, interventions from participants other than British may be, and surely will be, present. One may wonder: Why these two publications and their online forums and not others? “[T]he inclusion of each publication was determined by three main criteria: (1) genre, (2) popularity, and (3) gender of readership” (Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010: 68). Since *Google* is one of the most internationally used web search engines, we proceeded to an initial web search for the most popular women and men's online magazines and *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* were the main results. This initial web search was later on supported, as we will see in the next section of this chapter, by different publications (Frederick, *et al.* 2005, Motschenbacher 2009, Johnson 2009) which contrastively analyse these two gendered lifestyle magazines as salient referents within their fields. Apart from these criteria, the demarcation of our study to these two publications is also determined by their similar hyperstructure, organisation and even visual display both in relation to the online magazines themselves and their online forums.

In relation to the **selection criteria**, as we have already mentioned, the Internet and, especially, public online discussion forums provide an extremely rich environment for the analysis of CMD. Given the monstrous amount of information available in them, some selection criteria were needed in order to fence in our corpus. In Chapter 3, we already disclosed the idea that thematic and temporal sampling techniques are favoured by CMDA, our approach in this project. Temporal sampling, although at risk of truncating interactions or resulting in very large samples, allows researchers to provide a rich contextual corpus relevant for discursive analysis. In our case, we delimited our corpus to three natural months: May, June and July 2011. These three months were the preceding ones to the collection process and, therefore, they were rather new and already completed. Nevertheless, the intrinsic working order and the structural organisation of most online discussion forums is based, as it is the case of the ones being analysed here, on a reversed chronological order that displays the most recent entries first. Moreover, as it is the case of the forums selected for this project, most online public discussion forums are organised around topics and, within those, discussions or what are generally known as threads. This is the reason why, as it is the case in our corpus, it is very common to find a thread whose last entry was posted on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 but which was started, for example, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. This, of course, is something that escapes our control but which needs to be mentioned. In our case, the decisions taken in order to approach this kind of threads are practical. For example, if one of the threads comprised within our span of temporal sampling (May, June, July 2011) contains entries that belong to an earlier time (let's say that a thread received a reply on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2011 but was created on the 03<sup>rd</sup> of October 2009), even in that situation, we will proceed to the collection and downloading of the whole thread in order not to distort the thematic progression, the cohesion and coherence of the topic, which may be necessary for a subsequent qualitative analysis. We will explain the analysis process in further paragraphs.

On the other hand, thematic sampling, although it excludes other activities that may be occurring at the same time, offers a perfect criterion for providing topical coherence and a set of data free from extraneous messages which, in turn, is perfect for the analysis of the negotiation of meaning. In our case, we delimited our corpus to two thematic fields, that of sex and relationships. A number of studies motivated the selection of these two fields whose content, although gendered and sex-specific, can be said to be similar. For example, Willemsen (1998) or Gill (2009) present studies related

to the analysis of the fields of sex and relationships within gendered media. Moreover, in agreement with Farvid and Braun (2006: 308) and the objective of this project, we consider that, apart from analysing these fields or topics from an objective and scientific point of view, “researchers in this area may seek to examine how such texts and themes are taken up and engaged in by heterosexual female and male readers and whether/how they are resisted, challenged, or accepted by readers”. Apart from this academic support, the selection of these two thematic fields within the online discussion forums of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men’s Health* was also motivated by the structural organisation of the forums themselves. Each forum within each online publication is divided into different themes or topics related to the overall gendered discourse of the magazine, for example, topics such as sex, relationships, beauty, diets, fitness or parenthood are present in both publications. Among all these topics, the initial hypothesis that has driven our selection is that the fields of sex and relationships, because of their explicit relation to gender ideology, will provide a perfect, wide and rich context for our specific objective in this project, that is, the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of gender (in)equalities in these environments.

Regarding the **analysis of the corpus** itself, according to our objective, the specific approach (CMDA) and the paradigm (FCDA) selected to face it, both quantitative and qualitative analyses will be carried out. Firstly, numerical information of the corpus will be provided, which means that all the data related to the number of topics within each forum, the threads within each topic and the number of entries, posts or visits within each thread will be presented. These data will allow us to depict a global image of the main intrinsic characteristics of these two forums and the main discourses negotiated within these two communities of practice. Once this general quantitative data are provided, precise information about each of the specific topics selected for this project –sex and relationships– will be procured. We will go in depth into the specific number of threads within each of these topics and the discussions which are active within the selected period of time (May, June and July 2011). Moreover, we will take note of the number of entries, posts and visits within each thread. Afterwards, the whole corpus –consisting of the active discussions within the topics of sex and relationships in the online forums of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men’s Health* during the months of May, June and July 2011– will be subjected to a specific corpus linguistics tool (*Antconc*) in order to provide relevant information about the main key words and frequencies in our corpus. This information will be especially relevant for our subsequent qualitative analysis

because it will give us the clues on where to start analysing such an extensive corpus. As Motschenbacher (2009) claims, this kind of analysis will permit us to unveil how relatively abstract linguistic elements play a major role in creating and negotiating (gendered) discourses where the negotiation of social and gender identities by means of the use of (indirect) linguistic sexism may be rather relevant. As Herring (2004) puts it, the use of corpus linguistics tools for discursive analysis may help us disclose systematic regularities which may result crucial for our purpose of study and which, otherwise, may pass unnoticed because of the enormous amount of information comprised in extensive corpora.

However, quantitative content analysis may not be the best approach for analyzing complex, interacting, ambiguous or scalar phenomena, which risk distortion by being forced into artificially discrete categories for purposes of counting. Such phenomena may be more richly revealed by qualitative, interpretive approaches that illuminate through exemplification, argumentation and narration (Herring 2004).

As Hardt-Mautner (1995) testifies, strictly qualitative methodologies like FCDA may prove ill-suited when approaching gigantic corpora, as it is our case. The mismatch between the nature of the paradigm and the nature of the data call for new methodological perspectives in order to ease those differences. In our particular case – following studies such as those presented by Stubbs (1992), Caldas-Coulthard (1993), Fox (1993), Louw (1993) or Stubbs and Gerbig (1993)– the use of corpus linguistics tools, together with qualitative discursive methodologies, will bridge this gap. Once the quantitative data have been provided, and conclusions about frequencies and key words have been extracted in order to identify the most relevant texts to our purpose, this will be submitted to a qualitative analysis having in mind the main objective of this project, that is, the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism as negotiated by specific communities of practice in CMD. In this step, determining which features of the text must be taken into account is one of the main decisions of analysts as interpreters. In our case, as we mentioned in Chapter 1, Mills’ (2008) framework will be used as our main operationalizing guide. This is so because, as it has already been stated, modern societies are witnessing the functioning and negotiation of more dangerous, insidious and subtle forms of power that, in turn help maintain gender inequalities. This new form of power negotiation is “embedded and dispersed throughout networks of relations, is self-regulating, and produces subjects in both senses of the word” (Lazar 2007: 148).



These new forms of power, among which we must include indirect linguistic sexism, are effective because of their cognitive basis, because the internationalisation and routinization of those negotiations in everyday texts makes it “invisible power” (Lazar 2007: 148). As Lehtonen (2007) suggests, these hegemonic discourses can shape individuals’ lives but, however, they can also, and in fact are, resisted or transformed by individuals themselves within particular communicative situations. It is precisely this local negotiation of indirect and subtle forms of hegemonic power the ones that we aim at analysing in this project.

As mentioned earlier, (online) gendered magazines tend to use covert or indirect forms of sexism and other formulations of hegemonic gendered discourses with the objective of selling as many issues as possible or, in its absence, opening a market for their audience to consume as many products as necessary in order to adapt themselves and their gender identity to the communities of practice in which they want to interact. Gendered magazines are aware of this and they disguise their intentions of commercialising under the mask of, for example, indirect linguistic sexism but, what happens in the local context of their ascribed discussion forums?

#### 4.2.2. *Collection process and structural organisation of our corpus*

Having tried to find a productive **downloading method** or technological tool that allowed us to download the specific sections of the selected forums for our specific time span without an efficient result, we decided to download the selected temporal and thematic areas manually. The procedure followed in the collection process was based on a four-step procedure: 1) locating the webpage, 2) locating the forum, 3) locating the specific topic to be downloaded, either sex or relationships and, finally, 4) start downloading, by means of the *save as* option of our browser, all the active discussions or threads within the topics of sex and relationships for the months of May, June and July 2011.

The discussions were saved in two **file formats**, both as TXT and MHTML documents. The first format, TXT, renders our corpus into text-only files in which any kind of layout or multimodal elements are non-existent. This file format favours the quantitative analysis because it allows the processing of our corpus through specific corpus linguistics tools (*Antconc*). Moreover, the MHTML format allows us to have each page of a discussion saved as a single file in which we are able to observe the

visual display and structural organisation of the forum as it appears when we are online, the only difference is that hyperlinks cannot be accessed to from this file format. This file format allows us to proceed to a qualitative and multimodal analysis in which other mechanisms rather than linguistic elements may contribute to the negotiation of meaning.

Two **browsers** were used in the collection process. *Internet Explorer* was used firstly in order to download and save the data both in MHTML and TXT format. However, we came across some problems, certain threads or pages within a specific thread could not be saved because of unknown technological problems. In order to avoid this inconvenience, we decided to download our corpus through another Internet browser, *Mozilla Firefox*. This other browser, however, does not provide the option of saving files as MHTML in its basic version. As a result, we were forced to download an application called *MAF (Mozilla Archive Format) Add-on* which allowed us to download files in the MHTML format. This is the reason why, in order to display all the files in the MHTML format in our corpus without problems, we highly recommend the installation and use of both *Mozilla Firefox* and the *MAF Add-on* application. Both can be found free online and they are rather intuitive. Having this browser and the extra application installed in our computer, we will be able to display the files downloaded with the *Internet Explorer* browser but, however, we may find problems trying to do it the other way round.

In relation to the idea of **file cleaning** within corpus linguistics which is, as mentioned earlier, one of the methods used for the analysis of our corpus, only the files in TXT format should be taken into account. In these files, as we have already mentioned, all the information displayed on the screen is transformed into text-only data. That means that, for example, all the advertisements or hyperlinks present in the online version of the webpage will be also present in the text-only version as long as they have some sort of linguistic elements in them. Following this idea, any other source of information in relation to colour, layout, font, size or images is lost. This actually provides a gap between the information provided by the MHTML files and the TXT files. When dealing with the idea of file cleaning, we actually faced two options. On the one hand, we had the option of cleaning all the TXT files in order to eliminate all the adjacent information and just keep the data contained within the body of the discussions in each thread. On the other hand, contrarily, we had the option of not cleaning the files and leaving all the information contained in the webpage for its

processing through corpus linguistics tools. In order not to distort or eliminate more information from the TXT files, apart from the multimodal one, we decided not to clean the files in this format. Even though certain elements which form part of the hyperstructure of the webpage and not the discussions within the forums themselves –as it is the name of each section, topic or thread; certain HTML symbols such as < >; or even some advertising texts –may appear as recurrent, we consider that those patterns should not be eliminated because the analysis could be thought to be biased. These elements, as we have mentioned, form part of the MHTML version of the data and, when we access the online version, what we actually get is the multimodal and global information of the web page. As a result, we considered that not cleaning the TXT files will allow us, in a way, to have these elements present in the corpus linguistics processing and, therefore, provide a textual account of some multimodal patterns of discourse. At the same time, the impact of Internet-related linguistic terms –as it is the case of the recurrent appearance of terms such as *moderator*, *post* or *reply*– could at first be considered disturbing elements that may affect the discourse analysis intended here when corpus linguistics tools are first used in order to identify the most recurrent discursive patterns. Without a doubt, these terms form part of the discourse and the intrinsic rules of online discussions. These elements form part of the context and, therefore, in our opinion, they should not be eliminated. However, it is crucial to have this information in mind when critically and qualitatively analysing the quantitative information provided by corpus linguistics tools. These terms will be highly visible in our quantitative analysis but, in the light of our objective in this project, they remain rather unimportant. Apart from these reasons, we decided not to clean the TXT files because the elimination of certain data could prevent this corpus from being used in subsequent analyses of CMC as, for example, the Social Network Analysis (SNA, Herring 2009).

Regarding the **organisational structure** of our corpus, several ideas need to be mentioned that will ease the future analysis of such an extensive corpus. Being conscious of the immense amount of information that we had to manage, we decided to elaborate a plan to organise this information into a well-structured, efficient and reliable corpus. Our corpus is saved into a general folder called *Corpus*. Within this folder, we find an explaining document where all the methodological principles of the corpus and the information about the collection process have been summarised. Apart from that, within this folder we also find two sub-folders called *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*.

Within each of them, we find two more sub-folders called *Corpus CS / Mini-Corpus CS* and *Corpus MH / Mini-Corpus MH* respectively. As it can be inferred from their names, the first sub-folder, either *Corpus CS* or *Corpus MH*, contains all the active discussion threads that have been found during the months of May, June and July 2011 within the topics of sex and relationships. On the other hand, the sub-folders *Mini-Corpus CS* and *Mini-Corpus MH* were created once all the TXT files within each corpus were scrutinised and analysed through corpus linguistics tools (*Antconc*). This quantitative stage gave us specific linguistic and numerical information about the most recurrent and representative linguistic items and threads within each corpus. This, as we mentioned earlier, was considered as an objective criterion that allowed us to delimit our corpus to the most recurrent patterns of discourse and, therefore, carry out a qualitative analysis of the most representative discursive elements and threads of our corpus. We will present this information more in detail in a further section of this chapter where the specific procedure used to fence in our corpus into our mini-corpus will be explained.

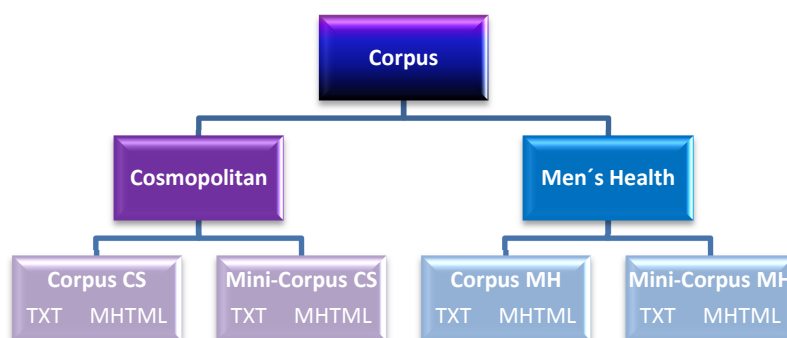


Figure 6. Corpus Structure

Finally, it is very important to mention the **naming system** that has been followed in order to organise our corpus. This, at the same time, will facilitate the task of trying to identify a specific text for specific purposes. Both within the sub-folders of *Corpus CS / Mini-Corpus CS* and *Corpus MH / Mini-Corpus MH*, we find the text files that form our corpus, both in TXT and MHTML. The naming system for both file formats has been the same so that the same text can be easily found in its two formats if a contrastive analysis may be desired. Different linguistic labels have been used in this naming system. On the one hand, *CS / MH* are used to refer to the name of the online gendered magazine within which the specific forums are located. On the other hand, *SEX / REL* are used to indicate the specific topic we are dealing with in each forum.

Following these labels, the name of the thread is written in lower-case. If more than one page is found within a specific thread, they will be numbered next to the thread title. Finally, the label *THREAD*, again in capitals, appears at the end of the name in order to indicate that we are actually facing a thread and not a topic section. Let's see some examples:

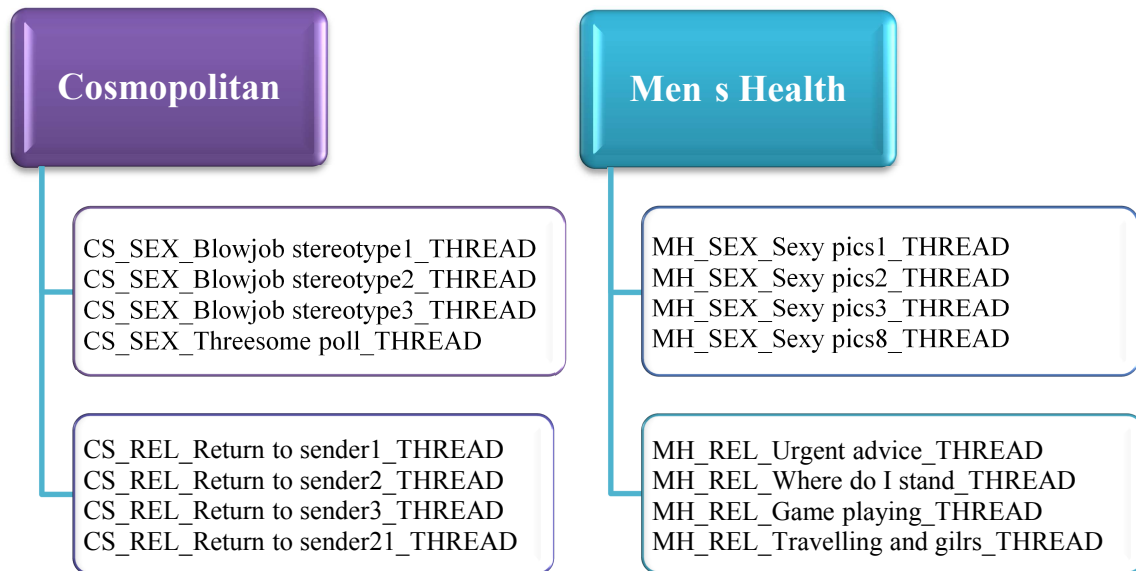


Figure 7. Naming system

### 4.3. Corpus Structure and Characterisation

Being able to analyse how hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity are being created at an institutional level and how these hegemonic and institutional constructions are negotiated in context at a local level is one of the main advantages offered by this project. As we have already stated in Chapter 2, gendered lifestyle magazines can be claimed to be characterised by the construction and transmission of hegemonic and unequal gender constructions by means of subtle and indirect linguistic and multimodal mechanisms. As a starting point, therefore, it is important to describe what the hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity created by the gendered magazines selected for this project are, that is, *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*. In so doing, we will be able to form a panoramic view of what the main discourses on gender promulgated by these publications are. Later on, we will proceed to the explanation and description of the specific online forums of these two publications and how, even their hyperstructure, conforms to the gender discourses promulgated by the institutional

framework to which they are ascribed. Following, the next chapter in this study will offer a detailed analysis of how the hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity promulgated by these publications are negotiated at the local level of specific discussion forums by looking especially at the use of indirect forms of linguistic sexism.

#### 4.3.1. *Cosmopolitan*

It is not difficult to find academic research in the field of gender identities and media that explicitly take *Cosmopolitan* as their main object of study (see Machin and Thornborrow 2003, Frederick *et al.* 2005, Alabarta 2005, Farvid and Braun 2006, Del-Teso-Craviotto 2006, Johnson 2009, Motschenbacher 2009). Nowadays, *Cosmopolitan* is one of the fifteen publications owned by *Hearst Corporation* –twelve of them aimed at women– (Johnson 2009). It was founded in 1886 as a magazine for upper-class families and perfect housewives whose main concerns were the domestic chores and family issues (Alabarta 2005). In the 1960s, Helen Gurley Brown transformed the publication into a selling brand that had a great impact on women’s self-perception (Machin and Thornborrow 2003). Up to that moment, women had been presented, as we saw in Chapter 2, as related and constrained to the domestic sphere but, from this moment onwards, which coincides with the outburst of the feminist movement, women started to be seen as human being having their own desires, fantasies and needs. It was first published in Britain in 1972 and the motto of the *Fun, Fearless Female* and the image of the *Cosmo Girl* started to take form (Machin and Thornborrow 2003). By 1996, when Helen Gurley Brown decided to leave the post, *Cosmopolitan* was already “number six newsstand sales among 11,475 magazines published and number one for the 16th straight year at college campus bookstores” (Alabarta 2005: 90). Nowadays, *Cosmopolitan* can still be considered one of the most widely read women’s magazine around the globe having a “readership of 16 million women, and 89% of them are between the ages of 18 and 49” (Frederick *et al.* 2005: 82). Actually, *Cosmopolitan* can be claimed to be more than a simple magazine, it can be considered an international brand that is present in more than 40 countries and 25 languages but, at the same time, it can be claimed to be a lifestyle in its own right, “its upbeat style present in the coverage of male-female relationships, careers, personal growth, beauty care secrets and latest fashion (among others) accounts for this” (Alabarta 2005: 90).

The studies that analyse the relationships between gender identities and discourse in *Cosmopolitan* usually do it from a feminist perspective, as in our case. From this standpoint, the main ideas concerning the hegemonic forms of femininity and masculinity promulgated by this publication are related to a fantasy world which is manifested through the use of linguistic and visual mechanisms that display an image of women's agency mainly through sex and consumerism (Machin and Thornborrow 2003). This, in turn, produces the virtual conception of community and alignment to the *Cosmo* brand which, in fact, helps maintain the idea of fantasy and playfulness. This fact, in itself, could be understood as an act of indirect sexism in which women's self-image is represented and connected to traditional and unequal gender stereotypes –such as relying on sexual practices and social manipulation rather than on their intelligence to move through the world– under the mask of a fantasy world in which having fun is the only *harmless* objective.

In this light, as Del-Teso-Craviotto (2006) claims, *Cosmopolitan* is thought to incorporate both traditional and progressive ideas in relation to gender and gender identities. This can be seen, for example, in the publication's almost exclusive focus on heterosexuality. Although this can be clearly considered a traditional conception of gender relations, somehow it is disguised by the magazine's focus on women's independence and agency within those relationships. Women are generally portrayed in transgressive situations where they are active sexual agents or rather they achieve power in other fields of their lives, such as work or financial issues, by means of sexual manoeuvring. In so doing, this publication, although trying to project a new image of women as independent and open to new ideas, it is actually supporting traditional gender ideologies such as heterosexuality, long term relationships or the submissive and indulgent role of women in a relationship.

In the case of the gender ideology surrounding issues of sex and relationships, *Cosmopolitan*, as we mentioned earlier, highly prioritises heterosexuality and, within it, male sexuality. This is so because *real sex* is thought to be penetrative and orgasms are considered to be essential in order to enjoy a pleasurable sexuality. Nevertheless, within this emphasis on traditional hegemonic forms of understanding human relations and sexuality, multiple and contradictory accounts of male and female sexualities are presented (Farvid and Braun 2006).

On the one hand, men are overwhelmingly presented as women's target or objective, and therefore, as their main source of fear, stress, anxiety or trauma. In this

way, men are also depicted as needing great sex to be satisfied and, therefore, they are thought to be easily aroused and manipulated by means of sexual tricks up to the point in which they cannot be made responsible for any sexual infidelity. At the same time, men are considered to be interested in women's pleasure and enjoyment only when that is directly linked to their ego as perfect lovers, that is, explosive orgasms are expected to be the only communicative response men need in order to know if they have succeeded in bed and, therefore, in their favourite territory.

On the other hand, women are globally depicted as in great need of developing amazing sexual skills that will allow them to find and keep the perfect man. In so doing, consumerism is especially relevant to acquire the necessary products or pieces of advice that will transform common women into attractive goddesses that will be able to obtain their main objective in life, a man to have a stable relationship with. At the same time, women are represented as empowered by their active sexuality and independence. They are thought to be the ones who decide which man gets into their lives but on the condition that a man gets into their lives because, when time goes by and this is not the case, stress and anxiety start governing their lives. As a result, sexuality and consumerism are presented as the solution to men's sexual and women's relational desires.

These ideas and varied accounts of male and female sexuality and gender identities in *Cosmopolitan*, of course, are not only present in articles or textual material, visual elements such as images colours, harmony, abstraction, motion, agency or display do also have a significant role in promulgating these gender ideologies (Machin and Thornborrow 2003, Alabarta 2005).

These often self-contradictory models, however, are not presented as realistic but as playful fantasies and, therefore, *Cosmopolitan* can be said to blend these contradictions in a creative way to produce a brand (Caldas-Coulthard 1996a, Machin and Thornborrow 2003). In other words, these gender constructions "can work to naturalise and normalise perceived behaviour differences between men and women" (Farvid and Braun 2006: 303) and, therefore, to routinize unequal gender relations and sexist attitudes. On this ground, we can observe how traditional and unequal gender ideologies are still prevalent in this publication, men and women's sexuality and ways of relating are presented as opposite but complementary. What is new, in a way, is that those traditional and conservative ideas are transmitted by means of subtle and more



indirect linguistic and multimodal elements that prevent the audience from attacking and rejecting the publication on the grounds of its supposed conservatism.

#### 4.3.2. *Men's Health*

In the same way that *Cosmopolitan* has attracted massive attention from scholars interested in the study of gender ideologies and gender identities and their relation or negotiation in the mass media, *Men's Health* can be considered to be its male counterpart (see Alexander 2003, Gill 2003, Stibbe 2004, Frederick *et al.* 2005, Gregorio-Godeo 2006, Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza 2007, Johnson 2009, Motschenbacher 2009, Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010).

As we mentioned in Chapter 2, gendered lifestyle magazines aimed at men appeared onto the stage around the 1990s, when the interest in the emergence of new men's identities started to be visible. *Men's Health*, launched in 1987 (Alexander 2003), is one of the 8 titles –related to health and environmental topics– owned by Rodale Incorporated (Johnson 2009). “The majority of *Men's Health's* readers are men (85%), and the majority (71%) are between the ages of 18 and 44” (Frederick *et al.* 2005: 82), they can generally be considered to be well-educated and having a middle-class income (Alexander 2003).

In this way, we can observe how *Men's Health*, in fact, represents the male counterpart of *Cosmopolitan*. This, together with the web search described previously in section 4.2.1 of this chapter, and the hyperstructural similarities that will be explained in the next part of it, sustain our selection of these two publications for our research objectives.

As it was the case of the appearance or, better said, the transformation of *Cosmopolitan* in the 1960s to adapt to the new social changes that affected women, “*Men's Health* serves as a historical artefact of the early-twenty-first century in terms of the problematic of masculinity faced by well-educated, middle-class men in an era of changing gender norms” (Alexander 2003: 540). In this light, it is not surprising that “*Men's Health* magazine's goal is explicitly to shape the reader's views of masculinity so as to transform modern men into postmodern consumers. In other words, male gender role resocialization is the product” (Alexander 2003: 540).

Therefore, as it is the case with women's gendered lifestyle magazines, these publications directed at a male audience are in fact based on stereotypical conceptions

of hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity in order to achieve their main objective and, consequently, the topics and discourses present in them will be accordingly related. In this way, it is important to mention how in men's lifestyle magazines and, particularly, in the case of *Men's Health*, "there are two main discourses that intertwine the whole throughout the magazine, the discourse of medical science and the discourse of the 'buddy'" who "acts as an intermediary, explaining and interpreting medical science for the reader" (Stibbe 2004: 36). This is so because, unlike women's gendered magazines, lifestyle publications aimed at a male audience need to rely on scientific and reasonable arguments that will move men into the consumerist sphere which, up to that moment, was almost reserved to women.

At the same time, as it happens with *Cosmopolitan*, varied and different male and female gender and sexual identities can be observed in *Men's Health*. However, one aspect that has strongly called our attention is the fact that, unlike the studies that focus on *Cosmopolitan*, studies centred on *Men's Health*, or other male gendered lifestyle magazines, tend to focus almost exclusively on men's gender and sexual identity leaving aside the role of women in these publications. Nevertheless, from a critical discourse perspective, the assumed female gender and sexual identities present in this publication can be inferred, without much effort, on the part of the readers and interpreters.

On the one hand, Stibbe (2004) suggests that *Men's Health* promotes new forms of hegemonic masculinities that may result extremely harmful for men's physical and mental health. Stibbe (2004) talks about six categories or hegemonic forms of masculinity present in this publication: the bodybuilder, the meat eater, the beer drinker, the convenience food eater, the sexual champion and the television watcher. In order to fit into the new hegemonic forms of masculinity promoted by this magazine, men must adhere to these images or stereotypes which, in turn, are their main cause of anxiety. "Evidence is presented that suggests that *Men's Health* magazine, while giving abundant health advice, does so in a way that reproduces a type of hegemonic masculinity associated not with health but with a variety of negative health behaviors" (Stibbe 2004: 31). In so doing, as it was the case of *Cosmopolitan*, this publication can be considered to be based on the premise of subtle and indirect forms of sexism that, although seen as progressive at a first sight, they are in fact tricks and new discourses used for the maintenance of gender inequality.

In this sense, it can be claimed that in *Men's Health*, contrary to more traditional forms of masculinity, men are usually depicted as highly interested in their physical appearance. In fact, topics related to health and dietary issues are rather prevalent and they coexist with more traditional male concerns such as physical strength or power (Alabarta 2005, Ricciardelli *et al.* 2010), which can be considered symbols that signify male social dominance over women. In its printed form, *Men's Health* deals with physical appearance in different section of the publication such as the front cover, cover stories, features, advertisements or problem pages (Alexander 2003). Men are expected to be well-toned but not over-muscled. Nevertheless, as Frederick *et al.* (2005) suggest, muscularity, which is a traditional male concern, is depicted differently in women's and men's publications and, just as thinness is overestimated in women's publications, muscularity is given too much credit in men's publications. In other words, "the media fuels gender-specific prestige competition involving body form, enhancing a runaway process through which male body ideals diverge from women's preferences" (Frederick *et al.* 2005: 85) and the other way round. This, as it was the case with *Cosmopolitan*, places these publications as perfect loci for advertisements and consumerist propaganda that create a sense of community and commonness. As it is the case in women's gendered lifestyle magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, which feature domestic or beauty products because they are thought to be women's products, men's gendered publications, as it is the case of *Men's Health*, bear a strong connection to designer clothing, automobiles or gadgets, which, as long as they are connected to brands, serve the purpose of representing symbols of male success. In this sense, as it was the case with *Cosmopolitan*, "branded masculinity in *Men's Health* affects the reader by constructing a well-toned body, a fashion sense, and the appearance of financial success as the necessary 'products' required by educated, middle-class men today" (Alexander 2003: 551). This, from a feminist perspective, should in fact be labelled as sexism because, as it is the case with dangerous forms of hegemonic femininity, these new masculine gender constructions do in fact reproduce harmful practices that introduce men into the consumerist wheel but also into the beauty mystique and its tramps.

At the same time, these ideas lead us to think about the new forms of hegemonic masculinity promoted by *Men's Health* as highly fitting into the category of the *New Man* described in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.2. The interest of men's lifestyle magazines in physical appearance, as we mentioned earlier, is a feature that places them quite close to their female counterpart. In fact, this topic is related, as it happens in women's

magazines, to important fields for gender studies, those of sex and relationships. If men are expected to take great care of their body and appearance it is not just for their benefit or enjoyment, men are expected to be attractive enough to catch women's attention. As Alexander (2003) claims, the relevance of the word *sex* in this publication can be a referent to suggest that men's emphasis on their bodies is in fact the way to achieve highly satisfactory and dynamic sexual activities. In fact, this is the reason why we are claiming here that, instead of running away from sexist attitudes regarding gender relations, what current gendered lifestyle magazines are doing is in fact driving closer to this. In fact, men are not only expected to be conscious about the importance of their appearance, but also about their new roles in society. In this publication, men are expected to make the perfect partner for the new liberated and modern woman. As a result, explicit or overt sexism is considered to be non-existent in this kind of publications that promote new forms of hegemonic masculinity, as it is the case of *Men's Health*. Nevertheless, what is clear is the underlying sexist attitudes and ideological agendas that still permeate the discourse of gendered magazines.

On the other hand, and based on the fact that, as far as we are concerned, there are no explicit accounts of the role of women within men's publications, and more precisely, in the case of *Men's Health*, what can be inferred from the information provided so far is the fact that female gender and sexual identities would, therefore, be related to the hegemonic male ideals presented by the publication. For example, as we mentioned earlier, physical appearance should be one of the main concerns of the new man presented by this publication. In the same direction, women are also expected to work out their physical appearance in order to be attractive to men. In a way, we can suggest that women can be claimed to become status symbols, such as those represented by cars or clothes' brands, since the physical appearance of the woman may determine the value of the man. In this way, we could also suggest that the image of the *New Man* promoted by the publication does also sustain the image of the modern and independent woman promoted by many women's lifestyle magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*. This implies that men would expect women to be independent and open to new and modern ideas, especially those related to sex and relationships.

Again, what is especially relevant in the light of *Men's Health* is the fact that, as it happens with *Cosmopolitan*, both progressive and traditional ideological agendas melt into a product whose main aim is that of selling as many issues as possible and opening a market for branded products. In so doing, subtle and indirect sexist discourses are

being promoted that maintain gender differences and inequalities in the light of preserving opposite and conflicting grounds. In turn, this enables the market to continue producing products and discourses to try to overcome those differences and, in theory, bring genders together.

#### 4.3.3. *Cosmopolitan and Men's Health online forums: macroscopic structures*

As we have seen in sections 4.2.1, 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, the reasons for choosing *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* are backed up on the basis of their comparative nature. As we mentioned earlier, these publications have been selected taking into account their salience and representativeness within their gender (gendered lifestyle magazines), their popularity (supported by a web search) and the gender of their readership (mainly [heterosexual] women and men from the U.K.). These two publications, at the same time, coincide in the emphasis they place on the importance given to personal care and the self-image in today's society (Motschenbacher 2009).

Apart from these criteria, the fact of marking the boundaries of our options around these two publications is also determined by their similar hyperstructure or macroscopic structure, that is, their organisation and even the visual display of both publications in relation to their online formats.

What we are going to do in this section of Chapter 4 is describe and explain the macroscopic structure of the online versions of both *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*. In so doing, we will be able to draw a panoramic image of the composition and main discourses and sections within these two online publications. As we have been claiming, among all the sections of these publications our main focus of attention will be devoted to the online discussion forums ascribed to them. In this line of action, the following section of this chapter will be devoted to explain the microscopic structure of the online discussion forums in both publications.

We will start by illustrating and describing in detail the macroscopic structure of the chosen magazine aimed at women, *Cosmopolitan*. As it can be observed, the screenshots of Figure 8, taken on a random day, do visually show the different sections of the cover, main page or home page of the online version of the women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*. Its structure, main discourses and some multimodal elements are attractively presented to the user.

# COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK

The screenshot shows the homepage of Cosmopolitan.co.uk. At the top, there's a banner for LISBOA with the text 'uma experiência personal'. Below that is the main navigation bar with categories: HOME, LOVE & SEX, MEN, FASHION, HAIR & BEAUTY, LIFESTYLE, TV, CAMPUS, DATING, BLOGS, FORUMS, SHOP, DIRECTORY. A search bar is also present. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Hot Right Now:** Features a 'Top Stories' section with a 'FLASHBACK!' article about Primark's holiday wardrobe, an article about Jessie J in ASOS, and an article about Chris and Liam Hemsworth.
- Join us Here:** Includes social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email, and a 'Give yourself a treat from head to toe' advertisement for Argos.
- Latest Forums:** Lists recent forum posts such as 'Re: Suspicious?', 'Re: gf asked out by scripted reality tv person', and 'Re: benefits'.
- Multimodal elements:** A carousel of 'Cosmo Latest' articles including 'Girls on film?', 'Cosmo reviews: The Great Escape 2012', and 'MIC star Gabriella Ellis gets colourful'.
- Blogs:** A 'Cosmo Bloggers' section with articles like 'The nightmare wedding guest', 'Finding the perfect pair of...', and 'Wears Holly'.
- Celebrity Gossip:** A section with articles like 'Cameron clears up JLo feud rumours', 'President Obama teases David...', and 'Jennifer Aniston has reportedly sent Brad and Angelina flowers'.
- Galleries:** A section with image galleries, including one for Primark's holiday wardrobe.
- Advertisements:** A 'Must-see Video' section and a 'Cosmo readers recommend' section with a poll about exes.

Sections

Direct access to the latest entries in the forums

Multimodal elements

Blogs

Advertisements

Multimodal elements

Advertisements and offers

**Joystick Joyride**  
Take things up a gear

**READ MORE**

**SNEAK PEEK**  
June Cosmopolitan out now!

**Jessie J looks awesome in...**  
You've seen it on the stars; now shop it for a...

**New in store this week**  
Shop our fun fashion finds set to put a stylish...

**See latest galleries**

**Competitions & Offers** [View all](#)

Bag yourself £3,000 worth of Primark bargains with this fabulous giveaway! [Enter Competition >](#)

**Horoscopes**

Choose your star sign

Aries **READ NOW**

**Pisces**  
Those who are most compassionate and keyed in to your situation are also the furthest away or apart from you. How mad is that? But when the time is right you can reconnect.

**JOIN COSMO...**  
Get the latest celebrity gossip  
Win heaps of prizes  
Chat to other Cosmo girls

**Promotion**

**The latest beauty news, tips and top buys**  
The best beauty advice is just a click away

**Cosmo click fixes**  
Get shopping with Cosmo's hot new fashion finds...

**Cosmo Loves**

FLASHBACK!

Primark have your holiday wardrobe covered!

Jessie J looks awesome in ASOS

New in store this week

Who's sexier? Chris OR Liam Hemsworth?

Celebs do gothic glam!

Check out Kristen Stewart's best looks...

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<p><b>Love &amp; Sex</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Man Text Decoder</li> <li>Cosmosutra</li> <li>Sex tips</li> <li>Cosmo dating guide</li> <li>Relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Men</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boyfriend wars</li> <li>Centrefolds</li> <li>Inside his mind</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fashion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fashion news</li> <li>Celebrity trends</li> <li>Love it or loathe it</li> <li>Fashion galleries</li> <li>Fashion videos</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hair &amp; Beauty</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hair &amp; beauty news</li> <li>Beauty makeover tool</li> <li>Luxe for less</li> <li>Beauty how to videos</li> <li>Hair trends</li> <li>Beauty trends</li> <li>Cosmo Beauty Awards</li> <li>Cosmo Fragrance Awards</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lifestyle</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diet &amp; fitness</li> <li>Horoscopes</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Cosmo quizzes</li> <li>Cash &amp; careers</li> <li>Ultimate Women</li> </ul>	<p><b>TV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fashion</li> <li>Hair &amp; beauty</li> <li>Men</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Love &amp; Sex</li> </ul>
<p><b>CAMPUS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Fashion &amp; Beauty</li> <li>Sex &amp; men</li> <li>Student life</li> <li>Cash &amp; careers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dating</b></p>	<p><b>Blogs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cosmo beauty blog</li> <li>Beauty and the backpack</li> <li>What Cosmo's wearing...</li> <li>Sex and the Cosmo girls</li> <li>Miss Cosmo</li> <li>The Wedding Dress Diet</li> <li>The Cosmo Intern Blog</li> <li>Personal stylists</li> <li>Fashion Fox Blog</li> <li>Cosmopolitan Blog Awards 2011</li> </ul>	<p><b>Forums</b></p>	<p><b>Shop</b></p>	<p><b>Directory</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and Beauty</li> <li>Fashion</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Recruitment</li> <li>Courses</li> <li>Horoscopes &amp; Tarot</li> <li>Gifts</li> </ul>

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Direct access to the sections

Figure 8. Cosmopolitan Home page

It is important for our purpose to observe how, from a global approximation to this online space, communication among users is strongly encouraged by means of the visual weight given to both forums and blogs. At the same time, the prominence of multimodal gender stereotypes is also remarkable in this environment.



# COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY

- Man Text Decoder
- Cosmosutra
- Sex Tips
- Cosmo Dating Guide
- Relationships
- Competitions & Offers

Have An Orgasm - It's Good For You!

Cosmo's Rules Of Sexting

Join us Here

Facebook | Twitter | Email

Wedding dress on SALE

BUY NOW

**CELEB HAIR MARES!**  
See the celebrity hair DON'Ts

1 2 3 4 5

---

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY

- Boyfriend Wars
- Centrefolds
- Inside His Mind
- Competitions & Offers

Cosmo's June Centrefold: Footballer Matt Jarvis

Say Hel-Lo To The Hot Hemsworth Brothers. Who's Your Fave?

Join us Here

Facebook | Twitter | Email

Wedding dress on SALE

BUY NOW

**Exclusive!**  
See The Saturdays on their Cosmo cover shoot

1 2 3 4 5

---

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY

- Fashion News
- Celebrity Trends
- Love It Or Loathe It
- Fashion Galleries
- Fashion Videos
- Competitions & Offers

Celebs Do Gothic Glam!

Look At Primark's Hot Summer Buys!

Join us Here

Facebook | Twitter | Email

Wedding dress on SALE

BUY NOW

**stars... CANNES 2012**

1 2 3 4 5

---

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY

- Hair & Beauty News
- Beauty Makeover Tool
- Luxe For Less
- Beauty How To Videos
- Hair Trends
- Beauty Trends
- Cosmo Beauty Awards
- Cosmo Fragrance Awards
- Competitions & Offers

Hot Hairstyles From Cannes 2012

Get Eva Longoria's Red Carpet Look!

Join us Here

Facebook | Twitter | Email

Wedding dress on SALE

BUY NOW


**BEST BEAUTY BUY**

Cosmo reviews the hot new products out this month

2



HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | **LIFESTYLE** | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY



**Which HEMSWORTH is HOTTER?**  
Let the battle of the brothers commence!

- Diet & Fitness
- Horoscopes
- Entertainment
- Cosmo Quizzes
- Cash & Careers
- Ultimate Women
- Competitions & Offers

**We use the T-WORD Do you?**

Are You Being Paid Enough? Join Our Wages War!


Plan The Perfect Girl's Night In!

We LOVE Kelly Brook's Cannes hair ▶  
Katy Perry is single again! ▶

**BUY NOW**

---

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | **LIFESTYLE** | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY



**CELEB HAIR MARES!**  
See the celebrity hair DON'Ts

- Fashion
- Hair & Beauty
- Men
- Entertainment
- Love & Sex
- Competitions & Offers

**Join us Here**


Wedding dress on SALE

**BUY NOW**

WATCH Florence Welch unleash her wild side! ▶  
We LOVE Kelly Brook's Cannes hair ▶  
Katy Perry is single again! ▶

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HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | **LIFESTYLE** | TV | **CAMPUS** | DATING | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY



**Exclusive!**  
See The Saturdays on their Cosmo cover shoot

- Student Fashion & Beauty
- Sex & Men
- Student Life
- Cash & Careers
- Competitions & Offers

**Join us Here**

Wedding dress on SALE

**BUY NOW**

WATCH Florence Welch unleash her wild side! ▶  
We LOVE Kelly Brook's Cannes hair ▶  
Katy Perry is single again! ▶

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HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | **LIFESTYLE** | TV | CAMPUS | **DATING** | BLOGS | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY

**Cosmo dating**

Whether you're looking for a bit of eye candy, a dishy date, or a hottie to call your own, we've got it all here at Cosmo Dating. Simply click JOIN NOW and get chatting, flirting and meeting hundreds of eligible bachelors straight away. With fantastic features such as recommended matches and advanced searching you're sure to find yourself some hot totty!

**JOIN NOW** **MEMBER LOGIN**


in association with  
**MensHealth**

**Join us Here**

**MD Discovers How to Slow Your Skin's Aging**  
Free Report Reveals

---

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | **LIFESTYLE** | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | **BLOGS** | FORUMS | SHOP | DIRECTORY



**BEST BEAUTY BUYS**  
Cosmo reviews the hot new products out this month

**Hot Right Now**

**Top Stories**

- Cannes 2012 Day Four ▶
- Get Cheryl's hot Hudson jeans! ▶
- WATCH Florence Welch unleash her wild side! ▶
- We LOVE Kelly Brook's Cannes hair ▶
- Katy Perry is single again! ▶

- Cosmo Beauty Blog
- Beauty And The Backpack
- What Cosmo's Wearing...
- Sex And The Cosmo Girls
- Miss Cosmo
- The Wedding Dress Diet
- The Cosmo Intern Blog
- Personal Stylists
- Fashion Fox Blog
- Cosmo's Guest Bloggers
- Cosmopolitan Blog Awards 2012

The screenshot displays the Cosmopolitan website's layout. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for HOME, LOVE & SEX, MEN, FASHION, HAIR & BEAUTY, LIFESTYLE, TV, CAMPUS, DATING, BLOGS, FORUMS, SHOP, and DIRECTORY. Below this, the 'FORUMS' section is prominent, featuring a 'Forum Home' link, a 'Forum RSS' icon, and a 'Join us Here' button. The 'Cosmopolitan Forums' area includes a 'Forum Jump' dropdown menu and a search bar. A sidebar on the right contains social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and a mail icon, along with a tip: '1 Tip for a tiny belly: Cut down a bit of your belly fat every day by following this'. Below the forums, a 'SHOP' section is visible, with a 'WELCOME TO THE SHOP' banner, a search bar, and a 'Camping & Travel Equipment' advertisement. The 'Top Stories' section features a 'Hot Right Now' button and a list of articles, including 'Cannes 2012 Day Four', 'Get Cheryl's hot Hudson jeans!', 'WATCH Florence Welch unleash her wild side!', 'We LOVE Kelly Brook's Cannes hair', and 'Katy Perry is single again!'. A 'Join us' section on the right offers a dropdown menu with options like Health And Beauty, Fashion, Entertainment, Recruitment, Courses, Horoscopes & Tarot, and Gifts. The page also includes a 'BACK TO MAIN SITE' link and a 'SEARCH SHOPPING' button.

Figure 9. *Cosmopolitan's* Macroscopic Structure

Figure 9 takes a step further and more specifically focuses on *Cosmopolitan's* macroscopic structure or main sections. As it can be observed, the online version of *Cosmopolitan* perfectly fits into the description we made of the printed version of the publication in 4.3.1. The main sections of the magazine spin around what are considered to be typical female gendered topics such as, beauty, men, love, sex, fashion or communication. Within each section, we find different sub-sections that help delimit which ideas or discourses are relevant for women interacting in this community of practice and participating in the *Cosmo World*. For example, within the *Love & Sex* section, the sub-sections *Men Text Decoder*, *Cosmosutra* or *Sex Tips* can be claimed to draw a picture of what women are expected to do and aim at in a personal or sexual relationship. Actually, first of all, the idea that personal or sexual relationships must be

present in the lives of women participating in this community is rather explicit. Within this idea, notions about how to get a man are implicit within the *Men Text Decoder*, *Cosmosutra* or *Sex Tips* sub-sections, which can be inferred to be created in order to present *Cosmopolitan's* readers with the main ideas they should follow in order to become the perfect man-hunter. Similar ideas can be applied if we look carefully to the titles within each section of the online version of *Cosmopolitan*. A women's gendered discourse is created based on ideas of CMC, modernity and globalisation but which is, in fact, structured around rather traditional and gendered stereotypes and ideas.

As we mentioned earlier, the section in which we are going to focus our research is that of online discussion forums. This, as we mentioned earlier, can have their origins in the more traditional problem pages present in the printed version of these publications. There, habitual readers could send their doubts, fears or comments expecting a reply from a board of experts. Online discussion forums can be claimed to serve the same communicative function but extended to the whole community that participates in the discourse of the publication. Online discussion forums, as we mentioned in 2.2.2., are a virtual space in which members of a specific community of practice can freely interact by means of CMC. In the case of the online discussion forum within the online version of *Cosmopolitan*, it is structured around three main sections (see Appendix I): *General*, *Messageboards* and *Chatroom Essentials*<sup>9</sup>. Within each main section, different topics are found which create the general image of the main discourses dealt with by this specific community of practice in their online interaction. As we mentioned earlier, our specific interest in this project is placed in two concrete topics within the *Messageboards* section, those of sex and relationships.

As it can be observed in Appendix I –without taking into account the topic of *General* which, as it can be inferred, is the most numerous one attending to its intrinsic heterogeneity–, the topics of *Sex* and *Relationships* are actually the two most numerous topics in relation to the number of discussions within each of them. By the beginning of our collection process, the topic of *Sex* had 21.226 open discussions while the topic of *Relationships* consisted of 36.991 open discussions. Obviously, the tremendous amount of information contained only within these two topics is overwhelming. Since our

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<sup>9</sup> The structure presented in Appendix I is the one we could find at the time of the collection process. Nowadays, most of the topics can be found, although some of them have been changed or eliminated. At the same time, they are structured under different sections or categories, namely those of *Cosmo Essentials*, *Life* and *Community Essentials*. These changes can be attributed to the fast-changing and dynamic nature of the Internet genres and their adaptability to users' intentions, likes and objectives.

objective is to carry out a FCDA of this online environment in order to discern how indirect linguistic sexism is used and negotiated in relation to gender identity performance, we decided to fence in our corpus by a temporal sampling that complemented the thematic one already carried out.

As we mentioned earlier, we decided to mark the contour lines around the months of May, June and July 2011, that is, those months just preceding the collection process. Appendix II shows all the active discussions or threads (2.155) contained within the selected period (May, June, July 2011) and the chosen topics (sex and relationships) within this online discussion forum. Appendix II presents the name of all the 652 discussion threads within the topic of *Sex* and the 1.503 discussion threads within the topic of *Relationships* that were active during the selected three-month period. Moreover, information is offered about the name or nick-name of the user that started the discussion and the name or nick-name of the last person that contributed to that discussion together with the number of views and replies that the discussion received. It is precisely the date of the last contributor the one that determined our starting point. As we explained earlier, those threads could have been started in a date out of our temporal sampling criteria. Nevertheless, as it is a technical aspect that escapes our control, the whole thread was saved in order to maintain the structure and coherence of the discussion.

Apart from these quantitative data, which are especially relevant to draw a general picture of the linguistic and discursive material present in our *Cosmopolitan* corpus, we find it also especially relevant to re-take Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme in order to provide a broader overview of the whole CMD involved in this corpus. As we mentioned in 3.1.2., Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme is used to clarify social and technical aspects or factors that influence the texture of discourses in CMC.

In this particular case, the specific medium factors that may influence CMD in this specific online discussion forum are mentioned here in detail. Regarding synchronicity (M1), this specific online discussion forum is an asynchronous channel of communication that allows users to post and answer to comments at any time, that is, interlocutors do not need to be online at the same time in order to communicate because their interactions are uploaded to the forum's database and displayed online. This implies that the message transmission (M2) is 1-way because the technological devices do prevent interlocutors from simultaneously communicating when another interlocutor

is sending a message and, therefore, feedback can only be given a posteriori. Because of the huge forum's database, the persistence of transcript (M3) is rather extensive in terms of both the time and amount of data available online. In this particular case, the topic of *Sex* was started on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2006 and, by the time of the collection process it consisted of 1.415 pages with 15 discussions each. The topic of *Relationships*, on the other hand, was started on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2006 and it consisted of 2.689 pages with 15 discussions each. This, of course, provides a general overview of the monstrous amount of information and transcript available for discourse research. In relation to the size of message buffer (M4), that is, the total number of characters that the system allows interlocutors to use in a single message, as far as we are concerned, there are no restrictions. What is limited, however, is the number of channels of communication (M5) that this particular web site offers to its users. More precisely, *Cosmopolitan* forum users communicate mainly by means of textual, intertextual (links to other pages) and visual (images or videos) material. In relation to anonymous messaging (M6), private messaging (M7), filtering (M8) and quoting (M9), which refer to technological affordances of CMC systems by means of which users can engage in different interactional behaviours, the users of the forum of the online version of *Cosmopolitan* must join the community in order to participate. Users must log in whenever they want to intervene in a public discussion. However, the forum is a public space and, as we mentioned earlier, it is open to lurkers or people in search of information but who may not want to intervene in the discussions. For those who do, a quoting system is available that allows users to create coherent discussions and address specific interlocutors. Finally, in relation to the message format (M10), messages are, as we mentioned earlier, displayed in reverse chronological order, that is, newer posts are displayed first and a maximum amount of 15 entries, regardless of their size, are displayed per page within a single discussion.

On the other hand, the most relevant social factors that may affect the CMD in this online forum are mentioned here. Firstly, in relation to the participation structure (S1), it is crucial to mention that this is a public forum and that any person around the world can join the community and participate. This implies that membership is absolutely open, dynamic and almost unapproachable in terms of number, participation and permanence. In relation to participants' characteristics (S2), we may infer that the users of the online discussion forum of the online version of *Cosmopolitan* do, in a way, fit into the description of its readership, provided in sections 2.1.2 and 4.3.1. In very



general terms, although we may find interventions by male, female and gender-ambiguous individuals, we can claim that the majority of users in this forum are women between the age of 18 and 40-something who try to combine modern notions on professional and personal objectives and expectations with more traditional ideas on sex and relationships. Nevertheless, participants are only identifiable on the basis of their names or nicknames which, although they may display some telling identity features (Stommel 2008), they cannot be taken for granted in order to try to characterise an individual's identity. As we mentioned earlier, these norms and values are expected to be brought into the online communication. Regarding the purpose (S3) for communicating, as we mentioned earlier, in CMD it must be regarded as a double-faceted concept which may refer to the group purpose, that is, its reason for existence, but it may also refer to individuals' purposes for communicating. In this particular case, we could state that the group's purpose for communicating may be related to creating a sense of commonness, a space for free communication and a relaxed and comfortable environment in which users can participate in order to express their main doubts, fears, opinions or ideas regarding particular subjects. This, of course, reveals that individuals' purposes for communicating may be as varied and numerous as the members of the community themselves. In relation to the main activities (S4), that is, the main discursive means or the form interactions take in particular communicative situations in order to obtain an objective, again, this is very difficult to quantify in such a vast corpus. However, after approaching our corpus from a general and global perspective, we can claim that asking questions, positioning doubts, expressing opinions, giving advice or telling personal stories can be said to be the main activities within this particular online discussion forum. In relation to the notions of topic and theme (S5), the contents that are appropriate within a communicative context at the group level are determined by the discussion itself. However, based on our selection criteria and the collection of discussions, we could suggest that ideas and notions about sex and relationships are the basis of the interactions contained in our specific corpus. Again, referring to the tone (S6) of the interaction, it cannot be done in general terms because the corpus is so extensive that generalising would not be fair. As a result, we would approach this aspect in detail whenever necessary during the analysis section itself. Moreover, as Stommel (2008) suggests

forums frequently have a list of forum rules (or netiquette), according to which certain styles of communication are either encouraged or inhibited. Moderators may check whether participants take these rules into account and intervene when necessary. Rules are likely to affect the interaction in terms of style or content, although it may be difficult to determine exactly how.

These norms (S7) on organisation, appropriateness and language are specified within the *Chatroom Essentials* section in the *Cosmopolitan* forum, more specifically in the topics of *Community Rules* (4 threads) and *Feedback & Help* (685 threads). What is especially relevant is the emphasis placed on the need to create a comfortable and useful resource for the forum users which must be based on the prohibition of any form of personal attack. Users under the age of 18 are (in theory) not allowed to use the forum. At the same time, it is important to mention that, although freedom of speech is defended, the *Cosmopolitan* forum moderators reserve the right to amend or remove the posts that do not abide by the rules of the community. Finally, the code (S8), that is, the language or language variety in which the interaction takes place is, as we mentioned earlier, British English on the whole. Nevertheless, since the Internet is an open-access space, any other varieties of English may be found.

All in all, the specific medium and social factors that govern the forum of the online version of *Cosmopolitan* may, in fact, help us delimit a mental image of the community of practice and the environment we are dealing with. This, together with the quantitative data provided so far, allows us to create a broad interpretation of the main characteristics of the local (online discussion forum) within the institutional (online gendered magazine).

Let us now focus on the description and explanation of the macroscopic structure of *Men's Health*. Following the explanation of *Cosmopolitan* macroscopic structure, we decided to present the screenshots of *Men's Health* main page or home page in the same way in order to be able to create a general overview of how this online publication is presented. The screenshots provide a panoramic image of the main structure, organisation, discourses and multimodal elements used to catch user's attention and present the information in an attractive way.

As it can be observed at the bottom of Figure 8 and Figure 10, both the online versions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* are produced by *Hearst Magazines UK*. Although their printed versions are published by different companies –*Hearts Corporation* and *Rodale Incorporated* respectively–, the online versions of both magazines are produced by the same company.

# Men's Health

The screenshot shows the Men's Health website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories like HOME, HEALTH, FITNESS, MUSCLE, SEX, NUTRITION, STYLE & GROOMING, WEIGHT LOSS, LIVING, VIDEO, and FORUM. Below this is a search bar and a 'Men's Health unlimited access' button. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'THE FOUR-WEEK 15-MINUTE WORKOUT BLITZ', 'RECIPE GENERATOR', 'WORKOUT GENERATOR', and 'STYLE ADVISOR'. A 'TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS' section lists items like '15-minute stability workout' and 'Make sweet stuffed peppers'. There are also 'LATEST ARTICLES' and 'LATEST GALLERIES' sections. The bottom of the page features a 'MH DATING LOUNGE' with a search form, 'LATEST BLOGS', and 'TWEETS'. The website is annotated with blue brackets and labels on the left and right sides.

Multimodal elements

Sections

Advertisements

Community

Articles

Advertisements and offers



**Multimodal elements and community**

**Direct access to the sections**

<b>HOME</b> Newsletter Blogs Competitions & Offers Latest Issue Subscribe Tools Shop MH Books Digital Edition	<b>HEALTH</b> Self diagnosis Smash stress Vices Heart health Energy boosters Brain training	<b>FITNESS</b> Sports training Adventure Running MH Challenges Cardio Injuries Survival of the Fittest Reebok ZigTech Challenge	<b>MUSCLE</b> Cover model Get great abs Build bigger muscles Quick muscle wins Weight-free workouts Supplements PT+ Building muscle	<b>SEX</b> Be the best in bed Boost your fertility Get more sex Girl galleries Read her mind Your penis MH Dating	<b>NUTRITION</b> Healthy eating tips Muscle fuel Superfoods Eat this, not that Recipes Drink
<b>STYLE &amp; GROOMING</b> Style tips Essentials Accessories Watches Eyewear Grooming Fragrance Hair care Grooming awards	<b>WEIGHT LOSS</b> Burn fat fast Diet plans Weight-loss shortcuts Delicious diet food Motivation	<b>LIVING</b> MH Men Gear Cars Travel Reviews Money	<b>VIDEO</b> Fitness & Muscle MH Events Adventure Style & Grooming Reebok ZigTech Challenge	<b>FORUM</b> Community	

**Men's Health** Contact | Privacy | Terms & Conditions | Advertising | Visit other Men's Health sites | Site Map | Popular Forum Threads  
The materials in this website are in no way intended to replace the professional medical care, advice, diagnosis or treatment of a doctor, qualified personal trainer, therapist, dietician or nutritionist  
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**HEARST magazines UK** All About Soap | All About You | Company | Cosmopolitan | Digital Spy | Elle | Elle Decoration | Esquire | Handbag | Harper's Bazaar | Inside Soap | Men's Health | Netdoctor | Psychologies | Red Online | Runner's World | Sugarscape | Triathlete's World | Zest

Figure 10. *Men's Health Home page*

*Hearst Magazines UK* was funded in 1910 as a subsidiary of *Hearts Corporation* in association with other publishers such as *Rodale Incorporated*. This is the reason why the online versions of these two publications, which share many hyperstructural similarities, are produced by the same company.

Figure 11, as it was the case with Figure 9, provides a more in-depth analysis of the main sections or the macroscopic structure of *Men's Health*. This online publication, again, perfectly matches the description we made of its printed counterpart in section 4.3.2. The main sections of this publication are organised around what are considered to be typical male gendered topics such as sport, fitness, sex, tools or gadgets together with more modern ideas on men and masculinities that match the figure of the *New Man* described before. For example, topics such as grooming, dieting or communication with other members of the same community of practice are also included within the hegemonic form of masculinity promulgated by this publication.

# Men'sHealth

HOME HEALTH FITNESS MUSCLE SEX NUTRITION STYLE & GROOMING WEIGHT LOSS LIVING VIDEO FORUM

NEWSLETTER | BLOGS | COMPETITIONS & OFFERS | LATEST ISSUE | SUBSCRIBE | TOOLS | SHOP MH | BOOKS | DIGITAL EDITION

← THE FOUR-WEEK 15-MINUTE WORKOUT BLITZ TRY IT NOW →

← RECIPE GENERATOR Protein-packed dishes in seconds →

← WORKOUT GENERATOR Find a new routine every day →

← STYLE ADVISOR Test your fashion sense →

**TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS**

1. 15-minute stability workout >
2. Make sweet stuffed peppers >
3. The five-point happiness plan >
4. Unlock your weight loss potential >

These lifts hit supporting muscles in your back and shoulders, preparing you to lift heavier. [Read More >](#)

Click to get your digital magazine now

HOME HEALTH FITNESS MUSCLE SEX NUTRITION STYLE & GROOMING WEIGHT LOSS LIVING VIDEO FORUM

SELF DIAGNOSIS | SMASH STRESS | VICES | HEART HEALTH | ENERGY BOOSTERS | BRAIN TRAINING

**HIGHLIGHTS**

1. The MH guide to bacteria >
2. Eliminate stress from your life >
3. Five signs you drink too much >
4. Who wants to live forever? >

Use these tips to make sure life never gets the better of you. [Read More >](#)

**Men'sHealth SURVIVAL of the FITTEST** SECURE YOUR PLACE SIGN UP TODAY

CLICK HERE OFFICIAL WATCH TISSOT

JOIN US HERE

f t e

HOME HEALTH FITNESS MUSCLE SEX NUTRITION STYLE & GROOMING WEIGHT LOSS LIVING VIDEO FORUM

SPORTS TRAINING | ADVENTURE | RUNNING | MH CHALLENGES | CARDIO | INJURIES | SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST | REEBOK ZIGTECH CHALLENGE

**HIGHLIGHTS**

1. The Manny Pacquiao workout >
2. The lazy man's triathlon plan >
3. 4 ways to beat muscle pain >
4. Gym exercises to make you a better runner >

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MH MEN GEAR CARS TRAVEL REVIEWS MONEY GIFT IDEAS COMPETITIONS

### HIGHLIGHTS

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3. How to negotiate a month off work >
4. The best bars in the UK >



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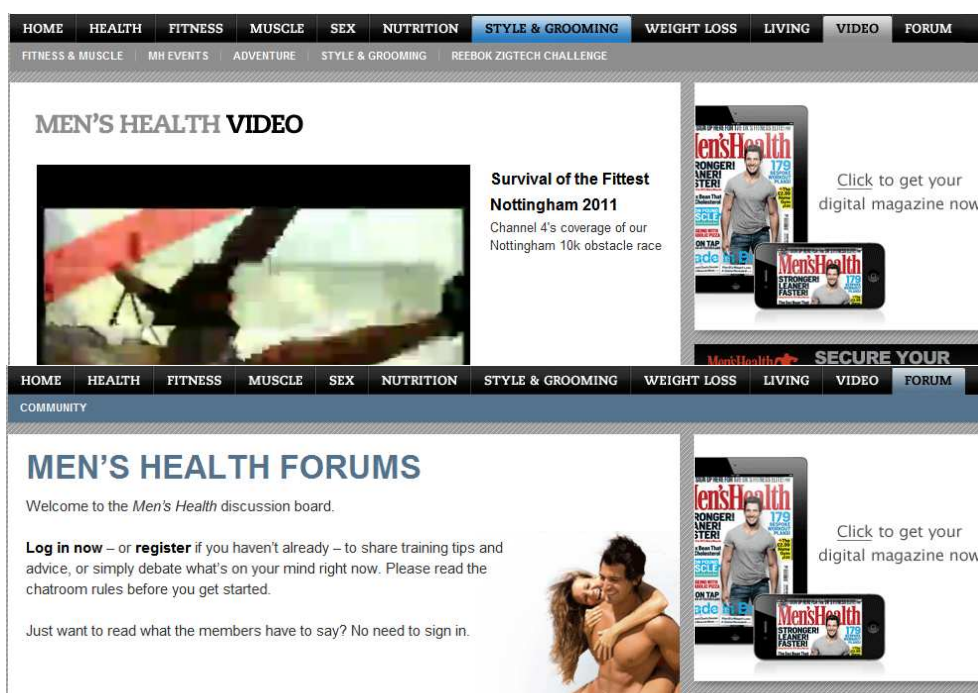



Figure 11. *Men's Health Macroscopic Structure*

As it was the case with *Cosmopolitan*, however, for this project we are only going to focus on the forum section. The online discussion forum within the online version of *Men's Health* is structured around three main sections (see Appendix III): *General*, *Men's Health News and Events* and *Discussion Boards*.

Again, different topics are found within each of the three forum sections that draw a general picture of what the main discourses negotiated by this specific cyber community of practice are. As we have claimed, our particular interest in this project is the analysis of the specific discourses on sex and relationships. However, these topics acquire connotative meanings within the *Men's Health* forum. Here, within the *Discussion Boards* section, we find two topics called *Exploring sex* and *Checking out the dating game*. Just from the beginning, certain difference can be observed in the way these two cyber communities of practice approach these gendered topics. On the one hand, the expression *Exploring sex* in *Men's Health*, in contrast to the topic of *Sex* in *Cosmopolitan*, moves forum users to expect certain attitudes or a particular environment. From our point of view –and based on general ideas from gender studies and personal experiences in which men may feel the need of being reasserted when entering a typical female space–, in this particular case, forum users are not invited to talk about sex, express their fears, posit their doubts or voice their concerns, instead, they are invited to explore, to go in depth into the study of a field that is of particular

relevance for them. In the same way, the expression *Checking out the dating game*, in contrast to that of *Relationships* in *Cosmopolitan*, may project the idea that these particular forum users are not asked to openly express their feelings but, simply, they are invited to have a look at the rules or particular examples of a specific game, that of personal relationships. This, of course, prevents forum users from feeling forced to intervene in a traditional female activity, that of exchanging opinions, advice or experiences on personal relationships. As it can be observed, the mere access to these two discourses –that of sex and relationships– is quite different within the *Cosmopolitan* and the *Men's Health* worlds. The entrance to these two discourses is already biased by the institutional framework of the online magazine and the hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity promulgated by them. Therefore, the fact of analysing, as it is our objective, how those institutional frameworks affect the negation of gender identities by means of the use of the specific resource of indirect linguistic sexism within these two cyber communities of practice would be of particular relevance both from a sociological and a linguistic perspective.

As it can be observed in Appendix III, the situation in this forum is different to that presented in *Cosmopolitan*. In this case, the topics of sex and relationships are not the most numerous ones. Actually, by the time we started our collection process, there were five topics that outnumbered the ones selected for this analysis: *Build bigger muscles* (37.781), *Just talk* (35.412), *Losing weight* (15.357), *Starting out* (14.573) and *Eating right* (11.234). Nevertheless, as we explained in Section 4.2.1, we believe that the thematic sampling criterion of focusing on the topics of sex and relationships provides our analysis with topical coherence and, therefore, the presentation of a perfectly suited set of data for the study of the negotiation of meaning. We consider that the topics of sex and relationships, because of their intrinsic connection to gender and gender ideology, will provide a perfect context in order to carry out our specific objective in this project, that is, the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of gender (in)equalities in CMC environments. More precisely, within *Men's Health* discussion forum, the topic of *Exploring sex* (7.726), contrary to the situation in *Cosmopolitan*, contained more topics than *Checking out the dating game* (5.770). This can lead us to think that the hegemonic form of masculinity projected by this online gendered magazine is, in a way, recreated in the local public space provided for its community of practice to interact. As we mentioned earlier, the figure of the *New Man* is characterised by a change in his focus of attention and a more *feminised* way of

living in which appearance and communication are essential in order to fulfil his role in society. This, in fact, is corroborated by the number of threads contained within the most numerous topics.

Again, the vast amount of information contained within the topics of sex and relationships, selected by means of thematic sampling criteria, as explained before, made it necessary for us to apply different and complementary sampling techniques in order to reduce our corpus even more so as to be able to carry out a qualitative FCDA. The procedure carried out in the *Cosmopolitan* corpus was also followed in order to scrutinise the *Men's Health* corpus under the same parameters. That is, this corpus was further fenced in according to a temporal criterion of three months (May, June and July 2011). This will allow us to discern how indirect linguistic sexism is used and negotiated from a qualitative perspective in relation to gender identity performance in this particular cyber community of practice.

Appendix IV presents all the active discussion or threads (131) within the selected topics and period in this forum. Appendix IV, as Appendix II did with *Cosmopolitan*, presents all the titles of the active discussion threads within the topic of sex (70) and the active discussions within the topic of relationships (61) during the selected three-month period. In the same way, information about the name or nickname of the creator and the last participant that contributed to each discussion is offered together with the total number of views and replies that each thread received.

As we did with the *Cosmopolitan* corpus, it is very important to apply Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme in order to provide a general and panoramic view of the CMD involved in this specific corpus. In the case of the medium factors that may influence the interaction in this CMC environment, we must note that they are exactly the same as those described for the *Cosmopolitan* forum<sup>10</sup>. This is so because, as we mentioned earlier, these two online environments are created by the same company and, therefore, they share the same medium factors which, additionally, prevents noise in our analysis.

However, when dealing with the social factors that may influence the interactions within this particular cyber community of practice, we find that these are

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<sup>10</sup> However, it is important to mention that the data in relation to the persistence of transcript (M3) is, obviously, different in terms of dates and numbers. In the case of the *Men's Health* corpus, the topic of sex was started on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2001 and by the time of the collection process it consisted of 516 pages with 15 discussions each, while the topic of relationships was started on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2001 and it consisted of 385 pages with 15 discussions each.

different in certain aspects to those present in the *Cosmopolitan* forum. Firstly, the participation structure (S1) can be said to be the same as that explained in the *Cosmopolitan* corpus description, that is, this forum is also open to any person who may have the required technical means and the desire to participate in this community. Again, this makes it almost impossible to refer to the number or permanence of participants in this forum. In the second place, however, participants' characteristics (S2) are specific to this cyber community of practice. The users of the *Men's Health* forum, as it happens with *Cosmopolitan* users, generally fit into the description of the publication's readership provided in sections 2.1.2. and 4.3.2. Generally speaking, we could claim that the majority of users of this forum are middle-class men between the age of 18 and 40-something who are willing to know about new hegemonic forms of masculinity that may fit into their conception of the world and its constant changes. In the third place, regarding the main purpose (S3) for communicating in this environment, as it was the case with the *Cosmopolitan* forum, the users of the *Men's Health* forum may have a general group purpose for communicating related to creating a sense of community and a comfortable and safe zone for interaction. Dealing with individuals' purposes, however, as it was the case with the *Cosmopolitan* forum, there may be as many purposes as individuals communicating and, therefore, more concrete analyses should be carried out in order to answer this question. Nevertheless, as it is not our main concern in this project, we will leave this question open for the moment. Fourthly, in relation to the main activities (S4) carried out in this environment, we can claim that they are very similar to those present in the *Cosmopolitan* forum. Expressing opinions, asking questions, giving advice or telling personal stories can be said to be the main interaction forms in this community of practice. However, we can also point out that providing scientific or technical information is also quite frequent in this discourse. Again, in relation to the main topics and themes (S5) present in this space, sex and relationships are, because of obvious reasons, the most representative ones. Regarding the tone (S6) of the interaction, it is important to mention that, as it is the case with the *Cosmopolitan* forum and trying to identify individual purposes for communicating, trying to determine the general tone of the interactions in our corpus is almost impossible. Every discussion or thread is developed within different communicative situations and, therefore, generalising becomes rather difficult in this sense. As with the case of communicative purposes, more detailed analyses should be carried out in order to identify the specific tone(s) used in each discussion but, as this escapes our purpose



in this project, we will leave this for further research. Regarding the norms (S7) of the *Men's Health* forum, these can be found within the *General* section, more specifically, within the topics *Discussion board rules* (266 threads) and *Talk about the website* (515 threads). As both online environments are produced by the same company, their rules and norms are virtually the same. The need to create a comfortable and useful communicative space is highlighted and specific prohibitions on language use and content are made explicit. Apart from that, the company reserves the right to delete, modify or republish any material made public on the forum. At the same time, it encourages users to report on any violation of the rules so that members feel also part of the controlling apparatus. Finally, as it was the case with the *Cosmopolitan* forum, one of the reasons for choosing this CMC environment was the language variety (S8) which, in general terms, and having in mind the world-wide access to the Internet, is supposed to be the majority, that is, British English.

With this information in mind, what we can conclude is that both the *Cosmopolitan* and the *Men's Health* forums, because of the company that produces them, share the same medium factors which, in turn, make it easier for us to analyse both spaces in a similar way. However, regarding the social factors, although some issues remain the same because of the similarities in the broadest sense of these two communities, there are certain specificities that are particular to each cyber community of practice, as we have seen.

The quantitative data provided so far, together with the description of the medium and social factors, help us draw a mental picture of the main features of these two cyber communities of practice. All in all, what we can claim is that they are similar in many aspects but, in fact, certain gendered features are salient. This may lead us to point at the fact that, certainly, the institutional framework does have an impact on the local space. Taking into account the quantitative data provided regarding the number of threads within each topic or the rank of those topics within the whole forum does, in fact, reflect what discourses are relevant for each community of practice. These, in fact, are influenced by the gendered space in which they interact and, in a way, this is reflected in the macroscopic structure of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* online discussion forums. Nevertheless, what we want to focus on is on how these main relevant discourses are negotiated within the local space by specific members of these cyber communities of practice. We will do so by means of the analysis of the resource of indirect linguistic sexism in these local spaces, which will help us analyse the broader



objective how gender identities are constructed and negotiated within local environments under the influence of higher institutional gendered structures.

#### 4.3.4. *Cosmopolitan and Men's Health online forums: microscopic structures*

This section of Chapter 4 will be devoted to explain in great detail the steps that were taken in delimiting our corpus, that is, the procedure carried out in order to convert the *Corpus CS* and the *Corpus MH* described so far into the *Mini-Corpus CS* and *Mini-Corpus MH*.

As already explained, our *Corpus CS* and *Corpus MH* are constituted by all the threads or active discussions within the topics of sex and relationships for the months of May, June and July 2011. As it can be inferred, the huge amount of information collected for our corpus, together with our intention of carrying out a qualitative discourse analysis, made it essential to introduce other resources that allowed us to mark the boundaries of our corpus. As we mentioned earlier, we decided to make use of the free corpus linguistics tool *Antconc* in order to carry out a quantitative analysis that helped us in this task.

By means of this analytical tool quantitative data regarding the most frequent lexical items could be provided and, as Del-Teso-Craviotto (2006: 2017) claims “while the statistical study of the lexicon [...] thus cannot substitute for the discursive study of words in their context, it is an excellent starting point for making finer distinctions”. As Gill (2009: 345) further suggests, the concern “with identifying the key representations, themes and discourses” which compound the topics of sex and relationships in these two online discussion forums is essential in order to explore “the ways in which these may be connected to enduring gender inequalities” (ibidem: 345-346). Following these ideas, the quantitative data provided by the use of specific corpus linguistics tools were the clues that we followed in order to reduce our corpus into a mini-corpus that favoured a detailed qualitative discourse analysis. The next paragraphs will be devoted to explain the step-by-step procedure followed for the creation of the *Mini-Corpus CS* and *Mini-Corpus MH*.

As we mentioned earlier, we made use of the free corpus linguistics tool *Antconc*. This software enables us to scrutinise vast amounts of linguistic material and provides numerical information about the total number of words, key words, frequencies, collocations or clusters in a particular corpus or set of texts. For our

procedure, the first step taken was that of obtaining the total amount of words that formed our corpus. In order to do so, we uploaded the TXT files of our corpus into the programme and clicked on the *Word List* section. Having done so, the information we obtained was that the *Corpus CS* had a total number of 77.081 word types and a total number of 11.711.091 word tokens. In the case of the *Corpus MH* the numbers were 23.621 and 1.052.882 respectively. This results in a comprehensive corpus of a total number of 89.059 word types and a total number of 12.781.237 word tokens.

Once we were aware of the total amount of linguistic material at our disposal, we decided to focus on the 150 most frequent words (see Appendix V). Among these, there are certain items that concretely refer to the specific channel of communication, that is, the Internet. At this point, we faced the question of how differentiating these channel specific words from the discourse specific elements that were to help us delimiting our corpus. In order to approach this issue, we decided to type all the 150 most frequent words in the *Collocates* section in order to identify the most frequent words they collocate with. For example, if we take the word *community*, which is the most frequent word in both corpora, and analyse it in the *Collocates* section, we can observe how it collocates with words like *profile*, *forums*, *pm*, *topics*, *message*, *page*, *messageboards* or *home*, which can also be said to be channel specific words. Therefore, this word would not be taken into account in order to determine which are the most frequent words within the body of our corpus. These words have been highlighted in yellow in the chart (Appendix V) and, as we have said, they have not been taken into account for our purpose of selecting the most representative items in order to identify the most relevant texts to our objective.

A similar problem is found when facing words like *fashion* or *beauty*. These cannot be considered channel specific words because, instead, they have to do with specific sections of the online magazine or advertisements. In this particular case, we followed the same procedure as with channel specific words but these have been highlighted in red. A detailed analysis of these elements may enrich the description of the macroscopic structure of both *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* online because they are charged with discursive and ideological implications but, as this aspect detaches us from our objective, we will leave this for possible future research.

Apart from the channel and the macroscopic specific words, among the 150 most frequent items of our corpus we also find grammatical words in the highest positions of the rank. From our experience, these do not tend to be relevant for our purpose of

studying the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the resource of indirect linguistic sexism and, because of that reason, we also decided to leave them out for future analysis. These have been highlighted in pink.

Therefore, if we do not take into account the channel words, macroscopic words or grammatical words, what we are left with are the most relevant content words that are to appear in the highest positions of the rank. These have been highlighted in green and these are the ones that have been taken into account for our purpose of delimiting our corpus following some quantitative objective criteria.

Apart from these, and taking into account our expertise within language and gender studies and our particular interests in this project, we decided to undertake an extra search within the *Word List* section in order to locate within the corpus some common words related to gender issues such as *sex*, *sexism*, *sexist*, *sexual*, *man*, *men*, *woman*, *women*, *love*, *relationship*, *dating*, *chauvinist* or *chauvinistic*.

Concordance		Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Hit	KWIC						
1	/blog-awards-2011-vote>: Text <b>sex</b> </love-sex/tips/Lets-have-some-dirty-text>:						
2	s-2011-vote>: Text <b>sex</b> </love-sex/tips/Lets-have-some-dirty-text>: * Home </						
3	</?cmpid=homenav> * Love & <b>Sex</b> </love-sex/?cmpid=lovesexnav> o Cosmosu						
4	omenav> * Love & <b>Sex</b> </love-sex/?cmpid=lovesexnav> o Cosmosutra </love-s						
5	av> o Cosmosutra </love-sex/karma-sutra/?cmpid=cosmosutranav> o <b>Sex</b>						
6	?cmpid=cosmosutranav> o <b>Sex</b> tips </love-sex/tips/?cmpid=sextipsnav>						

Figure 12. Concordance of “sex” in Corpus CS (Macroscopic Items)

Concordance		Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Hit	KWIC						
1	uilding-muscle/pt-plus/> * <b>sex</b> </sex/> o be the best in bed </sex/better						
2	g-muscle/pt-plus/> * <b>sex</b> </sex/> o be the best in bed </sex/better/>						
3	o be the best in bed </sex/better/> o boost your fertility </sex/mal						
4	o boost your fertility </sex/male-fertility/> o get more <b>sex</b> </sex/mor						
5	fertility/> o get more <b>sex</b> </sex/more/> o girl galleries </sex/linge						
6	ity/> o get more <b>sex</b> </sex/more/> o girl galleries </sex/lingerie-gs						

Figure 13. Concordances of “sex” in Corpus MH (Macroscopic Items)

Having objectively identified the most frequent words of our corpus, and having also extended this list with some common items within the study of gender and language issues, the next step of our procedure consisted in moving on to the *Concordance* section where we were able to study in detail the context of these discourse specific words. For example, in the case of the word *sex* and the study of its

specific context in our corpus, by means of typing it into the *Concordance* section it can be observed that some references to this word are embedded in the macroscopic structure of the forum, as it can be observed in Figure 12 and Figure 13.

Some other examples, however, belong to the specific context or body of the discussions themselves, as it can be observed in Figure 14 and Figure 15. “Results show that the most frequent and relevant vocabulary [...] appears distributed across texts, thus functioning as an ideological resource for the description and evaluation of people and situations” (Del-Teso-Craviotto 2006: 2003). Consequently, although analysing and identifying these particular examples is a very time-consuming activity that has to be carried out manually, the contexts where the word *sex* appears can be thoroughly analysed and, therefore, the possibility of demarcating the most representative texts from our corpus in relation to the most relevant linguistic elements is a reality.

Concordance	Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Hit	KWIC					File
7163	a friend for casual <b>sex</b> Forum Jump Last hourTodayYesterdayTh					CS_REL_Ask a friend for casual sex_THREAD.txt
7164	a friend for casual <b>sex</b> I'm not sure what forum this comes un					CS_REL_Ask a friend for casual sex_THREAD.txt
7165	a friend for casual <b>sex</b> if there's no spark, why would the se					CS_REL_Ask a friend for casual sex_THREAD.txt
7166	spark, why would the <b>sex</b> be good? Mary_Sue </community/profile					CS_REL_Ask a friend for casual sex_THREAD.txt

Figure 14. Concordances of “sex” in Corpus CS (Relevant Discourse Items)

Concordance	Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Hit	KWIC					File
1265	and bars. So I've never had <b>sex</b> with the same girl more than					MH_REL_Does working out make YOU more shallow1_THREAD.txt
1266	s that you just see women as <b>sex</b> objects. You haven't got any					MH_REL_Does working out make YOU more shallow1_THREAD.txt
1267	nest, yes I do view women as <b>sex</b> objects, but you would be nai					MH_REL_Does working out make YOU more shallow1_THREAD.txt
1268	k that they don't view us as <b>sex</b> objects as well!! So no-one i					MH_REL_Does working out make YOU more shallow1_THREAD.txt

Figure 15. Concordances of “sex” in Corpus MH (Relevant Discourse Items)

For example, as it can be observed in the *Word List* (Appendix V), the word *sex* is one of the most relevant items in our corpus. After having differentiated between the uses of this word in the macroscopic structure of the forum and the bodies of discussions themselves, we can, therefore, identify the titles of the texts where this word appears more often as part of the body of the discussion itself just looking at the *File* column in order to identify the specific texts where this relevant discourse element can be found.

Following this procedure, we were able to delimit our corpus into our mini-corpus without making use of external scripts for the corpus linguistics tool (*Antconc*) – which would escape our expertise in relation to this software– or without the necessity

of submitting our corpus to a detailed cleaning system that, apart from being extremely time-consuming, it would also prevent the corpus from being used for future and different purposes.

Appendix VI presents a list of the final threads contained in the mini-corpus used for detailed qualitative analysis in this project. Having followed the procedure described here in order to objectively fence in our corpus into our mini-corpus, from the 2.155 threads contained within the *Corpus CS*, actually 164 are part of the *Mini-Corpus CS*. This consists of 21.831 total number of word types and 1.815.783 total number of word tokens. In this way, from the 131 threads that were contained within the *Corpus MH*, actually 56 are part of the *Mini-Corpus MH*. It consists of a total number of 13.826 word types and a total number of 709.273 word tokens. This finally results in a comprehensive mini-corpus of a total number of 28.442 word types and a total number of 2.542.320 word tokens.

Finally, all the threads contained in the *Mini-Corpus CS* and *Mini-Corpus MH* were very carefully read and analysed in order to identify which threads were significant for our analysis and which were not relevant at all. This was done having our objective very clearly in mind, that is, the idea of analysing the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the use of indirect linguistic sexism in virtual socioideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online gendered magazines) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK consumers and participants of these discourses).

If the first step of our analysis was that of delimiting our corpus into a relevant mini-corpus by means of quantitative objective criteria adequate to our purpose, our second step was that of carrying out a detailed qualitative discourse analysis taking into account the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism (STEP 3 of the CMDA) following the paradigm of a FCDA (STEP 4 of the CMDA). This aspect will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter of our project.



# **Chapter 5**

## **Analysis of the Corpus**

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## **5. Analysis of the Corpus**

### **5.1. Where Are We Now? Summarising the Steps in our Analysis Process**

Chapter 4 served the purpose of explaining and justifying the selection of our specific corpus because of its adequacy to our primary objective in this project, that is, the analysis of the negotiation of gender identity performances within specific communities of practice ascribed to institutional gendered frameworks from the perspective of the resource of indirect linguistic sexism.

Moreover, the final sections of Chapter 4 served the purpose of presenting the first step in our analysis process. The analysis of our corpus from a quantitative perspective helped us delimit and mark the boundaries of our corpus taking into account the most representative discursive elements by means of the aid of specific corpus linguistics tools. This, in turn, helped us select the most representative texts within our corpus and, therefore, a mini-corpus was created on which a detailed qualitative discourse analysis will be carried out. It is precisely the second step of our analysis process, that is, the qualitative analysis, the one that will be presented here, in Chapter 5.

How is this qualitative analysis of the mini-corpus going to be carried out? As we have already mentioned in Chapter 3, a CMDA will be followed in order to do so. Looking backwards, this specific approach was characterised by a five-step procedure. STEP 1, the articulation of our research questions and the main intention of this project, was already presented in section 4.1. In order to analyse how the negotiation of gender (in)equalities is carried out in virtual environments ascribed to gendered institutional contexts by means of the resource of indirect linguistic sexism, we will focus on the main discourses of masculinity and femininity promulgated by those contexts and how these hegemonic forms are interpreted and accommodated in the local practice. This will be done i) by focusing on how indirect linguistic sexism is manifested, used and negotiated in these specific communicative situations and environments, and ii) by analysing those manifestations in order to identify or catalogue any variations to the model of indirect linguistic sexism presented by Mills (2008).

STEP 2, that is, the selection of the computer-mediated data sample, was also explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3. Once the adequacy of our corpus was justified, the collection process and the characterisation of our corpus were explained in great detail

in the sections just mentioned. There, we made especial emphasis on the importance of establishing concrete methodological principles and certain detailed organisational notions that allowed us to manage such a vast amount of linguistic material. Once the collection process and the general features of our corpus were identified, the first step of our particular analysis process was carried out and described in detail in section 4.3. There, the description of the steps taken in order to delimit our corpus into a mini-corpus that would favour a qualitative discourse analysis were presented. The use of corpus linguistics tools (*Antconc*) served our purpose of identifying the most representative discursive elements in our corpus. This, in turn, helped us selecting the most representative texts from our corpus and, therefore, delimiting it into a manageable mini-corpus from a qualitative critical perspective.

Having demarcated the limits of the most representative texts in our corpus, the next step is that of starting the analysis itself. STEP 3 of the CMDA consists in operationalizing the key concepts of our research in terms of discourse features. This step was already done in Chapter 1, where Mills' (2008) model for direct and indirect linguistic sexism was summarised. Nevertheless, in order to provide a coherent account of the CMDA undertaken in this project, this step will be properly dealt with in this chapter. We will provide a specific section in which the main discourse features identified by Mills (2008) as resources of indirect linguistic sexism will be re-taken in order to refresh the reader's mind and to provide a clear list of the key concepts we are going to be dealing with in this chapter.

Next, STEP 4 will be carried out, that is, the explanation of the specific paradigm chosen to tackle this corpus and the presentation of its specific application to our corpus. As we mentioned in section 3.2.2, FCDA has been selected as the most suitable paradigm to our objective. Its main concern with how forms of oppression and empowerment (Lehtonen 2007) are enacted in particular contexts influenced by broader societal or institutional frameworks perfectly suits our objective. In order to carry out such an aim, and as we have already presented in section 3.2.2, the CDA paradigm presented by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) will be used, following a feminist critical perspective in which the performance of gender identities will be the main focus of attention.

Finally, STEP 5, that is, the interpretation of the main results drawn from this project will be presented in Section III, where general conclusions and some future directions for research will be also suggested.

All in all, recalling Rodino (1997), it is crucial to mention that this project is exclusively based on the corpus selected for our purposes, that is, no extra ethnomethodological methods such as interviews or surveys have been used in order to interpret users' interactions. This implies that only the data available to the forums users have been taken into account. As a result, we have strongly tried to stick to user's interactions and interpretations in our analysis and detach ourselves from users' thoughts or comments about those communicative exchanges. Moreover, following an important principle of FCDA, it is important to make the researchers' background knowledgeable in order to prevent future attacks based on presuppositions. In this sense, it is important to remember that this study focuses on an English-speaking channel of communication and our Spanish origin and socialisation, together with our specific educational background and our explicit interest in gender and feminist concerns, may probably influence certain, or all, the interpretations presented in this project.

With all this information in mind, the next section of this chapter will be devoted to present how STEP 3 (the operationalization of the key concepts of indirect linguistic sexism) and STEP 4 (the selection and application of a FCDA paradigm to our corpus) have been specifically developed in this project.

## **5.2. Indirect Linguistic Sexism: Main Discursive Features**

As it has already been explained in Chapter 1, the study of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism can be located within the second branch of gender and language studies, that is, the analysis of how gender, understood as a social construction, is represented in language and performed through linguistic mechanisms.

The first steps in this field, those of Second Wave feminist researchers, started carefully on the grounds of concrete linguistic elements or specific lexical items such as pronouns, occupational nouns, insults or adjectives collocating with these. These Second Wave feminist analyses and the Feminist Language Reform initiated around that time did provide a new perspective on language-related issues and served a real social and linguistic purpose. However, the studies, proposals and alternatives presented in order to deal with the phenomenon of linguistic sexism from a feminist perspective produced, as it usually occurs in historical and social movements, a counter-attack coming from scholars and language users themselves. As we have been claiming, there is an intense and dynamic relationship between language, thought and society and

languages are communicative resources at the disposal of their users. Keeping this in mind, the Feminist Language Reform and the Second Wave feminist analyses of the time escaped to newer forms of linguistic sexism that detached themselves from more stigmatised and persecuted manifestations. This is so because, as it has already been explained, the feminist movement of the time had an impact on the way society and language users started to think about language-related issues. The stigmatising of more overt sexist linguistic practices derived in language users creating newer and more subtle linguistic mechanisms that served them the purpose of expressing their ideological concerns or performing their desired gender and social identities within particular communicative situations.

Consequently, new forms and methods of analysis are required in order to address these new manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism. Discourse analytical methods have proved to be quite effective in this task because of their specific focus on context and discourse, that is, on the study of the whole communicative situation in which not only linguistic material is analysed. Linguistic, multimodal and extralinguistic elements are as important as the interaction itself. Both senders and receivers' interventions are studied on the basis of their relevance to the communicative situation and the purpose of the specific study. As a result, and as Mills (2008) suggests, it is practically impossible to make generalisations about what constitutes or not indirect linguistic sexism because it is absolutely context and discourse-dependent.

Retaking Sunderland's (2004) concept of *damaging discourses*, not only concrete linguistic elements can be considered as sexist, in contrast, complete discursive practices where no lexical item can be claimed to be sexist can in fact be considered as extremely damaging for specific groups or individuals within particular communicative situations. As a result, there is a need to go a step further in the field of analytical methods and approach the study of linguistic sexism from the perspective of localised practices from which general conclusions can be drawn that are related to broader institutional and social frameworks.

Our social and gender identities are performed within local practices framed by broader structures that socially delimit our performances in terms of what is acceptable or not in those particular situations. Because of this, we can openly claim that our social and gender identities are, in fact, plural, dynamic, changeable and even conflicting within one concrete communicative exchange. It is precisely the analysis of these localised performances the ones that will enable us to study the newer and more subtle

manifestations of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism. Only in this way will we be able to scrutinise them and look at them with a significant perspective to investigate the social and institutional structures that delimit them. From this standpoint, a discursive analytical perspective will enable us to critically study those manifestations and, in turn, carry out a political and committed social activity.

What is clear, therefore, is that indirect linguistic sexism needs to be understood as “a resource available within the language” (Mills 2008: 124) whose concrete manifestations can be as varied as language users or communicative situations themselves. Nevertheless, as we mentioned in section 1.3, Mills (2008) provides a detailed and structured analysis of the main manifestations this phenomenon may present. We will retake her classification here in order to provide an organised account of the key discursive manifestations of this phenomenon. In so doing, we will be carrying out STEP 3 of our CMDA, that is, the operationalization of the key concepts of our research in terms of the main discourse features of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism.

Mills (2008) suggests six discourse features around which the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism can be claimed to be manifested in general terms:



Figure 16. *Discourse Features of Indirect Linguistic Sexism (adapted from Mills 2008)*

Firstly, humour is a crucial element in the detection and analysis of indirect linguistic sexism because of its intrinsic pragmatic and discursive characteristics. Mills (2008) explains that this linguistic resource which, we add, can also be expressed and negotiated by means of other discursive or multimodal elements such as pictures or videos, is characterised by the exaggeration of certain features associated to specific groups or individuals and the delight created by the play “with stereotypical knowledge for comic effect” (ibidem: 140). The trick in the use of humour as a resource to linguistically express sexist attitudes lies in the fact that gender differences are no

longer presented in a subordinated position, that is, both men and women are laughed at and about. However, this supposed equality, when discursively and contextually analysed, often reveals hidden scripts and traditional ideas on gender. At the same time, humour as a mechanism through which indirect linguistic sexism is manifested rests on the idea that overt and stigmatised forms of linguistic sexism will not be socially accepted in a modern world. As a result, the use of overt sexist mechanisms tends to be understood as forms of entertainment or jokes which, in fact, contribute to the maintenance of traditional gender stereotypes and ideas. Actually, some of the most representative forms of humour, according to Mills' (2008) explanation, can be said to be overt sexist manifestations, jokes and irony. In this way, irony plays an essential role in the transmission of humorous comments because "it is argued that the effects of humour and irony often depend on a subversive relation between the initial and alternatives frames" involved in the communicative situation (Ritchie 2005: 275). In this sense, irony can be understood as going beyond meaning the opposite (Alba 1995), as a linguistic mechanism implying a "reversal of the evaluative meaning of the utterance (rather than of the propositional/ideational meaning, as argued in many traditional theories of irony)" (Partington 2007: 1547). Moreover, both irony and humour can be said to have basic argumentative points within the communicative interaction in which, by means of the use of these resources, giving strength to an interaction is expected. Authors like Alba (1995), Speer (2002), Ritchie (2005), Alvarado (2006a, 2006b, 2009) or Partington (2007) work specifically on the use and analysis of irony while Bill (1992), Ford (2000), Bing and Heller (2003), Bing (2004), Angelone *et al.* (2005), Western Caroline (2007), Bemiller and Schneider (2008) or Case and Lippard (2009) work more specifically on the use and study of broader humour and jokes in specific communicative situations.

Secondly, presuppositions are also a primary reference when analysing indirect linguistic sexism. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) claim that we imply more than what we mean and actually say in context, that is, our interactions bear hidden messages that have to be deciphered or decoded by receivers. "Social and pragmatic meanings may be, and frequently are, inferred using contextualisation cues; and language systematically evokes contextual presuppositions" (Holmes 2007: 54). "Readers must infer meanings from embedded presuppositions. Therefore the meanings 'depend entirely on an 'ideal reader's' capacity to [infer these] from a list of attributes' (Fairclough 1989: 52)" (Remlinger 1999). The hidden messages can be decoded when

senders and receivers actually share common background knowledge and shared meanings that, in general terms, are evoked by particular lexical items or grammatical features. For example, as Mills (2008) exemplifies, when confronted with genderless nouns such as *pedestrian* or *consumer*, a *he* pronoun is usually applied and a masculine figure is mentally represented when no other gender stereotypes are present. This kind of presupposition is, as she claims, much more difficult to challenge than overt sexist practices because this depends on receivers' exposure of their interpretations. This, as Cameron (2006) claims, however, offers senders the possibility of neglecting any accusations by suggesting that this is only one of the possible readings offered by their words and that their primary intention was not sexist at all. As a result, it is extremely important to discursively analyse how indirect sexist expressions are understood and interpreted by receivers in specific communicative contexts.

Thirdly, conflicting messages are also vital when dealing with indirect linguistic sexism. As we have been claiming throughout this project, many institutions, public organisations or even the media have been, in a way, forced by social and legal actions to change their image and adapt the way they present themselves and their contents to the new social realities. In this way, overt sexism has been eliminated, for example, from magazines, even gendered publications, in the sense that sexist lexical items are hardly ever found and, when so, as it has been explained before, they are justified under the veil of humour, jokes and irony. However, the presence of conflicting messages in fact reveals that traditional gender ideas or stereotypes have not been eliminated from our everyday practice. When describing the publications chosen for this project, we mentioned how these try to adapt themselves to newer and modern gender identities such as the *Cosmo Girl* or the *New Man*. Here, although the break with traditional notions such as the submission of women to men or men's exercising of power by means of excessive economic control were eliminated, this was in real conflict with ideas on how women are encouraged to get a man whatever the means and the cost and how men are expected to show their potential as future partners by means of the acquisition of material items such as gadgets or cars.

Fourthly, the appearance of scripts and metaphors may also signal the presence of indirect linguistic sexism. As Achugar (2001: 129) claims, metaphors are characterised by a "descriptive value and as such they serve as mediators between cognitive models and the culture in which they are produced. There is an experiential basis for metaphors; they are grounded in our reality and shape our understanding of

things". Therefore, it can be suggested that metaphors reveal the dynamic and flexible relationships between language, thought and society because they involve sociocognitive processes which function as the foundations of presuppositions and contextual interpretations (ibidem). In Eisikovits and Buchbinder's (1999) terms, metaphors can be considered as a bridge between surface structures (descriptive overt content) and deep structure (interpretations). What is of particular importance for our purpose of analysing indirect linguistic sexism and offering a particular case of feminist and social action is Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) idea that creative metaphors can be used in order to provide new frameworks for interpreting our experiences. Moreover, as Ritchie (2005) claims, metaphors do also play an important role in irony, jokes and humour in general because they play with the juxtaposition or subversion of frames. What is implied here is that, as metaphors are a never-ending creative resource, there is a possibility to offer or provide new understandings of our reality, in our case, in relation to gender ideas. This is so because the routinization of metaphors into scripts, that is, general "narrative pathways" (Mills 2008: 148) or ways in which things are narrated by means of specific structures or vocabulary, can normalise certain gender ideas or stereotypes even though no explicit or overt sexist elements are present.

Next, collocations are vital when dealing with indirect linguistic sexism and the study of the relationships between language, thought and society. Collocations may be defined as "the company that words keep" (Mills 2008: 148) or repeated patterns which, in Stubbs' (2001: 215) terms "show that evaluative meanings are not merely personal and idiosyncratic, but widely shared in a discourse community. A word, phrase or construction may trigger a cultural stereotype". As we explained in Chapter 1, collocations were studied during Second Wave Feminism in relation to overt sexist items but, due to the discursive turn and the appearance of indirect linguistic sexism, researchers in this field have been forced to analyse those and other fields in which collocations, regardless of the overt sexism of the word they accompany, reveal gendered and sexist practices. For example, Mills (2008) explains how the word *mum* is used in the British press together with other words like *drink*, *pub*, *jail* or *fraud*. While these are relevant to the news story being told, the word *mum* appears as an ideological item used to express the newspaper's position in front of a mother and wife who is not performing her traditional role properly. In this direction, Marling (2010) presents a study in which the term *feminism* is traced along a specific corpus and then scrutinised in terms of the textual frames and discourses in which this term appears. In order to do



so, an investigation of the main collocational patterns in which the word *feminism* appears is carried out. Similarly, Caldas-Coulthard and Rosamund (2010: 99) present a study in which their main claim is that the “uses of premodification associated with [...] two types of newspapers in Britain and their lexical choices produce differential judgmental stances that have social effects”. Their findings show that “the media categorizes people through very specific points of view and values not always apparent to a non-critical reader. Collocational patterns undoubtedly reveal societal and sociolectal attitudes, especially in terms of stereotypes of gender, sexualization, age and behaviour” (ibidem). In this sense, “many people approach their encounters with certain types of language in a critical way and this may ‘immunise’ them to the ideologies inherent with certain collocational patterns” (Baker 2010: 128), as a result, and as Cotterill (2001), Caldas-Coulthard & Rosamund (2010) or Marling (2010) suggest in their studies, the use of corpus linguistics tools and the analysis of specific corpora may contribute to the study of how ideological work is socially manifested and carried out through language.

Finally, the androcentric perspective must also be noted as one of the main discursive features by means of which indirect linguistic sexism finds its way into discourse. Androcentrism may be defined as a male perspective of the world around us. This, again, is a discursive feature which is difficult to linguistically mark attending to lexical or grammatical elements. The androcentric perspective is an essence that flouts in discourses where only a male vision is presented. For example, many TV series or films are produced or directed by men and, therefore, a male perspective may be expected. Nevertheless, this is not a *sine quanon* condition for androcentrism to be present. What is essential, in contrast, is that no other perspective is presented or offered (Mills 2002). The same can be applied to other areas of our social and personal lives such as politics, religion, education, sexuality, etc. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, earlier studies on gender and language were characterised by a strong androcentric perspective in which men were considered the norm against which women were measured, that is, women were always considered as deviant or secondary. In this direction, Baker (2000) presents a study about how the term *gender*, despite being a concept very much integrated into feminist studies and actions, can in fact be used from a rather androcentric perspective or a politically correct point of view within the academic world. This, in fact, is a very subtle and covert discursive mechanism that

needs to be analysed in context and with methods of analysis that go a step further into the fluid and dynamic nature of communicative interactions.

In short, we can claim that these six categories are the main discursive features by means of which indirect linguistic sexism can be expressed and negotiated in interaction. Since indirect linguistic sexism is characterised by subtlety and it depends on the receiver's interpretation within a particular communicative interaction, new methods of analysis, such as those suggested by Third Wave Feminism will be required. This will allow researchers to scrutinise local instances of how gender identities are constructed, performed and negotiated in contexts that are globally affected by general and regular patterns of broader institutional frameworks that determine what is acceptable or appropriate within specific communities of practice. In this sense, again, we can consider that indirect linguistic sexism is a resource available to language users in order to negotiate and interpret one's own, as well as others', gender identities within specific communities of practice and communicative situations.

### **5.3. A FCDA of CMD: Linguistic Sexism in *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* online Discussion Forums**

The previous section of this chapter served the purpose of presenting the operationalization of the key concepts of our research, that is, STEP 3 of our CMDA. In order to be coherent with our initial plan, STEP 4 will be presented in this section, that is, the explanation of the specific paradigm chosen to approach our corpus and the detailed analysis provided by the application of that paradigm to our specific corpus. However, as we explained in Chapter 3, because of organisational and structural reasons, the explanation of the selection of the specific paradigm chosen for our research was included in Section I, which deals with the basic theoretical notions of our project. More specifically, section 3.2.2 was devoted to explain the main principles and ideas of FCDA and its adequacy to our research intentions. As we explained earlier, Section II is devoted to the practical application of the basic theoretical notions described in Section I. In this sense, the displacement of the explanation of the selected paradigm to Section I does not affect the development of the five-step procedure of the CMDA followed in this project. This is so because, although the theoretical notions and basic ideas of FCDA were described in section 3.2.2, here, in section 5.3 we will

present its practical and localised exploitation in our corpus and, therefore, its main principles and ideas will be, therefore, retaken.

Nevertheless, just to bring the main essence of FCDA to our minds, we would claim that this paradigm is concerned with the analysis of “how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social practices, and through interactional strategies of talk” (Lazar 2005a: 10).

For feminist critical discourse analysts, the ultimate goal is a radical social transformation based on social justice that opens up unlimited possibilities both for women and men as human beings; a discursive critique of the prevailing limiting structures is a step in that direction (ibidem: 15-16).

In this light, it is also important to remember Lazar’s (2007: 142) words in a later work. There, she postulates that feminist critical discourse studies that focus on the analysis of gender and language basically aim at unveiling the complex and subtle ways in which “frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities”.

In order to achieve such an aim, as we have already stated, we will follow Fairclough and Wodak’s (1997) eight principles of CDA from a feminist perspective, that is, having in mind the key concepts presented in Chapters 1 and 2 of this project and which have been summarised in section 5.2. In so doing, we will be able to follow a detailed and established model of indirect linguistic sexism, which is the basis of our study, in order to analyse how gender identities are negotiated within the local context of a specific CMD, that of the online public discussion forums ascribed to the online versions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Men’s Health*.

The FCDA carried out in STEP 4 of our CMDA followed a specific procedure. The first stage was that of reading with great detail all the 220 threads that form our mini-corpus, that is, the 164 threads belonging to the *Mini-Corpus CS* and the 56 belonging to the *Mini-Corpus MH* for the months of May, June and July 2011 in relation to the topics of sex and relationships. This was done on the basis of our main objective, that is, the analysis of how gender identities are performed and negotiated within the specific context of gendered online discussion forums taking into account the use and negotiation of indirect linguistic sexism. Once all the threads were read to get a

general impression of the communicative context in which we decided to focus our project, we conducted a second detailed reading of all the 220 threads paying particular attention to the key concepts operationalized in section 5.2, that is, on the basis of Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism. The results of such an analysis are presented in the following sections of this chapter<sup>11</sup>.

### 5.3.1 *Humour*

As we mentioned in section 5.2, humour is an important and rather visible element or discourse feature adopted by language users in order to display indirect linguistic sexism. Humour is defined by Bill (1992: 646) as a “distinctive and pervasive social medium of communication through which information in social interactions is conveyed”. This exchange of information or social interaction, besides, is “intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and is perceived to be amusing by at least some participants” Holmes (1998: 1). Moreover, humour “can contribute to meaning creation at cognitive and social as well as emotional levels, and may do so in a unique way, distinct from other communicative conventions” (Ritchie 2005: 287).

When in a communicative situation, participants may want to emphasise or even exaggerate certain characteristics of the people or group of people being referred to in the conversation by means of the use of stereotypes, for example. Other times, no stereotypes or references to people or groups of people are applied and, instead, a direct critique or an extreme damaging comment is employed. However, neither stereotypes nor direct damaging comments need to correlate with their primary communicative function, that is, that of attacking; in contrast, these discourse features, when used under the veil of a comic effect, become discursively and communicatively more complex. “According to Giora [2003] we invariably access the most salient meaning first. Humor exploits this tendency by providing an initial account consistent with a highly salient

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<sup>11</sup> In order to be coherent with the information presented in section 2.2.2 and current research on CMD, we would not dare classify the participants in each forum as male or female. In fact, as we have been claiming, the Internet constitutes a virtual reality in which social and gender identities can be openly performed and the persona used to communicate online may not coincide with the real person behind the screen. Having this in mind, we will refer to the participants in each forum as gender neutral making use of dual pronouns. Nevertheless, in order to be consistent with the information provided in Chapter 2 and section 4.3 regarding the prospective users of these two online cyber communities of practice, we will use the pair *she/he* when dealing with the *Cosmopolitan* forum, as women are thought to be the majority of participants of this environment, and the pair *he/she* will be applied to the *Men's Health* forum, where the majority of participants are thought to be men.

interpretation; the punchline forces us to revisit initially activated, but contextually suppressed, concepts” (Ritchie 2005: 279). More precisely, in order to comprehend how this discourse mechanism may work in meaning negotiation and the transmission of sexist attitudes, we could claim that humour is usually based on the activation of alternative frames. On the one hand, a dominant and socially licensed frame is found which is coherent with traditional social and cultural norms. On the other hand, a subversive frame that rejects or questions the socially accepted frame is activated by a punchline which has several cognitive effects (Ritchie 2005). In this light, humour “acts as a sensitivity barometer to which issues and sentiments are currently thought to be interesting and important in the sociocultural environment (Rappoport 2005)” (Case and Lippard 2009: 241) of a given community of practice.

From this idea, we can infer that humour is a heterogeneous and intricate discourse feature which is made up of linguistic or non-linguistic resources that, when applied in context, acquire different meanings and communicative intentions. As we mentioned in section 5.2, overt sexist manifestations by means of the use of stereotypes, jokes and irony are claimed to be the most representative forms of humour employed to display indirect linguistic sexism (Mills 2008). We could also suggest that

[h]umor is a distinctive medium of communication because it undermines the seriousness of the communicated message. That is, a communication is interpreted differently when given in a humorous versus a nonhumorous manner. A humorous communication is accompanied by cues (e.g., identification of the communication as a joke) that suggest that the communication is not to be taken seriously or examined in a critical manner [...] Sexist and other derisive sentiments, then, may be considered socially acceptable (not inappropriate) when communicated through humor because humor activates a non critical mindset in which the usually appropriate critical reactions toward such sentiments are inhibited (Ford 2000: 1095)

An example of humour from this perspective can be observed in our corpus in thread number<sup>12</sup> 111 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum. In *CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!\_THREAD*, created by *andyglasgow*, the original poster opens the following discussion:

#### Example 1

Hi Ladies hope you're all well,


<sup>12</sup> All threads are listed in Appendix V.

I've made an observation recently that alot of you seem surprised that your boyfriends etc. watch porn :-S<sup>13</sup>

I just hope you all know that this is completely normal and I would estimate 99% (this is very scientific research) of men watch porn of some sort, mostly youporn<sup>14</sup> type sites. That includes your boyfriends, husbands, brothers (sorry), dads (even sorrier), male mates....all of us. We also discuss which sites are good, which videos we like and what type of things we like to watch. All I can say is...boys will be boys!!!! I personally never watch porn and think I want to s\*\*g<sup>15</sup> a girl like that, I just need visual stimulation and actually like to see a fairly fit looking guy with a decent unit do a job on a girl (got to be able to relate lol<sup>16</sup>)

(CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!!\_THREAD)

In this post, it can be observed how the original poster makes explicit an inference from the observation of the forum. As a usual participant, she/he has noticed how the issue of the relationships between men-porn-masturbation has become a social problem for many of the users of this forum. The use of the words *Ladies* as a form of address and the use of the pronoun *you* in *alot of you seem surprised* or *we* in *We also discuss which sites are good* may lead us to infer that the original poster is trying to perform a male gender identity. We cannot know if the real person behind the screen is actually a man or a woman but the discussion is started marking the difference between the original poster and the women's group to which the message is addressed. This could make our *sexism alarm* detect a subtle use of stereotypes in which the male and female worlds are separated. This, in fact, is strengthened by the multimodal element of the smiley face :-S. This multimodal sign is intended to display an emotion, the two dots represent two eyes, the dash represents the nose and the letter *S* is used to represent a twisted mouth. All together, these signs are used to symbolise a face showing surprise or confusion. This, in fact, may be claimed to reinforce the dichotomous division between men and women implied before. What is more, in *I just hope you all know that this is completely normal* the stereotype is made even clearer by claiming, in very general terms, that it is *normal* that men watch porn. This, in fact, is a gender stereotype which, on the one hand, helps reinforce the division line between men and women – because it is not claimed that it is also normal for women to watch porn– and, on the other, it also constrains men to an almost divine and unquestionable relationship with sex. Moreover, the adverb *just* together with the verb *hope* contribute to locate the original poster in a position which, in very subtle terms, is demarcating the superiority

<sup>13</sup> The smiley is intended to represent something like this , used to show confusion or bewilderment.

<sup>14</sup> *Youporn* refers to a website where porn can be freely accessed to.

<sup>15</sup> These symbols are used in order to disguise certain words that may be considered offensive or rude.

<sup>16</sup> *Lol* stands for *lots of laughs*

of the men's group because, being identified with them in this post, the original poster is suggesting that women, contrary to men, do not see the evidence in front of their eyes and get surprised and even shocked when faced with general and well-known facts. In very indirect terms, we could claim that these words are helping reinforce the dichotomous division between men and women displayed so far and, moreover, they also reflect a very subtle androcentric perspective in which men are considered to be the norm and even superior to women in certain spheres.

Following this first subtle presentation of the issue under discussion, the original poster continues the argumentation by stating a supposed scientific fact. In *I would estimate 99% (this is very scientific research) of men watch porn of some sort* the original poster is claiming that almost all men adhere to the traditional image or stereotype of men having an intense relationships with sex. This can be claimed to be done in a very humorous tone because, although the expression *this is very scientific research* is used, no scientific data or real facts are provided. Moreover, the contrast between the expressions *I would estimate* and *this is very scientific research* may lead us to consider that this is an ironic statement. Afterwards, in *That includes your boyfriends, husbands, brothers (sorry), dads (even sorrier), male mates....all of us*, the enumeration and the added comments on each relative show that there are certain prejudices established on men depending on their relationship to women and that, as a norm, certain (sexual) behaviours are expected from each of them. It is suggested that women may perceive the fact that their boyfriend masturbate as an acceptable behaviour but when it comes to brothers or fathers, who are in higher positions in terms of bonds to women, this becomes stranger. This enumeration helps reinforce the previous sexist stereotype according to which women are naïve or ingenuous. The original poster added comments *–(sorry) and (even sorrier)–* suggest, although through humour and irony, that women are in need of knowing the truth out there and that the revelation of secrets or unstated truths correspond to one of the men's group who will project a beam of light onto the ingenuous women's minds illustrating them with the raw reality around them. A long discussion follows this statement in which different participants show their opinions and interpretation of each individual's intervention.

Humour and irony are also used, although with a different underlying communicative purpose, in thread number 10 from the *Men's Health* forum. In *MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has\_THREAD*, MP1988 starts a discussion about the importance both men and women attribute to each other's job when

in a heterosexual relationship. The original poster claims that men do care less about their partner's job as long as they are good looking. Moreover, a personal example is provided in which an intimate male friend left a well-prepared and successful woman for another girl who was a hairdresser and had a kid. Many presuppositions, implications and prejudices are found in this post. However, relevant for our analysis of humour in this section is the intervention of *Jitsuka1* who replies to the original post with the following message:

#### Example 2

I don't think it should matter what job either partner does. I like the fact that my girlfriend is ambitious, works hard and has a career.

That said, I'm not sure how i'd feel if she earnt more than me!

(*MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has1\_THREAD*)

Here, the participant is making use of conflicting messages with a humorous purpose. On the one hand, he/she claims that the job a person does may not have an influence at all in a relationship. However, on the other hand, he/she makes use of a humorous comment which is a contradictory message with that in the first sentence. *I'm not sure how i'd feel if she earnt more than me!* This could be understood as a negotiation of gender identity in which the participant is trying to conform to the modern and open views of the publication to which the forum is ascribed in relation to the social position of men and women but, at the same time, he/she is subtly disclosing internal fears that have to do with more traditional and androcentric hegemonic forms of masculinity in which men are considered to be the breadwinners. The threat to this traditional and stereotypical form of masculinity is in contrast with that intended by the institutional framework of the publication and the conflicting forms of masculinity within the participant him/herself. Therefore, we can claim that humour is used here as a form of self-reaffirmation, the manifestation of more hegemonic forms of masculinity is presented not by means of any direct form of linguistic sexism, but rather by a humorous comment that, in a way, negates the previous statements posted by the participant. This will allow him/her to negotiate his/her gender identity in terms of the supposed broader and open framework of the publication but, also, in terms of more traditional forms of masculinity overtly presented in the forum by other participants.

Humour is also used in thread number 7 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, entitled *CS\_REL\_A woman's role\_THREAD*. Here, the original poster starts a discussion from a personal observation made after watching a TV program called *Wife Swap*. This



programme is based on the recording of the lives of two different and opposite (usually) heterosexual families in which the wives decide to exchange lives for a short period of time. The original poster talks about a specific episode in which one of the wives had the role of the *ideal wife*. By this, she/he understands that doing everything for her husband, fetching him things, taking his coat and shoes off, dressing up for when he arrives, etc., are part of this role. Apart from expressing these ideas, the original poster also makes use of an anti-sexist statement in which she/he claims that this stereotype is far from what she/he expects from a relationship. A few posts later, after some participants have intervened in the discussion providing different opinions and points of view, *c\_\_\_jay* contributes to the discussion with the following joke:

### Example 3

Bought my son an iPad<sup>17</sup> and my daughter and iPod. The wife got me an iPhone and I got her an iRon. Wife wasn't overjoyed even after I explained it can be integrated with the iWash, iCook, iClean network. This opened up the iNag reminder service which totally wiped out the iShag function. 😊

(CS\_REL\_A woman's role1\_THREAD)

We consider that this is a clear example of how humour can be used as a means to express sexist attitudes and opinions by means of indirect and subtle linguistic mechanisms. On the one hand, the participant is playing with other interlocutors' cultural background in order to create an adequate environment for a joke. Here, a sense of community is necessary for the joke to be understood and shared by others. The participant uses the terms *iPad*, *iPod* and *iPhone* in order to locate the reader in the context of the joke. Only those who are familiar with the *iProducts* will be able to understand the joke and get into the subtleties of the message. The sentence *Bought my son an iPad and my daughter and iPod. The wife got me an iPhone and I got her an iRon* is the first part of the joke. Here, certain gender stereotypes are used in order to prepare the reader for what comes in the second part of the joke. The *iPad* and the *iPod* are electronic devices used to watch videos or listen to music. Here the young generation is associated with new technologies and no evident stereotype is shown. However the *iPhone* is a mobile phone with internet access and multiple applications

<sup>17</sup> The terms *iPad*, *iPod* and *iPhone* are specific names given to *Apple* products. *Apple* is an international trademark that produces digital devices and tends to name all its products under the *iSomething* idea. Although there are different theories, in very general terms, we could suggest that the *i* in all the products stands for *internet*, *individual*, *instruct*, *inform* and *inspire* (<http://news.yahoo.com/does-iphone-really-mean-175900366.html> / <http://macconvert.us/?p=190>)

can be set up on it in order to have almost a personal computer in a very small device. As we can observe, in this case, it is the wife who bought an *iPhone* for her husband. The term *iRon* is, as we can infer, an invented term aimed at producing a smile on the face of the readers, the *iRon* is a mock term used to refer to an iron. With this sentence, the participant is implying that the ultimate technological device a wife can aim at is an iron. This, of course, bears strong implications and stereotypical scripts behind such inoffensive words. The first sentence serves as a presentation of a stereotypical view on the role of men and women in a relationship. By means of this, the participant is implying that she/he agrees with previous comments (humorous or not) already presented in the discussion which do claim that there is and there must be a differences between women's and men's jobs and roles within a relationship in terms of who the breadwinner is.

The second part of the joke, *Wife wasn't overjoyed even after I explained it can be integrated with the iWash, iCook, iClean network*, makes the stereotypes implied in the first part of the joke even more explicit. The adverb *even* in *Wife wasn't overjoyed even after I explained* emphasises the idea that the husband had to give an explanation to his wife in order to justify the reasons that moved him to buy such a present. Although this may seem an anti-sexist comment breaking up the stereotypes presented in the first part, what follows breaks these expectations and actually reinforces the sexist and androcentric perspective on women's and men's roles in a relationship. In *I explained it can be integrated with the iWash, iCook, iClean network. This opened up the iNag reminder service which totally wiped out the iShag function*, the reasons why the wife should be happy about the present are explained. According to these, the present can be used together with other technological devices which are property of the wife, that is, the washer, the cooker, and the cleaner, being all of them elements used for the maintenance of the house and the household duties. This, in fact, strengthens the idea that the house is the woman's place and that all the presents bought to her should have a connection to it in order to be efficient and productive. But the joke takes a step even further in *This opened up the iNag reminder service which totally wiped out the iShag function*. While there are no overt sexist elements in this sentence, the meaning can be claimed to be so. Since the wife was not happy with the present, her reaction is that of getting angry and deciding to punish her husband (How?) by means of not giving him what he most desires: sex. This last sentence helps close the joke with a circular discourse, the ideas presented in the first sentence are reinforced throughout the joke

and finally sentenced at the end. On the one hand, the traditional stereotype of women as being considered almost physical ornaments of the house whose main role is that of maintaining the house and family is clearly, although humorously, presented. Moreover, they are presented as whiners or moaners who lack any kind of power except that of manipulating men, depriving them of their sexual demands. On the other hand, men are also presented as connected to technology, the outside, innovation, action and, of course, sex, almost the only weak spot in their strong nature and the absence of which actually affects them.

We consider that this example is a good evidence of how humour works at different levels in order to achieve specific interlocutors' communicative intentions because a "well-timed joke can be a very effective form of argument, because it blocks rebuttal by leaving the target open to the charge of lacking a sense of humor" (Ritchie 2005: 290). Playing with cultural references, traditional stereotypes or neologisms provide an enjoyable context which presents sexist attitudes under the mask of humour. Moreover, the emoticon at the end of the joke closes the discourse with a clear communicative intention. We consider that the participant is clear about the content of her/his message and, because of the fact that striking and overt sexism is present in it, the participant tries to negotiate her/his image and gender identity within the forum by means of this multimodal element. This, in fact, makes it more difficult for other participants to complain about the indirect sexism of this message. The emoticon sends a message of peace, the smile tries to create a sense of community and sympathy with other interlocutors and, although the sender has actually posted a sexist joke, her/his intention is distanced from that attitude by means of this last multimodal element.

Something similar occurs in thread number 21 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum. In the second page of *CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies\_THREAD*, *Elsis\_* replies to the original poster's question with:

#### Example 4

I asked my bf<sup>18</sup>.

Bless him.

His response?

"No, but we get moths, because they're more manly."

Alright, then... 😬😬

(*CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies2\_THREAD*)

<sup>18</sup> Bf stands for *boyfriend* as gf stands for *girlfriend* in forums and many kinds of CMC.

The participant's boyfriend is almost pitied in *Bless him* for having to answer and deal with all his girlfriend's questions and games. Moreover, his use of the word *moths* as a masculine term for *butterflies* can be claimed to have a funny effect on the reader who may easily identify the stereotype in the comparison and agree with it. However, as it was the case in Example 3, the participant is aware of the sexist implication of this humorous comment and distances her/himself from this sexist attitude by means of the use of the emoticons at the end of the message. The smiling face and the one sticking its tongue try to reach other readers' feelings and, therefore, avoid public punishment for posting a sexist message in an institutional environment which is supposedly known for its innovative and modern ideas on gender and the sexes.

The same use of a multimodal element in order to negotiate one's social and gender identity within a specific cyber community of practice can be observed in thread number 17 of the *Men's Health* forum. In *MH\_REL\_Plenty of fish\_THREAD*, participants are discussing about different web sites to find a partner. In page 1, *FFS\_* contributes to the discussion with:

#### Example 5

See recent thread from lad who met a girl on the web, then discovered she has a hairy lip  
they are single for a reason 😊

(*MH\_REL\_Plenty of fish1\_THREAD*)

While *Gabz-MacGirevik*, in page 35, claims that:

#### Example 6

I object to the idea of men being 'just' after one thing, though. We're not. We just want that first before we make up our minds about all the less important stuff. 😊

(*MH\_REL\_Plenty of fish35\_THREAD*)

In these two examples, the participants are posting rather sexist comments. Although no overt sexist item can be found in their contributions, the underlying messages are based on stereotypes and sexist ideas. In the first case, the idea of the importance of one's own physical appearance in order to get a partner becomes evident while in the second the stereotype of men being obsessive about sex is presented under the mask of irony. The contrast between what readers expect to read in a modern and open forum (that men are not after *one thing*) is contrasted with the idea that they do

actually want sex first in order to *make up our minds about all the less important stuff*. These could be considered sexist comments portraying and perpetuating gendered ideas. Nevertheless, the emoticons used at the end of each message should also be interpreted by the readers as part of the contribution. The smiling faces, as it was the case in previous examples, are used by the participants in these examples in order to seek other readers' agreement and sympathy and, therefore, avoid being censured for being sexist. This negotiation of their social and gender identity is performed by means of linguistic and multimodal elements in order to fit into a dynamic environment where the local and the institutional are mingled.

There are other cases, however, where no negotiation of social or gender identity is offered. Overt sexism is manifested either by means of direct linguistic elements or by means of indirect jokes which, although not containing any overt sexist linguistic element, do perpetuate strong sexist attitudes. In these other cases, sexism is not negotiated to fit into the dynamic relationships between the local and the institutional. In these cases, however, the mere fact of stating such an overt sexist comment places the reader in the situation of having to interpret those comments in such a framework. It will be individual readers who are the ones who will interpret those overt sexist comments or jokes as in fact sexist manifestations or as playful humorous remarks. The trick in these cases is that even though individual readers may interpret those messages as funny or hilarious comments, they are in fact being recorded in a public space. These are open for others' interpretations and, therefore, help perpetuate and reinforce sexist traditional ideas, they indirectly transmit overt sexism.

For example, in thread number 21 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_This girl im seeing doesnt want a relationship she wants a casual\_THREAD*, *See\_You\_Jimmy* participates in page 4 quoting several previous participants' contributions and answering the following:

#### Example 7

Quoted:

*WOW, YOU ARE MORE OF A TOOL THAN I THOUGHT ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE GUYS WHO THINKS THEY CAN GET ANY GIRL THEY WANT BUT CANT, AND IF A GIRL REJECTS YOU, YOU SAY %&\*\$# THEM I DONT CARE ! LOL YOU ARE A LOOSER MATE*

Nope, I just use force and go against there wishes.

You have much to learn young padawan<sup>19</sup>.

(MH\_REL\_This girl im seeing doesnt want a relationship she wants a casual4\_THREAD)

#### Example 8

Quoted:

*Jimbo, does your wife know that you're up this late?*

Yes, she is waiting for me to open the cupboard door and let her out for the night

(MH\_REL\_This girl im seeing doesnt want a relationship she wants a casual4\_THREAD)

Here the participant is referring to previous comments and then answers them back with quite strong commentaries. Firstly, a previous participant accused him/her of being a loser and an object being used by women. This, according to strict forms of hegemonic masculinity, is intolerable because it is women the ones who must be used by the most powerful members of society, that is to say, men. In this case, this can be considered an insult as it breaks traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity. We can observe how this participant responds to this threat with an overt sexist and violent comment *Nope, I just use force and go against there wishes*. There is no direct reference to women but the context leads us to infer that *See\_You\_Jimmy* is referring to them in this sentence. This comment places readers in a complex situation because they have to interpret this comment from what has been expressed in this thread so far or from any other background about the participant. This sentence can be read as an ironic one and, therefore, an anti-sexist contribution discrediting the participant being quoted and his/her traditional view on the role of men and women in a relationship. However, this comment could also be interpreted as an overt sexist expression with no irony or double meaning. This, in fact, may lead us to point at the difficulties individuals may come across in delimiting the differences between what constitutes direct or indirect forms of linguistic sexism, between what can be considered as something explicit or implicit and, most importantly, their reliance on the particular circumstances of the concrete communicative context. In any case, a sexist and violent attitude is being expressed which directly or indirectly contributes to maintaining sexism through linguistic mechanisms. This is possible because humour “gives individuals a greater license to express dangerous, irreverent, or even mean-spirited sentiments that would be

<sup>19</sup> *Padawan* is one of the different levels to which a *Jedi* can have access to in the *Star Wars* Universe. *Star Wars* is a trilogy created in the 1970s and directed by George Lukas.

considered inappropriate or forbidden in most ‘serious’ forms of discourse” (Case and Lippard 2009: 241).

In the second contribution, *See\_You\_Jimmy* plays the same game answering to a previous participant. The quote provides us with certain linguistic elements, such as the pronoun *your* and the noun *wife*, which may lead us to infer that the gender identity performed by *See\_You\_Jimmy* in this forum is that of a male person. More precisely, in his/her answer *Yes, she is waiting for me to open the cupboard door and let her out for the night* he/she asserts his/her male gender identity and colours it with hegemonic and traditional gender ideals. Here, again, a violent and sexist comment is uttered which, as it was the case in the previous example, can be interpreted in different and opposing ways by different interlocutors. On the one hand, irony can be seen as the main essence of this contribution and, therefore, the gender identity of this participant would be understood as distancing from that of traditional and sexist attitudes. On the other hand, however, his/her contribution may be interpreted directly and, therefore, understood as a reinforcement of traditional, gendered and sexist views. In any case, interpretations are individual, personal and not transferable and what remains publicly and freely available is the expression of sexist attitudes by means of indirect linguistic mechanisms.

In this way, in thread number 40 from the *Men’s Health* forum, *MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm\_THREAD*, *Gabz-MacGirevik* intervenes in the discussion after quoting a previous participant:

#### Example 9

Quoted:

*Practice makes perfect. Alternatively, ask him to go slower.*

Talk during sex? For godsake, woman, don't we have to put up with enough talking to get sex? We have to listen to you during it as well?

(*MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm1\_THREAD*)

In this thread, participants are discussing about the difficulties people sometimes find in keeping up rhythm when having sex. Here, a previous participant, assumed to be a woman by *Gabz-MacGirevik*, is accused of perpetuating and stirring up other women in the forum because she has suggested other women participating in the thread talking to their partners about their sexual practices and needs. *Gabz-MacGirevik* performs here a macho gender identity identifying her/himself as a member of the other group, as it can be observed in the use of the pronoun *we* in *don't we have to put up with enough talking to get sex?* Moreover, this sentence helps reinforce a traditional gender

stereotype according to which women are excessively talkative. The exclamative tone is provided by the words *For godsake* which contribute to exaggerate the stereotype and the gendered vision of women. Finally, this is strengthened with *We have to listen to you during it as well?* Again, this intervention can be understood by certain participants as a humorous and inoffensive comment transmitted by means of irony, that is, some readers may interpret that the participant is trying to project the opposite view to that transmitted by the message and that the underlying intention is what actually counts as meaningful in this contribution. However, others may interpret this as a real expression of feelings and thoughts and agree with the gendered and traditional ideas expressed by the participant. Again, what makes a statement sexist or not is the interpretations that others may make of it but, what can be suggested, regardless of the interpretation of individual readers, is that what remains is the traditional and gendered view of the sexes portrayed by the message.

We can find a similar example in the intervention of *Burnsituation* a few posts later in the same thread:

#### Example 10

I agree fire nackers. I also think womens needs arent insidered during sex and you should just lay there and take it, when were finished, we are happy.

(*MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm1\_THREAD*)

Here, the message is rather clear, sexist and heterosexist. Women's needs are considered as completely irrelevant during the heterosexual sexual act. Only men's needs should be satisfied and cared about. It does not even matter if women need or desire to continue with the sexual act because *when were finished, we are happy*. Again, although there are no overt sexist linguistic elements, the message seems in fact sexist, traditionalist, archaic and even violent. The veil of humour can disguise the indirect sexism in this comment and present it as a comic and innocuous remark. Nevertheless, what is clear is that, trying to be humorous or not, what is stated is a traditional gender stereotype according to which women and men are different, they have different needs and, as a rule, men's needs and desires should be satisfied with no hesitation or trouble.

Other times, participants make use of other discursive mechanisms related to humour or what can be considered more elaborated and easy-to-be-transmitted jokes. In these cases, overt sexist comments are also indirectly transmitted. Pointing at these jokes as examples of sexism is difficult because no concrete lexical or grammatical



features allow us to do so. It is the complete discourse, the overall essence of the contribution what can be interpreted as sexist. Nevertheless, again, in order for them to be considered sexist, readers' interpretations are required. A good example of how this more elaborated and easy-to-be-transmitted kind of jokes work is provided by *c\_\_\_jay* in page 3 of thread number 23 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Does monogamy come naturally to you\_THREAD*. In this case, the participant pastes a picture of a text which, we assume, circulates around the Internet. In this text, different types of women are described in terms of the relationships they have with a man. Again, heterosexism is the norm and women are catalogued from a sexist perspective in terms of the men in their lives, having androcentrism as a basis. The humour in this joke can be interpreted from the fact that it is so extremely sexist that it is expected to be understood as a joke. Again the institutional and the local levels of the forum play a crucial role here. The interplay between the institutional, modern and open views about the sexes in modern society and the local, sometimes more traditional and sexist attitudes expressed in the forum provide an open door for readers to interpret this message depending on the context of their communicative situation. Nevertheless, as it was the case before, the sexist and stereotypical views about the sexes remain publicly available and, what is more, covered by the invisible protection of humour which, in case of attack, serves as an almost instant defence.

#### Example 11

Haha funny how no bloke posted 😊

1) **Wifey** is irreplaceable.. but she is the only one that is irreplaceable.. She is the girl that the guy loves and will always loves, and he never wants to see her with another man. but, he will cheat on her with Boo, Bitches and Ho's until he is mature enough to realize if he loses Wifey he would be screwed, and NEVER be happy again.

2) **Boo** is replaceable, she thinks she's Wifey, but will NEVER be Wifey because Wifey was made Wifey and is irreplaceable. She can NEVER replace her. Boo tries to take Wifey's spot, but once she attempts, the guy allows her to get a TASTE of Wifey's spot but, wil NEVER achieve her spot for any longer than a few months, then the man goes back to Wifey... And Boo either gets replaced with another Boo, or, the man matures and decides that Wifey is the one for him.. (Ladies.. you don't want to be BOO)

3) **Bitches** a female that a male uses only for sex or other sexuality related events.. Dat call when Wifey acting up and you need a quick nut. The bitch is the first one running there.

4) **Ho's**.. enough said! Trying to move up in life, Wants to be a Bitch or a Boo. Hoes are just the women you bag for no reason and have them in your phone. Backups in case a bitch or a boo slips up. Then you replace with a hoe.

(*CS\_REL\_Does monogamy come naturally to you3\_THREAD*)

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the ways interlocutors have to fight against sexist comments is that of openly reporting what is been observed or perceived. Other times, probably impregnated by the fear of being accused of not having any sense of humour, interlocutors may decide to play the game. In these cases, participants may freely choose to participate in the sexist discourse being created with the aim of either being integrated into a particular community of practice regardless of their attitudes towards sexist comments or with the aim of indirectly fighting against those sexist comments being perpetuated. In any case, if participants decide to play the game, we are faced with a similar situation to those where humour or irony are being used in the negotiation of one's own social and gender identities. Participants' comments are open to interpretation and it is other readers or participants the ones who will judge those interventions as contributing to creating a sexist discourse or rather as fighting against it by means of humour and irony.

An example of this situation can be found in thread number 4 of the *Men's Health* forum. In *MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out\_THREAD*, *LadyShade*, who identifies him/herself as female, enters the forum asking for men's opinion about a personal situation. The original poster met a man at the gym and he/she is asking for advice on how to approach this man without seeming too desperate or inappropriate. A three-page thread is generated in which several participants offer their opinions. However, since the original poster identified him/herself as female, he/she is advised to go to the *Cosmopolitan* forum –and here we find more justifications for our comparison of these two virtual spaces based on the ground of the gendered comparative nature of these two environments– which is considered a better place for women. In this way, the original poster feels the need to justify his/her participation in this forum since this community of practice fits better his/her objectives of finding answers from gym-going men whose opinions would be more valuable to the original poster. In the following example, apart from observing how in-group members of the forum identify out-group members and these have to find their way into the new community, we can also observe how the original poster starts playing the game originated by the members of this specific cyber community of practice. In previous posts, they insisted that the new participants should provide information on his/her *tits and loaf*<sup>20</sup>, that is, in-group

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<sup>20</sup> The expression *tits and loaf* is used in the *Men's Health* forum to refer to women's breasts and vagina. Heterosexual men (persona) in this forum ask for female participants to provide personal information about their physical anatomy. In page three of a thread entitled *Tits and Loaf*

members are asking the new participant, identified as female, to provide information about his/her breasts and vagina.

#### Example 12

Ouch.

OK, should have expected that I suppose. Just to say though:

- 1) Yes, I'm 30. Doesn't stop me being a bit nervous about approaching a guy and possibly making a dick of myself.
- 2) I deliberately chose this forum (rather than Cosmo or similar) to ask for advice on as thought there was more chance of getting replies from gym-going guys - whose opinion I thought would be the most helpful - here.
- 3) I was trying to give a bit of background to my question but the point about big blocks of text is taken.
- 4) No tits and loaf this time, I hardly know you (and I'm 30, they're not what they once were)

*(MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out1\_THREAD)*

In point number 4, the original poster is showing his/her acceptance to participate in the game. He/she is stating, by means of humour, that his/her breast and vagina will not be shown because they are not as fit as they once were. The presuppositions here may lead us to infer that, being the original poster younger, he/she would have been happy to show her personal anatomy to the other members of the forum. This statement, although intended to be a humorous comment which may help the original poster fit into this new community of practice, it is also perpetuating traditional sexist ideas. According to this message, the original poster, who in this case identifies him/herself as female and, therefore, as a member of the groups being objectified here, he/she is also contributing to that objectification of women by means of subtly agreeing to play the game.

In page two of the same thread, *Roy\_Drage* contributes to the discussion with the following post:

#### Example 13

Ok, just read your post and I will answer your question with the exact information you need, I won't even be sarcastic or silly.

Firstly.

If you can't provide tits and loaf pictures we require Ass and Loaf pictures instead.

Secondly.

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(<http://www.menshealth.co.uk/community/forums/thread/470960?page=3>) a participant explains: *When new female posters joined we used to ask for pictures of Tits and Loaf (loaf meaning p\*ssy) until someone posted a picture of themselves with a loaf of hovis and the sense became more literal!*

I think you should continue the way you have been, try and get a quick chat in with the guy before/after your class. You could carry on 'trying' to read the signals and work out if he's single or you could just suggest after one of your classes going for a quick drink in the 'cafe//drinks/lounge area' etc (if you have one). [...]

(MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out2\_THREAD)

What is of special relevance to our analysis in this post is the first part of the message. Here, the participant is claiming that he/she is not going to be sarcastic or silly. According to this, readers would expect a serious comment following these words. However, the sentence *If you can't provide tits and loaf pictures we require Ass and Loaf pictures instead* is, in fact, a contradiction with the intentions of the poster. What is achieved, in turn, is a humorous and sarcastic tone which makes it difficult for readers interpreting this as a sexist comment to fight it back. We could even suggest that the pronoun *we* further strengthens the gender division between men and women and the verb *require* helps reinforce a strong image of men which places them in a higher and more powerful position.

In page three of the same thread, the original poster comes back again to the forum to report the new advances in their situation:

#### Example 14

...just wanted to say thanks to those of you that offered me advice. Since I last wrote, I've seen the guy a couple of times - last time I saw him, he was the one to *initiate* 😏 the conversation between us and it was all good, he went in for a kiss on the cheek when I was leaving too which I thought was a pretty good sign. We've both been invited out on Friday with a group of people from the gym - not sure if he's going yet, but even if he doesn't, I feel a bit more confident now about suggesting we meet up sometime. And if all else fails, guess I'll just offer him some tits and loaf and see what he says.

(MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out3\_THREAD)

Here the original poster is offering new information on how their relationship is developing. On the one hand, we can observe how the original poster continues playing the game offered by the in-group members of this forum. The original poster uses the word *initiate* together with an emoticon of a winking face. This can be interpreted by certain readers as a continuation of his/her gender performance because, as it has been required, in order to be accepted, he/she must offer sexual content to the forum participants. In this case, the sexual content is offered by the subtle meaning of the word used in italics and the multimodal element. However, this can also be interpreted as a humorous or ironic way of criticising the way this community pretended to include the

original poster in their lists. In any case, as it was shown earlier, what remains is the underlying message that women, in order to be accepted in certain male-dominated environments, must play men's rules and show up sexual attitudes. Moreover, the last sentence *And if all else fails, guess I'll just offer him some tits and loaf and see what he says* further contributes to this idea. Here, the original poster is openly stating that by means of sexual tricks, he/she could get what he/she desires, which is getting the man he/she likes at the gym. What we can claim is that, despite the intention of the original poster and the interpretation other readers may make of it, this idea actually helps reinforce traditional gender stereotypes for both men and women. On the one hand, women are portrayed as almost sexual objects who need to display their ruses in order to achieve their maximum aim in life, that of getting a man. On the other hand, men are depicted as rather basic in their needs and as absolutely obsessed with sex, by means of which, a woman can tackle their weak spot and trap them in a long-term relationship.

Following the original poster's update on the development of the situation and his/her final humorous and indirectly sexist comment, several participants intervene:

#### Example 15

Our work here is done. Go team Menshealth

(MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out3\_THREAD)

#### Example 16

Can we have the t&l for our hard work?

(MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out3\_THREAD)

#### Example 17

Hmmm...

...tell you what. If anything ever happens between me and this guy, I promise to come back to this thread and post some t&l. That do?

(MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out3\_THREAD)

It can be observed how several participants, who perform a male gender identity, as it can be inferred from the use of the pronouns *our* or *we*, further contribute to strengthen the traditional stereotypes portrayed by the original poster in Example 14. What is more, these two participants, who perform a male persona, are further contributing to stereotyping their own gender identity by affirming that, in fact, their *work* is that of driving women towards a sexual attitude. In fact, they ask for a sexual reward after their *hard work* which, moreover, contributes to reinforce the idea that men

need to be rewarded and admired when they have finished their deeds. In addition, the original poster closes the thread with a comment which, although intended to be humorous, is in fact transmitting a sexist attitude. The original poster actually claims that if he/she gets what he/she wants, a sexual prize will be given to the men in this forum. Again, whether this comment is intended to be humorous or real, only the sender knows. Moreover, whether it is interpreted as humorous or not does only depend on each reader's communicative situation, background knowledge and attitude towards sexist issues. What is clear, in any case, is that despite the fact that these messages do not contain any overt sexist linguistic element, they do in fact portray sexist and stereotypical ideas which remain freely accessible in such a public space as an online forum.

A similar situation in which the negotiation of an individual's gender identity is performed online can be observed in thread number 18 of the *Men's Health* forum. In *MH\_REL\_Single and needamale perspective\_THREAD*, *loopy24* starts a discussion in which he/she identifies him/herself as a *lass* who does not have much luck with the opposite sex. The original poster describes him/herself as not having much confidence and as *average in the looks and body department*. Moreover, the original poster offers some information about his/her *good career opportunities*. This offers us some clues about what the original poster considers as essential characteristics to be described when looking for advice in the search of a man. Of course, this bears indirect sexist implications for men, who are depicted as firstly interested in physical appearance. The first answer the original poster gets is one from *D4ve*, who briefly asks for *tits and loaf*. Here, as in the previous example, the heterosexual men personas in the forum want to get the new lady in the forum started in their game. They are trying to get the original poster into their gender categorisation by means of a humorous comment which, from a mere linguistic perspective, could not be catalogued as sexist but which, from a discursive one, could easily be classified as indirect sexism because of all the stereotypes and traditional ideas hidden behind such a short phrase. A few posts later, the original poster decides to enter the game. As in the previous example, the original poster may have decided to do so either because his/her real/not virtual social and gender identity would actually act in the same way in non-virtual reality or because, due to the implicit rules of the cyber community of practice in which the original poster wants to interact, he/she decides to perform an adapted social and gender identity who decides to enter the game. More precisely, the original poster claims:

## Example 18

d4ve, as the proud owner of a pair of breasts im aware of the effects on the male species 😊 [...]

(*MH\_REL\_Single and needamale perspective1\_THREAD*)

Here, the original poster is performing a female gender identity which indirectly accepts the sexist attitude being displayed in the thread. The original poster, and in contradiction with his/her initial message where he/she describes his/herself as *average in the looks and body department*, here he/she uses the adjective *proud* to refer to how he/she feels about his/her body. Moreover, the collocation *pair of breast* adds a sexual connotation to this comment and finally the clause *im aware of the effects on the male species* 😊 contributes to indirectly perpetuate traditional gender stereotypes. On the one hand, the original poster accepts to perform a female gender persona who accepts that by dealing with her body in sexual terms she will attain more attention in a male-dominated forum. On the other hand, this comment further contributes to depict men as sexually obsessed and easily manageable by means of sexual tricks.

These stereotypes and sexist gender ideas are further strengthened by *Gabz-MacGirevik* a few posts later where he/she claims:

## Example 19

[...]. I'm prepared to shag the OP<sup>21</sup>, even if she's an uggo<sup>22</sup>, just as long as she keeps me supplied with kettlebells<sup>23</sup> and paints and doesn't expect the hoovering to be done more than once a fortnight.

(*MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective1\_THREAD*)

The conversation between the original poster and *Gabz-MacGirevik* continues as follows in the following pages:

## Example 20

well if i was an uggo you could always stick a bag over my head, or double bag my napper just for safety.... 😊

(*MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective1\_THREAD*)

<sup>21</sup> *OP* stands for *original poster*

<sup>22</sup> *Uggo* stands for *ugly*

<sup>23</sup> The *kettlebell* or *girya* (Russian: ) is a cast-iron weight (resembling a cannonball with a handle) used to perform ballistic exercises that combine cardiovascular, strength and flexibility training (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kettlebell>)

## Example 21

It's a deal then. I'll just go tell the kids they've got a new rich stepmother who'll buy them lots of toys in a futile attempt to buy their love, and the more they play up, the harder she'll try. 🤖

*(MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective1\_THREAD)*

## Example 22

i ll bring the brown paper bags, obviously after drinking the alcohol thats in them.... 🤖

*(MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective1\_THREAD)*

## Example 23

Make sure you leave a hole in the bags. To breathe through, obviously.

*(MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective2\_THREAD)*

## Example 24

and here s me thinking something else.....must be my dirty mind... 😊

*(MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective2\_THREAD)*

## Example 25

🤖 This is a clean, gentleman's forum, missy. We'll have less of that.

*(MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective2\_THREAD)*

## Example 26

i better not post that topless pic then....

*(MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective2\_THREAD)*

In these examples, it can be clearly observed how the original poster fully enters the game, either because, as we mentioned earlier, he/she performs a similar gender identity outside the virtual environment or because he/she decides to accept the implicit gender rules of this thread and forum and perform a traditional gendered female attitude based on the sexual power of women and their innate naïve attitude in front of men. As readers, we can detect certain humour in these exchanges, otherwise, the violence in them would be considered just unacceptable. However, as we have been mentioning, this conversation is open to multiple interpretations and there is a possibility that this conversation may be read literally by some people holding traditional sexist attitudes. In any case, the indirect sexism perpetuated in these exchanges is offered as a possibility and humour may be interpreted in this case either as an inoffensive discourse feature or as a veil to disclose overtly sexist attitudes.



We would also consider it important to mention another discourse characteristic which is used in humorous or ironic comments, it is the use of what we would call *excusing headings*. Excusing headings allow participants to post a comment which runs the risk of being catalogued as sexist under a protection veil of humorous excuses. Excuses are used to distance oneself from what is actually being expressed by the message. In the case of humorous messages, certain participants negotiate their social and gender identity by means of this excusing headings. They initially distance themselves from the indirect sexism hidden in their interventions and, in so doing, anticipate to and, in a way, make it more difficult for anti-sexist reports. Even though participants are claiming and declaring that their messages, despite not containing any overt sexist linguistic element, can be considered sexist by certain individuals, they distance themselves from those comments in an attempt of negotiating their social and gender identity within the local framework of the online discussion forum in which they are participating and the institutional framework of the online magazine to which they are ascribed. An example of this is found in thread number 74 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum. In *CS\_REL\_Total idiot\_THREAD*, a discussion is started where participants are asked to provide their opinions on a personal situation. The original poster explains that she/he became friends with a man and after a year they started a relationship. After a time, he told the original poster that he did not like her/him *in that way* and asked her/him to be *fuck buddies*<sup>24</sup>. The original poster is offended by his attitude but, however, expresses her/his positive feelings towards this guy. By presenting the problem, the original poster is indirectly asking for other participants' opinions or advice. In page 3, *spizzy* intervenes in the discussion with the following post:

#### Example 27

I'm gonna get killed for this...

A woman is a lock, A man is a key. A woman that opens to many keys is a bad lock. A man that opens many locks is a master key.

(*CS\_REL\_Total idiot3\_THREAD*)

From a feminist critical discourse perspective, we could claim that this participant is contributing to the discussion with a metaphorical humorous comment. She/he makes use of traditional scripts or a traditional visual comparison of men and

<sup>24</sup> *Fuck buddy* is a colloquial term used to refer to someone with whom you have a merely sexual relationship with no emotional or psychological binding.

women with everyday objects, a key and a lock. We can infer that certain sexual implications are transmitted by means of this simple comparison. The penetrative action of the key into the lock tries to bring to the readers' minds the penetration of women by men. Moreover, this comparison is sweetened with an extra comment which offers a detailed description of how the perfect match between a key and a lock must be. By claiming that *A woman that opens to many keys is a bad lock. A man that opens many locks is a master key*, the participant is indirectly stating, by means of a metaphorical humorous comment, that women and men's sexual needs and standards are and must be different. More precisely, women who have many sexual relationships with different partners are classified as *bad* while men who do have many sexual relationships with different women (as much as possible) are described as *master*. This, of course, may lead readers to resort to their cultural backgrounds in order to make meaning of this humorous traditional comparison. This sexist comment which, by the way, does not contain any overt sexist linguistic element, is framed by an excusing heading *I'm gonna get killed for this...* The participant is assuming that what follows is an unacceptable comment and she/he should get punished for it. However, the communicative meaning transmitted by the anteposition of the excuse to a sexist comment is rather complex. On the one hand, by means of this discursive construction this participant may be suggesting that she/he does not agree with the sexism indirectly presented in her/his comment but that, in any case, considers that this message may be relevant for the discussion. If this were the case, however, although no sexist intentions would be present, the message will be transmitting an overtly sexist attitude anyway. On the other hand, this participant may identify her/himself with the ideas transmitted in the message and the excusing heading is just a shock absorber for future anti-sexist attacks. Again, what will remain publicly available for the participants or readers of this thread will be an overtly sexist humorous comment which, although framed by a sense of remorse, actually perpetuates traditional and damaging stereotypical gendered ideas and ideals.

A similar case is found in thread number 151 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum. The original poster of *CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women\_THREAD* opens this thread with what could be considered as a direct humorous comment with an open entertaining intention, that of offering participants or readers of this thread a two-sided vision of how oral sex is performed and experienced by both men and women.

### Example 28

*This is meant as a light hearted observation but apologies beforehand to those that might draw offense.*

Now I appreciate that giving oral sex is about being considerate and wanting to give something to your partner but I do sometimes wonder if women appreciate the difference between them fellating a bloke and us performing cunnilingus.

Okay on a bad occasion a woman might have to contend with a smelly/cheesy knob but a bit of spit, a vigorous rub with your hand or even on his belly and you can pop that baby in. Unless it's gigantic or miniscule it's reasonably easy to put in the mouth and there isn't a danger that you'll keep losing it. It's either in your mouth or isn't. We might worry about your teeth but your tongue won't have to hyper extend itself to find it.

Being an extremity of the male form means you can use one hand to hold or steady it and the other to make sure it's at the right angle for you. Your nose can remain free and clear away from the mans body, which allows you to breathe easily. As long as you don't get carried away or have someone over eagerly pushing your head down you can limit the depth of intrusion and reduce the danger of gagging. Ultimately put, and simplified down to its core, if you've ever enjoyed licking a lolly you are going to be capable of giving a bloke an enjoyable experience.

For us blokes though it's a little different. We have to put our face and breathing apparatus inside you. Unless we're blessed with a foot long tongue, if we want to get right in there, our nose is going to be virtually in you. In many cases we'll have to move hair aside to get to the prize, though some will still end up on our tongue and once through that will have to contend with the lips.

Yes we can give them a little nibble on the way in but again they are something else that needs to be moved aside meaning that your fingers will either need to possess the dexterity of a Harp player or you have the kind of facial and lip muscles that could move a chocolate from your forehead to your mouth with no hands.

Then there's the taste. It's sour, in most cases like popping a couple of old copper coins that got lost down the back of your sofa into your mouth. There's also the smell. Again, it's not always unpleasant but your senses are heightened so with your nose firmly planted in her gusset you are going to detect something. Granted a bloke could smell but at least you can keep that at arms, sorry knobs, length.

So you are going for it, licking the stamp and this in turn makes your mouth go dry which along with the dull ache forming at the base of your tongue only adds to the experience. Of course if you are doing your job right, you should be receiving all the lubricant you could need and she'll be moaning like a Union leader.

That though brings its own problems in that the very area that feeds your lungs is now pressed deeply into something wet and sloppy and doesn't facilitate the flow of air that well. Of course you could slightly pull away to breathe but just at that moment your tongue flicks across the magical 'make them bark like a dog' spot that you might find once a month and you are loathed to lose it.

The fun continues if you try to bring in the 'point multiplier' of some finger action. With all the hot spots located up and at the front, your hand has to go in palm up to allow your fingers to bend upwards, meaning that the heel of your palm is now effectively brushing along your chin and inexplicably feeling that your own body is trying to push your head further into her.

By the time you do pull away you look and feel like someone with a heavy cold who's been apple dunking for 20 minutes but still not got the apple.

And whereas some women seem to like blowing you and then immediately want to kiss you as a demonstration of "look I'm noshing you off so you can taste what I am" I always feel it only right to trace a path up their body so at least the worse of the residue has been wiped off. Add to this a need to blow your nose and it isn't any

wonder that when you then look down your 'chap' has lost it's earnest eagerness as blood and energy has been re-directed to preventing you from drowning. Don't get me wrong, it's still great to please a woman like that and I'm not whining. It was just an observation that giving oral sex to a woman is a little more challenging and although I'm sure more women 'give head' than men 'plate' this figure would be more equal if the practicalities of doing so were the same.

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women1\_THREAD)

What is especially relevant for us in this section is, on the one hand, how humour is used in the telling of how oral sex is different for men and women performers and, on the other hand, how the sexist attitudes expressed in so doing are framed by a excusing heading which helps the participant negotiate her/his social and gender identity both in the local and institutional framework of her/his participation.

In the case of how humour is used in describing how men and women perform oral sex to each other, we can suggest that several resources are used. Irony, exaggerations or funny comparisons are used to express, in a *light hearted* tone, that men performing oral sex to women do in fact deserve much more merit than women performing it to men. This is so because fellatios are described as easy or not very disturbing in physical terms. However, cunnilinguses are described as almost dangerous and adventurous experiences that place men at their limits. It is precisely the *light hearted* tone what offers a humorous air to the post.

Moreover, the opening sentence *This is meant as a light hearted observation but apologies beforehand to those that might draw offense* can be claimed to be used with a communicative intention similar to that explained in Example 27. The original poster may be either accepting that this message is utterly sexist but, however, agrees with the essence of it or rather the original poster may be consciously deciding to post an overtly sexist message in terms of its content and by means of the excusing heading she/he is just negotiating her/his social and gender identity according to the institutional framework of the publication to which this forum is ascribed. In any case, what remains, again, is a sexist message which, despite not having overt sexist linguistic elements, does portray and perpetuate a traditional and gendered view of the human race.

All in all, what can be claimed from the examples presented and analysed in this section is that humour, as Mills (2008) explains, constitutes a fundamental discursive feature for language users in order to indirectly transmit sexist attitudes. As we have observed, different mechanisms can be used in order to provide a message with a humorous tone –irony, exaggerations, conflicting messages, traditional scripts,

comparisons or even overt sexist comments—, it all depends on the communicative intention and the interpretation on the part of specific receivers of those messages. However, what remains intact in all these examples is that, regardless of the humorous intentions, all of them contain sexist and gendered attitudes. Whether they are intended or interpreted as sexist or not by particular senders or participants, what remains unaltered is the possibility of sexism and, from our perspective, that is the basic essence of indirect linguistic sexism.

We totally agree with Benmiller and Schneider's (2008) claim that sexist humour entails consequences both at an institutional and at an individual level. This is so because, paying attention to its discursive nature, humour, on the one hand, serves to maintain a dichotomous vision of *us* versus *them* amongst women but also between women and men and, therefore, it contributes to the maintenance of gender differences at an individual level. On the other hand, at an institutional level, humour serves the purpose of preserving gender stereotypes alive under a mask of indirectness which contributes to the conservation of gender social and cultural inequalities. It is precisely these consequences, both at an institutional and at a local level, that places humour in a relevant place within the most important mechanisms for the transmission of indirect linguistic sexism in CMC since humour, "like other elements of popular culture, is less rigidly controlled than other forms of communication (Case and Lippard 2009: 243). As it will be further discussed in section 6.2,

I propose that disparaging humor changes the rules in a given context that dictate appropriate reactions to discrimination against members of the disparaged group. That is, it expands the bounds of appropriate conduct, creating a norm of tolerance of discrimination against members of the disparaged group (Ford 2000: 1095).

### 5.3.2. *Presuppositions*

As we mentioned in section 5.2, presuppositions are another discourse feature that must be taken into account when analysing indirect linguistic sexism. Presuppositions can be defined as implicit or hidden meanings within messages which must be deciphered or decoded by individual interlocutors relying on their background, world and social knowledge. In Levinson's (1983) terms, presuppositions should be understood as the common ground which is taken for granted by all the interlocutors participating in a concrete communicative situation. Similarly, Richardson (2007: 63)

suggests that presuppositions should be conceived as “implicit claims inherent in the explicit meaning of a text or utterance which are taken for granted”. Moreover, Zare (2012: 736) claims that presuppositions refer to “the non-asserted information triggered by certain linguistic constructions which is irrefutably credited as gospel truth by participants in an utterance in a specific context”.

Because of these intrinsic, discursive and contextual characteristics, presuppositions do not always work. Certain interlocutors may decide to hide a meaning in a message in order to be decoded by specific participants in the communicative act. However, presuppositions are, in the first term, assumptions about what the sender expects the receiver to understand. According to these expectations and the background, social and cultural knowledge senders have of their interlocutors, they decide to encode the hidden meaning of the message in specific ways. Sometimes a noun, a verb, an adjective, a syntactic construction or a pragmatic element such as intonation may be used as clues for receivers to look in depth into the message combing it for veiled senses. Nevertheless, receivers may have a different background, social or cultural knowledge than that expected by the sender and the assumption may fail in its objective of providing a bridge between the sender’s intention and the receiver’s interpretation of the message.

We consider it of special importance to make a terminological distinction at this point. For our purpose, we will consider presuppositions those hidden messages that arise from a linguistic element in a given discourse. However, we will also take implicatures into account in our analysis. Implicatures may be defined as hidden cultural or socio-ideological meanings concealed in specific messages that do not arise from specific linguistic material, it is the whole discourse the one that provides receivers with certain cultural or ideological clues for them to interpret and decode a particular covert meaning. We could claim that presuppositions would be the clearest way of presenting or encoding a hidden meaning. In these cases, certain visible features will allow researchers to locate the specific items that may unveil senders’ intentions. For example, if somebody says *John’s son didn’t let him sleep last night*, we could claim that there is a presupposition made by the sender that the receiver knows that John has got a son, otherwise, this new information would have been provided. The following step in the scale would be occupied by strong implicatures, that is, hidden meanings that could be decoded because of the contextual communicative situation, in which we should include the context of the communication, the socio-cultural

background and the ideological structures surrounding that communicative situation. For example, if somebody says something like *Would you like some coffee?* and someone else answers *Coffee keeps me awake*, the receiver could not judge or interpret the receiver's sentence relying on any linguistic element, however, the context of the communicative situation will favour a reading for the receiver. In this particular case, for example, the receiver's knowledge on whether the second speaker wants to sleep or not for a particular occasion will determine whether this is an acceptance or a rejection of the offering of a coffee. Finally, the last step of the scale would be occupied by weak implicatures, that is, deductions which are based not on linguistic or contextual elements but on the receiver's own interpretation of the message. For example, if someone points at a particular element in a room, the receiver may look at that direction but without being sure about what the message or the sender's intention is. In this case the receiver's interpretation is based on pure deductions which may be contextually right or wrong<sup>25</sup>. For our purpose of analysing indirect linguistic sexism, we will basically focus on presuppositions and strong implicatures found in our corpus. In other words, for our purpose, and taking into account the intrinsic features of our corpus, we will focus on the two varieties of presuppositions presented by Zare (2012: 737),

[g]enerally, there are two approaches to studying presupposition which scholars can take, i.e. semantic and pragmatic<sup>26</sup>, based on which it is analyzed from the aspect of logic and pragmatics respectively. [...] semantic presuppositions hinge on the meaning of the words used to trigger information. While, pragmatic presuppositions [...] do not exist in the meaning of words, or in something that is already known; instead, they exist in something which is given as information by the speaker, or in something which is assumed as such [...]. As a matter of fact, pragmatic presuppositions share the meaning that more information is to follow (Zare 2012: 737).

It is precisely because of the individualistic interpretative and contextual nature of presuppositions and implicatures that anti-sexist supporters find it extremely difficult to fight against indirect sexism expressed by means of these discourse features. In order to report a presupposition or implicature we must make explicit our own interpretation of the message. In this case, both or neither senders or receivers may counter-attack our anti-sexist comments by claiming that our interpretation was not the sender's intention

<sup>25</sup> Thanks to Dr. Sergio Maruenda Bataller (University of Valencia) for his clarifying ideas on the distinction between presuppositions and implicatures.

<sup>26</sup> *Semantic presuppositions* will be referred to as presuppositions in our study while *pragmatic presuppositions* will be referred to as implicatures.

or a particular receiver's interpretation. For feminist critical discourse analysts, however, the fact of unveiling possible sexist attitudes hidden in messages reveals a crucial step in achieving our objectives.

In our particular corpus, several and varied examples of presuppositions and implicatures can be found. In order to make this section appear more structured, we have decided to classify them in different blocks. The first would refer to those presuppositions or implicatures related to the world of relationships, more precisely, to those rules or unstated norms which surround this issue. A clear example can be found in thread number 2 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single\_THREAD*. We could claim that just the title implies something clear about relationships. From our perspective, the fact of overtly asking about reasons that may make someone love being single imply that, contrarily, the desirable state would be that of being in a relationship. Being single is a secondary state which needs to be reinforced by strong reasons in order for those being in that situation to find something to hold on. We could consider that participants in this thread are looking for a kind of consensus or agreement that may help them find the bright side of the situation to finally come to terms with it, as it can be observed in:

#### Example 29

I haven't came on here for ages and I'm not single but I will be once I work up the nerve to and hopefully this list will help give me some things to look forward to (and it may be more than 5!)

(*CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single2\_THREAD*)

In this example, the words *I'm not single but I will be once I work up the nerve to and hopefully this list will help give me some things to look forward to* may lead receivers to interpret that there is something wrong in being single and, in fact, there is a need to *work up the nerve* to be in that situation. Throughout the thread, the reasons provided to help readers come to terms with their situation do go in the direction of showing the good points of this undesirable state by means of, for example, strengthening the idea that being in a relationship may make you feel trapped, as in:

#### Example 30

Nobody making me feel less important than cycling or the gym or weightlifting

(*CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single2\_THREAD*)



Also by claiming that being single relieves people from the stress or the fear of being abandoned, as in:

#### Example 31

I don't have to worry about being dumped 😊  
 (CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single3\_THREAD)

The idea that being in a relationship is almost a *must* for people is reinforced by thread number 47 of the same forum. In *CS\_REL\_I really like you but I don't want a relationship\_THREAD*, a discussion is started where the original poster suggests that the phrase contained in the title means different things when uttered by men or women, which is, on the basis of marked gender differences, a way of manifesting sexism indirectly. In the first case, men are accused of using this pretext to tell women that they are not worth being their partners in a very subtle, constructed and accepted way. A few posts later, the same participant further contributes to the discussion by claiming:

#### Example 32

Naughty I totally agree with you but when I try and explain this to my friends they get annoyed at me for being pessimistic and crushing their dreams of being with the man in question. I would rather I crushes their dreams as soon as they heard that line rather than being devastated when they find out the guy IS ready for a relationship... with someone else.  
 When I hear that of a man, i run a mile and dont look back  
 (CS\_REL\_I really like you but I don't want a relationship1\_THREAD)

The word *pessimistic* and the expression *crushing their dreams* can be claimed to contain a veiled message in the sense that people should be encouraged to feel that they can attain their maximum objective or dream in life, that of being in a relationship. Moreover, the sentence *I would rather I crushes their dreams as soon as they heard that line rather than being devastated when they find out the guy IS ready for a relationship... with someone else* may also make the reader infer that men should be considered as unstable and cruel beings who do not find this objective as relevant as women and, in the light of this, women should be aware of the problems that can arise as, for example, infidelity.

Once the fact of being in a relationship has been established as the most desirable state for any social being, we wonder what the concrete norms that govern these relationships are. From the information obtained from our corpus, we could

suggest that monogamy and heterosexuality could be considered the maximum standards of any relationship. This, although in a very subtle and indirect way, could be regarded as sexist attitudes because traditional gender roles and stereotypes continue being transmitted and encouraged. In thread number 6 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation\_THREAD*, *Mary\_Sue* explains a personal experience in which the sexuality of one of her/his friends is confusing her/him:

### Example 33

So I have a friend, who I've known about 2 years. She's engaged to someone she's been with about a year and a half.

Anyhow we met through a couple of guys who I've known since my early teens (my experimenting-with-drugs friends, basically) but now we normally see each other just the two of us. Sometimes we meet for lunch, but usually we go for a night out or for some drinks after work or she comes round and we have wine and a takeaway. I see her about once a week, I'd say.

About a year ago we were out and were really drunk, and she told me she really fancied me and we kissed. I've always assumed she was completely straight, but always also thought she was quite hot. Anyway the next time we saw each other it wasn't mentioned and I just assumed she'd been really drunk or joking or something and forgot about it. We carried on as normal and nothing changed.

Thing is now it's happened another couple of times. Once was about... 3 months ago? And the other was last night. I'm not sure what to make of it. If it happened every time we drank together, I'd assume she fancied me. If it was just the once, I'd just shrug it off. It's always been in a quiet corner or at her place, so I don't think she's a "bar-sexual" i.e. doing it for attention. And she seems completely happy with her fiancée.

What would you think? If it was a guy I hung out with alone all the time I'd think he fancied me, but the fact she's a seemingly straight woman makes me confused



(*CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation1\_THREAD*)

In this example, the original poster is exposing her/his doubts about her/his friend's sexuality and their relationship. The friend is described as a woman who is *engaged* and seems *completely straight* which derives in the original poster assuming that her/his friend is *completely happy with her fiancée*. These elements, although in a very subtle and indirect way, drive the reader through the original poster's discourse towards the idea that being in a heterosexual relationship is the most desirable state. Moreover, the fact that they have kissed in different nights out makes the original poster wonder, not about her/his own sexuality but, about her/his friend's sexual orientation. This could be derived from the fact that, as mentioned earlier, being in a stable relationship should be considered as the best state of affairs for any person but with the

emphasis on the idea of being heterosexual. In fact, the last sentence *If it was a guy I hung out with alone all the time I'd think he fancied me, but the fact she's a seemingly straight woman makes me confused* together with the multimodal elements included at the end of the sentence can lead readers to interpret that what is *normal* and not *confusing* in a relationship is that it is formed by complete heterosexual people committed to have a monogamous bound. Moreover, the idea transmitted in *If it was a guy* may lead us to infer a sexist attitude towards men. Double standards are also present in this statement because, being it a man in the same situation, the interpretation of the event by the original poster would have been different. This raises the question that judgements and expectations are different for men and women when being in a relationship.

The importance of heterosexuality and monogamy are also highlighted in thread number 48, *CS\_REL\_If you are not naturally faithful what do you do\_THREAD*. The title itself may lead receivers to think over the naturalness of monogamy, in fact, the opening post posits several questions:

#### Example 34

This is something I was discussing with some friends and their opinions were all pretty similar so I thought I'd see what you guys think...

In my opinion most people are naturally monogamous, however some people struggle with it, even within a long term happy relationship. So if you were one of those people who was happy in your relationship, loved your partner but found it unfulfilling to be with only one person, then what would you do?

The general consensus was that you should remain single until you felt that you could be 100% faithful, when you 'met the right person.' But what if that was just the way you were, would it be realistic to remain single for your entire life just so you could be safe in the knowledge that you weren't a cheat?

Hmmm... 😊

(*CS\_REL\_If you are not naturally faithful what do you do1\_THREAD*)

From our perspective, the collocation of the words *naturally monogamous* together with *some people struggle with it* imply a conflicting message, probably deriving from the ideological construction of heterosexual relationships as monogamous and the intrinsic individual needs of particular people not to be monogamous *even with a long term happy relationship*. In *The general consensus was that you should remain single until you felt that you could be 100% faithful, when you 'met the right person'* the original poster is indirectly suggesting that, in order to be in a happy relationship, one must be faithful and adhere to monogamy, as expressed by the adverb *until*, otherwise,

people should remain single. Moreover, *would it be realistic to remain single for your entire life* leads us to infer that it is unrealistic to remain single for someone's entire life. Again, being in a relationship which is monogamous and happy is highlighted as one of the main objectives of the people participating in this community of practice. This idea is in fact strengthened a few posts later in:

#### Example 35

JellyBelly, that's what my post is about, so if it was you would you spend your entire life alone in that case? I dont know what I'd do if i felt that way, but I think it's a bit narrow minded to imagine that it'd be realistic for someone to simply never have a relationship for their whole life!

(CS\_REL\_If you are not naturally faithful what do you do1\_THREAD)

Something similar can be observed in page 2 from thread number 39, CS\_REL\_How to suggest openish relationship\_THREAD:

#### Example 36

How dare you all? Lady, this is a public forum and you've asked peoples opinions - if you got together with your boyfriend expecting him to be monogamous then why shouldn't he expect it from you too, instead of having a fair weather girlfriend. Honestly, first it's wanting the option of shagging someone on holiday, what's next? Wanting the opportunity to shag someone on a girls night out? If you can't be faithful then why are you in a relationship?

(CS\_REL\_How to suggest openish relationship2\_THREAD)

However, in page 3 of thread 48, another participant contributes by adding a scientific point of view in defence of the unnaturalness of monogamy:

#### Example 37

[...] The human race simply could not have evolved to be as they are such a relatively short time if our ancestors were monogamous. There wouldn't have enough genetic diversity.

(CS\_REL\_If you are not naturally faithful what do you do3\_THREAD)

As we will observe in further examples, the scientific discourse is, many times, used in these communities of practice in order to carry out different communicative intentions. In this case, the participant wants to justify her/his reasoning by means of supporting it with scientific arguments. In this particular case, the participant needs to do so in order to successfully diverge from the sexist general norm of the thread which considers that being monogamous and heterosexual is the norm and the most desirable

state. However, as we will see in future examples, the scientific discourse is many times also used in order to present overtly sexist attitudes and traditional ideas under the mask of cutting-edge scientific theories.

Apart from monogamy and heterosexuality, relationships are also valued in terms of the sexual skills women must develop and employ in pleasing men's sexual needs. This idea, from the beginning, bears strong sexist attitudes and traditional roles according to which women need to attract men on the basis of their weakest point, sexuality. In this way, women have to train themselves in becoming sexually attractive and successful in order to attain and keep the man of their dreams. This traditional and sexist attitude is transmitted by means of presuppositions and implicatures in different threads in our corpus. For example, in thread number 18 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Depressed about being a virgin!\_THREAD*, many linguistic elements lead receivers to presuppose that developing great sexual skills and having an extensive sexual history is crucial in obtaining the most important aim, as it has been mentioned, being in a relationship.

#### Example 38

Hi,

I'm 23 and still a virgin...the furthest I have gone is a kiss. It's really getting me down and there's nothing more I want than to meet someone I like and who likes me.

I try to forget about it but relationships are such a big part of everyone's lives and I've never had one.

Obviously not everyone knows I'm a virgin, but my family constantly say stuff to me about it. My sister is 16 and has been having sex since she was about 11 and had a baby at 15...I'm sure you can guess what kind of girl she is. Sh's always saying I'm a freak etc. The thing is I can understand people thinking it's weird, it's just it's never happened and the time goes so quick before I know it I'm 23.

I started seeing a guy nearly two years ago, we were in contact for quite a few months but we were living in different places and he went travelling for a few months so it was a bit complicated. The last time I saw him i told him I was a virgin and he didn't contact me again. I really liked him and him rejecting me like that has affected me.

I deleted him off fb<sup>27</sup> and a few months later he added me again and I feel like he just did it to laugh at me, and if I ever bump into him I feel humiliated like he thinks to himself that I'm the freak that wanted to lose my virginity to him or something.

I know I shouldn't dwell on it, but life is going so quick and I feel like I'm majorly missing out and it's just weird to be a virgin at this age...it really upsets me 🙄

(*CS\_REL\_Depressed about being a virgin!1\_THREAD*)

<sup>27</sup> Fb refers to *Facebook*, a worldwide well-known social network

In this example, the first thing we can notice is how the word *virgin*, which is directly related to sexuality, gets mixed with expressions like *meet someone* or *relationships are such a big part of everyone's lives*. The presupposition under these linguistic elements is the fact that they get blurred in real social life, that sexuality plays an essential part in getting a relationship. Moreover, the words *virgin*, *laugh at me*, *freak* or *humiliated* may lead receivers to infer that being a virgin or not having enough sexual experience is an extremely complex and unfavourable state. However, this idea is in direct contrast with the idea transmitted in *My sister is 16 and has been having sex since she was about 11 and had a baby at 15...I'm sure you can guess what kind of girl she is*, where promiscuity at a young age is condemned. Here conflicting messages transmitted by means of presuppositions help reinforce and strengthen traditional gender roles and stereotypes which help maintain the gender divide alive.

These ideas can also be observed in other threads from the same forum, for example, in tread number 46, *CS\_REL\_I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all\_THREAD*, the words *finally*, *get it over and done* or *freak*, help reinforce the idea that women need to do an extra effort in order to obtain certain needed sexual skills without being condemned by society or accused of promiscuity, which will lead them to the contrary effect. Moreover, the last paragraph contributes to strengthen the gender divide because men are depicted as not paying particular attention to the effort and stress women must undergo in order to fulfil their roles:

#### Example 39

Last night I finally lost my virginity, I'm 21 so it's been a long time coming and part of me just wanted to get it over and done with because I was starting to feel like a freak, stupid I know.

I lost it to this guy I know from work, we'd been on a few dates and fooled around then went clubbing last night and went back to his and did the deed so to speak.

Now I hear from one of my friends who was out with us that he told her that I was a nice girl, but there are loads of other nice girls here as well and then winked and walked off. I didn't see him for about half an hour but just thought he got lost or something when he went for a fag. Looking back he was probably hooking up with other girls. [...]

(*CS\_REL\_I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all\_THREAD*)

But evidence from our corpus do also suggest that women's need to please men goes beyond the sexual sphere and other skills, apart from the sexual ones, are required from women to be in a successful relationship. This can be observed in thread number

14 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_Male opinion needed bullying your girlfriend\_THREAD*. Here, the original poster identifies him/herself as a woman, as inferred from the title and as described in the content of the post. The original poster explains how the relationship he/she maintains with a man is becoming problematic due to different abusive and aggressive attitudes that the man has had against the original poster. His playing with his phone annoyed the original poster and he/she took it from him. After this incident, the original poster accidentally knocked over a cup of tea and the boyfriend started complaining about the original poster's inappropriate and clumsy behaviour. After explaining this situation which, for the original poster can be classified as *bullying*, several participants intervene in the discussion:

#### Example 40

[...] If you don't want to live with him any more because he had an out burst of anger then I suggest you go and live on your own forever because this may come as a shock to you but people you live with and have arguments with often say hurtful things , so if you cant handle this get a dog and live on your own, of course if it ever growls at you , you will probably have to have it put down. [...]

(*MH\_REL\_Male opinion needed bullying your girlfriend2\_THREAD*)

We suggest that certain presuppositions lie under this discourse. On the one hand, this participant is considering that the original poster's classification of the situation as *bullying* may not be labelled so and, instead, the expression *out burst of anger* is used. Moreover, the irony used in *this may come as a shock to you but people you live with and have arguments with often say hurtful things* could be read as hiding a veiled meaning. From our perspective, this participant is suggesting that, unless the original poster wants to remain single, which is not the most desirable state, as we have observed in previous examples, he/she should accept the *out burst of anger* of the person he/she lives with. From our perspective, this could even be considered as an indirect way of supporting and promoting domestic violence and its normalisation by means of the routinization of certain scripts which, as seen in previous sections, conforms a clear way of indirect sexism. By means of veiled and indirect messages hidden in presuppositions, traditional and stereotypical gendered patterns of behaviours are encouraged and, what is more, those which differ from them are condemned. These ideas are reinforced in page 4 of the same thread in interventions like the following:

## Example 41

However, you also seem a bit overly sensitive and need to toughen up, you cow (that's just to toughen you up to insults a bit, it's nothing personal).

(MH\_REL\_Male opinion needed bullying your girlfriend4\_THREAD)

Here the participant, by means of humour and irony, is hiding a veiled meaning. From our perspective, he/she hides under the mask of humour and irony in order not to be accused of being sexist, as explained in section 5.3.1. However, the presupposition hidden in this message is that described in the previous paragraph, the participant is presupposing that other members of his/her community of practice will agree that the original poster is being *overly sensitive*, even dramatic and, in order to *toughen [him/her] up*, violence in the form of insults is employed. Communicatively speaking, we could suggest that this participant is actually adhering to the boyfriend's behaviour described in the original post and actually condemning the original poster's behaviour and attitude in reporting this bullying incident.

The second block where presuppositions and implicatures are salient in our corpus is that dealing with sexuality, that is, with the social accepted norms or recognised standards of sexual behaviour. A good example can be found in thread number 33 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, CS\_REL\_Homophobia\_THREAD:

## Example 42

I'm not sure if this should be in Relationships or General so sorry if it's in the wrong place.

Basically this guy I was considering dating (not anymore, it has to be said!) yesterday got drunk and went on a massive rant on Facebook, titled 'No To Faggotry'. He went on to say that while he didn't mind homosexuals as people what they 'do' disgusts him and he shouldn't have to hide that disgust as gay people don't care if they offend him by being gay.

He said he couldn't 'help' being homophobic anymore than gay people can help wanting to 'suck c-ck' and when challenged on why he found gay people so offensive he dug his heels in, said lecturing him wouldn't change his views so anyone disagreeing could just delete him from their friends list. Many did, me included, after trying to have a reasoned debate on the subject and failing.

Is being gay natural or unnatural? Do straight people have a 'right' to be 'disgusted' by what gay people get up to in their private lives? Is homophobia a mindset that can be changed or is it inbuilt and unchangeable? Is using terms like 'faggot' in any way acceptable in this day and age? Was I right to be appalled by his aggression and name calling?

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia1\_THREAD)

In this thread, the original poster describes a personal situation and suggests a series of questions to be dealt with in the discussion. From the point of view of



presuppositions, implicatures and sexuality, however, there are certain elements that call our attention. Although it may pass unnoticed because of the complaining tone of the post, the fact of reporting certain attitudes of the original poster's ex-friend do in fact help transmit certain sexist attitudes. For example, we could suggest that there is a hidden message in *he shouldn't have to hide that disgust as gay people don't care if they offend him by being gay*. From our perspective, the real message in this statement would suggest that the original poster's friend would only hide his disgust if gay people hide their sexuality and, consequently, try to mask their real identity in public social circumstances. This, although in an indirect and subtle way, bears the presupposition that, in order not to disgust people who may feel offended, gays should conceal themselves. Moreover, *He said he couldn't 'help' being homophobic anymore than gay people can help wanting to 'suck c-ck'* may lead receivers to presuppose that all gay people should be considered as sex addicts who cannot help themselves in public circumstances.

Moreover, the questions at the end of the post offer participants in this discussion the possibility of presenting their ideas and opinions on the issue of homosexuality. In page 5, for example, *D4ve* offers her/his view on the issue as follows:

#### Example 43

lol so what if there's gay animals. the penis and the vagina are reproductive organs. there are for reproduction. if you could get pregnant via homosexuality then I would agree it would be natural. however, you cant and therefore does not benefit any species whatsoever, its purely recreational.

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia5\_THREAD)

#### Example 44

Quoted:

*So does that mean oral sex, anal sex, non penetrative sex etc between hetro couples is also unnatural?*

technically. yes.

its only due the development of society in which sex has become to mean more than just a means to reproduce.

Quoted:

*would you regard rape and incest as natural then? they can both result in pregnancy.*

incest is not natural. due to the deficiency it greates in the gene pool. rape sadly, is a factor that occurs in many species. in particular those based around a alpha male hierarchy system. [...]

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia5\_THREAD)

In these examples, the participant, as we anticipated earlier, is making use of a scientific discourse in order to defend her/his views on whether homosexuality is natural or unnatural and, therefore, normal and accepted or not. In this particular case, by means of finding support in scientific arguments, the participant is presenting a sexist discourse where other forms of sexuality rather than heterosexuality are not accepted as natural and, therefore, we may presuppose as not normal. These scientific arguments are based on the necessity of species of breeding themselves. If a sexual act does not lead to pregnancy and reproduction, it is scientifically considered as unnatural because it does not *benefit any species*. This scientific argument can be sustained because in the first sentence the participant hides a strong ideological message, that of human beings not being animals. In *what if there is gay animals* the participant, by means of an exclamative tone, leads receivers to interpret that the animal and the human kingdoms are different, that this comparison is not suitable for her/his discourse and by means of this presupposition the participant distances her/himself from this idea. Besides she/he goes on trying to justify the unnaturalness of homosexuality in contrast with other sexual practices in the following quotes and answers. Any sexual practice that does not lead to reproduction, cannot be considered as natural, which may lead receivers to presuppose that any form of sexuality deviant from heterosexuality is not acceptable or considered as normal. What is more, certain forms of reproduction such as rape are claimed to be natural, based on the fact that they lead to reproduction at least in *alpha male hierarchy systems*. In fact, this sentence could be considered as leading receivers to consider that rape is natural and, therefore, acceptable and should be judged as normal in patriarchal societies, like ours, based on the fact that it leads to the beneficial reproduction of the human species. In fact, in page 7 of the same thread, *D4ve* changes her/his argument and also includes incest as a natural and, therefore, normal form of reproduction:

#### Example 45

rape and incest are both (not preferable) ways of reprodcing. life is a game of survival, and the ones that survive are the ones who reproduce and send on their succesful genetic characteristics.

rape and incest can both achieve this (although incest can cause some pretty funky babies) where as homosexuality does not.

many examples of homosexuality in the animal kingdom occur in species where sexual dimorphism (visual differences between genders) is extremely low.

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia7\_THREAD)

Moreover, the last paragraph, *many examples of homosexuality in the animal kingdom occur in species where sexual dimorphism (visual differences between genders) is extremely low* may lead us to infer that homosexuality would not be natural and, therefore, accepted in our society, apart from the scientific reasons already explained, because sexual dimorphism is not *extremely low* in our society. Apart from this, we can observe a confusing use of terms such as *sexual* and *gender* which may indirectly contribute to the blurring of distinctions between these terms, one of the main objectives of gender studies and feminism.

However, in page 6 of the same thread, another participant also makes use of a scientific discourse but, in this particular case, in order to counter-attack *D4ve's* sexist attitudes:

#### Example 46

Furthermore, I'll bring another element into the debate where no man can actually answer without questioning his own sexuality. If homosexuality was so unnatural in our species, or any species at all, why is it that the G spot is located in the male homo sapien's anus? The G spot was created for sexual purposes alone in both male and female mammals, like how the dome of the penis is exclusively for a man and the clitoris is exclusively for a woman.

If homosexuality wasn't so common at the very least if not natural at the very most, what happened in our evolutionary line for that "irregularity" to rear its head?

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia7\_THREAD)

Moreover, thread number 73 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Told my boyfriend im bi\_THREAD*, serves the purpose of posting the following problem about sexual identities different from heterosexuality:

#### Example 47

i've known ever since i was 15, but i've only just really got the courage to tell my best friends, who are very supportive and look at me no differntly at all!

i never really wanted to tell my boyfriend, because he does have some old fashion views, and i knew he wouldn't be at all pleased.. but it slipped out last night after a few drinks.

he just started crying, and seemed so upset by it. i'm terrified i've ruined the relationship now, and saying i feel awful would just be a understatement

i said to him it makes no difference to our relationship, and in the same way i'd never look at another man while i was with him, i'd never look at another girl

i sort of expected his reaction, but not crying

(CS\_REL\_Told my boyfriend im bi1\_THREAD)

In this particular example, the original poster is explaining how her/his bisexuality may cause a problem to her/his relationship, as it is expressed in *i'm terrified i've ruined the relationship now*. This may lead receivers to consider that, in order to be in a relationship which, as we have mentioned earlier, is the maximum objective in life, heterosexuality is almost a *sine quanon* condition. Other forms of sexuality reveal themselves as catalysts for problems and conflictive situations. Moreover, the sentence *i said to him it makes no difference to our relationship, and in the same way i'd never look at another man while i was with him, i'd never look at another girl* may lead readers to infer that bisexual people are generally considered as more promiscuous than heterosexual people, which is the cause of distress for the boyfriend in this particular case. In this light, we could suggest that traditional and biased attitudes towards other forms of sexuality rather than heterosexuality are being transmitted by means of presuppositions and, therefore, indirect sexism.

Moreover, in thread number 44 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_SEX\_New boyfriend also like men! Is there any way to change him\_THREAD*, bisexuality is also brought into discussion as a non-standard or non-normative form of sexuality:

#### Example 48

So my new BF told me he also likes sex with men! Is there any way to change him to just liking women? Maybe a medical procedure or hypnotism? I really like him.

(*MH\_SEX\_New boyfriend also like men! Is there any way to change him\_THREAD*)

It can be inferred that the original poster is looking for advice regarding an unexpected situation, in this case, regarding bisexuality. Indirect sexism is expressed here by means of certain presuppositions raised by her/his direct questions on how this problem may be dealt with, *Is there any way to change him to just liking women? Maybe a medical procedure or hypnotism?* In the first question, the original poster is implying that there is a need for a change to be made. The word *change* can be considered here as loaded with negative connotations, the original poster is shocked by the news and the idea of her/his partner liking men. This is something just inconceivable for her/him because it does not fit into traditional and accepted scripts of what a couple should be and, consequently, a change is needed. Moreover, the second question helps strengthen these negative connotations by using the words *medical procedure* and *hypnotism*. This may lead us to associate bisexuality with a disease or an illness that

may need a medical procedure in order to be cured. At the same time, hypnotism is proposed as an extra and almost ultimate resource that may help the original poster solve her/his problem. These presuppositions do construct a view of other sexual identities rather than heterosexuality as different, strange and undesirable, therefore, perpetuating traditional scripts and gender stereotypes that render heterosexuality as superior, standard and more desirable than any other form of sexual orientation. What is more, sometimes, as it can be observed in the second page of thread number 40, *CS\_REL\_How would you react...\_THREAD*, heterosexuality is the only possible option and no other forms of sexuality are even considered, which leads to a sexist vision of the spectrum of human relations:

#### Example 49

Alsoooooo heres an interesting fact for you, because of the nature of sex its easier for female to catch HIV from sex with a man than it is for a man to catch HIV from a woman

(*CS\_REL\_How would you react...2\_THREAD*)

Other issues related to sexuality are also dealt with in different threads, for example, thread number 4 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it\_THREAD*. From our perspective, the title itself implies certain sexist attitudes, for example, the idea that men are more sexual than women and, thus, need or have a right to watch porn, which is brought into discussion in this thread. This, of course, makes use of traditional roles and stereotypes in relation to considering men and women opposite and homogenous groups of beings whose desires fit into strict categories. To these implicatures, we can add a message posted in page 3 of this thread:

#### Example 50

[...] Half the time as well it;s not the women they are interested in (a lot of the time ther is also a man involved!) it's the senario/story!

(*CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it3\_THREAD*)

In this statement, the participant seems to be veiling a message addressed to those people who may feel threatened by the fact of their partners watching porn. In this case, the fact that most of the times men are not just interested in the women in the film projects the idea that women who may be concerned with pornography may feel insecure and suffer from the fear of being abandoned or substituted in their sexual roles

by other women. Moreover, although an ironic tone may be perceived, men are described as more visual and active than women, needing different scenarios or stories in order to be sexually aroused. This, again, could be considered as a veiled message for women who may be encouraged to develop great sexual skills in order to satisfy their partners' sexual needs.

More presuppositions about sexuality can be found in thread number 12 from the same forum. In *CS\_REL\_Boyfriend tries to have sex with me while I'm asleep\_THREAD*, the original poster starts this discussion in order to find opinions and advice on how to tackle a personal situation she/he is living with her/his boyfriend. More precisely, the original poster explains how her/his boyfriend does usually try to have sex with her/him while she/he is asleep. The original poster expresses her/his disgust about this situation but her/his discourse is permeated with an androcentric tone in which the needs of the boyfriend are located in the first place. The original poster even expresses her/his doubts about how many times, under what circumstances and up to which point the boyfriend might have gone in different occasions. Moreover, the original poster feels guilty of sending mixed signals because sometimes she/he has woken up and enjoyed the act. Many participants intervene and, the majority of them, try to open the original poster's eyes suggesting that this is not a *normal* or *reasonable* behaviour in a relationship, especially when the original poster has explicitly manifested her/his disgust about this situation. However, she/he starts showing further fears and doubts in page 2:

#### Example 51

What hurts me too is that because I'm asleep/unresponsive, he probably tries his luck with me and then probably goes and masterbates...which I'm fine with but NOT while I'm with him. It just makes me feel used, sex should be more than just him being horny, it should be about us both connecting.

(*CS\_REL\_Boyfriend tries to have sex with me while I'm asleep2\_THREAD*)

The presupposition here is that it would be acceptable for men to use women throughout the whole sexual act. The original poster is offended by the idea of her/his boyfriend masturbating after watching or even touching her/him. This may lead receivers to consider that men have an intense need to go till the end, that every sexual act must be *full* in the sense of involving penetration and/or ejaculation. Otherwise the woman involved may feel used, we can presuppose, because she has not fulfilled her role in satisfying her partner's basic sexual needs, an idea that is emphasised in the

following example where the word *traumatised* may lead receivers to consider that not fulfilling a woman's partner in relation to his sexual needs is a horrible act that bears consequences both for the couple and the woman herself.

#### Example 52

[...] Sex doll/fake vag suggestion: hell no. not my thing at all. i appreciate the advice though but it's just not me and I would be pretty traumatised if i walked in on him pumping away at a blow up woman. [...]

(CS\_REL\_Boyfriend tries to have sex with me while I'm asleep11\_THREAD)

This same idea can be observed in thread number 39 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_SEX\_Jealousy and negative thoughts in marriage\_THREAD*. There, the original poster describes a personal situation in which his/her 10-year relationship and 4-year marriage are characterised as *happy* on the basis of the heterosexuality of the couple and the three children that have come out of that relationship. However, one day, the original poster's wife uttered a joke about one of his ex-partners and the original poster derived this issue towards his/her partner's exes. This started to awake a feeling of jealousy in him/her and, therefore, he/she decided to resort to this forum to seek advice. Of particular importance for our analysis of presuppositions related to the issue of sexuality is his/her following comment:

#### Example 53

She always stressed nothing happened between the person I mentioned above although oral sex but not full sex happened and it was a short fling and stressed this when we got engaged years ago.

(MH\_SEX\_Jealousy and negative thoughts in marriage1\_THREAD)

As it was the case with Example 51, here, the original poster's message can be claimed to contain a veiled meaning. The words *oral sex but not full sex happened* may lead receivers to presuppose that sex is non-existent when there is no penetration. An androcentric perspective is hidden here in which foreplay or oral sex, for example, would not count as *full* sex because there is no active role on the part of the man involved in a heterosexual sexual act. The presuppositions hidden in this message may lead receivers to perceive, conceive and understand sexuality as always involving penetration and not being complete unless the man has an active role in it. Again, as explained earlier and as understood here, heterosexism is a *must* for successful relationships and sex to exist. This, of course, may lead us to consider that under such

an inoffensive comment as that related to the sexual practices carried out by the original poster's wife many years ago, there is indirect linguistic sexism. A mere conscious or unconscious presupposition starts a chain reaction in which both sexes are considered different and even opposite in sexual terms and whose intrinsic and homogeneous characteristics must be compatible in order for the maximum objective to be achieved, that of a heterosexual relationship.

The third block in which presuppositions and implicatures can be considered as relevant in our corpus deals with the issue of confidence and physical appearance. As we mentioned in Chapter 2, gendered magazines have been found to be a perfect place for indirect sexism to find its place and the topic of physical appearance and its relation to confidence plays a central role in the indirect transmission and maintenance of gender roles and stereotypes. As we have already explained in Chapter 2, physical appearance is crucial in *getting the prize*, that is, in being able to show yourself attractive enough for others to be interested in you and be able to start a relationship. Moreover, confidence plays a vital role in contributing to sell oneself in the market of relationships and sexual relations. A good example of this issue and how presuppositions are involved in it and are used by participants to transmit sexist attitudes can be observed in thread number 11 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive\_THREAD*. As the title implies, the original poster of this thread is worried because her/his boyfriend finds other girls more attractive. This comparison with other girls may lead readers to infer that the original poster is performing a female heterosexual gender identity. From this standpoint, it is relevant to analyse how her/his view of the situation raises several presuppositions which help transmit sexism in an indirect way:

#### Example 54

Ok, I know this is going to seem stupid and that I'm making a mountain out a mole hill, but its bothering me and just wanted to let it all out.

Basically I was a little upset because all of my male friends had been saying how my sister was so much 'hotter' and 'fitter' than me etc. And it was bothering me.

My boyfriend was trying to cheer me up by saying that his brother was a lot 'hotter' than him and that his brother is always attracting much more attractive girls.

I said did he find me more attractive and he said no, I was cuter. Cuter!!!????

I asked him later about this, pretty upset, that did he find other girls prettier and more attractive than me. He said yeah, theres loads of girls out there that are prettier and more attractive than me.

I know it shouldn't matter because I'm the one hes with and all that. But its made me feel rubbish and that hes tempted by all these other more attractive people. I



know that if hes talking to a really pretty girl I'm just going to think he wants to run off with her.

Irrational I know, but any thoughts/opinions from people would be nice. Just having a lil feeling sorry for myself moment hah..

(CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive1\_THREAD)

In this example we can observe how the sexist idea that, especially, women's physical appearance is crucial for being in a relationships is reinforced although in a subtle and indirect way. When the original poster claims *I was a little upset because all of my male friends had been saying how my sister was so much 'hotter' and 'fitter' than me, My boyfriend was trying to cheer me up or I said did he find me more attractive and he said no, I was cuter. Cuter!!!????* the reader may infer that a fierce competition is created among women in terms of their attractiveness to men. Moreover, the comparatives *more attractive* and *cuter* can be interpreted as establishing different levels of what can be considered as acceptable or beneficial for women in their objective. As we have been mentioning in this and other sections of this research, this main objective is precisely that indirectly stated by the original poster in the sentence *I know it shouldn't matter because I'm the one hes with and all that. But its made me feel rubbish and that hes tempted by all these other more attractive people.* Here the original poster claims that *being the one* is her/his most important concern and being threatened by other people make her/him feel insecure and anxious. Moreover, in *any thoughts/opinions from people would be nice* the original poster is looking for advice, trying to find comprehension and sympathy in other members of this cyber community of practice in order to ease her/his anxiety. What can be observed here is how sexist attitudes and traditional roles and gender stereotypes are being transmitted and perpetuated by means of indirect discursive means such as presuppositions and how participants in this thread generally tend to offer support and advice for the original poster. Many times, the sexist presuppositions are reinforced and, others, they are challenged by specific participants, however, as it was the case with humorous or ironic comments, what remains is the veiled meaning hidden in a particular message and the possibility of it being interpreted and accepted as common knowledge, as a general truth, by many people, which would lead to the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes. In page 3 of the same thread another participant contributes to strengthen these presuppositions by means of a direct question at the end of her/his intervention:

## Example 55

[...] Now, we all know our OH<sup>28</sup>s find other girls attractive, but we don't want to hear that we're not the most attractive girl to them, do we? Because that makes us worry "why are you with me then if you don't find me attractive?" [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive3\_THREAD*)

The same sexist idea is indirectly transmitted by means of presuppositions in thread number 24 from the same forum. In *CS\_REL\_Eternally single any insight please I could do with some advice\_THREAD*, the title itself may lead us to a presupposition that has been dealt with in the first block of this section, that of the necessity of being in a relationship. However, if we go in depth into the kind of language used in the discussion we can observe how other presuppositions are brought into scene, more precisely, those that deal with the importance of physical appearance in the case of women in order to find the man of their dreams, again, presupposing that any relationship, or at least those of the people involved in this community, is heterosexual. In page 2 we find the following contribution:

## Example 56

[...] I seriously doubt you're hideously ugly! But maybe you should get a friend to ask guys what they are looking for, and see how you compare. One poster on here did this, and I think it is a very good idea. It will give you insight to your public image. There could be something you're not aware of that is putting guys off. If you know what it is, then you can change it!

(*CS\_REL\_Eternally single any insight please I could do with some advice2\_THREAD*)

In this example, the participant is trying to offer support and advice to the original poster. As we mentioned earlier, probably the communicative intention is that of making the original poster feel better and offering a series of possibilities that may lead her/him towards that purpose. However, the solution offered is that of asking *guys what they are looking for, and see how you compare* which, although it may seem inoffensive, it is actually indirectly transmitting very traditional and sexist attitudes, for example, that of women being subordinated to men's opinions, needs and desires and being forced to *change* whatever is needed in order to fit into their established categories of what a woman should be. Going a step further, we can even suggest that the sexism implied here goes beyond affecting only women, both men and women are


<sup>28</sup> *OH* is an abbreviation for *Other Half*, understood metaphorically as one's partner.

described as static and homogeneous groups where generalisations and, therefore, stereotypes govern their worlds.

This can also be observed in the *Men's Health* forum where the issue of how obtaining the objective of a stable and heterosexual relationships is also of great concern for participants in this cyber community of practice. Nevertheless, this objective also mingles with the traditional stereotype of men being concerned with establishing a sexual relationship or even being just able to have spontaneous sexual encounters with women. All in all, as explained in the previous paragraph, the presupposition that men and women are static and homogeneous groups of beings helps reinforce gender ideas which contribute to the transmission of sexist attitudes. For example, in thread number 13 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters\_THREAD*, this sexist presupposition can be observed in page 2 where the original poster summarises some of the information offered up to that moment:

#### Example 57

So, basically, what I have been able to glean from the female perspective on here is that it has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the way I look, how I conduct myself, whether I behave like a total gentleman or a complete w@nker, almost instantaneously the decision has been made that I either am or am not the kind of guy they want to %&\*\$#, and the only way I can improve my chances of getting further than the trap of lets just be friends, is to pretend to be someone I am not, fake confidence and occasionally act like a meathead to prove "I have it in me"....

Why fukkin bother ??? 

(*MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters2\_THREAD*)

In this case, we can observe how the original poster assumes, from the posts offered by other participants, that what is relevant for him to attain his/her objective of going a step further with girls has to do with appearances but, more specifically, with his/her attitude and women's volatile and unpredictable instant decision. This, in fact, helps strengthen traditional and gender ideas on how men and women as homogenous and stable groups behave and relate to each other.

Moreover, and as we mentioned in Chapter 2, the topic of physical appearance and how to be attractive to the other sex in heterosexual couples is sold differently to men and women in institutional gendered frameworks such as magazines. As we mentioned, their beauty standards are different and while women are encouraged to be thin and delicate, muscularity is encouraged in men. As we have witnessed in our corpus, the local framework of the online community of practice ascribed to these

environments does also project the same gender ideas. More precisely, men, apart from being encouraged to work on their bodies, are also invigorated to project a different type of attractiveness which is not only physical, confidence is a major concern for men interested in obtaining their maximum objective, either a heterosexual relationship or sporadic sexual encounters. The title of thread number 13 from the *Men's Health* forum itself may lead readers to presuppose that collecting girlfriends is not enough for heterosexual men and that, indeed, what they are interested in, as it was the case of women, is in having a stable heterosexual relationship. In responding to the original poster's questions, many participants intervene in the discussion offering their particular points of view. Many of them, as it was the case of women, are centred upon the importance of physical appearance, however, confidence reveals itself as a more relevant element:

#### Example 58

[...] The other thing I should add is girls are attracted to self confidence (another reason you should believe in yourself) The certain way you say things will have a bearing on this. For example "*We should go out sometime*" comes across better than "*Will you go out with me sometime?*" [...]

(*MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters1\_THREAD*)

Moreover, in this particular example, it can be observed how confidence is related in the case of men to the idea of assertiveness or even strength. In order to show confidence, men are encouraged to present themselves as cutting and assertive which, although in a subtle way, presupposes that women like being acted upon and prefer to be guided by men's opinions and desires.

This distinction between women's and men's expectations and rules in order to obtain their objectives can also be observed in thread number 5 from the same forum. In *MH\_REL\_Cant pull, wont pull\_THREAD* a 19-year-old participant decides to post his/her fears about not being able to have sex with women. The original poster describes his/her attitude in life and some relevant information about his/her likes and dislikes and the way he/she behaves with women. Nevertheless, the original poster suggests that probably his/her weakest point is precisely confidence. A few posts later, another participant identifies with the story and explains his/her particular situation and his/her frustration at not being able to have sex with women. In this contribution, besides, the participant claims:

### Example 59

Anyway the moral of this story is:

You should all respect yourselves cos u are the ones that have to make the effort cos lets face it. All women do is dress up nice.

The ONLY women that HAVE approached me have been pretty ugly, which for a mans standards in general is pretty good going.

When has an attractive women ever approached you? they dont need to! they let u do it cos their Bueaty exceeds their social ineptness (ask my Sister!)

(MH\_REL\_Cant pull, wont pull1\_THREAD)

Here, men and women are catalogued as homogenous groups whose needs and efforts are different, *u are the ones that have to make the effort cos lets face it. All women do is dress up nice*. Here, traditional gender stereotypes are brought into play and the presupposition is that women need to put less effort in obtaining their objectives than men which, indirectly, contributes to build up men as active and committed beings. Women, moreover, can be seen as associated with trivial and non-important things. Besides, confidence is interconnected here with sexuality, as it can be observed in *The ONLY women that HAVE approached me have been pretty ugly, which for a mans standards in general is pretty good going*. The presupposition here is that men do increase their confidence and, therefore, their success with women by means of having sex with as many women as possible, regardless of whether they are (physically) interested in them or not<sup>29</sup>. The implications of this commentary are, in fact, sexist and gendered and raise the issue of double standards. This, in fact, is even strengthened in *When has an attractive women ever approached you? they dont need to! they let u do it cos their Bueaty exceeds their social ineptness (ask my Sister!)*, where the participant suggests that women are almost cruel beings who play with their beauty and treat it as a weapon to socially relate to men because they lack any other social skills. Moreover, readers may presuppose that men are the victims of women and this, together with the previous idea about men needing extra effort, may contribute to presuppose that men, in a way, are superior to women which, obviously, is a good example of how indirect sexism can work at the level of presuppositions.

Finally, we would like to mention a fourth block where presuppositions do especially serve the purpose of transmitting indirect linguistic sexism. Roles and stereotypes are behind multiple veiled messages and presuppositions, in these particular

<sup>29</sup> This issue is further discussed in thread number 6 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_Confidence\_THREAD* where the attitude presupposed in this post does even have a name *the go ugly early tactic*.

cases, presuppositions which rely on linguistic evidence and implicatures which rely on socio-ideological knowledge do especially merge.

We have explained how, in general terms, sexist presuppositions and implicatures work on the basis of considering men and women individual members of stable and homogeneous groups but, we wonder what the main features of these groups are according to these communities of practice. Many presuppositions and implicatures on this issue lead receivers to have a general gendered vision of how those individuals belonging to these groups are or should be, however, some basic traits can be highlighted which emphasise the indirect sexism hidden in certain messages.

On the one hand, for example, we could suggest that the men belonging to these cyber communities of practice tend to be conceived as strongly and traditionally masculine and assertive beings. This can be observed, for example, in thread number 21 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies\_THREAD*, and thread number 19 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_That first date ... Everything you did and didn't want to know\_THREAD*:

#### Example 60

Guys do get butterflies but its taboo for them to admit it.

(*CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 61

Thats a complete true, if you are good to them and do everything they say, woman just overlook you for another guy who is being almost rude to them, that's the true.

(*MH\_REL\_That first date ... Everything you did and didn't want to know2\_THREAD*)

In the first example, we could claim that a presupposition arises from the word *taboo*. The fact that men do get butterflies, that is, get excited when they see their loved ones, is confirmed by this participant in the discussion, however, it is also stated that they cannot show it because there are certain taboos surrounding this issue. The presupposition we can infer from it is that men are, or should be, strong beings who are not encouraged to show their feelings or emotions. In the second example, the adjective *good* and the sentence *women just overlook you* may lead receivers to presuppose that what women want in a heterosexual relationships is that men are *bad*. In this case, however, the connotation of the term itself will imply different things for each member of this particular community of practice, for example, some may infer that being bad

implies sounding assertive, others may combine it with looking tall and strong or some others may infer that being the contrary to good implies behaving or treating women violently. Many ideological and socio-cultural implicatures may derive from these linguistic presuppositions. In any case, however, what is clear is that they help transmit sexism in an indirect and subtle way.

On the other hand, women in these communities of practice tend to be depicted as complicated and intricate beings. This can be observed, for example, in threads number 41, *CS\_REL\_How would you read this\_THREAD*, and 11, *CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are attractive\_THREAD*, from the *Cosmopolitan* forum:

#### Example 62

Hey ladies, so I've just come across a chat message on my OH's facebook and I'm not sure what to make of it. Innocent or slightly worrying? Before I get accused of snooping, he asked me to log onto his FB to look something up for him, and I spotted the last line of this convo in his inbox, so investigated further...

(*CS\_REL\_How would you read this1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 63

[...] As a guy, I'm sure he didnt mean to imply that he's just settling for you or that he's attracted more to other girls. I've said things myself with 100% good intentions that just got me a withering look from a girl who didn't interpret it in the way I meant it. It's best not to read too much into it - he was just being honest to the person he cares about the most. [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are attractive3\_THREAD*)

In the first example, the sentence *Before I get accused of snooping* may get readers to unveil a hidden meaning, that of women being curious or meddling. This may be the reason why the original poster feels the need to justify her/his action of reading her/his boyfriend's messages in a social network. Moreover, in the second example, the idea of women being too curious or meddling is reinforced by a participant who identifies her/himself as a *guy*. In this example, the participant is justifying the messages sent by the original poster's boyfriend in a social network. Apart from establishing certain camaraderie and commonness between men as a group, in *I've said things myself with 100% good intentions that just got me a withering look from a girl who didn't interpret it in the way I meant it* the participant is also implying that women read too much into simple and innocent messages. In this way, this participant is removing the fault from the men's groups and, at the same time, she/he is putting the blame on women. Due to their intricate and complex mind, women tend to read too much into

things and make a mountain out of a mole hill. What seems obvious, however, is that these presuppositions indirectly transmit a sexist image of the sexes which contributes to the veiled transmission of sexist attitudes.

Besides, women are also generally described as complex beings in terms of their fitting into several well-established categories. More precisely, women are depicted as needing to fit into active and modern perceptions of how and what a heterosexual woman should be and behave, but also the need to fit into more traditional conceptions of femininity. Several threads reveal this clash and, therefore, permeate these local environments with presuppositions and implicatures derived from conflicting messages. For example, in thread number 56 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Making the first move online\_THREAD*, the original poster opens the following discussion:

#### Example 64

I have messaged a few guys on the dating website I am using, and even though I can see that they have then viewed my profile, they haven't replied. When this happened the first time I just brushed it off and didn't think anything of it, but since then I have messaged another 3 guys and the same thing happened - no reply. Do guys not like a girl approaching them first? I wouldn't normally approach a guy but it seems 'safer' online than it would if you were face to face in a bar or whatever. I keep the message short but sweet so could it be that I'm doing something wrong? Has any girl on here had success after messaging a guy first?

(*CS\_REL\_Making the first move online1\_THREAD*)

This message may lead other participants in the thread to presuppose that making the first move is not the most acceptable behaviour on the part of a heterosexual woman. The fact that the original poster wonders and publicly questions whether her/his behaviour is appropriate and whether her/his approaching guys is the reason why she/he is not getting attention may indirectly make readers infer that there is something wrong or suspicious in a woman taking the lead. Moreover, the final question, in fact, is asking for evidence of any woman having succeeded in approaching a man which may lead receivers to infer that it is not the most acceptable or appropriate way of action. The presuppositions involved in this post, however, are in direct conflict with other opinions posted by different participants in the same thread:

#### Example 65

It must be your profile, whether content or pictures. Men have no issues with being approached

(*CS\_REL\_Making the first move online1\_THREAD*)



This is also observed in other threads, for example, thread number 4 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out\_THREAD*:

#### Example 66

A positive response. I find it hot when girls ask me out. Go for it. He will lap you up. Unless you look like Brian Blessed in a sports bra.

(*MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out1\_THREAD*)

In this case, the idea of women being active and determined is encouraged. In Example 65, this idea is made explicit, however, always accompanied with the nuance of the importance of appropriate behaviour, *content*, and physical appearance, *pictures*, in the search of getting a relationship. In Example 66, this idea is also highlighted in the last sentence. Moreover, the words *A positive response* may lead readers to infer that what has been said up to that moment has not been very positive. In fact, the idea of whether women should approach men is debated along the thread. Nevertheless, this participant claims that he/she finds it *hot when girls ask me out*, which is an indirect encouragement for the original poster.

Nevertheless, this supportive essence is contrasted with other messages, like those presented in thread number 70 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Sexual frustration. He doesn't like when I initiate...\_THREAD*.

#### Example 67

[...] Basically, he hates when I try to initiate anything sexual...I've asked him about it and he said that its a turn off for him cause he knows I'm turned on already and that for a guy that's not fun...I understand that but It's very frustrating not to be able to get any sexual attention when I want it. [...]

Does anyone have any tips on how to turn a guy on without making it obvious that you are trying? 😊 ha if its possible...

(*CS\_REL\_Sexual frustration. He doesn't like when I initiate...1\_THREAD*)

In this example, the original poster directly explains that her/his partner does not like when she/he initiates anything sexual. An androcentric perspective can be observed in *cause he knows I'm turned on already and that for a guy that's not fun*. The sentence *I understand that but It's very frustrating not to be able to get any sexual attention when I want it*, following these androcentric ideas, may lead receivers to interpret that, in fact, keeping oneself back from what one wants to do is the best option in order to offer men the image they expect of their partners, an idea which is further strengthened by the last

question, *Does anyone have any tips on how to turn a guy on without making it obvious that you are trying?*

This clash between what women should do or be in terms of different standards or coexisting categories is also reflected in thread number 10 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has\_THREAD*. As its title implies, the fact of women working in the public sphere may cause problems for some people, what is more, what kind of job is developed may be crucial. Nevertheless, what is especially relevant in terms of presuppositions and implicatures is the fact that this discussion is mixed with what seems an intrinsic and almost divine job for women, that of becoming mothers:

#### Example 68

I don't see anything wrong with women working hard to provide their children with a good life. My friend who will be a trainee lawyer shortly knows she will have to work long hours, but she doesn't have any kids yet...she is only 23. She also comes from a council estate and not a very good childhood, and knows what it's like to come from nothing and so wants to work hard and be able to give her children the things she never had. I don't see why a man should have a problem with this.

*(MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has2\_THREAD)*

#### Example 69

a woman can have a career and a home life - to say otherwise is just ignorant

*(MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has2\_THREAD)*

#### Example 70

Money doesn't replace good parenting, but it helps. Far too many girls on the dole have kids they can't support and I know that the kids end up suffering in a number of ways. Just because a girl has a good job and works long hours, doesn't mean that things won't change when they have kids. Back to the original topic, I didn't realise men determined how good a mother a girl will be from her job. I know many girls who are beauticians/hairdressers, don't earn much, had kids young, they may have plenty of time to spend with their kids, but smoke weed daily and snort coke at the weekends.

*(MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has2\_THREAD)*

#### Example 71

[...] Other countries in Europe like Italy and Spain are more traditional in that they put their kids first and the mother doesn't moan about not having her own life outside the home. Look how most of their kids end up compared to ours

*(MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has3\_THREAD)*

All these examples transmit the idea that having children is almost a must for women. Becoming a mother is not even questioned, it is something almost taken for granted, as it can be observed in Example 68, *she doesn't have any kids yet*. This presupposition may be interpreted and taken as common knowledge by other participants or readers of this thread. In this case, as mentioned earlier, the presupposition that men and women have different and opposed roles in society may pass unnoticed for many receivers and, therefore, indirect sexism will be transmitted by means of the linguistic mechanism of presuppositions and implicatures.

Following the explanations and examples provided in this section, what we can suggest is that, as Mills (2008) explains, presuppositions and implicatures comprise a linguistic and discursive mechanism by means of which sexism and sexist attitudes and ideas can be transmitted in an indirect and subtle way that may pass unnoticed unless a detailed reading or analysis is carried out. Sometimes it is a linguistic element the one that lights participants' presuppositions alarm on and drives them to interpret a particular message in a particular way. Some others, however, there is no specific linguistic element that marks what the sender is implying but the overall message is impregnated with socio-cultural and ideological references that may lead receivers to decode a particular message under a particular light. In any case, what seems evident is that senders can encode subtle messages which transmit sexist attitudes under the mask of veiled meanings.

We believe that presuppositions, as it was the case with humour, should be considered as a relevant category or discourse feature in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes through language. We consider that the specific and concrete medium and social factors of this kind of CMD lead participants in online discussion forums ascribed to institutional frameworks to frequently use this discourse feature in order to express and negotiate sexist attitudes in a way that can be considered acceptable within this particular communicative situation. As we will explain in section 6.2, presuppositions can be claimed to be especially important from the perspective of both the institutional and the local contexts that intertwine in this specific kind of CMD.

### 5.3.3. *Conflicting messages*

The third discourse feature that we are going to analyse in detail is that of conflicting messages which, according to Mills (2008), may signal the indirect

transmission of sexist attitudes by means of linguistic mechanisms. As we mentioned earlier, the success of feminist and anti-sexist campaigns has made it possible for the people in the street to be less exposed to overt forms of sexism and less direct manifestation of gender differences. In public fields such as journalism, advertising, television or governmental issues, the overt expression of gender differences can be considered as almost non-existent due to the adaptation of these fields to the development of our society to a more flexible world. Nevertheless, as we are analysing in this chapter, language users, either at an institutional or local level, may find other discourse features which allow them to transmit, whether consciously or unconsciously, gendered and sexist ideas by means of indirect linguistic mechanisms and, as we previously mentioned, conflicting messages are one of these discourse features.

Taking into account the specific environment upon which we are centring our investigation, we could claim that, as it was explained in Chapter 2, gendered publications have a particular position in this respect. The adaptation of gendered publications to a modern and understanding world is, in fact, in direct conflict with the basic essence of these publications. Gender differences are, actually, the core content of these publications and trying to avoid sexism in such a context can be found especially problematic. This is the reason why conflicting messages are easily found at the institutional level of gendered (online) magazines. Here, as we mentioned in Chapter 2, modern views on how men and women should behave in a modern world clash with more traditional ideas on gender and gender relations. Our particular contribution in this respect and in this particular section of our work is to analyse whether those conflicting views projected at an institutional level are also reflected at the local level of their respective online communities and, if so, how they are transmitted. This will allow us, on the one hand, to check whether this category of discourse features described by Mills (2008) also serves to study indirect linguistic sexism at a local level and, on the other hand, to identify the most recurrent topics in relation to gender conflicting messages in these particular cyber communities of practice.

In order to present such an analysis, we will resort to three main topics: i) conflicting messages about what is acceptable or not for each gender according to these communities of practice, ii) conflicting messages about how relationships between genders are perceived and, finally, iii) conflicting messages in relation to gender identity performance.

In the first group where conflicting messages are highly visible in our corpus, that is, that related to appropriate gender practices, we could suggest that the general idea is that double standards, although hidden under the mask of opposing views, do still form a vital part of people's understanding of gender and gender behaviour or performance.

For example, in thread number 81 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_When things get sexist...\_THREAD*, a discussion is started in which the original poster complains about a personal situation in which she/he describes an episode in which she/he and her/his boyfriend got back home from work quite late. The original poster was tired that particular day and asked her/his boyfriend to help her/him cook dinner. The boyfriend claimed that women are supposed to want to look after their partners and, suddenly, *storms off*. The original poster starts this discussion with the aim of getting other people's opinions about this incident because, in her/his view it is rather *sexist*. A few posts later, a participant intervenes in the discussion with the following post:

#### Example 72

I'd address the issue once you've both calmed down and don't feel as tired.  
I'd say it's unfair for you to make dinner every night anyway, but if it's not something that generally bothers you then that's fair enough.  
Why don't you just calmly explain to him that sometimes you'd like him to make dinner or at least help you, because you do it everyday? If he's a nice guy I'm sure he won't mind.

(*CS\_REL\_When things get sexist...1\_THREAD*)

Here the participant is making use of conflicting messages which, as we have been claiming, help reinforce sexist attitudes. In *I'd say it's unfair for you to make dinner every night anyway, but if it's not something that generally bothers you then that's fair enough* she/he is suggesting that, although she/he does not openly agree with traditional views and roles of women within the domestic sphere, in part, she/he could accept those if they do not feel as imposed by others. Although this is just a personal opinion, however, many ideological issues intervene and whether the sender and the receiver of this message are aware of the subtleties of “being aware” of something are crucial. Moreover, when these kinds of conflicting messages are repeated along different contexts and communicative situations, they run the risk of becoming scripts themselves, which help maintain gender inequalities in relation to housework duties.

Something similar is observed in thread number 7 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_A woman's role\_THREAD*<sup>30</sup>. On this occasion, a participant offers her/his opinion on what a woman's role should be in today's society, more precisely:

### Example 73

I have mixed views on it. I would never want to fit that role personally and for someone to be forced into it is horrible. However, if that's of her own choice then i don't see anything wrong with that. Some people prefer the 'old' ways and that is just one of them along with people who won't have sex/children before marriage etc.

(*CS\_REL\_A woman's role1\_THREAD*)

In this example, as it was the case in the previous one, the participant is offering a personal opinion which, in isolation, would not be especially relevant. However, as we mentioned in the previous paragraph, the repetition of these conflicting messages in different contexts and communicative situations may lead to these conflicting messages in turning into scripts which, with time, help transmit sexist ideas from a veiled position. More precisely, this particular individual is suggesting that, from her/his personal point of view, the traditional role of women as home and family carers is not appropriate in today's society, however, *if that's of her own choice then I don't see anything wrong with that*. This message, as we can observe, provides a contrasting viewpoint to that expressed in the first sentence. What is *wrong* or not is perceived, not in terms of objective social criteria but, in terms of subjective personal circumstances. However, as we mentioned earlier, feminist have long been claiming that what is personal is political and, therefore, social. In this sense, we agree that under certain socio-ideological circumstances specific individuals may not realise that their behaviour is *normal* because they have been taught so, many times, no other possibilities are offered. On other occasions, individuals do just follow what is *normal*, even if they see its artificial nature, just because it is easier. We consider that transmitting conflicting messages such as the two presented in these examples help reinforce sexist ideas and gender stereotypes in an extremely pernicious way because, in fact, they help normalise and routinize socio-ideological gendered patterns which, although under the mask of freedom of choice, transmit very traditional and gendered views of society.

In page 2 of the same thread, we find another example of how conflicting messages should be considered a discourse mechanism by means of which sexist

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<sup>30</sup> This thread is also discussed in Example 3.

attitudes can be covertly expressed. Nevertheless, we would claim that the use of this discourse feature seems many times an unconscious mechanism that reveals the ideological struggle within society's cultural knowledge. We consider that this can be observed in:

#### Example 74

My nan, when she married my grandad, moved in with his dad (my great grand dad).

My greatgrandad used to treat her like a slave, come in and just dump his dirty clothes in the middle of the kitchen floor and expect her to wash them (and she says, this was a normal thing for a man his age). So she started picking up his clothes and throwing them away.

A week or so later he came down and asked her where all his clean washing was, and she simply replied "Oh, leaving them on the floor like that I thought they were rubbish, so I threw them away". From then on he did his own washing 😊

It's weird how much times have changed even since our nans were young. I think we have come along way, and it annoys me when girls wanna go back to being like that :P<sup>31</sup>

Personally, the only "old fashioned" thing I believe in is when it comes to children.. I'd quite happily leave work to look after them if my partner could support me as I believe thats better for the kids (but I'd save up for a loooong time before hand if possible).

(CS\_REL\_A woman's role2\_THREAD)

The first part of this intervention could be claimed to include rather anti-sexist views on gender relations. A personal example is narrated where overt sexist attitudes are criticised and anti-sexist advances are praised. However, the last paragraph of this intervention offers a conflicting message with the ideas previously expressed. The participant's alignment with some "*old-fashioned*" views in relation to children's upbringing do in fact adhere to those traditional sexist attitudes previously condemned. The idea that women should take care of their children because *that's better for the kids* is provided within an apparently anti-sexist discourse and mitigated by the modifier *the only* which may lead receivers to infer that the participant's final opinion is unimportant in relation to her/his previous anti-sexist comments. However, we consider that this kind of conflicting messages contributes to the veiled and alarming conveyance of sexist attitudes.

Double standards are also transmitted by means of conflicting messages in thread number 83 of the same forum, CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women\_THREAD. The title itself is an example of sexism where

<sup>31</sup> This side smiley represents two eyes and a tongue, something similar to the emoticon 😊.

men and women are treated as homogeneous groups characterised by certain fixed differential behaviours. The original poster explains that for her/him the fact that her/his boyfriend does not try to contact her instantly after a message is a great issue. The original poster openly asks whether other participants think this is a *universal* issue in women and men's relationships. Some posts in this discussion are relevant for our purpose in this section of analysing whether conflicting messages at a local level may help transmit sexist attitudes indirectly and, if so, how it is done, for instance:

#### Example 75

I think men are just crap at keeping in contact.. My boyfriend always answers the phone to me (unless he's at work) cos i rarely ring him so he knows it's important if i do. But if i text him, i'm lucky if i get a reply at all!! Lol, obviously not all men are like it, but i think the vast majority. They're just not programmed like us unfortunately!

(CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women1\_THREAD)

#### Example 76

Men are programmed differently to women and therefore see life in different terms. Although this is not always true, it can often be the case. But male psychology is a mystery to me! But men *are* less emotional with their approach to situations [only generally speaking]. I suppose this is why men and women come across conflict. Each see the other from a different angle and this can be the cause of arguments. And some men can be an absolute nightmare!!

(CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women1\_THREAD)

#### Example 77

Quoted:

*bullshit does the above apply to every guy. I've never experienced this with any ex ever and they used to ring me up just for a chat a lot. I had one ex who'd ring me up in the middle of the night for a chat if he couldn't sleep, one who'd ring nigh on every evening. It's people who differ, not gender imo<sup>32</sup>.*

No one has said it applies to every guy... In fact if you read the original quoted paragraph you'll see that it's specified that *not* all guys are like that.

However, it's safe to say that guys generally aren't as communicative as girls (going by the majority of the posts on here so far)... I notice you say your exes are like that... so you could argue your experiences may be more to do with the type of guys you go for. Some guys are very comfortable around girls and know how their mind works so can abide by their protocols... but it's naive to think that's the case for all or even the majority.

Quoted:

*Also the 'we bypass protocol' thing has nothing to do with being a bloke! It's how well you know someone. I would text 'hi how are you' to someone i don't know well*

<sup>32</sup> *Imo* stands for *in my opinion*



*but with my friends i'm more likely to be like the 'mate got some intresting news 4 ya' type thing, but with no cringey text speak and correct spelling.*

Well I'm a guy and I don't think I've EVER got a "hi, how are you?" type text from another guy... I only ever get them from girls (not necessarily someone I'm seeing). In fact, I think a lot of guys would find it a bit weird if another guy was to text them like that. Also, guys would very rarely set aside an evening for phoning / texting people... chances are he'll be doing something else so only notices the text when he periodically checks his phone (which may be why some guys take so long to reply). I'm not saying this is a good or bad thing, just how some gender differences may manifest themselves.[...]

Anyway, I don't want to get into an argument about this, I only wanted to offer a male perspective to this (light-hearted) debate. 🍷

(CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women2\_THREAD)

In these examples, it can be observed how the sexist idea of considering men and women homogeneous and closed groups of individuals is contrasted with the view of individualisation in a modern society. In Example 75, *I think men are just crap at keeping in contact* contrasts with *not all men are like it, but i think the vast majority*. In Example 76, the first two sentences also contain this contradiction *Men are programmed differently to women and therefore see life in different terms. Although this is not always true* which is further strengthened in later comments such as *male psychology is a mystery to me!* or *men are less emotional although [only generally speaking]*. Moreover, Example 77 contains the same kind of conflicting messages in sentences like *No one has said it applies to every guy* or *not all guys are like that* which contrasts with arguments like *However, it's safe to say that guys generally aren't as communicative as girls (going by the majority of the posts on here so far)* where men are catalogued as a fixed group. This idea is even strengthened when men are contrasted with another fixed and opposing group of people, that of women, as it can be observed in *Some guys are very comfortable around girls and know how their mind works so can abide by their protocols* in which, furthermore, the idea that different rules govern these groups is added. These differences in terms of gendered behavioural accepted patterns can be observed in *Well I'm a guy and I don't think I've EVER got a "hi, how are you?" type text from another guy... I only ever get them from girls (not necessarily someone I'm seeing). In fact, I think a lot of guys would find it a bit weird if another guy was to text them like that* which, in fact, is a conflicting message with those presented by the same poster at the beginning of her/his contribution where the idea that men should not be catalogued as different to women is destroyed in this sentence towards the end of her/his discourse. Moreover, although at the beginning of this contribution we could

consider that mitigating gender differences was the main aim of this participant, towards the end of her/his intervention the appearance of conflicting messages may lead receivers to have a different perspective of this participant's objective, as it can be observed in *I'm not saying this is a good or bad thing, just how some gender differences may manifest themselves* or in *I only wanted to offer a male perspective to this (light-hearted) debate*. These examples contribute to exemplify how conscious or unconscious conflicting messages in discourse may lead receivers to interpret a supposed sender's intention in completely different terms. Although we consider that most of these conflicting messages are not presented in a conscious or knowing way, however, we totally agree with Mills (2008) that they contribute to offer a sexist perspective which relies on interlocutors' internal socio-ideological struggle to adapt their gender performance to the communicative situation and the particular (cyber) community of practice in which they are interacting.

Double standards in terms of what is appropriate for each gender in reference to behavioural and social practices can also be noticed in thread number 74 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Total idiot\_THREAD*. In this case, the original poster opens a thread with the aim of expressing some personal feelings in relation to a personal situation and getting some pieces of advice or opinions. In this particular case, the original poster is indignant about the reaction of an intimate friend who, for a short period of time, started a relationship with her/him. After a short time, this friend decided that he did not want to continue with the relationship and that he preferred having the original poster as a *fuck buddy*<sup>33</sup>. In line with the original poster's open question, several participants intervene in the discussion and the thread derives in a public space where the adequacy of the term *fuck buddy* is discussed in relation to a female or male referent:

#### Example 78

[...] I have heard men I work with talk about their 'casual f\*\*k buddies' like this. Calling them "easy" or "always open". It's time to wake up and realise that it's not as empowering as some women think. It's not nice to hear them speaking about women like this (being a woman), but society hasn't swung the pendulum evenly. The worst a man will get called is a man-whore. 😏  
It's very easy to assume that there is mutual respect, but not easy to prove it. It may not be what women want to hear, but it happens.

(*CS\_REL\_Total idiot3\_THREAD*)

<sup>33</sup> See note 23.

## Example 79

[...] I don't think it's that bad to have a f.ckbuddy as a woman, as long as you've got one and don't change f.ckbuddies as often as you'd change your nailpolish. Women have needs too, you know. It's not just men that need some action from time to time.

Sometimes women don't want relationships, but they do want the action, so it's in no way degrading. I mean... He likes you enough for sex but not enough to go out with you. Yes, maybe, but it can also be the other way around: woman likes a man enough for sex, but doesn't want to be together with him.

As long as you're not a slut it's okay to have a f.ckbuddy.

(CS\_REL\_Total idiot3\_THREAD)

In the first example it can be clearly observed how double standards are applied to men and women. When sexual practices are discussed, the accepted behavioural patterns are different for men and women. Moreover, the participant in Example 78 suggests that *It's time to wake up and realise that it's not as empowering as some women think. It's not nice to hear them speaking about women like this (being a woman), but society hasn't swung the pendulum evenly*. In this particular sentence, we could suggest that the participant is expressing an internal conflict, on the one hand, she/he considers that, for a woman, having just sexual relations –with no emotional load– cannot be considered as *empowering* as more modern views may pretend. This idea, in fact, reveals that, although more modern and open models of femininity are being offered by institutional frameworks such as gendered magazines, in which the sexual empowerment of women is emphasised in the light of obtaining certain degree of liberation, specific participants perceive that this view is in direct conflict with what society actually feels as appropriate behaviour for women. The coexistence of these conflicting views leads this particular participant to complain about this issue in the example just described but, at the same time, to surrender at the idea that it is not appropriate for women to have some degree of sexual freedom, as it can be perceived in the sentence *It's not nice to hear them speaking about women like this (being a woman)*, where a regret can be perceived and a suggestion for women to remain in more traditional roles can be inferred. Moreover, in Example 79, in the opening sentence *I don't think it's that bad to have a f.ckbuddy as a woman, as long as you've got one and don't change f.ckbuddies as often as you'd change your nailpolish*, the adverbial phrase *as long as* provides the discourse with a clash of opposing messages. On the one hand, the participant is reclaiming sexual freedom for women but, on the other hand, she/he also offers a restriction *as long as you've got one and don't change f.ckbuddies as often as you'd change your nailpolish*. Here, apart from observing the intricate and

stereotypical relations between women and beauty, implied by the connection between women and *nailpolish* and the need to change it frequently to be attractive to men, the participant is also claiming that this flexible and adaptable behaviour is not acceptable in terms of sexual practices for women. They should be allowed, according to this view, to have just one sexual partner and the obligation to stick to him regardless of other circumstances. In fact, this may lead receivers to infer that what is implied by this kind of new sexual freedom is that women are allowed to have a degree of sexual liberation as long as it follows the parameters of personal relationships, fidelity and chastity are respected. Actually, this idea is strengthened in the final sentence *As long as you're not a slut it's okay to have a f.ckbuddy*, where the word *slut* helps depict the idea that sexual promiscuity is not appropriate female behaviour. In so doing, although the message tries to provide a modern and open view of women and sexual relationships, the appearance of conflicting messages actually helps disguise the presence of sexist and traditional gender ideas.

When dealing with what are considered as appropriate sexual practices in modern Western society, we can still observe, as we have witnessed in the previous examples, that double standards are still applied. In fact, conflicting messages contribute, as we have observed, to perpetuate the collision between modern and more traditional and sexist attitudes on gender and gendered behavioural patterns in relation to sexual practices. An issue which gains importance in terms of displaying conflicting messages in relation to double standards is that of virginity. As it was the case in past times, women's virginity is still highly valued in certain respects. However, we perceive that it is mainly women who value it the most, we observe that women still feel some kind of need to offer their virginity to someone special but, at the same time, to get rid of what they consider a heavy weight. This could be regarded as the manifestation of a socio-ideological clash between modern views of women's sexuality and more traditional perceptions of what is the appropriate sexual behaviour for women. This can be observed, for example, in thread number 46, *CS\_REL\_I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all\_THREAD*:

#### Example 80

I was just like you. I wanted to get it over and done with because I wanted to have relationships without worrying too much about how prudent I was. I hadn't even gone beyond kissing before my first. My first time with with an ex who was a douche bag to me through and through, and although I regretted it straight after,

and thought "I don't want to do this" literally seconds before, I'm kind of glad. He had brainwashed me into thinking no one else would want to sleep with me, so even though he was a dick and we didn't care that much about each other, at least I could claim I did it in a long-term relationship rather than in some skanky alley.

I had completely forgotten about it and only really consider my OH as my only partner, because the experience with my ex literally meant nothing to me. However I find times where I think to myself "god why did I settle for him?" when foresight is a privilege many of us don't have. Had I known I might have met my OH four months later, I probably wouldn't have done it, but I didn't know any of this back then. I was convinced I was a toad, so I settled.

I agree with Annie a lot about the importance of virginity. It's overhyped and because of this sexist hype of women having to make it "special", I hated myself for nearly two years afterwards! That's too long to spend dwelling on my first time and time I will never get back. Do not do as I did. If this guy is a douche, then grieve now and resolve that you will make sure the next guy is worthwhile.

Congrats by the way 😊 you'll enjoy it after you get used to it.

(CS\_REL\_I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at  
all2\_THREAD)

In this example it can be observed how the participant reflects conflicting views in relation to the value of virginity, how and with whom it should be lost and the consequences of it. On the one hand, the participant claims that *I wanted to get it over and done with* and *I wanted to have relationships without worrying too much about how prudent I was* which may lead receivers to infer that virginity is a weight in today's society because being a virgin implies not having any sexual experience which, in turn, is one of the main characteristics modern females should have in order to be successful and appreciated. However, the participant later claims that, although she/he is glad of having lost it, she/he also regrets it because the person was not the appropriate one, they were not much in love with each other but *at least I could claim I did it in a long-term relationship rather than in some skanky alley*, which may lead receivers to infer that losing virginity is crucial but it is also vital to whom it is lost. In fact, the participant regrets not having waited a few months more, when she/he met her/his *OH* –other half. Nevertheless, more important for our analysis of how conflicting messages help transmit linguistic sexism indirectly as a discourse feature are the ideas expressed in the last two paragraphs of this intervention. There, the participant claims that *I agree with Annie a lot about the importance of virginity. It's overhyped and because of this sexist hype of women having to make it "special"*, however, she/he also claims that *I hated myself for nearly two years afterwards!*, which in fact performs what she/he is just criticising, that is, giving importance to virginity. Moreover, in the last sentence the participant also congratulates the original poster for having finally lost hers/his. From a performative perspective, this participant is offering conflicting and opposing messages

and carrying out opposing actions. On the one hand, she/he is expressing her/his view that virginity is overrated and, from a performative point of view, she/he is complaining about this fact. On the other hand, however, she/he is explaining that she/he felt in the first person the consequences of not losing virginity as it is supposed to be done and, besides, congratulates the original poster for finally having got rid of it. It can be observed here how conflicting views on virginity are presented in this discourse as a reflection of the participant's inner socio-ideological construction of her/his own adequate social and gender performance in relation to the cyber community of practice and the communicative situation in which she/he is interacting.

Some similar views can be observed in thread number 18 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Depressed about being a virgin!\_THREAD*<sup>34</sup>. In Example 38 we already observed how, by means of presuppositions, the original poster of this discussion presented some conflicting messages.

#### Example 81

[...] Obviously not everyone knows I'm a virgin, but my family constantly say stuff to me about it. My sister is 16 and has been having sex since she was about 11 and had a baby at 15...I'm sure you can guess what kind of girl she is. Sh's always saying I'm a freak etc. [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Depressed about being a virgin!1\_THREAD*)

Here, as we mentioned in the section dealing with presuppositions, the original poster is offering conflicting views. On the one hand, she/he highly values the fact of losing virginity and, therefore, being able to acquire a certain degree of sexual experience. However, the original poster also mentions the particular case of her/his younger sister who started having sex at a very young age and became a mother in adolescence. The sentence *I'm sure you can guess what kind of girl she is*, apart from transmitting sexism indirectly by means of presuppositions and implicatures, also offers a conflicting message with the desire of the original poster of losing her/his virginity. This contradiction may lead receivers to infer, as we mentioned in the previous section, that there are certain parameters which are acceptable and some which are not in relation to women and their sexuality. According to this, the conflicting message derives from the desire or even the need to lose virginity but adhering to certain limits

<sup>34</sup> This thread was also analysed in section 5.3.2. when dealing with presuppositions.

such as age, as we can observe here, the number of partners one has sex with and the frequency, as we observed in Example 80.

These contradictions in the socio-ideological background of participants intervening in these threads can also be observed in thread number 63 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Never had boyfriend or had sex\_THREAD*. In the following example, we can observe how the discussion about first times in terms of relationships or sexual encounters has developed into a discussion about sporadic sexual encounters. In one of the interventions, a participant claims:

#### Example 82

I can't exactly imagine something like a ONS<sup>35</sup> being fun (not for me) but that doesn't mean I'm not bloody GAGGING for it. Arghghghghghghghgh.  
(*CS\_REL\_Never had boyfriend or had sex2\_THREAD*)

Here, the participant offers a conflicting view on sporadic sexual relationships which, in a way, are related to the idea of the loss of one's virginity and the acquisition of sexual expertise. On the one hand, this participant, as it has been the case in previous examples, offers a negative view about promiscuity and the idea of having sporadic sexual encounters without being in a relationship which, besides, helps reinforce traditional gender stereotypes related to the issue of sex. On the other hand, the conjunction *but* helps introduce a conflicting message in which a strong desire for open and non-restrictive sexual relations is expressed, as it can be observed in the words *bloody GAGGING for it* and the exclamation *Arghghghghghghghgh*.

Moreover, these conflicting views about what women should take into account in performing an adequate female gender identity in the terms established by this institutional framework of gendered publications and the local environment of their online discussion forums, are also in contrast with the adequate behavioural patterns acceptable for men in similar situations. If promiscuity is condemned in women whether in a relationship or not, in the case of men promiscuity is acceptable, although indirectly, by means of conflicting messages, as it can be observed in thread number 26 of the same forum, *CS\_REL\_For guys only- cheating!\_THREAD*. In this particular case, the original poster directly asks the men participating in the forum to offer some insight into why all men cheat on their partners. Apart from assuming that all the men's partners are women and, therefore, heterosexual relationships, again, are established as

<sup>35</sup> ONS stands for *One Night Stands*, which is a term used to refer to sporadic sexual relationships.

the norm, the original poster also assumes that men and women can be catalogued as homogeneous and closed groups of people with fixed characteristics which, as we saw in section 5.3.2, leads to indirect linguistic sexism. A few posts later, a participant contradicts the original poster's idea that all men are equal and, therefore, have some kind of genetic predisposition to cheat on their partners. In this contribution, the new participant expressed her/his view that not all men are the same, which could be considered an anti-sexist comment, but, a few words later, she/he gets onto a slippery ground stating that *guys tend to go back*, where all men are, in fact, included in the same group.

#### Example 83

i dont think all guys are like this, some of my female friends who i know have cheated have tended to have just one night stands and move on, guys tend to go back to the same people,i just have no idea how people get away with it  
(*CS\_REL\_For guys only- cheating!\_THREAD*)

This contradiction, apart from offering conflicting views on gender stereotypes, also provides a conflicting message with the one presented in previous examples where female promiscuity is condemned and considered non-acceptable. In this case, the discourse used may lead receivers to interpret that, because of their nature, men are intrinsically more sexual and, therefore, promiscuity at a young age would be justified and acceptable for men. This conflicting message, of course, helps reinforce sexist attitudes towards the genders and the behavioural patterns that tend to be accepted or not within different communities of practice.

This difference in terms of what sexual behaviours are acceptable for men and women is also observable in thread number 161, *CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she's a sl\*t\_THREAD*. Following the direct question in the title of the thread, a participant contributes to this discussion making use of what we have previously labelled as scientific discourse. By making use of certain scientific and taken-for-granted facts about pregnancy and the selection of suitable genetic material, this participant provides a justification for women needing to have sex with fewer sexual partners and, therefore, indirectly provides a justification for male promiscuity:

#### Example 84

Quoted:



*If you look at it from a biological perspective it's in a man's best interest to have sex with as many women as possible in order to give him the best chance of having many children and his genetic strand continuing. For women, who can only have a limited amount of children, it's in our best interests to be choosy and only sleep with men who can provide well for our kids.*

Its a good point. But, also from a biological/evolutionary perspective, I think its also about investment.

If women gets pregnant (assuming she doesn't terminate) she has nine months of pregnancy, the trauma of hours of labor. Then there's the aftercare, having to breastfeed and having provide general care until the offspring is able to fend for itself.

That's potentially years of investment compared to the male equivalent, which is a table spoon of genetic material and a less than an hour of copulation. In the case of pregnancy, its easier for a man to run out than a woman, because females are physically tied to the offspring. Women, on average, would only have one child per pregnancy so they have to make sure that child is getting the best possible genes.

Basically, with this much investment, I think its perfectly fair for women to ask for a certain level of commitment, and resources from males and are also entitled to be as picky as they like.

However, with the wide and easy access to contraception this is no longer relevant because pregnancy can be prevented, so they are able to have many sexual partners if they choose. I agree with paiigeturner, I think it simply comes down to society's attitudes not keeping up with technology.

*(CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she's a sl\*t3\_THREAD)*

This contribution, as mentioned, could be claimed to indirectly contribute, by means of presuppositions and the use of a scientific discourse, to justify the stereotypical idea that women should have fewer sexual partners than men and the other way round. Nevertheless, the last paragraph of this intervention offers a contrasting view. Again, making use of scientific arguments, in this case the vast amount of contraceptive possibilities that the market offers, the previous scientific argument that claimed the necessity of women to remain almost faithful to one perfect partner is discredited because sex does not necessarily lead to having children. In the light of this new argument, the same participant dismantles her/his own arguments in favour of women's chastity and, therefore, tries to adhere to more modern discourses about female sexuality. Nevertheless, these conflicting views on what is acceptable in terms of men and women's sexuality, as it was the case of humour and presuppositions, remain publicly available for future readers or participants to interpret them. The only real fact is that those conflicting messages are freely accessible on the web and open to individual and contextual interpretations which, from our perspective, will include a sexist bias in some cases. Therefore, by means of the conscious or unconscious

transmission of conflicting messages, we would suggest that sexism can be transmitted in a subtle and indirect way.

Apart from social or public gender acceptable behaviour or sexuality, conflicting messages on double standards in relation to gender practices can also be observed in what practices are tolerated in each gender. This is the case, for example, of violence, as we observed in thread number 14 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_Male opinion needed bullying your girlfriend\_THREAD*<sup>36</sup>:

#### Example 85

There may be a reason for his outbursts... something that he is dealing with but just not openly, therefore, taking it out on you... Whatever the reason there is no excuse for verbally abusing someone, but there may be something unerlining thats trigering this.

(*MH\_REL\_Male opinion needed bullying your girlfriend1\_THREAD*)

In this example it can be observed how the participant is offering conflicting messages on what must be tolerated or not in terms of violence within a relationship. Although any form of violence is condemned in *Whatever the reason there is no excuse for verbally abusing someone*, the participant frames this statement between contradictory views that try to justify the man's violent attitude. We could consider that by means of these conflicting views, sexist and very pernicious attitudes are transmitted because, in fact, although violence within relationships is condemned, the participant is also claiming that there must be a reason for that behaviour and, therefore, justifying it. From our perspective, this particular example helps reflect how conflicting messages, although unconsciously uttered, may have serious and extremely damaging and pernicious consequences in the routinization and normalisation of certain traditional and stereotypical gendered patterns.

The first topic we have analysed so far in relation to whether conflicting messages are used at a local level in these specific cyber communities of practice to transmit sexism indirectly was that related to what gender practices are accepted or tolerated in relation to each gender. The second topic we are going to deal with in this section is that regarding how those gendered practices coexist in personal relationships, that is, we are going to study how conflicting messages are used in tackling the issue of relationships between the different genders. In this respect, it is important to remember

<sup>36</sup> This thread is also discussed in section 5.3.2.

that, as we saw in previous sections, relationships between different genders in these particular cyber communities of practice are perceived as mainly heterosexual. However, within this topic, conflicting messages are found that often reveal, as it was the case with gender expectations, that there is a socio-ideological hidden clash between what society expects us to do and what particular individuals may feel as a need. This can be observed, for example, in thread number 24 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Eternally single any insight please I could do with some advice\_THREAD*. We consider that this example is a clear proof of how the institutional and the social intertwine with the local and the personal:

#### Example 86

I havent posted here before but I have found that the ladies on these forums are very understanding, non-judgmental, and full of useful advice and I just feel so upset and unhappy that I wanted to write.

Where do I start? I'm 29 and I've been single for many many many years and its not for want of trying or putting in effort. I've been speedating, online dating, joined social clubs, done evening classes, attended parites, gone to pubs/clubs all to no avail. I'm not the kinda girl who needs a man to feel truly happy and fufiled (I've been single for far to long to have that as an issue), and I dont think that there is anything wrong with ladies who feel like that.I have many hobbies and do lots of things on my own as well as with the social clubs I'm part of. I look after myself in terms of appearance, diet and exerise. I'm quite bubbly, chatty, outgoing and loyal and loving to people who are important in my life. I really enjoy my job and get satisfaction from it.

And yet, I'm eternally single. This is not a 'poor me' rant, its simply fact. I try not to let it get me down but there is only so much positive thinking and upbeat thoughts you can say to yourself before the loneliness, unhappiness and fustration wears you down. I just dont know what to do any more, my heart and head ache from the sadness of it all, I'm so lonely and feel unattractive and that something is wrong with me, that I'm seriously flawed, or boring or something. I try to fight these thoughts but after years of being single these things gain more strength in your head. I am so lost at what to do, I just cant get a man, and I cant escape the desire to find a fella who wants to spend time with me and would like to have a relationship. A boyfriend would be simply wonderful, I just want to be given the chance to have a relationship and all the happiness and wonderfulness that it brings. Thank you for listening

*(CS\_REL\_Eternally single any insight please I could do with some advice1\_THREAD)*

In this thread, the original poster is, on the one hand, trying to disclose her/his feelings and, on the other, offering other participants the possibility of offering her/him some advice or opinion on this particular issue. We could suggest that the general tone of this particular discourse reveals a deep internal conflict between what the original poster feels and needs to feel. More precisely, we observe how there is a clash between

the discourses on gender and gender relations provided by institutional frameworks and her/his own personal needs or desires. First of all, we could claim that the original poster tries to fit in into the *Cosmo Girl* discourse promoted by the institutional framework of the publication to which this forum is ascribed. The original poster describes her/himself as outgoing, having many interests and hobbies, doing well in social relations, loyal and loving. Moreover, she/he describes her/himself as successful in terms of her/his professional development as she/he finds her/his job rewarding and satisfactory. Moreover, the sentences, *I'm not the kinda girl who needs a man to feel truly happy and fulfilled* and *I dont think that there is anything wrong with ladies who feel like that* help construct her/his discourse in line with the modern and progressive ideas on femininity and women's gender performance of *Cosmopolitan*. Nevertheless, this internal feeling of satisfaction and fulfilment is blurred by the institutional framework of accepted gender behavioural patterns. More precisely, we consider that ideas on how people should behave according to their gender put a lot of pressure on this particular participant. Regardless of her internal satisfaction, the original poster feels *upset* and *unhappy*. The fact that she/he has been single for a long time feels like a heavy weight for the original poster. In fact, despite the positive description she/he made of her/himself and admitting the fact that she/he is not *the kinda girl who needs a man to feel truly happy and fulfilled*, the original poster has been trying and putting a lot of effort into getting a man. In fact, not getting this objective, and contrarily to previous arguments, the original poster feels that *I just dont know what to do any more, my heart and head ache from the sadness of it all, I'm so lonely and feel unattractive and that something is wrong with me*. These conflicting messages may lead readers and other participants to unveil rather stereotypical and sexist attitudes behind the original poster's post. In fact, as we mentioned earlier, we do not consider that the expression of these sexist attitudes is done consciously, moreover, we consider that the original poster is not aware of the inner struggle taking place in her/his mind. The institutional frameworks and ideas on gender and gender relations collide with those feelings of success and satisfaction she/he feels. This can be observed more clearly in *after years of being single these things gain more strength in your head. I am so lost at what to do, I just cant get a man, and I cant escape the desire to find a fella who wants to spend time with me. These things* that gain strength in one's head are the institutional discourses on gender and gender relations which, many times, are in conflict with individuals' internal needs and desires. In fact *I can escape the desire to find a fella*, from our perspective,

strongly reveals how this desire feels more as something external than internal for the original poster because of the fact that she/he cannot *escape* from it. Finally, the last sentence, *I just want to be given the chance to have a relationship and all the happiness and wonderfulness that it brings*, and the passive voice used in it summarises how the original poster feels in relation to the need of adhering to the institutional frameworks imposed on what her/his behaviour and social and gender performance should be in terms of her/his social and gender identity.

Something similar can be observed in thread number 2 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single\_THREAD*. In this particular case, the title of the thread itself may lead readers and other participants to infer that being single, as we mentioned in the previous section, is not the most desirable state. However, as it is the case of many people, some participants in this forum decide to participate in this discussion in order to provide a series of evidence that might help other members of this community feel comfortable with the idea of being single. In page 2 of this thread, *staceeyxox* suggests:

#### Example 87

1. Doing what I want to with my friends without worrying about anyone else.
  2. Going to bed in my pjamas with no make-up on, covered in face cream and not worrying about impressing anyone
  3. Going out in town and flirting with whoever I want
  4. Not having to clean up or cook for anyone
  5. Not having to sit and watch ps3<sup>37</sup> for what seems like a lifetime
  6. Not constantly over analysing(sp) every little thing that happens between us
- I understand the game was 5 but I thought of the last one and had to add it in! 😊  
However I do hate being single!

*(CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single2\_THREAD)*

It can be observed how this participant is effectively contributing to the communicative intention of the discussion. The participant offers her/his reasons for loving the single status, in fact, 6 and not only 5 reasons are provided which help emphasise the idea that there are multiple reasons for not wanting to be in a relationship. Moreover, all the reasons provided, as we will analyse in the following section of this chapter, contribute to construct traditional scripts and gender stereotypes. Besides, heterosexuality is reinforced as almost the only possible option for gender relations by means of constantly opposing male and female traditional gender

<sup>37</sup> PS3 refers to *Play Station 3*, a game console.

stereotypes. *Without worrying about anyone else, not worrying about impressing anyone* or *Not having to clean up or cook for anyone* in fact portray a traditional image of women as carers, therefore, highlighting their traditional main role as mothers and wives. Moreover, *Not having to watch ps3 for what seems a lifetime* provides a conflicting message with men's traditional stereotype as non-related to household duties at all and not even caring about the essential and subtle issues of maintaining a relationship, as it is emphasised in *Not constantly over analysing(sp) every little thing that happens between us*. These opposing female and male gender stereotypes in fact help transmit a sexist attitude although indirectly and in a very subtle and, probably, unconscious way. Moreover, we consider that this first conflicting message can be catalogued as a homogeneous message in favour of being single and approving the fact of not being in a relationship. However, again, the final sentence of this post provides a conflicting message with this first one. In *However I do hate being single!* the complaint, together with the exclamative tone, allows the participant to subtly unveil an internal conflict, a clash, we would say, between what the participant feels she/he must do in this post in order to favour her/his community of practice and adhere to it but, at the same time, she/he discloses some internal and personal feelings which, we consider, are influenced by the strong presence of gender stereotypes in institutional frameworks. We could claim that the implicit importance given to relationships is installed within the participant's socio-ideological repertoire despite her/his efforts in adhering to this community of practice's intention of contributing to a more modern world in which relationships are not important. We consider that the clash between the institutional and the local is clearly reflected in this participant's post.

Conflicting messages on how relationships between genders are perceived can also be analysed in thread number 9 of the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Being looked after\_THREAD*. In this thread, the original poster starts a discussion about a conflicting message itself. The original poster claims that she/he is naturally attracted to big men because she/he likes the idea of being looked after and protected. However, she/he also emphasises the idea that financial independence is important for her/him. We consider that the original poster's post actually discloses a deep conflict produced and reproduced at an institutional level. As we mentioned in previous examples, this original poster seems to want to adapt to the *Cosmo Girl* identity in which traditional and more modern gender ideas coexist. However, the fact that she/he decides to start a discussion with this clash as its central point may lead us to consider that the clash is

evident, although at an unconscious level, for some participants of this community of practice and there is a need to share this feeling. Some interventions in this thread make our claim evident:

#### Example 88

I like being looked after. I can take care of myself financially though, I don't rely on being looked after with money and material things, but it's always nice. I don't think I could ever date someone who was smaller than me, I like to feel looked after by someone who is bigger than me 😊

*(CS\_REL\_Being looked after1\_THREAD)*

#### Example 89

I don't know if it's IMPORTANT to me as such, but I really like the feeling. Obviously not to a scary/controlling extent! But the feeling of being cared for/protected is really nice. Not financially though, I like that to be equal - I would feel awkward if he "looked after" me financially (although obviously circumstances change for instance if you stay at home to have a family you're gonna be relying on someone then!)

*(CS\_REL\_Being looked after1\_THREAD)*

#### Example 90

i wouldn't like being looked after financially to such an extent that he paid for everything, because i'd just feel plain harsh on him 😞 but.. i do like knowing that he will be there to help me out financially if i need it, and he knows i would do the exact same for him 😊 i like the feeling that he's always looking out for me 🇧🇷 but i do like my own independence 😊

*(CS\_REL\_Being looked after1\_THREAD)*

#### Example 91

i usually go for guys that are built, makes me feel safe, plus its hot :P .....only thing i dont like is men trying to pay for things for me, makes me feel really uncomfortable, even if it is a drink

*(CS\_REL\_Being looked after1\_THREAD)*

#### Example 92

I love being looked after by my boyfriend, it makes me feel loved. / When i was with my ex tho, i hated him looking after me cos it was waayy over the top and to be honest, i preferred looking after myself when i was with him. I'm independant financially but when it comes to being protected and looked after, its such an amazing feeling.

*(CS\_REL\_Being looked after3\_THREAD)*

We believe that these examples evidence that there is a clash between different gender roles and how these are perceived when in a relationship. From the point of view

that this forum generally considers that relationships have a heterosexual basis, we can consider that, when talking about *being looked after* or *protected*, it is mainly women or people talking about women that offer this perspective. The passive voice, again, can be considered as a syntactic element that may veil women's passiveness under a grammatical construction. This traditional gender role is opposed to the active role of men within relationships. Nevertheless, these conflicting messages at a first level do also clash with more subtle messages in a secondary level. We believe that all these examples reflect the internal clash produced in the general knowledge of this community of practice about how women should behave. More precisely, the *Cosmo Girl* discourse is presented here by means of the opposing messages of being looked after and independence. Financial independence is highlighted in all these examples as a sign of women's modern views and adaptation to a modern and egalitarian society, however, the discourse on women's passiveness and even physical dependence on men projects more traditional and sexist views on the relationships between the genders. Moreover, we consider that these conflicting messages also have an impact on the hegemonic form of masculinity promoted by this community who may find it extremely difficult to fulfil such an uncertain role where the level of care or attention they should show to women is ambiguously presented in terms of conflicting gender roles.

As a final example of how conflicting messages on how relationships between genders are perceived by these cyber communities of practice and how conflicting messages may be used as a discourse feature to transmit sexist attitudes indirectly by means of linguistic mechanisms, we would like to include an example taken from thread number 53 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Love changes\_THREAD*. In this particular case, it can be observed how the clash between the institutional and the local provide individuals' interventions with conflicting messages which indirectly help transmit sexist attitudes and ideas:

#### Example 93

i've been with my boyfriend for 7 months now. he's been away travelling for three weeks and won't be back until the end of july. the first week i missed him ridiculously and cried every day. i still miss him now but not as much and i'm definitely not thinking about him as much. i'm just worried that after a few more weeks i won't be missing him anymore (and he won't be missing me) and that things won't be the same when he gets back. can you fall out of love with someone that quickly? he's my first love and i truly hope my feelings don't change for him. i'm just getting paranoid that he's going to change whilst he's away and will come



back and leave me, so i guess i'm trying to protect myself from being hurt. has anyone else experience feelings like this?

(*CS\_REL\_Love changes\_THREAD*)

In this example, the original poster starts a thread with the aim of getting some replies that may help her/him understand what is happening in her/his inside. The fact that her/his boyfriend has been away for a week and she/he has been missing him a lot is something considered as normal by the original poster; however, as time goes by, she/he feels that this feeling is decreasing and the original poster starts struggling with the idea that her/his love may evaporate. The original poster's anguish about this fact can be claimed to reveal the internal conflict produced by the collision between the institutional discourse about love and first love and her/his real and particular feelings on this matter. We could consider that posting these feelings may result irrelevant in the transmission of sexist attitudes and ideas, however, as it has been expressed in previous examples, we consider that the constant repetition of certain discourse patterns, by means of conflicting messages in this case, may contribute to the creation of normalised discourses or scripts that help transmit sexist attitudes indirectly.

Finally, as we mentioned at the beginning of this section, the third topic we are going to analyse for our purpose of studying how conflicting messages may contribute to the transmission of indirect sexism, is that of conflicting messages in participants' gender identity performance. The previous topic, that dealing with how conflicting messages were involved in the indirect sexist transmission and construction of gender relations may lead us directly to this third topic. The social and gender identity of individuals participating in these cyber communities of practice is, in great measure, determined by how gender relations are established and understood in these particular communicative environments. As a result, we consider that analysing particular instances of how gender identities are performed in specific and localised communicative situations may provide us with real examples of how conflicting messages may intervene, if they do so, in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes.

At this point, and after analysing our corpus in order to ascertain whether and how this particular discourse feature is relevant in our corpus, we discovered that conflicting messages are frequently used by participants in these cyber communities of practice when performing their particular social and gender identities. We may venture to suggest that this particular discourse feature is especially used when performing gender due to the fact that conflicting messages themselves are part of the common

knowledge and socio-ideological background of participants themselves. As we have explained in Chapter 2, the institutional framework of gender publications is continuously transmitting conflicting messages on gender identities and what features better fit certain communities of practice. These conflicting messages are filled with modern and more traditional stereotypes that coexist in a discursive environment which, in a way, covers the damage that these conflicts may cause.

In order to illustrate this topic in a clearer way, we will centre, for example, upon thread number 4 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it\_THREAD*<sup>38</sup>, more precisely in page 4 of this discussion:

#### Example 94

[...] I don't think guys have an automatic right to watch porn, masterbate yes. But I don't understand why some guys seem to struggle without when they have a perfectly healthy sexual relationship with a girlfriend.

I have conflicting views on porn though tbh<sup>39</sup>. Now it seems so violent against women, I mean you've got videos like 'painful anal' and 'babe chokes on dick' etc etc, I even remember one which said something along the lines of 'babe has ball in ass and anal prolapse' (seriously wtf<sup>40</sup>) which is disturbing because this is just 'normal' porn. Porn creates an unrealistic view of sex and raises some people's expectations which is why I think watching porn to find solutions to a problem sex life is a bad idea.

I also find it strange that prostitution is illegal but making porn isn't, even though they both involve having sex for money. I also think its nieve to think that the people in it are all there by choice.

But with all this said. When I'm *single*, I do watch a fair bit of it.

(*CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it4\_THREAD*)

#### Example 95

[...] Conflicting views indeed 😊

(*CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it4\_THREAD*)

It can be observed how the conflicting messages present in Example 94 do not pass unnoticed by other participants in this thread, as it is observed in Example 95. In Example 94 we can observe how the participant is trying to negotiate, trying to perform her/his social and gender identity in consonance with the gender parameters established by the institutional framework to which this specific community of practice is ascribed. More precisely, it can be observed how this participant openly expresses that she/he has

<sup>38</sup> This thread was also deal with in section 5.3.2.

<sup>39</sup> *Tbh* stands for *to be honest*.

<sup>40</sup> *Wtf* stands for *what the fuck*

*conflicting views on porn*. This would mean nothing more than that if no other conflicting messages were subtly transmitted in this discourse. On the one hand, this participant explains how porn, or at least certain types of porn, can be considered as almost violence against women because of its denigrating nature. The participant provides several examples to justify this opinion and she/he further strengthens the idea that porn helps construct an *unrealistic view of sex and raises people's expectations*, which is a statement that may lead readers and other participants to infer that strong and traditional gender stereotypes are hidden behind the porn industry and with which the original poster does not have very much in common. Nevertheless, the final sentence, *But with all this said. When I'm single, I do watch a fair bit of it* we consider that the original poster is negotiating and performing her/his own social and gender identity. Stating those negative comments about porn may be in relation to new and modern views on women's role in society and in contrast with women's sexual objectification. However, the institutional framework in which this particular cyber community of practice is located also promotes ideas on women's sexual liberation and open and active sexual relationships. We believe that, because of this conflicting views on gender and gender ideas, this participant also finds the need to project those conflicting views in her/his speech in order to be coherent with the conflicting views of the institutional framework. In so doing, it can be observed how the institutional is reflected and has certain influence on how local social and gender practices are negotiated at a local level.

Something similar can be observed in pages 8 and 9 from thread number 33 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Homophobia\_THREAD*<sup>41</sup>. This discussion was started by an original poster who was disturbed by the attitude of one of her/his friends who openly manifested a homophobic attitude on a social network. A discussion follows where opinions on homophobia and politically correct ideas on freedom of speech are exchanged. In several interventions, however, a particular discourse structure can be noticed where conflicting messages are used to present sexist ideas indirectly:

#### Example 96

I firstly want to point out that I am not homophobic and have no problem with homosexuality or homosexual acts.

BUT:

1. I think he did have the right to say what he did. I am a firm believer of freedom of speech, even if its something distasteful. He may have had the right, but that

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<sup>41</sup> This thread was also analysed in section 5.3.2.

doesn't mean he acted in a way that was moral. He would get a response being equally strong against his wires then a defriending.

2. To the people who argue gay sex is natural because animals do it, I'd like to remind them that giraffes drink wee for sexual reasons, and some animals kill their partner after sex, oh and lots of animals use rape. I have no opinion on whether gay sex is natural or not, but using the animal kingdom as a model for sexual behaviour is a really bad idea.

3. The question of whether it's natural can't be determined by what someone who is gay thinks (someone said 'well you wouldn't say it was unnatural if you were a lesbian would you'). If something is your preference of course it will seem natural - but asking those involved would get the same results for paedos, rapists and those with really weird fetishes - it's human nature for people to consider their personal behaviours natural.

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia8\_THREAD)

#### Example 97

I have absolutely no problem with homosexuality whatsoever as long as who someone is isn't compromised in order to be that way. I cannot stand womanly gay men, as I can't understand manly gay women...!!!

Men flouncing around wearing make up, women's clothes etc, I just don't get it and if a woman acted super camp as some gay men do then it would drive me just as mental!

But that's just my opinion, I would never stop someone living their lives the way they want too, nor would I ever dream of attacking someone over the way they choose to live their lives and people who do disgust me, I just dislike the over-flounciness! it makes me uncomfortable!

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia9\_THREAD)

In both examples, the sentences, *I firstly want to point out that I am not homophobic and have no problem with homosexuality or homosexual acts* and *I have absolutely no problem with homosexuality whatsoever* firstly present these participants as adhering to modern and egalitarian views on gender and gender relations. However, the conjunction *BUT* and the adverbial phrase *as long as* help readers and other participants understand the conflicting messages hidden in the discourse of these two participants. After stating that they have an open, modern and accepting view on gender and gender relations, a stream of sexist thought and attitudes is expressed where, although not using direct or open derogatory terms or syntactic structures, homosexuality is condemned. These conflicting messages can be claimed to transmit sexism indirectly by means of linguistic mechanisms such as comparisons or metaphors but, more precisely, under the framework of conflicting messages. These two participants are negotiating and performing their social and gender identities under the mask of the mixture of political correctness with traditional and sexist attitudes. In fact, this kind of discourse makes it extremely difficult for feminist critical discourse analysts

to attack them and overtly claim their sexist nature. It is precisely conflicting messages what protects participants from being accused of being sexist while, consciously or unconsciously, performing their social and gender identity.

A similar example can be observed in thread number 104 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Curious\_THREAD*. In this particular case, *andyglasgow* directly asks other participants about their interest or concern about their partners' sexual past. Moreover, the original poster presents a conflicting identity in which, in spite of trying to sound secure and confident, she/he indirectly projects an image of insecurity and doubts that come from the question and discussion itself. Moreover, in page 2 of this thread, the original poster claims:

#### Example 98

I know what u mean clairelouise I see my gf almost as my property. I know that sounds bad but I just love her more than anything and it rips out my heart to think of her with anyone else, actually makes me feel physically sick....but I'd still watch it lol

(*CS\_SEX\_Curious2\_THREAD*)

In this example, the original poster presents a conflicting message and, at the same time, transmits sexist attitudes indirectly. On the one hand, she/he expresses that her/his girlfriend is seen as *almost as my property* and, concerned with the sexist and traditional scripts behind this idea, the discourse is modulated by *I know it sounds bad but I just love her more than anything*, where extreme love is considered as a subtle excuse for being jealous and wanting to consider a partner as one's own property. Here, despite the conflicting messages, we would claim that sexist attitudes are indirectly being transmitted. Moreover, the final sentence *but I'd still watch it lol* is in direct opposition with the previous ideas where the original poster claimed that it will rip her/his *heart to think of her with anyone else*. We believe that this opposing view at the end of the discourse is trying to frame the social and gender identity of this participant. More precisely, we consider that, taking into account the heterosexual framework of this community of practice, the original poster is performing a hegemonic form of masculine identity, regardless of her/his non-virtual identity. In so doing, the original poster must adhere to the norms and standards of masculinity presented as acceptable in this community of practice. As a result, the original poster, on the one hand, presents a loving and tender side of her/his persona, where extreme love even justifies intense jealousy. However, although framed by possession, which is a traditional masculine

feature, extreme love and care about one's partner is not a traditional masculine feature, because of that reason, we consider that the original poster decides to close her/his message with a typical masculine stereotypical sentence in which male sexuality is enhanced. Despite the fact that watching her/his girlfriend with anyone else will destroy the original poster, she/he still claims that she/he will watch it. By presenting these conflicting views, the original poster is performing her/his social and gender identity paying attention to the gender rules established in this community of practice for the chosen persona but, at the same time, as it happens at an institutional level, she/he is also helping transmit sexist attitudes indirectly by means of discourse.

The contrast between modern and traditional, between egalitarian and sexist ideas, can also be observed in other threads of our corpus, for example, thread number 10 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has\_THREAD*<sup>42</sup>.

#### Example 99

I don't think it should matter what job either partner does. I like the fact that my girlfriend is ambitious, works hard and has a career.

That said, I'm not sure how i'd feel if she earned more than me!

(*MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has\_THREAD*)

In this example, on the one hand, the poster adheres to modern and open views on women's social role and active life apart from the domestic sphere, which are strongly encouraged by this community of practice. Remember that the *New Man* figure, which is encouraged by this institutional framework, is strongly related to the emotional side of men. However, we also assume that this participant, due to the heterosexist framework of the community of practice in which he/she is participating, is performing a masculine gender identity and, therefore, must also adhere to more traditional norms on hegemonic masculinity, as it is power and superiority over women in terms of independence. These conflicting messages can also be observed in page 4 of the same thread:

#### Example 100

I prefer successful, driven girls. It does have its drawbacks though.

<sup>42</sup> This thread is also analysed in section 5.3.1 and section 5.3.2.

My ex earnt over twice as much as me (very well off indeed for her age) but whenever we went out for a emal etc. she'd always try to pay for it which made me feel sh!t and was always pretty awkward!

I honestly don't think I could go out with a girl who had minimal prospects and was setting herself up as a future housewife. Needs more about her than that!

(MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has4\_THREAD)

Here another participant explains, from a rather androcentric perspective, that, as a man, he felt useless when his girlfriend earned more than him. However, the androcentric perspective is not our main concern in this section, what is important is the fact that this androcentric perspective is framed by two conflicting messages. In the first and last sentence, this participant claims his/her preference for successful and hard-working women, which is in line with the progressive view of *Men's Health* in relation to women's social role. Nevertheless, this progressive view is in contrast, as we mentioned, with the androcentric middle statement. By providing this swing between modern and traditional views, we consider that the participant is performing his/her own gender identity at a local level adhering to the norms of the institutional framework in which this cyber community of practice is located. As we mentioned in Chapter 2, this publication is characterised by conflicting messages on gender, gender relations and gender performance which, as we can observe, is also reflected at a local level. In so doing, sexist attitudes are being indirectly and subtly transmitted by means of less direct discourse features as it is the case of conflicting messages.

Therefore, paying attention to the examples and explanations provided in this section, we would claim that Mills (2008) suggestion that conflicting messages should be considered a discourse feature that helps transmit indirect sexist attitudes by means of linguistic mechanisms can also be applied to the local level in this specific kind of CMC. We would claim that conflicting messages are generally used in three main areas, namely, those of gender accepted patterns within specific communities of practice, those of established relational models between genders and, finally, those on gender performance itself. We consider that it has been demonstrated how conflicting messages are frequently used in these three areas. Therefore conflicting messages can be claimed to be a discourse feature which, consciously or unconsciously, helps transmit sexism in an indirect and subtle way which, as we claimed earlier, results in an even more pernicious kind of sexism.

Contrarily to what we claimed in section 5.3.1 and section 5.3.2, dealing with humour and presuppositions respectively, we consider that, even though numerous

examples of conflicting messages are found through our corpus, this should not be deemed as a special significant discourse feature in this specific kind of CMD. As it will be explained in section 6.2, we believe that the special medium and social factors that intertwine in our corpus provide us with a very specific kind of CMD. Although conflicting messages are, without a doubt, and as it has been demonstrated in this section, a very suitable vehicle for the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes through linguistic mechanisms, we consider that they should not be considered as especially relevant in this local context or specific to this kind of CMD. As it will be explained in section 6.2, we hold the view that the concrete medium and social factors of this kind of CMD definitely lead participants in this local context to use certain discourse features more prominently than others for the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes. Nevertheless, and after having analysed the examples provided in this section, we consider that the concrete category of conflicting messages, although undeniably useful in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes, should not be considered as specific to this kind of CMD but, rather, a general discourse features that may serve the purpose of expressing and negotiating sexism through language in many and varied communicative situations, but not necessarily restricted or associated to the medium and social factors of the CMD under analysis in this study.

As we explained in section 2.1.2, conflicting messages and their constant confrontation with subtle forms of hegemonic masculinity and femininity form part of our everyday public and private life. These, in turn, delimit or restrict individuals' possibilities from an institutional level in terms of what is acceptable or not in relation to their particular social and gender performance in given communicative situations. However, after having analysed the examples provided in this section, we consider that the battle ground of conflicting messages at an institutional level is, indisputably, reflected and recreated at a local level, at least in this specific kind of CMD. Nevertheless, we do not consider that it is the specific social and medium factors of this concrete context what favours this situation but, rather, the intrinsic properties and functionality of the discourse feature of conflicting messages itself.

#### 5.3.4. *Scripts and metaphors*

This section will be devoted to analyse particular and relevant examples of scripts and metaphors in our corpus. As we mentioned earlier in this chapter, Mills



(2008) suggests that this specific discourse feature is frequently employed by language users in order to manifest sexist attitudes by means of linguistic mechanisms. As we mentioned in section 5.2, metaphors may be defined as bridges between individuals' cognitive frameworks and the real world around them (Eisikovits and Buchbinder 1999, Achugar 2001), that is, as tools for environmental comprehension and interpersonal or intrapersonal communication. In Lakoff and Johnsons' (1980) words, metaphors mirror the existential, cultural and social meanings that, because of different reasons, cannot be expressed in different terms. In this light, metaphors exploit "imaginative connections which are shared within a culture and which link the familiar with the unfamiliar" (Adams *et al.* 1995: 395). In this sense, metaphors reveal the dynamic and flexible relationships between language, thought and reality since the linguistic mechanisms in which they incarnate serve as graphic and tangible material for individuals to communicate their experience of the world. In turn, this sharing of experiences and the recognition of recurrent patterns of understanding and representation help construct a range of possibilities to interpret the world in specific communities of practice or whole cultures. When these bridges between the real world and individuals' interpretations become routinized, that is, they become common knowledge in specific communities of practice or cultures, we can talk about scripts, "narrative pathways" (Mills 2008: 148) or "recognizable routinized sequential structures of content-form relations" (Philips 2003: 260) whose meanings, whether consciously or unconsciously, prompt the reader towards a variety of interpretations of the information being offered (Caldas-Coulthard and Rosamund 2010). As active members of different communities of practice, how certain metaphors and scripts are used in our everyday life and communication may pass unnoticed. Generally speaking, unless immersed in a critical analysis of particular communicative situations, the way we communicate and the mechanisms we use remain mainly unobserved.

Our particular interest in this section is to analyse how members of the specific communities of practice adhered to the online versions of the specific gendered magazines under analysis in this project make use of metaphors and scripts as a discourse feature that helps transmit sexist attitudes. Whether this is done consciously or unconsciously we may never know. What is clear, anyway –as it was the case with humour, conflicting messages or presuppositions– is the fact that the effects of using such discourse features remain open to the public in such a dynamic environment as CMC. Retaking the ideas expressed by Ansary and Babaii (2003), we suggest that

“sexism is often not a matter of intention but of effect”. Having this idea and the main characteristics of CMC in mind, we could suggest that the discourse features displayed on the net that help transmit sexist attitudes are especially damaging. This is so because their effect is, at least ideally, eternally available in the cyber space to be interpreted by all the individuals that may come across those discourse features. It is also a matter of fact that the specific communicative situations in which they are encountered may affect the sexist effect itself but, what seems obvious, anyway, is the fact that they help transmit sexist attitudes in an indirect and very extensive way.

In order to illustrate these concepts, we have decided to select some relevant examples of how metaphors and scripts work as discourse tools for the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes in our corpus. We have decided to centre upon five specific routinized scripts that frequently appear in our corpus: i) the script of the strong and almost divine relation between men and sex, ii) the script of the conflictive performance of women of their new and modern sexual and social roles, iii) the script of the new and modern limitation of men in the new era due to their new social roles, iv) the script of the scientific justification of sexism, and v) the script of the abnormal relations between other gender identities rather than the traditional masculine and feminine ones.

The first script we are going to analyse is that of the strong and almost divine connection between men and sex. As we mentioned earlier, one of the most generally accepted gender stereotypes related to men and sexuality –which, when repeated, becomes routinized common knowledge in our Western culture– is that the link or connection between men and sex is a strong one by nature. This script is based on the idea that men are intrinsically sexual agents that biologically need to satisfy certain sexual needs that may escape women’s reasons and personal needs. Because of this traditional gender stereotype –that is, the “salience of simple category cues in the immediate environment” (Lee 2007: 516) in relation to gender–, women who have a relationship with men who watch porn and/or masturbate find themselves at a crossroad. On the one hand, they may have this stereotype embedded in their minds and, therefore, ideologically and socially consider that it is a normal practice when their partners watch porn or masturbate. However, on the other hand, they may find that, individually and personally, they may not consider this an acceptable behaviour for particular reasons. In this particular case, a social problem arises that reveals a clash between socially and

personally accepted practices within a relationship that arises from traditional gender stereotypes and routinized metaphors or scripts.

An example of this clash can be observed in thread number 4 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it\_THREAD*, where - *JellyBelly*- contributes to the conversation in the following terms:

Example 101

[...] I would never in a million years ask my OH not to do it, that would be like him saying to me "i don't want you to use any thing which comes from ann summers<sup>43</sup> by yourself as it's just an aid to getting you off"....

I don't personally see porn as cheating and if he wants to watch it, fine by me...go ahead! I can understand people not liking the though of their OH watching it, but to ask him to stop something he enjoys if he's not really intentionally doing anything to hurt....just seems a bit controlling to me.

(*CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it1\_THREAD*)

Here, the user is making use of certain traditional gender metaphors and scripts that may signal indirect linguistic sexism. We consider that gender roles and stereotypes are the main basis of metaphors and scripts or, in Wodak's (2006: 185) words, "stereotypes and prejudicial beliefs are [...] enforced and manifested inter alia by metaphors, analogies, insinuations as well as stories", and this example can be used as a proof of the indirect work carried out by them. In this particular case, the term *OH*, an abbreviation for *Other Half*, is used and the script of a couple being the melting of two incomplete halves is therefore strengthened. In so doing, although the poster is trying to convey the idea that she/he is not against porn and, therefore, has an open mind in relation to sexual matters and, consequently, also fits into the hegemonic form of femininity portrayed by the institutional discourse to which the forum is ascribed, the term she/he uses actually emphasises traditional gender roles and stereotypes that still constrain women to the obligation of sharing their lives with someone in order to be considered complete beings. Moreover, the user also employs a comparison in *that would be like him saying to me "i don't want you to use any thing which comes from ann summers by yourself as it's just an aid to getting you off"*. The presuppositions hidden in this comparison come from the word *aid*, which leads us to bring to our minds ideas related to the impossibility or difficulty of doing something. An aid is brought into scene when something is considered impossible or difficult to do in order to save

<sup>43</sup> *Ann Summers* is an international trademark with subsidiaries all around the world and on the Internet which provides products especially designed for women. Sexy lingerie and sex toys are its main icons.

concrete obstacles. In this particular case, as the original poster did, the user is claiming that, as it is the case with men, women may need an aid to masturbate. Although this may seem a progressive idea at first sight, if we go a bit deeper into its implications, we can deduce that the user is corroborating that men, in fact, do need external stimulation to satisfy all their sexual needs. Although the comparison may project the image that the user is locating women in a position that, years ago, would have been unconceivable, what she/he is actually (or also) doing is reinforcing the idea that men-porn-masturbation are intrinsically and naturally connected elements, as we can observe in the sentence *to ask him to stop something he enjoys if he's not really intentionally doing anything to hurt...just seems a bit controlling to me* where the word *intentionally*, again leads us to infer that, what is not intentional is natural and, therefore, consolidating a traditional script in which men are naturally bounded to sex. Moreover, the word *controlling* brings to our mind a full set of traditional scripts, idioms, images, films or jokes in which women have been portrayed as excessively controlling and, therefore, traditional stereotypes and scripts are being subtly brought into scene. This, in fact, results in indirect sexism addressed to both women and men in this particular example. Both are restricted to traditional roles by apparently inoffensive linguistic and discursive resources which, in fact, are emphasising women and men's gendered scripted positions in relation to individual sexual practices when in a relationship.

Something similar can be found a few posts later when another participant intervenes in the discussion. The tone of the comment may lead readers to perceive that this particular poster is, in fact, not against porn and, therefore, also has an open and modern view of sex which fits into the *Cosmopolitan* vision of new and modern (heterosexual) gender relationships. However, if we go a bit deeper into this comment, we can observe how certain gendered scripts are being used which help maintain sexist ideals although in a very subtle way:

#### Example 102

For example...when i go out, i like wearing heels, but it makes me taller than my OH, i wouldn't stop wearing them to make him feel secure about his height.

(CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it1\_THREAD)

In this particular case, the image of women wearing high heels correlates with traditional ideas about the connection between women and beauty, about the necessity of wearing pieces of clothing or accessories that may make them look prettier.

Moreover, this poster also mentions the fact that wearing high heels makes her/him taller than her/his boyfriend which may bring the activation of certain traditional gendered sexist scripts to particular receivers' mind. As seen in other examples, patriarchal ideology considers that women are inferior beings who need the protection of men. As a result and under this perspective, there is a shared stereotypical idea that men need to be taller and bigger than their female partners. This is so because physical superiority is needed in order to protect and take care of women. Moreover, as it is the case here, many women feel bad or inappropriate when their physical characteristics do not fit into these scripts. Being a tall or corpulent woman has been considered inadequate and little feminine according to this traditional patriarchal script. In this concrete example, however, although the poster may try to project the idea that this script does not affect her/his behaviour and she/he would wear high heels despite the stigma of being taller than her/his boyfriend, the fact that the script is transmitted as an almost universal truth contrasts with her/his anti-sexist position.

The influence of metaphors and scripts is sometimes even directly analysed by certain forum participants but, at the same time they are criticised and pointed at as a source of social damage, they may also be indirectly, subtly and even unconsciously transmitted. This is so because, as Adams *et al.* (1995) claim, this discourse feature may be conceived as a promoter of multilevel responses in interlocutors of a given communicative situation. This can be observed in page 7 of thread number 111 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_Everyman watches porn!!\_THREAD*:

### Example 103

Just read through the entire thread, and I think a lot of people have misunderstood the intentions of the OP.

If I went on to the MH<sup>44</sup> forums and said that 'EVERY woman gossips about her sex life' most of the guys would probably think, 'yup'. And others would feel relieved to know that their girl wasn't the only one and therefore there was nothing wrong with him that she felt the need to do it. Yes it would be a generalisation, but a fairly reasonable one to make. Although there are exceptions, and some women keep private lives completely private.

All the OP was trying to do here was let women who didn't know, know that it is normal and not a slight on her or the relationship.

The thread wasn't actually aimed at those who are already aware and are comfortable with the idea. And the whole thing has been blown out proportion.

---

<sup>44</sup> *MH* refers to the forum in *Men's Health* online magazine. We can notice how the forums in *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* are compared and, therefore, this may provide us with localised and practical justifications for our research

Lilys, Kim, et al., I actually hate generalisations and stereotypes as a rule, but when the intent is to relieve the distress of some individuals I think an exception has to be made. There were only good intentions in this.

I only hope the OP doesn't think we're stark raving looney feminists around here because some well intended advice to some has been misconstrued by others!!!

(CS\_SEX\_Everyman watches porn!!7\_THREAD)

Here, the participant is assuming that, in fact, the original poster has made use of generalisations and stereotypes *I actually hate generalisations and stereotypes as a rule, but when the intent is to relieve the distress of some individuals I think an exception has to be made. There were only good intentions in this.* However, the last part of this sentence is pointing at a justification, that is, it is indirectly approving the use of sexist comments in certain contexts. On the light of providing unknown information to more naïve readers, stereotypes are accepted. For this participant, the use of indirect linguistic sexism would be, therefore, justified when a social problem, that of ingenuous women, may be solved. What is more, in the sentence, *I only hope the OP doesn't think we're stark raving looney feminists around here because some well intended advice to some has been misconstrued by others!!!* The word *looney* collocates with *feminist*. None of these items can be considered an intrinsically sexist element but, when combined together, the discursive meaning is coloured with a fairly sexist attitude. Moreover, the rest of the sentence serves as an excuse, even as an apology, to the original poster in which this participant is asking for comprehension. What is more, a conflicting message is present here because, although the participant is asking for generalisations not to be applied as a general rule, this participant also solicits the original poster not to consider that all the participants are the same and, therefore, is making use of generalisations herself/himself and solicits a double standard to be applied.

As it can be observed, the script of the strong connection between men and sex can be considered as having three main facets: physical contact, porn and masturbation. In the case of the last two, many examples help transmit the idea of the almost divine bond between men-porn-masturbation. This image, in turn, contributes to reinforce the script of the strong image of men as natural sexual beings. This can be observed, for example, in thread number 106, CS\_SEX\_Do you mind them masturbating\_THREAD:

#### Example 104

A guy would masturbate whether you 'allowed' him too or not. It's like part of a routine for most guys. There are exceptions as with everything in life but in general most young, healthy guys crack one off on a regular basis. I've seen myself finish

having sex and then having a crafty one not long after simply because I feel horny and my gf is maybe sore or is getting ready to go out or just isn't up for a second round. It's a natural thing to do and something they probably did long before they met you. I see it just like a release of tension and I'm very open with my gf about it. I encourage my gf to masturbate as it turns me on even to know she does it. She used to play solo alot before she met me as she hardly had a sex life with her ex. Even when we first met and both lived with parents she would text me telling me what she was doing. Now we live together she doesn't really do it as, according to her, she has me for that!!

(*CS\_SEX\_Do you mind them masterbating3\_THREAD*)

Also in thread number 93 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Argument about porn\_THREAD*:

#### Example 105

(...) I guess I'm really happy knowing that he: a) Is normal - most men have or are interested in porn, and if they deny this then they're likely to be fibbing b) Has desires which are completely 'normal'. I find this hard to explain - the porn I found was graphic, but not offensive or horrid. It was consensual, there were no children/violence/rape scenes involved.. Nothing scary.

Everybody has their own secret fantasies and desires which is healthy. I wouldn't even care if the porn was fetish based. I would only worry if I'd stumbled across something very dark or non-consensual. Then it would be an issue for me, since I would hate to find images of children or something like that and it would make me see him entirely differently. I know people argue that porn exploits women, but really, the only people being exploited out there are those willing to pay vast amounts for this imagery. The actors and models choose to do this and get paid - it's just another job.

(*CS\_SEX\_Argument about porn1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 106

Porn is a problem for many men. It can become obsessive and desensitizes them, so that they need harder and harder material to get the same satisfaction. I think it was reported in the news recently that 1 in 4 men or something are addicted to pornography.

(*CS\_SEX\_Argument about porn1\_THREAD*)

In Example 106 it can even be observed how scripts can be conceived of as *matryoshka* dolls, that is, they can be conceived of as containing one another. In this particular example, the script of the strong and innate link between men and sex and its manifestation in the need of physical contact, porn and masturbation is related to the strong link between men and violence. We consider that, although in a very subtle and indirect way, the words *problem*, *obsessive* or *desensitizes* can be perceived as belonging to the world of violence. Actually, in *they need harder and harder material to get the same satisfaction*, the escalation of demands needs to be supplied because,

according to the script of the relation between men and sex, this is an innate and natural relation. Their sexual demands need to be satisfied, whatever they are and whatever point they get at. The words *harder and harder* may even resound to some receivers as also having a connection to violence and, in this sense, may be considered by some receivers, depending on their contextual situation, as a natural justification to it.

Particularly relevant for the analysis of the script of the strong and natural relation between men and sex is the discussion developed throughout the pages of thread number 108 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn\_THREAD*:

#### Example 107

yeah my OH does. I now do too but I didnt used to. Its never bothered me though. Its just porn, just like reading a lads mag in a way. Its not cheating or anything. I wouldnt worry unless its affecting your sex life.

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 108

No problem with it at all and from the men I have discussed it with in the past have all said porn makes them less likely to cheat. Men are more visually stimulated than we are and have higher needs

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 109

I watch porn, i used to watch more as a guy. I have done porn! so can't really have an issue if my FB etc watches! I think all men do, they need visual more than women, and it should not be seen as an issue. Men feel they should be ashamed, and hide the truth, IF you share with them I feel you will get to know what they like, and explore your own thoughts.... I can find it arousing as a female, thinking differently about it as i watch.

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 110

Glad you've sorted it out Emmy. As to the lying, the answer is to just not give him an ultimatum in the first place. Men grow up lying about porn, it's second nature to us. In my day it was hiding the mags somewhere my mother wouldn't find them, nowadays it's deleting browsing history before your parents check your pc. Most of us have learned to do it by the age of 13, so it's just ingrained. I don't even see it as lying, it's just sparing embarrassment all round.

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn16\_THREAD*)



## Example 111

This thread just reminds me of that conversation in the film I Love You Man "Wait, you jerked off to a picture of your own girl friend? You - that - wow, that is sick! Oh my God, what is \*wrong\* with you?" 🤔

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn17\_THREAD*)

## Example 112

Guys will always try and tell girls what they (the boys) think the girls wanna hear. So I'm not surprised if the boy lies after the girl brings up the subject of porn in a manner that suggests to the boy that she may not be okay with it.

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn17\_THREAD*)

## Example 113

Yeah, it's just not worth any emotional drama about. It's basic womangement; if something's liable to cause an argument, lie. You might eventually get found out, but chances are the drama will be the same anyway, so at least you get to put it off.

(*CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn17\_THREAD*)

Throughout these examples it can be observed how the script of the innate and strong bond between men and sex is reinforced. This connection or stereotype is manifested, as we mentioned, in three main spheres: physical contact, porn and masturbation. The first sphere is understood as the most natural and understandable context where this connection can be manifested. Masturbation is, moreover, perceived as an extra field where men can express and liberate their extra sexual demands when women are not there to satisfy them or where men's sexual needs overreach women's desires. Moreover, porn is generally understood as a tool or extra aid that men need because of their higher visual stimulation. In turn, all these ideas shape the script of the innate, divine and natural connection between men and sex. At the same time, all this imaginary helps reinforce an antagonistic script, that of women having a lower sex drive than men. This, in turn, may help indirectly reinforce some other gender stereotypes such as those of women having greater sexual demands as not fitting into the norm and, therefore, opening the possibility for classifying them as promiscuous. Moreover, the script of the strong relationship between men and sex also indirectly helps sustain another gender stereotype, that of men as natural liars and strategists. The fact that men grow up confronting their high sexual needs with women's low sexual drive encourages them to hide their natural impulses under lies and concealing strategies. This idea, again, reinforces the image of gender scripts and *matryoshka* dolls, that is, as containing one another. What is more, if we go a bit deeper into the connection of these self-

contained scripts, we could suggest that they can even serve as an example of contradictory messages. If men are said to be naturally more sexual than women, why should they then feel embarrassed and feel the need of becoming professional strategists and liars? Were this bound to be as natural as expected, men would find no need to hide this natural behaviour. At the same time, this contradictory message also serves as an evidence of how society and accepted social rules may make individuals feel the need to hide their real social and gender identities in favour of unnatural but acceptable behaviours. Precisely because of this, we can observe how the perpetuation of scripts may result into extremely damaging sexist weapons.

The second script we found especially relevant in relation to sexist attitudes in our corpus was that of the conflicting new social and sexual roles women must perform in the new era. An example of this script may be observed in thread number 6 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation\_THREAD*<sup>45</sup>, where *AngryCheeseCake* answers a few lines later to the original poster, who explains a personal situation where she/he feels insecure about an intimate friend who is showing up certain bisexual features, claiming that:

#### Example 114

Maybe she does, but I dunno<sup>46</sup>, a lot of straight girls experiment when an opportunity arises. I've heard women's sexualities aren't as 100% fixed as men.  
(*CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation1\_THREAD*)

In this example, the participant makes use of a gender stereotype. Nevertheless, we would not consider it a traditional gender stereotype but one that emerges from the coexistence of conflicting forms of hegemonic femininity in different discourses, as it is the case of *Cosmopolitan*. We suggest that, in this particular discourse, women are considered as almost sexual objects that need to satisfy their partner's sexual needs in order to keep them but, besides, they should present themselves as open to new sexual experiences in order for them not to be considered boring in bed. This may lead us to the stereotype of the more flexible sexual identity of women which, in fact, is strengthened a few lines later by *c\_\_\_jay*:

<sup>45</sup> See Example 33 for further information on this thread.

<sup>46</sup> *Dunno* stands for *I don't know*

### Example 115

I'm not saying it's alright but a lot of men wouldn't see that as you girls would see your OHs kissing another man ( many it's sth<sup>47</sup> to do with secretly having the fantasy of actually seeing you two at it?)

(*CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation1\_THREAD*)

This participant claims that, in fact, this sexual identity is typical of many women and that their partners may not see it as actual cheating because, in fact, it is just the realisation of a sexual fantasy which their partners would be very keen on watching. This, again, presents us with the traditional stereotype of men as always in search of new sexual actions that may satisfy their increasing sexual desires which, actually, may be considered a gendered and sexist stereotype.

Apart from needing to adapt to new sexual roles, women are also encouraged to fit into new modern social roles that, in a way, combine more traditional and newer concepts of their role within the domestic sphere. This can be analysed in thread number 81 from the same forum, entitled *CS\_REL\_When things get sexist...\_THREAD*<sup>48</sup>, we can directly observe the main concept under analysis in this study, that of sexism, and what it implies for certain participants in this forum. This allows us to analyse whether scripts are relevant for this category and, as expected, we confirmed our hypothesis in this sense. More precisely, the script of the conflicting new social and sexual roles women must perform in the new modern era is observable in this example, where the original poster presents her/his problem as follows:

### Example 116

So we're both tired. I was in college then I worked... I got in at half 8. He worked today and then went food shopping he got in at half 8. I say (for the first time ever) Lets both make dinner (instead of me doing it on my own like usual) because we're both tired.

And he says all serious 'You should do it, you're a woman, you should want to look after your guy, it's what women are supposed to do' ...I normally agree that women normally do (not should) look after men. But the ONE night I'm tired and I say we should make it together he insults me and then turns the argument around on me and storms off.

What do you think?

(*CS\_REL\_When things get sexist...1\_THREAD*)

Here, apart from explaining their daily routine, the original poster tries to justify the one day she/he decides to break that routine *I say (for the first time ever)*. This can

<sup>47</sup> *Sth* stands for *something*

<sup>48</sup> See Example 72 for further information on this thread.

be considered as an indirect manifestation of sexism because she/he feels the need to justify any deviation from more traditional stereotypes or scripts of behaviour for women within the domestic sphere. Moreover, her/his boyfriend's serious comments '*You should do it, you're a woman, you should want to look after your guy, it's what women are supposed to do*' does not include any overt sexist lexical item but it, in fact, projects an extremely sexist discourse in which modality, expressed by the modal verb *should*, determines what are the expected social behaviours from a woman who is in a heterosexual relationship, that is, those of taking care of their house and partner. This example can be understood as an evidence of how women in the new era feel trapped between conflictive modern and more traditional gender scripts which still persist and delimit their performance.

A few lines later another participant, *AlwaysRainingSunshin...*, contributes to the conversation in the following terms:

#### Example 117

I find his attitude is a bit disrespectful to be honest. Its the 21st century and you have a job, which is not taking care of him. You're not his mother.

(*CS\_REL\_When things get sexist...1\_THREAD*)

In this case, the collocation *a bit disrespectful* helps construct a soft discourse in which his attitude is not totally condemned. Moreover, the words *you're not his mother*, despite not containing any sexist element, help maintain the traditional script of mothers as being primary carers of others. Actually, although this expression is used with the intention of supporting the original poster, in fact, this statement is also condemning her/him because, was she/he to become a parent, she/he would be doomed to the service of another. It can be observed how conflicting scripts coexist in the same discourse, how women in the new era may feel forced to manage different gender scripts for specific forms of hegemonic femininity at the same time.

Something similar can be observed in thread number 52 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_SEX\_Why does sex always end up under the duvet after 6 months\_THREAD*, where *-AJP-* posts:

#### Example 118

Here's a question that may never have been asked before!

When you meet someone new, and the relationships starts to progress in the physical form, why after a while (6 months from past experiences) why does sex end up being UNDER the duvet rather than on top?

Is it a female thing, that 6 months into a relationship sex has to be hidden as the woman loses confidence in her appearance? Of course I assume most men (here) like to be 'seen' and re-enact the best %&\*\$# film they have ever seen!

(MH\_SEX\_Why does sex always end up under the duvet after 6 months!\_THREAD)

Here it can be observed that no overt sexist items are used and, however, from our perspective, the message could easily be labelled as sexist. First of all, in *Here's a question that may never have been asked before!* The original poster is using irony to suggest that the question he/she is going to post is a traditional one and a well-known fact by his/her readers. In this case, the idea that women tend to lose their libido once they have attained what they aimed at, that is, finding a man. Once this is done, women are thought to hide themselves and lose confidence. This may imply that women's self-confidence is a virtual reality they build up when they are trying to attain their maximum aim but that disappears once this is achieved. This, in turn, strengthens the stereotype that women are insecure and fragile and that only by having a man next to them they become complete beings. Moreover, there is a semantic jump in the second paragraph where the writer is using the neutral term *someone* to refer exclusively to *woman* and *female*, as stated in the next paragraph. In this sense, *someone* is dyed with an androcentric perspective because it considers that every reader and participant in this cyber community of practice is a heterosexual man that would get involved into a relationship with a woman and, therefore, *someone* becomes restrictive and moves away from its neutral meaning in this context. Moreover, the last sentence *I assume most men (here) like to be 'seen' and re-enact the best %&\*\$# film they have ever seen!* helps reinforce another gender stereotype and script, that of the relationship between men-porn-masturbation. In this case, the original poster is claiming that all or most men watch porn in order to satisfy their needs and he/she assumes that all or the majority of them hope to perform and act out specific scenes from these films. Therefore, it is implied that a certain attitude is expected from a partner, in this case, women, by heterosexual men. This attitude towards sex is almost never accomplished in real life and that is the reason why men *need* to resort to porn and masturbation to satisfy the extra sexual needs. Here, sexism is directed both at men and women by means of the discourse feature of indirect linguistic sexism by means of the transmission of traditional sexist scripts. Traditional scripts and gender stereotypes are repeated in a

light-hearted manner and, although harmless at first sight, they in fact help maintain gender inequalities and transmit sexist attitudes because gender “stereotypes are closely linked with and support gender ideologies” and since “we view them as ideological prescriptions for behavior, then actual individuals have to respond to the stereotypical roles expected of them” (Talbot 2003: 472).

In page 3 of the same thread, another participant replies to the original poster with a message that, although trying to be objective and rational, also helps maintain these traditional scripts and gender stereotypes by means of the images and associations he/she uses:

#### Example 119

I guess there are a lot of reasons that it might change to under the duvet sex.  
 Maybe she is feeling insecure?  
 Maybe it feels more intimate?  
 Sometimes being under the duvet feels more intimate because women are no longer worrying about their boobs/butt/stomach looking fat..so they can concentrate on eye contact etc. The problem with that is that men are very visual and prefer to be stimulated that way.  
 Maybe a compromise could be made so that it's not always under the duvet. Or you could suggest sex outside of the bedroom so there is no duvet for you to have sex under.

(MH\_SEX\_Why does sex always end up under the duvet after 6 months3\_THREAD)

By using the questions and the sentence *I guess there are a lot of reasons*, the participant is starting his/her intervention in an open manner, implying that no restrictive vision should be applied when looking for reasons when dealing with sexual practices. However his/her following two unique questions *Maybe she is feeling insecure? Maybe it feels more intimate?* in fact restrict his/her reasons to a traditional image of women in relation to sexual practices, that of insecurity and modesty. The next paragraph tries to justify these two questions by using a series of collocational terms such as *worrying about their boobs/butt/stomach looking fat* in relation to insecurity and *concentrate on eye contact* in relation to intimacy. These collocations help us draw a mental image of women as extremely demure in relation to sexual practices and, moreover, excessively concerned with their physical appearance and the way it may diverge from the accepted standard, which causes them stress and anxiety having serious repercussions in their sexual life. Moreover, his/her discourse continues with the sentence *The problem with that is that men are very visual and prefer to be stimulated*

*that way* which, in fact, helps strengthen the gender differences between men and women explained so far. Although no comparative term or structure is used, claiming that *men are* and that they *prefer* cognitively draws a line between men and women as supported by the conflicting discourse built up in the whole thread. This image of women as modest and demure in relation to sexual practices is in direct conflict with that presented in Examples 114 and 115, where modern women were depicted as flexible and open in terms of sexual practices. We can observe the coexistence of different and conflicting scripts of hegemonic forms of femininity which concur in the same community of practice. Sexual practices and the role of women within relationships and the domestic sphere can be claimed to be clashing grounds where different scripts co-occur making women's performances difficult to fit into such a conflicting framework.

This script of the conflicting new sexual and social roles women must perform in the new era is also a central part of the imaginary of thread number 10 from the same forum, *MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has\_THREAD*. Although this thread does not explicitly deal with sexist issues, in this particular thread a traditional sexist sphere is dealt with, that of occupations. *MP1988* starts the discussion as follows:

#### Example 120

Hey

I was just wondering whether you take into account what job a girl does when you start seeing someone. Me and my friends were talking about this and we came to the conclusion that guys don't care about it as much as girls, and if a girl is good looking they don't care what she does.

My friend is good looking, first class law degree, soon to be a trainee lawyer. She was seeing a guy and he basically rejected her for a girl who has a kid and is a hairdresser. He probably preferred the other girl's personality or whatever but I don't think he even cared that my friend was intelligent etc.

I think it might have been because this guy does a manual job, left school at 16 and doesn't earn much, so the hairdresser suited him better.

Do you think it would matter more if the guy had quite a good job?

It would be interesting to hear the opinion of men because I know girls would love to be able to say 'my boyfriend is a lawyer, doctor etc.'

(*MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl has1\_THREAD*)

The starting question *I was just wondering whether you take into account what job a girl does when you start seeing someone*, on the one hand, presupposes an androcentric and heterosexist perspective in which the original poster assumes that all his/her readers will be heterosexual men, therefore, delimiting what his/her image of

this specific community of practice is. On the other hand, in the statement *we came to the conclusion that guys don't care about it as much as girls, and if a girl is good looking they don't care what she does* different scripts and gender stereotypes are present that project an indirect sexist attitude. The original poster is making use of the traditional stereotype of men as less interested in the social position of their partners. This may imply that men, *per se*, have a good social position and what their partners do for a living may not affect them as it may be the case for women who, having a lower and more unstable social status, may need to find the adequate partner to their needs. Moreover, the traditional stereotype of men as not caring about their social position is reinforced by the fact that they focus on other qualities of women, that is, their physical appearance. This, apart from denigrating men to a position in which only physical appearance is taken into account when wanting to have a relationship with someone, also strengthens the traditional image of women as physical objects or trophies to be displayed by men. To justify his/her reasoning, the original poster makes use of a real example from his/her experience in which one of his/her male friends broke up with a successful and intelligent woman in order to start a relationship with a hairdresser who had a child. The fact that the original poster mentions that the hairdresser had a child is significant since it demarcates a line between what is desirable and, therefore, considered as normal or appropriate (i.e. starting a relationship with no children) and what real circumstances may bring into play (i.e. falling in love with someone who does not fit into the accepted and most valued standards). Moreover, the original poster describes his/her friend's position as a middle class man and assumes that the hairdresser suited him better because of that reason, he did not even care about the intelligence of the first woman. Here, as we mentioned in previous chapters, other variables of social identities are interconnected, in this case, sex, gender and class, as it is demonstrated by the question *Do you think it would matter more if the guy had quite a good job?* Finally, the last sentence of this post, *It would be interesting to hear the opinion of men because I know girls would love to be able to say 'my boyfriend is a lawyer, doctor etc.'* could easily be labelled as an indirect sexist comment because, although no overt items are used, the discourse projects a traditional gender script in which, as it was implied in the first question of this post, women are considered to be almost treasure-hunters. In this sense, the opinion of men is requested as it is implied to be less known than that of women who, treated as a homogeneous group, are ironized about in the sentence *'my boyfriend is a lawyer, doctor etc.'*, which projects an image of



women as cold and acting in their own interest. Again, the image of the *matryoshka* doll can be brought to our minds. We can observe how different scripts and gender stereotypes are used in a discourse where no direct sexist linguistic elements are used. The image of men being socially secure in a higher social position, the image of women as cold and after the mere objective of getting a man with a high social status, that of women as sexual and social trophies and many others projected in this speech provide interlocutors with a complex mental image of what adequate social and sexual role women must adopt in order to fit into the hegemonic forms of femininity projected by these cyber communities of practice. However, certain interlocutors, as it is our case, may perceive a rather sexist tone in it. For others, this sexist attitude may pass unnoticed and, therefore, uncriticised. Nevertheless, what is clear is that different and conflicting scripts and gender stereotypes are used which help transmit sexist ideas and images that, more indirectly, may permeate receivers' minds and help keep sexism alive.

A similar and related recurrent script can be observed in our corpus, the script of the new and modern limitations men encounter in their performance of the accepted forms of hegemonic masculinity admitted in certain communities of practice. The limitations men encounter in performing an acceptable gender identity for a chosen communicative context are related, in general terms, as it was the case with women, with the clash between different and conflicting views about acceptable gender behaviours. One of the main clues that has revealed this recurrent script in our corpus is that related to men and sincerity. It is interesting to observe how men conforming to the hegemonic forms of masculinity portrayed and sustained by these cyber communities of practice incarnate the idea that men should develop an early range of strategies to carry out white lies. Generally speaking, these forums are impregnated with the idea that men need to lie in order to be themselves. Their nature is sometimes misunderstood by the opposite sex and, therefore, a spam of different strategies is required that may help them relate with women being truthful to their real nature but, at the same time, adhering to women's sense of what is acceptable or not. In this respect, white lies are understood as an essential part of heterosexual relationships and are justified on the basis of the opposite natures of both sexes. Nevertheless, the fact that men are traditionally considered as almost natural liars is also a cause of distress for many couples. The fact that men are not totally sincere in their relationships is considered as an old-fashioned traditional masculine trait that modern men should not bring into their relationships. These complex plot may leads us to discern the basic working order of the script we are

analysing here, that is, the script of how modern men must deal with the limitations that the clash between modern and more traditional ideas on hegemonic forms of masculinity exert on their gender performance. A good example of this situation is provided in thread number 108 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_Does your oh watch porn\_THREAD*<sup>49</sup>. Although this thread has already been analysed in previous sections, we consider it important to re-take particular examples already analysed in this chapter in order to analyse them under a different perspective, more precisely, we will focus again on Example 110 and Example 113.

These two examples may serve as an illustration of how lying is considered an essential strategy to be developed by men in order to have a successful heterosexual relationship. This presupposes the idea and strengthens the first script we analysed in this section, that of the strong and natural bond between men and sex. This script is reinforced by the necessity of having to lie. When in a heterosexual relationship, men encounter difficulties in trying to explain their sexual needs to their partners, as a result, lying becomes almost an evolutionary tool they need to acquire in their bringing up. The contradiction is evident here. On the one hand, men's high sexual drive is understood as a natural force, however, on the other hand, they must hide those natural impulses because of women's different sexual needs.

What is more, men may find it necessary to lie just to cover the opposite side of the coin, that is, the fact that the supposed naturalness of their bond to sex is not manifested in certain individuals and, in order not to be mocked at or attacked by other members of their community of practice, lies become the weapon they use to negotiate their gender identity. This can be observed in thread number 111 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!\_THREAD*<sup>50</sup>:

#### Example 121

I knew a guy who used to chat to his friends about porn and how much he loved it. Then one day when having a heart to heart with me he admitted that he had actually never seen it in his life but lied to his friends so that they didnt think he was weird. He thought that if he admitted to his friends that he didnt watch it they would think he was less of a man. So just because men tell their mates that they watch porn, it doesnt mean that they actually do.

(*CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!8\_THREAD*)

<sup>49</sup> See Example 107-113 for further information on this thread.

<sup>50</sup> See Example 1 and Example 103 for further information on this thread.

Another example of how and why men must acquire the skill of lying without sounding insincere is thread number 11, *CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive\_THREAD*. As it can be observed in examples from thread 108, sincerity should be understood as a valuable quality in heterosexual relationships. At the same time, men are encouraged to disguise their feelings or opinions in order not to hurt their heterosexual partner's feelings. This is why lying, which is considered a problem for participants in these cyber communities of practice, although from different perspectives, is also perceived as a necessary evolutionary skill men must develop in order to successfully maintain a heterosexual relationship:

#### Example 122

Quoted:

*Jeeze - no wonder men find us so confusing. All he did was tell the truth.*

There's a difference between telling the truth and being a dick

Anyone with brain cells, would know that cheering someone up by implying that he's having to settle because he's just as unattractive in comparison is pretty damn stupid. He could have saved a lot of emotional BS if he'd added a simple phrase like 'but you're the most beautiful to me' or 'you're the one I want' or something that's not going to lower a girl's self-esteem.

Now stop with the penis envy 😊

*(CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive1\_THREAD)*

#### Example 123

[...] A lot of boyfriends would answer with 'no you're the only girl I find attractive so you're the prettiest ever in my eyes' or something along those lines and they're just lying tbh. It's a question that girlfriends shouldn't ask boyfriends as they can't win haha!

Just don't worry about it, he probably doesn't compare you to every attractive girl he sees, he would just think a girl is pretty as they walk past and then never think about them again. He's with you and loves you, let it go!! 😊

*(CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive1\_THREAD)*

In thread number 34, *CS\_REL\_Honesty the best policy\_THREAD*, it can even be observed how different members and participants of these cyber communities of practice present the description and prescription of how those lies should look like and be carried out in order to be successful. On the one hand, men should seem sincere in front of their partners but, on the other hand, they should disguise their real feelings or opinions when these may cause any damage to the sensitive nature of their heterosexual partners:

## Example 124

I always thought it was an unwritten rules of relationships, when a girl asks these questions she wants her boyfriend to tell her only good things? She's looking for a compliment, no brutal honesty but its a bit weird to just say 'compliment me'.....Its like on that fosters advert, he tells her she's beautiful, he gets treats 😊 haha....As for the things to be improved, I just ask, 'how can I make me/sex etc better?' And if my OH thinks there's rooms for improvement, he just suggests ideas. / For example, I asked him how pretty I was and how could I make myself better. He said, "you're perfect, you just need to show yourself off more. You're beautiful and others should see it." / That was a compliment but also a suggestion. If you understand me. There was no need to point out my flaws to indicate ways I could improve. If he had done that, I would have felt horrible within myself.

(*CS\_REL\_Honesty the best policy2\_THREAD*)

Whether the collision of needs between men and women's sexual demands or men's necessity to fit into the accepted forms of masculinity projected by their communities of practice urge the development of the ability of men to lie. At the same time, this is an action that is strongly condemned by their heterosexual partners. Consequently, it can be observed how, as it was the case with women, the coexistence of conflicting gender acceptable patterns of behaviour also leads men to conflicting and problematic gender performances in particular communities of practice.

Another example in which we have observed the recurrent script of men's limitation in the new era due to the collision of traditional and more modern gender stereotypes is the example of the expression of feelings. This is considered as an essentially feminine feature ascribed to traditional forms of femininity. However, as we mentioned in Chapter 2, the figure of the *New Man* tries to mingle certain traditional feminine features with more long-established masculine ones. An example of this clash can be analysed in thread number 21, *CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies\_THREAD*<sup>51</sup>:

## Example 125

I think they do but they don't know what they are and/or can't express what they are! / My OH gets excited about seeing me...but I don't think he's ever called them butterflies whereas I say I get butterflies...

(*CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies1\_THREAD*)

## Example 126

Quoted:

*Why wouldn't they want to admit it though?*

<sup>51</sup> See Example 4 and Example 60 for further information on this thread.

Quite a feminine trait, goes against the 'macho alpha male' image that men like to portray.

Quoted:

*Maximov have you ever had butterflies then*

Course not. Im a macho alpha male.

(*CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies1\_THREAD*)

It can be observed here how the new hegemonic forms of masculinity accepted in these communities of practice in a way consider that, as it was the case with sincerity, the expression of emotions is a positive trait of the *New Man*. Nevertheless, more traditional ideas, such as that of the *macho alpha* are still prevalent in these cyber communities of practice and, therefore, favour the collision of opposing views. These conflicting messages help maintain the scripts of the new men limited in the new era, as it was the case of women and the conflicting views on their new modern acceptable social and sexual roles. However, we would suggest that this script, when related to men, is sometimes coloured with a tone of pity that discerns a light of androcentrism. As if it was a necessity for women to adapt to the conflicting gendered perspectives acceptable in each community of practice they interact in but, in the case of men, as if it was an almost unnatural situation that has been recently created or that is not fair. This is manifested in the special attention paid to the extra work men must do to adapt to this conflicting situation, an attention that is totally absent in the examples analysed when dealing with the script of the conflicting social and sexual roles women must face.

Another case where the script of the limitation of men in the new era is reflected is in the case of the expression or manifestation of one's sexuality, where conflicting messages drive men to feel limited and confined, even lost. A good example can be provided by thread number 13 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters\_THREAD*<sup>52</sup>, where the original poster is asking for help on the issue of how acting correctly in order to obtain a sexual or intimate partner:

#### Example 127

You are not being perceived in a sexual way by these women. That is down to your nice guy behaviour. (Often prevalent in men who experienced a lone mother/sister(s) upbringing) Its not a gay image - more neutral. Women obviously feel safe in your company. There are some men who naturally ooze testosterone and the sexual predator vibe. Polite flirting from the outset will identify you as a sexual animal. Women soon let you know if the light is green.

(*MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters1\_THREAD*)

<sup>52</sup> See Example 57 and Example 58 for further information on this thread.

Here, it can be observed how being too feminine may deform the image of the *New Man* accepted and promoted in this community of practice. The combination of both traditional feminine and masculine traits must be done in the right measure in order to be successful in the performance of the chosen gender identity. Failing in doing so and not controlling the necessary strategies needed in order to carry out such an objective may derive in the failure of one's main objective. This can also be observed in the following example, taken from the same discussion, where the participant openly expresses his/her feelings about the clash between gender stereotypes and the script of limitation this provokes in modern men:

#### Example 128

I don't think I ought to have to act more like a testosterone fueled primevil predator if that is not who I am. There are those of us who are genuinely sensitive type (100% straight) guys, that don't think of women as a means to satisfy our desires, but as people to share close and intimate times with. I know that the "Alpha male" types out there will see this as "pussy" language and behaviour, and be appalled that a man could think like this, but surely it should not preclude someone like me from making more than platonic connections with girls . . . . should it ????. Where is the happy medium between meathead neanderthol and the friends only type . . . . ?????

*(MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters1\_THREAD)*

This participant expresses his/her feelings about the idea that not all heterosexual men are sex machines, therefore, directly opposing this view to the script of the strong bond between men and sex. Men are claimed to also have a sensitive nature which they sometimes feel pressured to conceal in order to fit into certain communities of practice and relate to other people. It can be observed how certain individuals may feel strongly affected by the collision of gender stereotypes and the strong script of limited men they create.

The fourth script we found relevant in our corpus for the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes is the script of the scientific justification of sexism. Being the discourse of science one that has historically counted on the approval of society as a whole, it is then obvious that it is used by certain participants in our corpus to provide reliable and truthful evidence of their opinions or to justify their ideas about gender and gender relations. Some relevant examples are found in thread number 38 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want\_THREAD*:

## Example 129

Perpetuated by the media, definitely, but it's actually a significant evolutionary theory suggested by Darwin and then furthered by Trivers. Men tend to go for youth and attractiveness as they're cues for fertility, whilst women tend to seek men with greater resources so they'll be able to provide for any offspring. And those reproductive strategies link into parental investment and sexual selection... but I'll stop now. 😊 Either way, I agree with ya.

(MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want9\_THREAD)

Thread number 4 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it\_THREAD*<sup>53</sup> can also be considered an instance of how the scientific discourse can be used as a script for the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes:

## Example 130

[...] The all men watch porn statement comes from research of the university of montreal. They could not find a single man who had not seen porn at one point or another. While not all guys may be regular users, the large majority is. So while it is a generalization that is not always correct, it's not an unreasonable generalization to make. [...].

(CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it5\_THREAD)

Something similar can be observed in thread number 159 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_Where do all these men hide\_THREAD* where the poster claims:

## Example 131

Wow. You clearly have an axe to grind here! All I have to say is that we are all biologically programmed to find certain physical aspects attractive, whether it be muscles or a strong Jaw or whatever other attractive physical attributes. Females are biologically programmed to look for attributes they want to pass on to their offspring. So, whilst it may be considered shallow, it's a fact of nature that we will be attracted to these attributes and I admit that I am. Apologies if this causes offence, which it clearly has, but thats the way I was made and thats what I find attractive. ....A lot of men will admit, and I'm not saying ALL men (before you start)that they are attracted to larger breasts or hip ratios or whatever they are biologically programmed to find attractive (due to health indications and childbirthing insticts etc). [...]

(CS\_SEX\_Where do all these men hide2\_THREAD)

Finally, thread number 161 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does she's a slut\_THREAD* may also be

<sup>53</sup> See Examples 50, 94-95 and 101 for further information on this thread.

considered as an illustration of how the scientific discourse can be used to covertly transmit sexist attitudes about gender and gender relations:

#### Example 132

If you look at it from a biological perspective it's in a man's best interest to have sex with as many women as possible in order to give him the best chance of having many children and his genetic strand continuing. For women, who can only have a limited amount of children, it's in our best interests to be choosy and only sleep with men who can provide well for our kids.

(*CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does she's a slut2\_THREAD*)

In all these examples it can be observed how scientific research is mentioned although very few concrete references are provided. These scientific studies are used by participants in order to support their opinions and ideas and, at the same time, they can be used as a mask under which participants cover themselves in order not to be accused of being sexist. Sexism can be found in the ideas underlying that scientific research in which women and men are catalogued as distinctive and homogeneous groups. On the one hand, women are described as being after certain pre-established features in men intrinsically related to their virility and potentiality to take care and protect their families while, on the other hand, men are described as being naturally after features of fertility in women. All these scientific theories may lead us to encounter a theoretical and biological basis for heterosexism. Nature and human biology are considered as an immovable foundation that may justify certain features which could be catalogued as sexist, as it is the case of the special attention men pay to the sexual attributes of women or the special attention paid by women to the protective capacity of men in order to fulfil their main objective in life, that of procreation within a relationship.

By means of the use of the scientific discourse, participants may project and help transmit very damaging gender stereotypes, as it is the case in thread number 140, *CS\_SEX\_Pornography especially for women\_THREAD*, where a participant posts a link which directly leads to an article about specific female pornography within the online version of *Cosmopolitan*, provided in Example 134.

#### Example 133

[http://www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/love-sex/female-friendly-porn-105008?click=main\\_sr](http://www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/love-sex/female-friendly-porn-105008?click=main_sr) if you haven't seen it 😊

(*CS\_SEX\_Pornography especially for women\_THREAD*)



### Example 134

FEMALE FRIENDLY PORN ARTICLE Cosmo has cherry picked the fruitiest finds that will pleasure your visual sexual fantasies and make sure porn is something you're romanced by not repulsed by. Watching porn is not something you'd want to have a conversation about with your mum, but it is one you can have with Cosmo. Whether you see it as filthy or fun or both together as revealed by a survey carried out by The Sun newspaper, 66% of women watch porn. Scientists say that men are more visual creatures than us, which is reason enough for the porn industry to ensure it's aimed for their pleasure while girls' is ignored. Anyone who's searched the internet for porn will know most of what you find is explicit, aggressive and comes with that nagging concern that the women actors aren't entirely happy. At Cosmo we're concerned about your pleasure so control your giggles and hide your blushes as we're getting down and dirty to uncover the steamiest scenes, racy reads and pleasuring pictures you'll love and we promise it's all female friendly porn...

([http://www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/love-sex/female-friendly-porn-105008?click=main\\_sr](http://www.cosmopolitan.co.uk/love-sex/female-friendly-porn-105008?click=main_sr))

As we mentioned earlier, this example serves as an illustration of how the script of the scientific justification of gender differences may serve to sustain several sexist gender stereotypes. On the one hand, for example, the idea that men are more visual than women may lead us to establish a connection between this script and that of the strong bond between men and sex and the great need, even for the industry, to create pornography especially dedicated to their main interests and concerns. Even though, in their attempt to fit into new forms of hegemonic femininity, the *Cosmo* community of practice has a great concern for its participants at an institutional level and, therefore, takes care of its members' interests and sexual desires. In so doing, they incur in another gender stereotype, that of classifying women, as well as men, into homogenous and separate groups of individuals with the same likes and interests. This way, basing their approach on scientific research, the idea that female and male sexualities are different and homogeneous is encouraged, thus favouring the transmission of sexism in an indirect and subtle way.

Some other examples, apart from segregating genders into dichotomous and homogenous groups that correspond to the sexual categories of men and women, also assert the superiority of one in front of the subordination of the other. In this respect, these examples based on scientific research try to justify, in a way, the domination of men over women. This can be observed in thread number 38 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want\_THREAD*<sup>54</sup>:

<sup>54</sup> See Example 129 for further information on this thread.

## Example 135

Im sorry but in sociological theory and all that rubbish, men always have the upper hand when it comes to sex as men have the ability to commit rape (obviously these arent my words). So in sexual terms women are always subservient. Saw it in a lecture theatre last year 'all men are potential rapists'. This is obviously straying from the thread of 'pulling'.!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

(MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want7\_THREAD)

In this example it can be noticed how science and biology are used to justify the subordination of one gender to another, more precisely, the subordination of women as a group to the group of men. What is more, violence over women is somehow justified under the perspective of the domination-subordination dualism. Moreover, men are described as potential rapist on the basis of another script, that of the strong and natural link between men and sex and the escalation of greater demands they experiment in their need of fulfilling their basic sexual requirements. Even though we could interpret that this is not the main intention of the use of specific gender stereotypes, their appearance under the mask of a scientific script helps keeping very traditional and sexist ideas alive. At the same time, this is done under the protection of quoting or referring to external and consolidated references that distance the sender of the message from any responsibility. The fact that the sender of the message can claim that it was not his/her intention that of being sexist and that the message just contained information offered by other sources allows interlocutors to transmit sexist and damaging ideas under the veil of indirectness and the support of the scientific discourse.

Something similar occurs in page 8 of thread number 33 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Homophobia\_THREAD*, where another participant comments on the biological or anthropological necessity of homosexual people:

## Example 136

I would also like up to bring up the point of the necessity of gay people.

In general, things that cease to exist because they are useless. We see this sort of thing in evolution, if something cannot adapt to it's environment, or proves useless, it dies out.

We see in nature, the harder we try to fight diseases, the more they mutate. Such as malaria, many different drugs have been distributed, and after a while the disease mutates in a way because it is necessary for it to survive.

It is necessary for us to die and have diseases in order for us to sustain the human race, or we would continue multiplying and run out of food.

We are going to have a big food shortage in 10 years due to our increasing population.

I have often wondered if a gay person's existence is nature's way of stopping over reproduction, stopping us from killing ourselves by a population that cannot be sustained by limited resources.

I believe myself to be not entirely 100% straight, it is something that I have not yet entirely accepted and come to terms with.

(CS\_REL\_Homophobia8\_THREAD)

Here, the participant is trying to provide a scientific justification for homosexuality to exist. This act in itself may be read as sexist by some interlocutors because, do we try to justify scientifically the existence of heterosexuality? The answer will lead us to infer that, although trying to perform an open and reasonable social identity, this participant is actually performing an indirectly sexist identity. The words *the necessity of gay people* provide a reason for us to consider that the following lines are going to be, at least, suspicious of sexism because, do we try to justify the necessity of heterosexual people? The poster of this contribution claims that, taking into account the evolution of the human race, the things that have proved to be *useless* or *cannot adapt to its environment* end up dying out or ceasing to exist. This supports her/his view that being homosexuality useless for our society, it would have disappeared, consequently, if it still exists, there must be a reason. The reason is provided in the following paragraphs by means of a comparison. Here *diseases* is used as a comparative term with homosexuality, bringing to our minds a traditional stereotype that sustains that homosexuality is a curable illness. Verbs such as *fight*, *mutates* or nouns such as *drugs* help this participant construct her/his discourse and elaborate a comparison. Following, the sentence *It is necessary for us to die and have diseases in order for us to sustain the human race, or we would continue multiplying and run out of food* provides the final justification. The word *multiplying* raises certain presuppositions that come from our background knowledge and experience of the collocational patterns of this word. When talking about the *human race* we may infer that multiplication refers to having children. From a purely objective biological point of view, homosexual couples cannot reproduce themselves and, therefore, they help control the multiplication of human beings and, from the participant's point of view, this is *necessary* because *We are going to have a big food shortage in 10 years due to our increasing population*. Nevertheless, the last sentence of her/his intervention, *I believe myself to be not entirely 100% straight, it is something that I have not yet entirely accepted and come to terms with*, leads us to have mixed feelings about her/his contribution to this thread providing conflicting messages, another discourse feature of indirect linguistic sexism. This

sentence can be understood as a communicative act trying to seek other participants' sympathy. Actually, we could consider that she/he is trying to downplay her/his comments and comparisons. Here, we could even suggest that political correctness is being used and the participant is including her/himself in the group of people that are compared to a disease. In so doing, she/he is implying that no harm was intended in the post since no-one would want to harm oneself. Nevertheless, what is clear in this example is that, although there is no direct reference or quoting from a scientific study, the participant is making use of the scientific discourse in order to support her/his ideas and be able to avoid any accusations of being sexist.

Finally, the last script we are going to analyse in this section and that we found especially relevant in our corpus is the script of the abnormal relations between other gender identities rather than the traditional masculine and feminine ones. This script, again, is sustained by traditional and biased gender stereotypes, as it can be observed in thread number 20 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Do feminie lesbian exist\_THREAD*:

#### Example 137

This might seem like a strange place to talk about this but I'm confused at the moment. / I've always been feminine but I have only been attracted to other women and always straight women at that. I decided to venture and look around at the lesbian community and I feel pretty lost now I have to say. I actually don't believe I'm a gay woman any more. Reason being I love being girly and feel highly uncomfortable around butch women like I do men. Also I have absolutely no masculine characteristics physically (i.e I have a very womanly face) or mentally except for being able to love a woman. I'd rather buy *Cosmopolitan* over *Diva* magazine because I find there is very little in *Diva* to interest me. If I go to a lesbian forum on the net many women talk about their appearance and I find they are nothing like me. / To add more to my confusion I read this article on the BBC website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7456588.stm>. Now if that is the case then certainly it doesn't apply to me, or only a tiny part of my brain has masculine parts. / I have found some feminine lesbians but nearly all of them are attracted to the butch women I am not attracted to. To me it seems I am a freak of nature and I don't fit any where. I identify now as A-Sexual, I can't see that I'll ever be in a relationship and after being recently rejected by a woman (who was straight), I don't think I want a relationship, as her almost disgust has made my opinion of women very low. Do you guys think I'm weird? Do you think there is a reason that I have feeling for women that could be psychological rather than biological? I'm beginning to wonder if I get confused about my feelings towards women and actually I mistake my feelings for love and attraction.

(*CS\_REL\_Do feminie lesbian exist\_THREAD*)

The script of the confusion about one's own and others' sexuality, as we mentioned, is sustained by the maintenance of traditional gender stereotypes. As it can

be observed in this example, the participant identifies her/himself with a woman and, as such, she/he expects to be attracted to men. When this is not the case and the individual accepts her/his homosexuality, a new problem arises when she/he does not fit into the traditional stereotypes of homosexuals. In the case of lesbians, since they are women, there is a shared social idea that more feminine lesbians tend to be attracted to a more masculine type of lesbians, therefore, perpetuating, in a way, the importance of heterosexism. As a result, as it is the case in this particular example, when a lesbian feels and identifies herself with femininity and feminine traits but also feels attracted to the same kind of woman, this individual may feel that something is wrong with her because she does not fit into traditional and well-established categories or stereotypes. Actually, the participant's doubts in this post do in fact help transmit the script of the abnormal relations between other gender identities rather than the traditional masculine and feminine ones and place it in a public and accessible place such as CMC to be accessed to by many different individuals and, therefore, leaving the possibility open for the indirect transmission of this sexist script.

These doubts are sustained by beliefs and stereotypes as the ones manifested, for instance, in the following example. In thread number 33 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Homophobia\_THREAD*, the idea that every relationship must have a heterosexual component is crucial. It is precisely from this idea that doubts and fears arise and individuals who do not fit into that category may feel lost. Therefore, the script of the confusion about the abnormal gender relations rather than the traditional ones is created and sustained:

#### Example 138

I think it is because the ones I have met at least one always seems to act really camp. I totally understand that there is generally a male and "female" in all gay relationships, but gay men who are the "female" tend to take it too far and that bugs the shite out of me. There is no need for it.

I think the freaked out aspect comes more from that fact that anal sex freaks me out so knowing that this is the way only way they can have penetrative sex makes me shiver.

(*CS\_REL\_Homophobia2\_THREAD*)

The heterosexist framework basis of this script is not just applicable to personal relationships but also to sporadic sexual relations and the understanding of those. Again, the script of the confusion derived from abnormal gender relations rather than the

traditional ones is common in these cyber communities of practice, as it can be observed in thread number 133, *CS\_SEX\_New rules\_THREAD*:

Example 139

How come when 2 lesbians are together it's classed as having sex but when a guy and girl do the same things (oral etc) it's 'fooling around'? hmmm....strange!!! Should it be that if there's no strap-on involved, it wasn't sex? 😊

(*CS\_SEX\_New rules1\_THREAD*)

Example 140

Well, lesbians can't have penetrative sex without strap ons...so that's probably why.

(*CS\_SEX\_New rules1\_THREAD*)

Example 141

I agree with lilly\_games and actually cant a man & woman have sex without it being penetrative? I think it is more us men that think it needs to be penetrative for it to be sex.

(*CS\_SEX\_New rules2\_THREAD*)

Example 142

Is someone who's been a lesbian all their days and never had sex with a man still a virgin? I know when I was young u could get al.l the bj's<sup>55</sup> and tongue as many girls as u wanted but until u had penetrative sex u were a virgin!!

(*CS\_SEX\_New rules2\_THREAD*)

Example 143

All lesbians are really just shy girls gagging for a nice strong man to show them a good time. Discuss. 😊 😊

(*CS\_SEX\_New rules2\_THREAD*)

This bewilderment in relation to non-traditional gender relations can also be observed in thread number 148 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Sex with a transsexual\_THREAD*:

Example 144

I think anyone who sleeps with a transsexual has to be at least bisexual. I can't see how a totally straight person could manage it.

(*CS\_SEX\_Sex with a transsexual1\_THREAD*)

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<sup>55</sup> Bj stands for *blowjob*

In these examples it can be observed how sex is understood just from a heterosexist perspective where *full* sex implies penetrative sex and, therefore, is based on androcentrism. Whatever practice that does not involve the relation between men and women may be the cause of distress and suspicion for participants in these cyber communities of practice and, therefore, the maintenance of subtle but sexist stereotypes and scripts remains.

All in all, having analysed the examples provided in this section, we can suggest that Mills' (2008) inclusion of scripts and metaphors as a discourse feature that may signal the presence of indirect linguistic sexism is reaffirmed by our analysis. In fact, this discourse feature can be claimed to be salient in our corpus. Participants of these specific communities of practice interact with one another, start discussions and provide opinions or examples which, many times, as it has been demonstrated, are based on very traditional gender stereotypes and ideas. The way these sexist stereotypes combine in the collective memory of language users is by means of metaphorical meanings and scripts, that is, as stable and immovable mental images that serve as icons or symbols that favour an easier contact of participants with their environment. In our corpus, we have identified five main metaphors or scripts that combine different gender stereotypes. Nevertheless, as we mentioned in Chapter 2, CMC is a very rich and fruitful ground and other investigations may reveal that other scripts are more relevant for different communities of practice. In our case, what is clear is the fact that the institutional framework of the online publication to which these forums are ascribed, in a way, shape the mental images and scripts that regulate their participants' behaviour in the localised communities of practice. At the same time, the re-enactment of these scripts at a localised level nourishes the institutional framework and, therefore, a vicious circle is created in which scripts and metaphors are used as a discourse feature that allows organisations and local participants to express their opinions on gender and perform a particular gender identity where sexism, although in a more subtle and indirect way, still has a place.

Nevertheless, as it was the case with conflicting messages, described in section 5.3.3, we consider that scripts and metaphors, regardless of their presence in this specific kind of CMD and our specific corpus, should not be considered as a particular discourse feature that allows the expression and negotiation of indirect linguistic sexism in this specific kind of CMD. We consider that scripts and metaphors are a proof of human capacity to create and recognise discourse structures, that is, of the human ability

to both produce and recognise units of discourse as a fundamental source of the negotiation of meaning in human communication (Philips 2003). As Wodak (2006) suggests, discourse and society are related to each other by means of cognitive multi-levels that intervene in both text production and text interpretation. These are different from one person to another but, as a general truth, they rely on a cultural and social dimension that has its basis on ideology (Martínez-Guillem 2003) and, by extension, on scripts and metaphors. As a result, we consider that this specific discourse feature, as it has been demonstrated by the analysis presented in this section, undeniably leads us to claim that scripts and metaphors are a relevant discourse feature in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes through language. However, as it was the case with conflicting messages –section 5.3.3– and as it will be explained in section 6.2, we consider that scripts and metaphors are not specific to the concrete context of CMD analysed here but, rather, a global and universal mechanism suitable for many different and varied contexts.

### 5.3.5. Collocations

In this fifth section of the analysis of our corpus, as mentioned earlier, we are going to deal with collocations, defined by Mills (2008: 148) –based on Firth (1957)– as “the company that words keep”. More precisely, we could define collocations as “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text” (Sinclair 1991: 170), as “a way of demonstrating (relatively) exclusive or frequent relationships between words (or other linguistic phenomena)” (Baker 2010: 24). In other words, the notion of collocation could be conceived as in “the Hallidayan tradition as an intermediate level between syntax and lexis, which focuses on recurrent word patterns (Hunston & Francis 2000)” (Stuart and Botella 2006: 238). By means of the collocational patterns of specific lexical items language users construct ideological meanings which are, because of their recurrent use, accepted as common knowledge by particular communities of practice. By means of studying these collocational patterns, we may unveil special discursive and ideological functions and effects that we are unconscious of since identifying “the collocates around a word gives us an indication about subtle meaning and connotations that a word possesses” (Baker 2010: 25).

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, Second Wave Feminism started to go in depth into the analysis of the company that words keep, more precisely the company of



concrete lexical items which were considered to be sexist. Third Wave Feminism and its focus on discourse, on the other hand, has changed the focal point towards linguistic elements that do not necessarily trigger any sexist meaning. The reason for this change of attention can be found, precisely, in the care Third Wave Feminism pays to how discourse as a whole and not specific or individual linguistic elements help language users transmit sexist attitudes.

In order to analyse collocations in an objective and scientific way, corpus linguistics tools can offer researchers the possibility of including numerical and statistical data in their research. In this way, critical qualitative discourse and language analysis can be complemented and sustained by quantitative numerical data. As we mentioned earlier, Cotterill (2001), Caldas-Coulthard and Rosamund (2010) or Marling (2010), for example, suggest that the use of corpus linguistics tools in specifically designed corpora may contribute to decipher and analyse the way ideological work is done by means of linguistic mechanisms, in this case, focusing on how words are combined with each other in specific and patterned communicative situations.

Having this idea in mind, we decided to scrutinise our corpus following these suggestions. Nevertheless, and although having a short experience with corpus linguistics tools, we predicted a possible inconvenience in this kind of analysis. The fact that collocations are, by definition, words that accompany other words, we wondered whether collocations by themselves will serve our purpose of identifying indirect linguistic sexism in our corpus. As far as we are concerned, many times, the words that do certain ideological work do not necessarily accompany other words as pre-modifiers or post-modifiers in context. Many times, as we claimed, the ideological load is brought into scene by words that hang around in discourse. Because of this, we predicted that the use of corpus linguistics tools will be valuable only up to a certain extent for our study. Our main interest in this section is not only to analyse the collocations of specific words but the ideological work produced by the combination of repeated patterns of words along discourse structures. This concept is labelled by Santaemilia and Maruenda (2010 in press) as *discourse constellations*, that is

a form of organising the multiplicity of conceptual representations subject to ideological negotiation and social and political pressure in/between communities of practice. These are nebulous realizations of conflicting ideological concepts/discourses in today's societies and as such they are imprecise and constantly changing, in continuous struggle to become legitimised or core, subject to processes of pragmatic adjustment when meaning negotiation comes into play.

Discourse constellations may be understood as the recurrent words or linguistic elements that tend to surround, but not necessarily accompany, specific lexical items and that, based on their recurrent appearance although in different patterned variations, may affect language users' interpretations and, for our purpose, may subtly and indirectly help transmit sexist attitudes through language. Following Santaemilia and Maruenda (2010 in press), although we acknowledge the importance of collocations in the analysis and investigation of how ideological traces are left in discourse, "we argue for a more flexible approach to meaning-construction that allows the pragmatic enrichment of concepts in the light of new contextual assumptions" and where the concept of discourse constellations may be crucial.

We could claim that discourse constellations, as conflicting discursive struggles for the legitimation of ideological meanings, could be considered the basis of scripts and common knowledge. It could be considered that discourse constellations are formed by nebulae of different linguistic patterns. In the case of the transmission of sexism, it is not difficult to imagine different nebulae around concrete lexical, not necessarily sexist, items. One nebula would be that of sexist attitudes where apparently neutral words like *mum*, *woman*, *men* or *bishop* may be coloured by sexist attitudes due to the discursive construction of their meaning. Another nebula would be that of non-sexist or neutral attitudes where those same words would not be tainted by sexism. Moreover, we could even find a third nebula where those same words would be tinted by an anti-sexist overtone.

In the case of our corpus, we considered that the communicative struggle and coexistence of sexist, anti-sexist and neutral nebulae could be critically analysed by focusing on the overlapping discourses surrounding the key words (KWs)<sup>56</sup> of our corpus. We considered that, by means of focusing on our key words in context (KWIC), we would be able to analyse not only the main collocational patterns of these items (KWs) and, therefore, disentangle certain ideological forces, but we would also be able to have an overview of the ideological nebulae surrounding those items and, therefore, the discourse constellations that help delimit the possible meanings of those terms for language users who, according to their communicative variables, will interpret or use them in one way or another.

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<sup>56</sup> Although being aware of the fact that in CL the term KW refers to the most salient words of a given corpus in comparison to another corpus, for our purpose, we will be using the term KW here to refer to the most frequent content words extracted from our corpus

In order to carry out an analysis of the main collocational patterns and the main discourse constellations surrounding the KWs of our corpus and, consequently, analyse their influence in the transmission of indirect linguistic sexism, we undertook the following procedure.

Firstly, we resorted to the same tool used in order to fence in our corpus. By means of the corpus linguistics tool *Antconc* we were able to identify the main KWs of our corpus. KWs can be claimed to be relevant for corpus and discourse analysis because, apart from revealing crucial quantitative data, they can be used, as we mentioned in Chapter 4, as objective catalysts for qualitative analysis (Gill 2009, Del-Teso-Craviotto 2006).

The *Word List* section in the *Antconc* software allowed us to list all the words present in our corpus attending to a frequency criterion<sup>57</sup>. In order to follow an objective principle, we decided to focus on the 150 most frequent words. At this stage, we found a specific problem that arises from the nature of our corpus itself. Some of the 150 most frequent words did not belong to the body of the discussions of the forums themselves but to what we called Internet language, that is, the hyper-text that surrounds the discussion forums. By typing each word into the *Collocates* section we could discern, in an objective way, which words were liable to be part of the Internet language and which ones were part of the discussions of the forums due to their collocational patterns. Moreover, all the words liable to be part of advertisements or specific sections of the web site where the forums are ascribed were also eliminated. Apart from eliminating these words from our selection, we also decided to eliminate all the grammatical words from this top list because, as far as we are concerned, they would not be relevant for our analysis at this stage. By following this procedure, we could finally claim that the most relevant content words of our corpus had been extracted from the list of the 150 most frequent words. These were the ones that were taken into account for our purpose of delimiting our monstrous corpus into a mini-corpus following some quantitative objective criteria.

Once this stage was done, we decided to extend this list of KWs with some words that, because of our experience in the field of language and gender and our particular interest in this project, could be relevant for our study. This was done with the objective of fencing in a vast corpus into a manageable corpus for critical analysis.

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<sup>57</sup> This information is provided with more detail in Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.

Our specific purpose in this specific section, however, is that of analysing the specific collocational patterns and discourse constellations of the KWs of our corpus in order to discern whether these help transmit sexist attitudes in an indirect way. Having this objective in mind, we decided to focus only on those KWs that were common to both cyber communities of practice, that is, *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* online discussion forums. In so doing, we would be able to analyse whether these KWs, their most common collocations and the discourse constellations surrounding them help transmit sexist attitudes by means of linguistic mechanisms indirectly.

We could observe that the KWs selected for this section of the analysis were especially relevant for our investigation because i) they are, in fact, KWs of our corpus; ii) surprisingly or not, they could be considered KWs within gender and language studies themselves; iii) they cannot be classified, in terms of Second Wave Feminism, as intrinsically sexist words but neutral lexical items, and iv) the specific examples analysed both in the *Collocates* and *KWIC* sections helped reveal that the use of these items is conditioned by the context in which they appear and that they may be used or interpreted as sexist depending on the collocations or discourse constellations that surround them, whose repetitions or recurrent appearance in different communicative discourses may help create a chain effect in which these are converted into common knowledge for specific communities of practice, thus, maintaining the transmission of indirect linguistic sexism.

The KWs that were common to both *Corpus CS* and *Corpus MH* were: *sex, love, relationships, dating, man, men, woman, women*. Once the KWs common to both corpora had been detected, the next stage of this procedure was that of analysing them in context by means of the *Concordance* section of the *Antconc* software. We typed each KW into the search engine and gave specific directions of highlighting, as Sinclair (1991) suggests, the four lexical items to the left and the right of the KWs in order to have a broader spectrum of the discourse surrounding each element. Once this was done, we proceeded to save each search into a TXT file. Again, as it was the case in the procedure for fencing in our corpus, we came across the problem of the specific language of the macrostructure of our corpus. In order to eliminate those examples from our analysis, we manually cleaned the eight TXT files containing our eight KWIC. In so doing, we obtained a search where our KWIC could be exclusively analysed in examples coming from discussion forums themselves and not the macrostructure of the forums.

Once our KWIC could be analysed in these clean documents, we continued making use of corpus linguistics tools. More precisely, we uploaded the new clean documents into the corpus linguistics software in order to analyse the clean collocations of each KWIC. Appendix VII displays the charts where the 100 most frequent collocations for each KWIC have been reflected. We decided to analyse the first 100 collocations of each of our KWIC in order to study the discursive nebulae or constellations of each of them attending to the previous search in the *Concordance* section where each KW had been located into a 4L and 4R discursive spectrum.

After analysing each KWIC and its collocations in detail by having a close look at particular examples, we decided to make a selection that reflected the most relevant collocations for our analysis, that is, the transmission of sexist attitudes by means of indirect mechanisms, in this case, by means of collocational patterns and discourse constellations.

We observed how the combination of the KWs of our corpus with certain elements in context does help transmit traditional sexist attitudes and gender stereotypes. This can be observed, for example, in the collocations shown in Table 4 where the combination of our KWs with other items helps create a sexist image.

KWIC	Collocations
Sex	shameless (16), opposite (18), drive (31), biggest (32), oral (36), Worse (38), before (47), dirty (60), best (72), anal (87)
Love	Making (17), first (36), changes (38), romantic (55), real (83),
Relationships	previous (15), serious (20), open (21), past (31), gay (34), future (35), should (40), homosexual (47), happy (48), tend (63), modern (73), heterosexual (77), healthy (78), best (87)
Dating	online (2), internet (4), site (5), someone (12), profile (20), advice (32), website (35), potential (49), technique (72), skills (75), should (77), sex (78), rubbish (81), paid (88), normal (94)
Man	every (4, 5), my (18), any (30), should (36), new (38, 39), perfect (45), good (48), best (49), whore (56), single (63), works (72), other (75), young (82), won (84), wired (85), typical (87), straight (91), old (97), normal (98)
Men	hide (8), all (17), most (26), many (31), older (43), need (50), sex (58), cheat (73), prize (75), pay (76), tend (86), masterbate (88), single (95), should (96)
Woman	should (13), older (26), attractive (35), ideal (38), young (55), relationship (71), real (72), married (77), crazy (87), beautiful (89), Western (92), stupid (99), straight (100)
Women	most (26), some (27), all (29), attractive (40), many (43), should (58), prefer (66), tend (68), love (81), happy (83), gay (84)

Table 4. KWICs of our corpus and some of their 100 most frequent collocations

As we mentioned, these collocational patterns, when analysed in concrete examples, can be found to be collocations themselves, that is, words accompanying another word as pre-modifiers or post-modifiers or, on the other hand, due to our previous search of our KWIC in a 4L and 4R spectrum, they can form discourse constellations where the words surrounding the KWIC do not necessarily appear next to them but, however, help transmit traces of ideological struggles.

We will now analyse the most relevant collocations and discourse constellations of our KWICs for our purpose of studying whether this linguistic mechanisms may help transmit sexist attitudes in an indirect way in this specific medium of CMC.

When approaching all the examples of our KWICs we realised, as predicted, that there were different discourse constellations or nebulae surrounding them. Many times, the KWIC of our corpus do appear together with anti-sexist elements or even sexist items which help transmit sexist attitudes. Many others, however, they are surrounded by neutral or non-sexist words which, at the same time, may help project a sexist or antisexist discourse because of the ideological load they bring into discourse. For our purpose of analysing how collocations and discourse constellations may help transmit indirect sexism, we will only focus on those examples where the ideological struggle reveals tension in relation to gender negotiation.

We will start with the word *sex*. After analysing the most common 100 collocations of this KWIC we found that certain collocations and discourse constellations of the word *sex* with other lexical items, although neutral or anti-sexist, helped transmit sexist attitudes in an indirect way. This is the case, for example, of the collocations or discourse constellations of the word *sex* with the word *anal*.

#### Example 145

[...] because he doesnt ask he often gets a bj or anal sex from me, so try having a little more respect [...]

(CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls... relief on bad week!!1\_THREAD)

#### Example 146

[...] boyfriend always makes jokes about us doing anal sex but he would never ever try [...]

(CS\_SEX\_Attitudes to sex in relationships1\_THREAD)

## Example 147

[...] If I was horny we'd do anal. I'd never have full sex though [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls... relief on bad week!!4\_THREAD)

## Example 148

[...] I mean so many straight people have anal sex!  
 (CS\_REL\_Homophobia3\_THREAD)

## Example 149

[...] indicated that women don't actually enjoy anal sex but only indulge to satisfy their partners [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Gilrs myth or fact women don't actually enjoy aal sex1\_THREAD)

In these examples it can be observed how the collocations or constellations where the word *sex* appears with the word *anal*, the nebula may be, somehow, interpreted to be sexist. This is so because in all these examples *anal sex* is treated as something restricted to homosexual couples *I mean so many straight people have anal sex!* or something special that usually women tend to do or accept to do for their heterosexual male partners, as in *because he doesnt ask he often gets a bj or anal sex* or in Example 149. It can also be observed how *anal sex* is not considered *full sex*, that is, the penetration of the penis into the vagina. Going back to Second Wave Feminism and its analysis of language, gender and ideology, we could suggest that this discourse nebula comes from the script or idea that men need to conquer or enter women by means of the vagina. Traditionally, sex was considered a merely reproductive practice and, therefore, vaginal sex was the only acceptable sexual practice. As a result, and claiming that anal sex is not *full sex*, a sexist discourse nebula is created.

Something similar occurs with the collocation *oral sex* or the discourse constellations where these terms tend to appear. Again, this sexual practice is not considered *full sex* –since men do not get into, or conquer, women's most important sexual organ–, it is rather something special, even a prize or a reward to be given by women to their heterosexual partners:

## Example 150

[...] Now I appreciate that giving oral sex is about being considerate and wanting to give [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women1\_THREAD)

## Example 151

[...] well it obviously does as foreplay [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Girls - Bloke in need of advice2\_THREAD)

## Example 152

[...] It was just an observation that giving oral sex to a woman is a little more challenging [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women1\_THREAD)

## Example 153

[...] although oral sex but not full sex happened and it was a short [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Jealousy and negative thoughts in Marriage1\_THREAD)

## Example 154

[...] Tbh, girls don't even like oral sex, sometimes they might ask for it or [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Advice on licking your girlfriend out1\_THREAD)

The word *sex* does also collocate or form constellations with the adverb *before*. In this case, time is used to demarcate different phases within a sexual act that, as in the case of *anal sex*, help delimit what can be considered *full sex* or not:

## Example 155

[...] him to go down on you for a few minutes before sex [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Foreplay\_THREAD)

## Example 156

[...] feel abit dry. what foreplay could we use before sex to make sure im lubricated enough?  
 (CS\_SEX\_Foreplay\_THREAD)

## Example 157

[...] I dont like ppl who are thinking that having sex before marriage is smthng evil or if you do that [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Having sex before marriage1\_THREAD)

## Example 158

[...] evryone has the right to choose whether to have sex before marriage or not.  
 [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Having sex before marriage2\_THREAD)

These examples help transmit the idea that, again, *full sex* involves the penetration of the penis into the vagina and that any other practice, such as preliminaries



or any homosexual practices where no penetration or vagina are involved, may not be considered *full sex*. Moreover, the idea of waiting to have sex until marriage is also transmitted and, therefore, having *sex before marriage* becomes somehow stigmatised.

The superlative adjective *best* also appears in collocations and discourse constellations with the word *sex* and, again, certain sexist attitudes are somehow transmitted. This collocation or the discourse constellations where these two terms co-exist tend to be coloured with an androcentric perspective in which *best* always indicates a benefit for the man in heterosexual couples. It is usually women who desire to give their men the best sex they can in an attempt of being, as described in previous chapters, perfect and modern women fitting into modern and conflictive ideals of what a woman should be in these specific communities of practice. This can be observed for example, in the title of thread number 121, *CS\_SEX\_How to give him the best sex ever\_THREAD*, or in these examples:

#### Example 159

[...] it's in a man's best interest to have sex with as many women as possible [...]  
*(CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she's a slut2\_THREAD)*

#### Example 160

[...] for my boyfriend, but i want him to have the best sex of his life. Any suggestions on what i can do [...]  
*(CS\_SEX\_How to give him the best sex ever\_THREAD)*

#### Example 161

[...] how confident you are that you're the best sex that your OH has ever had [...]  
*(CS\_SEX\_Curious2\_THREAD)*

In this way, although the word *drive* does not intrinsically bear any sexist meaning, when it collocates with *sex* it can lead to sexist interpretations. This is especially so when the discourse nebula surrounding this collocation is permeated by traditional gender scripts such as that of the intrinsic an almost divine relationship between men and sex. The collocation *sex drive*, especially when pre-modified by *high*, is usually connected to men, as it can be observed in the title of thread number 98 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_Boyfriend with very low sex drive! What to do\_THREAD*. In the examples coming from our corpus, we can also observe how this

traditional image overlaps with more modern ideas and stereotypes on how the sexual life of modern women in these communities of practice must be:

Example 162

[...] doesn't want sex? Maybe he doesnt have a high sex drive? Me and my bf dont have a hell of alot [...]

(CS\_SEX\_He doesn't want sex\_THREAD)

Example 163

[...] where as for men a high sex drive is completely physical [...]

(CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn13\_THREAD)

Example 164

[...] though I reckon (since he has a much higher sex drive than me, obviously) he is probably gagging [...]

(CS\_SEX\_Attitudes to sex in relationships3\_THREAD)

Example 165

[...] when I'm on but that's because I have a high sex drive, not him!

(CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!2\_THREAD)

Example 166

[...] You just have a high sex drive which you should be proud of.

(CS\_SEX\_Relationship or %& \$# buddies\_THREAD)

But *sex* is also surrounded by the terms *dirty* and *loving*, used in particular examples as opposing terms which help delimit a particular discursive struggle between accepted or normal sexual practices in front of more peripheral or abnormal ones. This, in fact, helps strengthen the idea that certain sexual practices are more acceptable than others and, therefore, contribute to discrimination on the basis of gender. Moreover, this opposing view of *dirty* and *loving* in relation to *sex* also contributes to the ideological and gendered interpretation and perception of the traditional script of love versus sex. This can be observed, for example, in the title of thread number 123 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of porn-ish...\_THREAD:

Example 167

[...] Fast, dirty, porn-like sex is all good and dandy, but sometimes [...]

(CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of just porn-ish dirty sex\_THREAD)

## Example 168

[...] romantic. Sex with him is wild,passionate, dirty sex. Not that keen regret that, the sex is great [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of just porn-ish dirty sex\_THREAD)

## Example 169

[...] I never had fantasies until we had really dirty sex together. [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Boyfriend says he doesn't have any fantasies1\_THREAD)

## Example 170

[...] instead we got drunk and had hours of dirty drunken sex. Good times. [...]  
 (MH\_REL\_That first date... Everything you did & didn't want to know3\_THREAD)

## Example 171

[...] sometimes I want it to be a gentle, romantic, loving sex... So I talk to him, and he said he will try [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of just porn-ish dirty sex\_THREAD)

## Example 172

[...] like all kinds of sex -hot sex, quickies, loving and romantic, adventurous [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm3\_THREAD)

Finally, a collocation that has been found to be particularly relevant for our analysis of how indirect linguistic sexism may be transmitted by means of this linguistic mechanism is that of the words *sex* and *opposite*. This collocation or the discourse constellations where both appear help transmit the idea of the perpetuation of a sex war. These combinations of lexical elements and the discourse struggles in which they appear help transmit traditional ideas related to differences attending to gender roles and stereotypes:

## Example 173

Close friends of opposite sex [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Close friends of opposite sex\_THREAD)

## Example 174

[...] frustrated with communication with the opposite sex sometimes. I was talking to my OH in bed [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women2\_THREAD)

## Example 175

[...] all about their confidence with the opposite sex. [...]  
*(CS\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want2\_THREAD)*

## Example 176

[...] lothing, talking/being friendly with the opposite sex, etc etc will also be considered 'hamrful' [...]  
*(CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn13\_THREAD)*

## Example 177

[...] in their opinion having friends of the opposite sex is weird and wrong for someone in a relations [...]  
*(CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it7\_THREAD)*

## Example 178

[...] And when it comes to generalizing the opposite sex, it usually does come across as sexist. [...]  
*(CS\_SEX\_Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex!8\_THREAD)*

## Example 179

[...] their skills in interacting with the opposite sex - I would buy it for certain. [...]  
*(MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting 'Pseudo Sisters'1\_THREAD)*

## Example 180

[...] I have felt sort of invisible to the opposite sex for a while now [...]  
*(MH\_SEX\_Cyber sex again3\_THREAD)*

## Example 181

[...] and dont have much luck with the opposite sex, [...]  
*(MH\_REL\_Single and needamale perspective1\_THREAD)*

After having analysed all the examples provided in relation to the word *sex*, it can be observed that certain collocational patterns and discourse constellations surrounding this term, regardless of their non-sexist intrinsic denotative meaning, may entail strong sexist attitudes derived from their repetition or permanent flouting essence in our corpus.

The second KWIC we are going to deal with is *love*. This particular lexical item, as it was the case with *sex*, can be claimed to be a relevant or special word within gender and language studies. As we have seen throughout different section of this dissertation, there are different ideological tensions ascribed to these terms depending

on the communities of practice in which they are used or interpreted. Nevertheless, the words themselves cannot be claimed to be intrinsically sexist. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, language, as a conventional system of communication, cannot be intrinsically sexist, it is its users' interpretations and usage what can be catalogued as such. As we did in previous paragraphs with the word *sex*, now we are going to focus on particular examples where the coexistence of several words with *love* or the discourse constellations where it appears may lead the word to be interpreted as sexist in particular communicative situations.

For example, analysing the word *love* and its collocations in the clean documents extracted from the *Concordance* section of this KWIC, it can be observed that it quite frequently collocates with the adverb *first*. Although, apparently, this may just signal a temporal spectrum related to the action of loving or the idea of love, if we further analyse particular examples, we can observe how the discourse constellations of those examples ideologically delimit the meaning of this collocation for these particular cyber communities of practice:

Example 182

[...] I think anyone who believes in love at first sight has been watching too many movies [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Do you believe in love at first sight1\_THREAD*)

Example 183

[...] love at first sight ? i don't believe in 'love at first sight' but definitely attraction [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Do you believe in love at first sight2\_THREAD*)

Example 184

[...] don't see why love at first sight is implausible. Love is just an emotion [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Do you believe in love at first sight1\_THREAD*)

Example 185

[...] I'm lucky enough to be my boyfriends first love, first kiss and first everythng [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Things you just can't compete with!3\_THREAD*)

Example 186

[...] we became official Said 'I love you' He said it first, on our first valentine's day [...]

(*CS\_REL\_How long before you....3\_THREAD*)

## Example 187

[...] One of my friends has gone from her first love straight to another guy then to her current [...]

(CS\_REL\_Lessons in Love3\_THREAD)

## Example 188

[...] love with someone that quickly? he's my first love and i truly hope my feelings don't change [...]

(CS\_REL\_Love changes\_THREAD)

Examples 182, 183, 184 illustrate how the idiomatic expression *love at first sight* is ideologically charged. On the one hand, it bears the idea that it is something unreal, yet expected, that is reflected in films and fiction. We could even claim that this idiomatic expression activates certain scripts, such as that of romantic love, in the minds of certain language users in these particular cyber communities of practice. On the other hand, some other participants believe that *love at first sight* is a plausible real situation. Here, the negotiation of meaning of this particular idiomatic expression is still going on and different ideological grounds on gender are competing. Examples 185, 186, 187 and 188, however, illustrate another nebula around the term *love* and its discursive coexistence with the adverb *first*. In these examples, it can be observed how the first times, the first love, the first kiss, the first partners are extremely valued, as it can be observed from the nebula created by words like *lucky* or sentences like *i truly hope my feelings don't change*. This discourse constellation, created by the connotations of the adverb *first* around the word *love*, in fact helps transmit certain sexist attitudes in which first times are highly valued. This can be claimed to help reproduce traditional scripts and stereotypes such as those of the importance of virginity or the relevance of not having too many partners in order to start a relationship. These, again, are ideas which are historically mainly associated with women and, therefore, help transmit sexist attitudes in an indirect and very subtle way.

The word *love* does also frequently collocate with the verb *making* in our corpus. Again, as it was the case with *sex*, it can be observed how language users in these cyber communities of practice in fact negotiate in discourse the ideological interpretations of the differences between *making love* and *sex*. The idea that *sex* is ruder, more masculine and *making love* tends to be associated with femininity, cuddles and tenderness is repeated along our corpus, therefore, helping maintain an idea of a gender divide that is

reflected in the vocabulary used by the members of these communities to refer to sexual relationships between the sexes:

Example 189

[...] sex which is like just a normal shag. making love is deffo the more cuddly intense type [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Making love VS Sex2\_THREAD*)

Example 190

[...] sex when its hot and rude and making love nice gentle and cuddly!! [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Making love VS Sex1\_THREAD*)

Example 191

[...] sex is more physical than emotional. To me, making love is so much more emotional and connecting. [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Making love VS Sex3\_THREAD*)

Example 192

[...] Yeah we hardly ever have stereotypical "making love" but every time we have sex I would consider [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of just porn-ish dirty sex\_THREAD*)

Example 193

[...] Sex I think its cheesy when a Guy calls it making love. [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Making love VS Sex1\_THREAD*)

Example 194

[...] Making love involves a lot of foreplay [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Making love VS Sex1\_THREAD*)

We also find discourse constellations and collocations where the word *love* appears with the adjectives *real* and *romantic* which, in general terms, tend to appear as opposites creating a discourse and ideological struggle. Love is sometimes catalogued as *real*, which connotatively may lead language users to interpret this as a more down-to-earth kind of love in which certain characteristics such as romanticism, passion or lust tend to be absent. Because of the words that appear in the discourse constellations of the collocation *real love* we can also infer that this ideological concept is very much related in these communities of practice to the ideas of stability and fidelity which, according to traditional ideas on gender and stereotypes, are the basis of any normal and desirable relationship:

## Example 195

[...] in the nicest possible way, i doubt it was real love with both these guys straight after each other [...]

(CS\_REL\_What to do with this situation2\_THREAD)

## Example 196

[...] to have a healthy relationship and real love with someone else. [...]

(CS\_REL\_You have to love yourself before someone else can love you1\_THREAD)

## Example 197

[...] magical love: not real. magic isn't real Chemical love: of course it is [...]

(CS\_REL\_'I don't believe in love'1\_THREAD)

## Example 198

[...] Leave both guys and stay well away. It's not real love if you can do that to someone. [...]

(CS\_REL\_Its a mess2\_THREAD)

## Example 199

[...] For me real love means being really and honestly comfortable [...]

(CS\_REL\_Loving someone and being in love\_THREAD)

This ideological interpretation of *love* as *real* is almost in direct opposition with the idea of *romantic love* which, as we have seen, is also maintained not necessarily through the direct naming of it, but also through ideas such as that of the *first* time something happens in a relationship. The link between romanticism and love implies ideas such as spontaneity or surprise which, at least at first sight, are opposites to the ideas of stability and fidelity expressed by the ideological and discursive construction of the idea of *real love*:

## Example 200

[...] he shows his love in practical ways cos hes not a romantic [...]

(CS\_REL\_What does your man do that makes you smile3\_THREAD)

## Example 201

[...] How does that differ from romantic love? Well romantic love has the additional sexual element [...]

(CS\_REL\_Do you believe in love at first sight2\_THREAD)



## Example 202

[...] Love doesn't always have to mean grand, romantic [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Lessons in Love4\_THREAD)

## Example 203

[...] It's totally incomparable to romantic love imo. There is no way proper love at first sight [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Do you believe in love at first sight2\_THREAD)

The third KWIC we are going to analyse in order to investigate its more common collocational patterns and discourse constellations with the aim of studying whether they serve as a mechanism to maintain and transmit sexism indirectly is the word *relationships*. The first thing we notice in the collocational patterns of this word and the discourse constellations surrounding it is that there are three different ideological battle grounds in relation to the word *relationships*.

The first battle ground would be that of time. The word *relationships* tends to collocate with temporal words like *future*, *past* and *previous*. These temporal chains and the frequent reference to temporal data when referring to relationships may lead readers and users to interpret that there is an urge to be always in a relationship. Past, present and future are always mentioned and no gap is left where relationships are not desired or expected. As we saw earlier, the idea of the importance of being in a relationship is a gendered conception that, in a way, may limit gender performance in specific communities of practice, as it is our case. The high expectations regarding having a relationship are something that, as we can observe in these examples, still governs the ideological representation of the genders in these cyber communities of practice.

## Example 204

[...] that'll come up at least once in your future relationships, i gurantee.  
 (CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn12\_THREAD)

## Example 205

[...] it will ruin any future relationships she has [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Girls - Bloke in need of advice1\_THREAD)

## Example 206

[...] I have no interest in other men but in past relationships I have still fancied others [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Does monogamy come naturally to you2\_THREAD)

## Example 207

[...] But sometimes a guy's past experience with relationships will have left him  
 [...] (CS\_REL\_I really like you, but I dont want a relationship3\_THREAD)

## Example 208

[...] I agree on not mentioning past relationships, [...] (MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish10\_THREAD)

## Example 209

[...] I have to say, in a previous relationship my ex [...] (CS\_SEX\_Attitudes to sex in relationships6\_THREAD)

## Example 210

[...] in your current or previous relationships, did you say 'I love you'? [...] (CS\_REL\_Saying I love you1\_THREAD)

The second battle ground would be that of the classification of gender relations. The word *relationships* does also quite frequently appear in our corpus surrounded by words like *homosexual*, *gay* or *heterosexual*. This may lead us to interpret that relationships tend and should be catalogued in these communities of practice in order to clarify certain aspects. That is, whether a relationship is heterosexual, homosexual or gay can be determinant in what aspects are being talked about, for example, sexual practices or limits within a relationship. Although this may not entail sexist attitudes at a first sight, a deeper analysis into the discourse constellations surrounding these terms and classifications of relationships may lead us to interpret that, as it has been explained in previous chapters, heterosexual relationships are usually considered the standard against which any other types of relationships, therefore, deviant, are measured:

## Example 211

[...] as you believe in hetrosexual relationships [...] (CS\_REL\_Homophobia3\_THREAD)

## Example 212

[...] But I just wonder because homosexual relationships are often seen in a different way [...] (CS\_SEX\_Unprotected, Underage Sex is just Disgusting18\_THREAD)

## Example 213

[...] teens engaging in underage sex within homosexual relationships? [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Unprotected, Underage Sex is just Disgusting18\_THREAD)

## Example 214

[...] have a feminine partner including male gay relationships so I am confuzzled  
 as to why you [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Do feminine lesbians exist1\_THREAD)

## Example 215

[...] you also said something along the lines of gay relationships also being wrong  
 in the eyes of god [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Homophobia3\_THREAD)

Finally, the third battle ground where the ideological and discursive nature of *relationships* is discussed is that of what is considered normal or adequate for a relationship in these particular cyber communities of practice. Here, it can be observed how relationships, in order to be perfect and normal, tend to be classified as *happy* and *healthy* within these communities of practice. Moreover, the words *open* and *modern* also quite frequently collocate or appear within the discourse constellations of the word *relationships*, however, their ideological implications are different. *Open* or *modern* relationships, or the fact of being open-minded regarding aspects of relationships, may entangle the idea that traditional gender stereotypes are being broken or challenged. As a result, being *open* or *modern* in a relationship or having an *open* or *modern* attitude towards gender relationships tends to be considered as something negative within these cyber communities of practice. It is precisely the discourse constellations created around the idea of breaking traditional gender stereotypes the one that allows us to claim that the collocational pattern of *relationships* with *open* and *modern* or the discourse constellations where they may appear, contrarily to what may be expected in these cyber communities of practice, are connotatively charged with rather negative tones:

## Example 216

[...] you see all your mates in happy relationships, it's natural to want what they've  
 [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Eternally single, any insight please, I could do with some  
 advice2\_THREAD)

## Example 217

[...] all the decent guys who are in healthy happy relationships? [...]  
 (MH\_REL\_That first date... Everything you did & didn't want to know3\_THREAD)

## Example 218

[...] healthy relationships are about compromise, [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Scared of getting me pregnant1\_THREAD)

## Example 219

[...] it is an important part of healthy relationships [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Break up over sex life..3\_THREAD)

## Example 220

[...] relationships have been destroyed by the values of the modern [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_17 and need sex so bad!!! Im furstrated4\_THREAD)

## Example 221

[...] to make a conscious decision about it then open relationships and casual sex  
 are better [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_If you're not naturally faithful, what do you do3\_THREAD)

## Example 222

[...] establish their own boundaries (e.g. open relationships), [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation2\_THREAD)

## Example 223

[...] what do you do? Some people work out fine in open relationships etc [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_If you're not naturally faithful, what do you do1\_THREAD)

## Example 224

[...] If you really find it difficult then I think open relationships are the best option.  
 [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_If you're not naturally faithful, what do you do2\_THREAD)

*Dating*, the fourth KWIC we are going to analyse in our corpus in order to study its collocational patterns and discourse constellations in terms of their contribution to the indirect transmission of sexism, usually appears in context in our corpus with the words *potential*, *advice*, *skills* or *technique*. Again, the coexistence of these words may bring to our minds traditional and gendered scripts regarding gender and gender relations. On the one hand, the fact that a *dating potential* is mentioned may signal that individuals in these cyber communities of practice consider that having dates is the first

step for a bigger purpose, that of being in a relationship, as explained earlier. Because of this *potential*, a discourse of *dating advice* is created which, apart from sustaining this traditional script of the necessity of relationships, it also favours, although in an indirect way, the gender divide. This is so because advice regarding dating is better considered when given to or by women. Again, this discourse keeps alive the idea that women communicate better, especially in the emotional sphere. This nebula where advice is required in relation to dating also sustains the appearance of the words *skills* and *technique* in the collocational patterns or discourse constellations of the word *dating*. Again, the fact of building up a great repertoire of abilities is essential for the genders to relate to each other. Moreover, this implies that extraordinary and specialised skills or techniques are needed depending on whether we want to approach one gender or another which, indirectly, helps maintain the gender divide alive:

Example 225

[...] how you acted to make women not see you as dating potential. Tone things down a little. [...]

(*MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting 'Pseudo Sisters'8\_THREAD*)

Example 226

[...] I wouldn't see them as dating potential [...]

(*MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting 'Pseudo Sisters'3\_THREAD*)

Example 227

[...] you losers on a mens health forum reading dating advice section ? im young ive got an excuse... [...]

(*MH\_REL\_This girl im seeing, doesnt want a relationship, she wants a casual4\_THREAD*)

Example 228

[...] any idea on how get internet dating right. Take advice from female friends [...]

(*MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish7\_THREAD*)

Example 229

[...] So we get from bad dating skills, to racism [...]

(*MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting 'Pseudo Sisters'3\_THREAD*)

Example 230

[...] I hope that helps I knew that was your dating technique aka Johnny sausage [...]

(*MH\_REL\_Girl playing hard to get, how do i play it better than her1\_THREAD*)

Finally, we are going to study the case of four words that have frequently been the focus of attention of gender and language studies because of their relevance in the understanding of how these identities are ideologically and discursively constructed. It is the case of the words *man*, *men*, *woman* and *women*, which are also KWs in our corpus.

In the case of *man*, words like *good*, *perfect* or *straight* help delimit some basic defining traits of what is needed for a person to be considered a *man* in these cyber communities of practice. We may notice how these terms, although not necessarily sexist in terms of denotative meaning, can be claimed to be rather charged terms connotatively. This can be observed in the nebula surrounding all these elements, for instance, in Example 231 we can observe how being *good* is related to breaking a traditional male gender stereotype according to which women were kept limited by their heterosexual partners. Moreover, being a *good man*, as shown in Example 232, must also be rewarded which, from our perspective, helps transmit a sexist attitude since the implication that it is not an intrinsic characteristic of a man to be *good* but one that needs an extra effort may be read between the lines. In Example 234, for instance, the word *perfect* collocates with *man* and this collocation is embedded in a discourse constellation where the words *for you* help transmit the metaphorical conception of the other half. In this case, the gendered and sexist idea that, in order to be complete, people need to be in a relationship is transmitted by a collocation and a discourse constellation where a traditional script is subtly veiled. Besides, this idea is strengthened by the word *straight*, which brings to the discursive construction of *man* the idea of heterosexuality and heteronormativity which, as we saw in previous chapters, may be considered sexist:

#### Example 231

[...] give up life dreams/careers etc for a man (a good man won't want you to) [...]  
(CS\_REL\_Lessons in Love1\_THREAD)

#### Example 232

[...] If he is a good man, who treats you well, put him first. [...]  
(CS\_REL\_Lessons in Love2\_THREAD)

#### Example 233

[...] stupid of me, but I've also realised that a good man would never behave like that [...]  
(CS\_SEX\_Attitudes to sex in relationships4\_THREAD)

## Example 234

[...] it's about finding the perfect man for you [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Where do all these men hide2\_THREAD)

## Example 235

[...] I have this idea in my head about how my perfect man should look like, talk like and smell like [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Eternally single, any insight please, I could do with some advice3\_THREAD)

## Example 236

[...] My OH is not the stereotypical perfect man, but he is absolutely perfect for me [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Where do all these men hide2\_THREAD)

## Example 237

[...] A 100 % straight man isn't gonna watch gay porn [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it5\_THREAD)

## Example 238

[...] A straight man is only going to watch straight porn [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it5\_THREAD)

These traits are considered to be crucial for any man to be considered so, thus, *every man* must adhere to these forms of masculinity understood to be normative in these cyber communities of practice. Apart from transmitting traditional ideas on what a man should be like, the collocation of the word *man* with *every* also helps transmit the sexist idea of homogeneity within a group. Nevertheless, we find it especially relevant that this collocational pattern is discursively contested by several participants, as it can be observed, for example, in the frequent use of this term, as well as *men*, with *most* or *many*, implying that *not every man* is or *all men* are the same. Because of this, although *every man* seems to bring to our minds the idea of group and similarities, there are many voices that contest this traditional and sexist idea in discourse, therefore, maintaining a discursive struggle where the ideological meaning of *man* still reveals itself as an unstable ground within the fields of gender and language:

## Example 239

[...] Also, of course every man has at least SEEN porn even if he [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!4\_THREAD)

## Example 240

[...] say all men have seen porn, but not every single man will watch it regularly.  
 [...] (CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn3\_THREAD)

## Example 241

[...] You can't say every man watches porn then say 99%? [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!1\_THREAD)

## Example 242

[...] he'd forgive me (because of it being almost every man's fantasy)" even if the  
 uniforms [...] (CS\_REL\_Boy Banter2\_THREAD)

## Example 243

[...] I think, just about every other man on the planet. [...]  
 (MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish32\_THREAD)

## Example 244

[...] I'm not saying the blonde stunner every man keeps staring at but you get the  
 idea. [...] (MH\_REL\_Confidence10\_THREAD)

This collocational pattern and the discourse constellations surrounding it, although contested by certain individuals, in fact helps transmit the idea of homogeneity and the idea of group. This may lead us to talk about the following KWIC we analysed in our corpus, *men*. In this particular case, as it happened with *man* and its coexistence with the word *work*, certain traditional ideas and stereotypes are transmitted by its collocation or its appearance in discourse constellations where traditional and gendered words appear. This is the case of words like *prize* or *pay*. The idea that men work in order to pay for things and that they are active agents in winning prizes, especially those related to the objectification of women, is still alive as it can be observed in:

## Example 245

[...] men pay on dates because women are the prize [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_17 and need sex so bad!!! Im furstrated4\_THREAD)

## Example 246

[...] men trying to pay for things for me, makes me feel [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Being looked after1\_THREAD)



## Example 247

[...] you seem to expect men to pay your way through life [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Unprotected, Underage Sex is just Disgusting14\_THREAD)

Apart from these traditional stereotypes related to men as a group, other characteristics are considered especially related to men as a norm. This is the case of cheating as a result of the intrinsic and the strong connection between men and sex, as it can be observed in the collocations and discourse constellations where the word *men* coexists with *cheat* or *sex*. Nevertheless, as it was the case with *man* and its association with traditional gender ideas, many voices in the forums contest these traditional images and contribute to the discursive negotiation of the hegemonic forms of masculinity considered acceptable in these cyber communities of practice basically by means of the use of pre-modifiers like *many* or *most* which, although subtly, help transmit the idea that *not all men* are identical:

## Example 248

[...] Men are driven by sex and women are driven by emotion [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she's a slut3\_THREAD)

## Example 249

[...] his doesn't apply in every case but mostly in sex men are guaranteed an orgasm, [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want2\_THREAD)

## Example 250

[...] who has the higher sex drive. Maybe it is mostly men, but some women do [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn13\_THREAD)

## Example 251

[...] Exploring sex Yes men can have multiple orgasms [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Yes men can have multiple orgasms1\_THREAD)

## Example 252

[...] Men who feel they are able to get sex whenever [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want10\_THREAD)

## Example 253

[...] Men will cheat for the same reasons women cheat [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_For guys only- cheating !\_THREAD)

## Example 254

[...] these generalisations funny - men watch porn, men cheat, men talk more honestly when women aren't [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!9\_THREAD)

## Example 255

[...] most guys watch porn but I disagree that most men cheat. I know an awful lot of guys who think guys [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn!!8\_THREAD)

## Example 256

[...] all said porn makes them less likely to cheat. Men are more visually stimulated than we are [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn1\_THREAD)

Furthermore, we also found in our corpus that the use of verbs like *need* or *tend* in collocational patterns or discourse constellations where the word *men* appears tend to highlight and enhance the recovering of traditional roles and stereotypes related to men. These verbs cannot be considered denotatively sexist but, however, the discourse constellations surrounding them in our corpus help create a nebula where men are associated with traditional scripts and gendered ideas. Because of this, although no sexist term or attitude is openly or directly stated, we could claim that indirect sexism is transmitted by means of very subtle although damaging linguistic mechanisms as, in this case, the use of collocational patterns or discourse constellations surrounding certain verbs:

## Example 257

[...] Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women1\_THREAD)

## Example 258

[...] Men need to rise up against the shackles of their sex [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Is this acceptable behaviour in a relationship3\_THREAD)

## Example 259

[...] men need visual stimulation, and better for him to be [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn2\_THREAD)

## Example 260

[...] I think all men do, they need visual more than women [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn1\_THREAD)

## Example 261

[...] the majority of men don't and some do feel the need to speak up [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Why the fear of being circumcised3\_THREAD)

## Example 262

[...] Men in most cases need physical sexual attraction [...]  
 (MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish22\_THREAD)

## Example 263

[...] more bitchier than men in my experience. Men tend to tell it to your face [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_I am a size queen!3\_THREAD)

## Example 264

[...] They do, it's just that men tend to always want more - it's kind of in our DN  
 [...]  
 (MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish15\_THREAD)

## Example 265

[...] I just feel like as men do tend to place more emphasis on a girls looks [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_Small boobs2\_THREAD)

## Example 266

[...] Men tend to go for youth and attractiveness as they' [...]  
 (MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want9\_THREAD)

Something similar can be observed in the analysis of the word *woman* in our corpus. It has been revealed that this term is still associated with many words that, although not intrinsically or denotatively sexist, in fact project very sexist and traditional gender roles and stereotypes. For example the adjectives *attractive* or *beautiful* help create a nebula where the idea of *woman* is still very much associated with beauty and the importance of physical appearance, as it was explained in Chapter 2. These collocational patterns or discourse constellations where the word *woman* is surrounded by these terms help construct an ideological image of women in which their physical appearance is still crucial for their main objective in life, that of getting a man. For example, attractiveness can be perceived in the following examples as a tool women

use in order to get a man but, at the same time, since attractiveness is also considered a case for competition among women in the achievement of their main objective, it is also described as a source of anxiety. In the case of *beautiful*, moreover, it can be observed how this term tends to be associated with *woman* and, at the same time, with an air of feminist ideals where the word tries to be defined in non-traditional terms. Nevertheless, the appearance of this term, although in a very subtle way, can be claimed to bring to readers' minds certain traditional scripts and stereotypes that almost naturally link women with beauty:

Example 267

[...] enough to believe I am the only woman he finds attractive? Of course not [...]  
(CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn10\_THREAD)

Example 268

[...] not also insist he never looks at an attractive woman in the street? [...]  
(CS\_SEX\_Does you OH watch porn8\_THREAD)

Example 269

[...] that their OH will never find another woman attractive so long as they are with them? [...]  
(CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn and lie about it4\_THREAD)

Example 270

[...] I agree. A woman can very very attractive, yet have no sex appeal [...]  
(MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish23\_THREAD)

Example 271

[...] to think that she is the most beautiful woman in the whole world [...]  
(CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive3\_THREAD)

Example 272

[...] of a mirror chanting 'I am a strong beautiful woman' [...]  
(MH\_REL\_Single and needamale perspective3\_THREAD)

Example 273

[...] Saz, you're a beautiful, intelligent woman. Don't let these plebs define [...]  
(MH\_REL\_What's wrong with me2\_THREAD)

## Example 274

[...] He says he'd always had an 'ideal woman' in his mind but didn't actually think  
 [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_How did ur relationship start2\_THREAD)

## Example 275

[...] how would you then describe your ideal woman [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex!7\_THREAD)

## Example 276

[...] but whats you ideal woman? Just being noseey really.  
 (MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish19\_THREAD)

Moreover, the modal verb *should* also very frequently collocates or appears in discourse constellations next to the word *woman*. This case of modality, although syntactically insignificant, semantically and pragmatically reveals certain sexist attitudes because of the nebulae surrounding this structure. Nevertheless, this case of modality is also found to be contested by certain participants in context through the discourse organisation they present in the discussion. For instance, in Example 277 or Example 281 it is the negation of the structure what provides the discourse with an anti-sexist tone. However, as we have mentioned in other sections of this project, what is relevant is that the expression of the sexist attitude still remains available in CMC to be interpreted and/or contested by other participants depending on their individual communicative context:

## Example 277

[...] It is completely archaic to suggest a woman should be 'serving' a man, but at the same time [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_A woman's role1\_THREAD)

## Example 278

[...] gave him false expectations of what a woman should do in the bedroom. [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Attitudes to sex in relationships2\_THREAD)

## Example 279

[...] I believe that the woman should do everything around the house [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_A woman's role2\_THREAD)

## Example 280

[...] you're a woman, you should want to look after your guy [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_When things get sexist...1\_THREAD)

## Example 281

[...] i totally disagree with is that a woman should keep all the worry and anxiety to herself. [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_A pregnancy scare...not good recation!2\_THREAD)

## Example 282

[...] I've found if you treat a woman as they should be you're just the nice guy [...]  
 (MH\_REL\_That first date... Everything you did and didn't want to know2\_THREAD)

Finally, as it was the case of the pair *man-men*, many of the traits attributed to a *woman* are also discursively elevated to embrace every woman or all *women*, thus, creating an image of homogeneity that indirectly helps transmit sexist attitudes under the mask of common and almost incontestable knowledge. Nevertheless, as it was the case with *men*, the pre-modification of the word by *many* or *most* also discursively creates a struggle in which those attributes are contested by certain participants in particular interventions.

In the case of *women*, again, attractiveness seems to be an essential feature associated to this group. As it was the case with individual women, when dealing with them as a group, attractiveness is conceived of as an essential feature every woman must have. If it is not something natural to them, then, extra effort is needed in acquiring that characteristic that will allow them to obtain their objective. Moreover, attractiveness still continues to be a source of anxiety and distress for women as a group since this feature brings up competition among members of the group:

## Example 283

[...] to conceive of blanking physically attractive women [...]  
 (CS\_SEX\_Where do all these men hide2\_THREAD)

## Example 284

[...] upset because there are more attractive women in the world [...]  
 (CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive3\_THREAD)

## Example 285

[...] being in a relationship and the times attractive women have thrown themselves at me [...]

(*MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want4\_THREAD*)

## Example 286

[...] It is extremely frustrating. I see attractive women everyday and I just feel too scared [...]

(*MH\_REL\_Can't pull, won't pull1\_THREAD*)

Moreover, the use of certain verbs like the modal *should*, as in the case of *men*, or *tend* or *prefer* also help strengthen the idea of group and homogeneity. As we mentioned when describing the main objectives of Second Wave Feminism, the individualisation or personification of women, and men, and the abandoning of the treatment of all of them as homogeneous and static groups was a one of their standards. The fact that the word *women* still appears very frequently with verbs like the ones mentioned a few lines earlier, *should*, *tend* or *prefer*, proves that, although in indirect ways, women and men are still treated as static and closed categories of people with defining features and desires which, as we have been claiming, helps transmit indirect sexism:

## Example 287

[...] Women should really be thankful for men not being that [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex!7\_THREAD*)

## Example 288

[...] though, god the size of women these days. Average should well be 10 [...]

(*MH\_REL\_Plenty of Fish18\_THREAD*)

## Example 289

[...] I agree, women tend to be more bitchier than men in my experience [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_I am a size queen!3\_THREAD*)

## Example 290

[...] whilst women tend to seek men with greater resources so they' [...]

(*MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want9\_THREAD*)

## Example 291

[...] Of course women prefer bigger - it makes contact with a larger su [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex!8\_THREAD*)

## Example 292

[...] I am also sick of people saying that women prefer cut men. What utter rubbish. [...]

(*MH\_SEX\_Advantages-disadvantages of being circumcised during sex2\_THREAD*)

Finally, we find it especially relevant that in our corpus the KWIC *women* also frequently appears associated with the word *gay*. Although at first sight this may be perceived as a sign of the visibility of gay women, when having a closer look at context and the discourse constellations where these words appear, we find that the ideological construction of *gay women* is one that classifies them as peripheral, that is, not heterosexual and, therefore, deviant and not normal. Moreover, although certain sub-classification might be found, as it can be observed in the use of *lipstick lesbians* or *butch*, *gay women* are also considered a homogeneous and static group where characteristics are easily defined and stable. These two ideological constructions of the notion of gay women, instead of projecting what at first sight would be expected, that is, an open and dynamic vision of *women*, it in fact helps strengthened traditional ideas and stereotypes about heterosexuality and women:

## Example 293

[...] to ever said 'lipstick lesbians', a lot of gay women serious hate bullshit labelling like that [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Do feminine lesbians exist1\_THREAD*)

## Example 294

[...] I am fine with gay women. My best mate is gay. I also have gay males mates [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Homophobia2\_THREAD*)

## Example 295

[...] as i can't understand manly gay women...!!! [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Homophobia9\_THREAD*)

## Example 296

[...] just point out, that's what the more 'butch' gay women called me! [...]

(*CS\_REL\_Do feminine lesbians exist2\_THREAD*)

Having analysed all the examples presented in this section, we could claim, as Mills (2008) suggests, that collocations are a discourse feature that, at least in our CMC corpus, served the purpose of transmitting sexist attitudes by means of language in an



indirect and subtle way, whether consciously or unconsciously. At the beginning of this section, we also explained that our main concern here was that of analysing the KWs of our corpus within a contextual framework. In order to do so, we identified and studied the KWICs of our corpus. As our concern is that of studying how discourse and discourse construction may help transmit sexist attitudes we found that collocations were only a part of what could be relevant for our study. Because of this, discourse constellations, that is, words that appear in the same discourse but not necessarily next to each other, revealed themselves as a crucial theoretical concept in our analysis. We have studied how, depending on the collocational pattern or discourse constellation of specific lexical items, their meanings can acquire sexist, neutral or anti-sexist tones. In this sense, we corroborate how non-sexist or neutral words can be used in discourse to transmit and project sexist ideas. By means of the analysis of the main collocational patterns and discourse constellations of the KWICs of our corpus we have been able to identify these discourse markers as essential features in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes by means of indirect linguistic mechanisms.

This section, therefore, has served us, on the one hand, to corroborate the idea that CL may definitely help researchers in drawing conclusions about the ideological meaning of collocations (Coterril 2001). More precisely, and always taking into account our main objective of analysing indirect linguistic sexism and the negotiation of social and gender identities by means of this linguistic mechanisms in a specific corpus of CMD, we agree with the idea that “corpus linguistics methodologies can lead the researcher to identify semantic areas where gender ideologies may be especially salient” since “quantitative analyses can reveal patterns that are not easily observed when examining specific texts” (Del-Teso-Craviotto 2006: 2017). Nevertheless, we should not forget that one of the main aims of feminist gender and language studies, as it is our case, is that of political activism and, with that objective in mind, the necessity of making generalisations extracted from the study of concrete analyses is a reality. In this particular sense,

[f]ocussing on the diversity, complexity, and richness of particular interactions means we risk erasing systemic sexism from social consciousness. It is important that we continue to highlight discursive behaviours which penalise women [and men], that we expose sexist assumptions and challenge covert patterns of [...] domination, and that we document women’s [and men’s] discursive resistance to domination (Holmes and Marra 2010a: 5).

From this perspective, we believe that our specific analysis of the KWICs of our corpus and the main collocations and discourse constellations that accompany them may definitely contribute to the development and enrichment of (F)CDAs. We consider that this section has served us to unveil how apparently non-sexist or neutral words may, in fact, entail strong sexist attitudes in discourse. Again, however, it is important to remember that, in order to draw such conclusions, CL analyses may be aided by CD analyses in order to contextualise the findings. In so doing, the quantitative analysis presented here is extended by a feminist critical discourse study which also takes into account variables of meaning negotiation such as the processes of text production and text interpretation; the relevance of intertextuality; the social, political and historical context of the communicative situation and even the social attitudes in relation to particular issues under discussion (Baker 2010).

On the other hand, the analysis of the collocations and discourse constellations presented here has also served us, as we mentioned earlier, to corroborate Mills' (2008) inclusion of the category of collocations within the model of indirect linguistic sexism. It is important to highlight how this particular discourse features may allow researchers developing their work within feminist language and gender studies to carry out the objective aforementioned, that of political activism. By means of focusing on localised and concrete examples, broader and more extensive generalisations can be drawn. This is so because, even though we "should not assume that everyone experiences and processes language in the same way" (Baker 2010: 128), we consider that this analysis serves to demonstrate that the constant, conscious or unconscious, repetition of different collocations and discourse constellations may work in the direction of indirectly and subtly transmitting and maintaining sexist attitudes by means of linguistic mechanisms.

Moreover, we want to make explicit the fact that the examples presented in this section are, by far, shorter and more numerous than those presented in previous sections. This is due to the intrinsic nature of collocational patterns and discourse constellations themselves. We consider that, in order for this section to be relevant, several and varied examples of the same phenomenon should be presented with the aim of clarifying specific critical notions. However, we consider that a detailed explanation of every example was not necessary. We consider that the discourse feature of collocations and discourse constellations makes it for a kind of analysis derived from CL methodologies in which the number of examples presented, even though it may seem overwhelming at first sight, is just a way of justifying critical interpretations.

Finally, as we mentioned in section 5.3.3 and section 5.3.4, dealing with conflicting messages and scripts and metaphors respectively, this section coping with collocations and discourse constellations should not be considered an essential and specific discourse feature for the indirect expression and negotiation of linguistic sexism in this specific kind of CMD. As it will be explained in section 6.2, unlike humour and presuppositions, we consider that collocations and discourse constellations are a universal and global linguistic mechanism that may, indisputably, as it has been demonstrated in this section, contribute to the indirect transmission and maintenance of sexist attitudes through language. However, after the analysis and the theoretical notions presented in this section, we consider that this discourse feature should be better considered an extensive and wide-ranging discourse mechanism that may be indistinctively used in different and varied communicative contexts, not necessarily linked to the concrete medium and social factors of the CMD under analysis in this study.

#### 5.3.6. *Androcentric perspective*

The last category Mills (2008) mentions as a discourse feature that may signal indirect linguistic sexism is that of androcentrism. As we explained early in this chapter, androcentrism may be understood as an essence that positions men as the centre of discourse, as “a system that treats ‘male’ as the neutral standard and ‘female’ as the deviant other” (Rodino 1997). It may be also conceived of as a predominant male perspective onto things, that is, as if men were to be considered the norm against which everything needs to be measured. In fact, as Lledó (2005) suggests, a dichotomous and androcentric perspective about the world around us may be considered as a form of violence in itself since, as it sets boundaries to what can be considered acceptable or appropriate in given communities of practices, it delimits our collective imaginary, symbolic order and, therefore, our relation to the world.

As it can be inferred, this discourse feature, as it happens with others like humour or presuppositions, is extremely difficult to detect and, above all, denounce because the potential of denial is always present. The sender of the message themselves, or even other participants in the communicative situation, may interpret the same message as not containing any androcentric perspective. Again, sexism does not depend on inherent characteristics of the language but on how language is used and, most

importantly, on the eye of the beholder, on how particular communicative situations are interpreted by particular language users.

In the examples we are going to present in this section we interpret that there is a clear androcentric perspective since men, and no other referent, are considered the centre of discourse. In these particular instances from our corpus men are the reason why certain practices or ideas should be applied. It may be difficult to linguistically mark how androcentrism finds its way into discourse because, as it happens with indirect sexism in general, it is the combination of different elements and no single lexical or syntactical features may be identified that signal this characteristic. Following this premise, we are going to present several examples in which, from our standpoint, an androcentric perspective can be perceived. The first examples presented in this section are rather long interventions which may help us have an insight into how this mechanism is carried out throughout discourse.

Many times, androcentrism is fought against by individual participants in the forum although many others this mechanism remains uncontested or, even worse, is supported by certain comments. As it was the case with other discourse features of indirect sexism, what is relevant for our purpose as discourse analysts interested in gender and language issues is the fact that, being those transmitted by means of CMC, the repercussions and impacts may be more relevant. As we explained in Chapter 2, CMC is one of the most powerful and widely used means of communication nowadays and the fact that sexism may be transmitted in it, although subtly and indirectly, should be the focus of attention of researchers interested in social concerns.

The first example we are going to analyse in this section has already been presented in section 5.3.1<sup>58</sup>. In thread number 151 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women\_THREAD*, the original poster starts a discussion with a *light hearted observation* that is not intended to cause any offense. Although, as explained in section 5.3.1, humour is an essential feature of this message, we can also observe how the androcentric perspective under study in this section is also present in this intervention. The mere idea that it is more difficult for men than for women to give oral sex places men in a higher position. Due to this difficulty, men are described as almost heroes who, in the search of their heterosexual

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<sup>58</sup> See Example 28 for further information on this thread.

partners' pleasure, go into the adventure of giving them cunnilingus. The following replies to the original poster also illustrate this androcentric perspective:

#### Example 297

[...] guess i'm lucky he likes doing it because you've made it sound like something of an ordeal. All i get when i'm doing it for him is a sore jaw, he's like a babies arm... I feel even worse for him after reading that. And self concsious.

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women1\_THREAD)

#### Example 298

Great post Payne 😊 Not showing my OH though, for fear he'll agree, I'd rather live in blissful ignorance and pretend he loves doing it ...

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women2\_THREAD)

#### Example 299

Thanks Kate, glad you found it entertaining. I'm sure your OH does love doing it. Sexually pleasing a woman makes you feel like a superhero (well it does for me!) so the tongue ache and facial/finger collaboration is all worth it.

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women2\_THREAD)

#### Example 300

I like doing it because he loves it. I know that when I'm getting down on my knees for him, he feels like a king and that makes me want to do it.

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women2\_THREAD)

#### Example 301

[...] And ashamedly I actually agree with pretty much everything you said. Which is why I am so so soooooo appreciative that my OH troops on and does it almost every time we have sex 🍷 He's a star!

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women3\_THREAD)

#### Example 302

That really was so very funny... and true. My man refers to it as his ability to breathe through his ears! as to his stubble - I quite like him rough. 😊

[AVATAR: Women are Angels. And when someone breaks our wings, we simply continue to fly....usually on a broomstick. We are flexible like that]

(CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women3\_THREAD)

Women are, somehow, described as inferior in the sense that they do not need to go through such an ordeal in order to please their heterosexual partners. Moreover, the sentence *Ultimately put, and simplified down to its core, if you've ever enjoyed licking a lolly you are going to be capable of giving a bloke an enjoyable experience* may lead

readers to interpret that giving oral sex to a man is as easy and pleasurable as eating a candy and, therefore, no extra skills or abilities are needed. Although women's experience in giving fellatio is also represented in this discourse and no exclusive male perspective is offered, however, the view of how women's action is performed can be considered to be played down. As we explained in section 5.3.1, humour plays an essential role in not doing it in a direct and overt way, women's action is devalued under the mask of humour and framed by the edge of a *light hearted comment* which helps the sender of the message hide behind the protection of indirectness and the possibility of neglecting any accusation of being sexist, as it can be observed in a post by the original poster a few lines later:

#### Example 303

No, it's all me. It's original source was when I put it up on my website, then I put it on the Mens Health website in Oct 2008 and the Digital Spy forums a few years later.

I've ummed and ahhed putting in on here for a few months now in case some didn't take it in the jokey manner that it was intended.

Still, it's nice to know that you recognised it and are aware of my work around the web! [...]

(*CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women1\_THREAD*)

Contrarily to what happens in the case of women, men's correlative actions are described as almost deeds which need to be praised by their partners and even recognised by society as a whole. Basically, we could suggest that this could be, apart from the *light hearted* tone of the comment and the humorous intention, one of the basic communicative purposes of the sender of this message in starting this thread.

Contrasting with the idea that women's actions in giving oral sex are less complex or heroic than those carried out by men are the numerous threads or comments that refer to advice on how women should please their men in this respect. A clear example is thread number 127 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Jack's Blowjob Lessons\_THREAD*. In this discussion, the original poster presents an interesting observation for our purpose. Despite the fact that fellatios are described not as complex or challenging as cunnilinguses in the previous example, the original poster of this discussion observes a *bunch of threads today about blowjobs*, where an interlocutor keeps participating introducing the reference of what seems a book aimed at women who desire to give amazing fellatios. This, on the one hand, shows the great interest women profess in giving men what they are supposed to desire the most and, on the

other, presents us with a market that makes use of this androcentric perspective to get economic benefits.

A few posts later in this discussion, a participant intervenes by copying and pasting the FAQs<sup>59</sup> section of the web site, where the aforementioned book is offered. Although this participant frames her/his intervention and expresses her/his opinion about the book classifying it as a *con*, what is important for our purpose is the fact that this text remains visible for other participants and, therefore, open to interpretation. As we are going to analyse, we consider that this text gives off a clear androcentric perspective that could be perceived as common knowledge by certain participants in the forum willing to give their male heterosexual partners the best oral sex ever. This, in turn, would favour the transmission of indirect sexism by the uncontested acceptance of an androcentric perspective:

#### Example 304

Quoted:

*Frequently Asked Questions*

(...)

*Question %&\*\$#6: Is this for real?*

*Answer:*

*Naaah, it's just a big joke, get the %&\*\$# out of here. Of course it's real, blowjobs are a crucial part of a successful relationship. Accept that as a fact - most guys would leave you for a girl that gives better blowjobs than you. We live in the year 2010, not some 19th century conservative society where talking about blowjobs would get you burned on the bonfire.*

(...)

*Question %&\*\$#10: What if I have a certain problem that's unique?*

*Answer:*

*First of all, there's an FAQ BONUS which you get for free, so - in case your question/problem is not mentioned - you can always send me an email - to the "VIP" email address which is only for the girls that have read the book. I get too many emails to answer all of them, so that's why readers get a priority. I'll give my best to help you, I believe I'm good at it, after all the crazy stuff I've been through in life... If I can't help you, then you're hopeless. Just joking 😊 Every problem has a solution, so don't worry too much.*

*Question %&\*\$#11: What's in it for you, why are you doing this?*

*Answer:*

*I'm fed up. I'm fed up with too many of you girls that a) don't know how to give a decent blow job and b) I want to make the world a better place. Yeah, yeah, yeah - I know, call me a sexist pig, a jerk, an asshole, chauvinist - whatever, you are right, in a way - I'm ALL that. But at least I'm an honest prick. There is no complete relationship without great sex, and there is no great sex without great blow jobs - every guy desires them. If you know how to give him the best blow jobs of his life, he'll be happier, less frustrated, eager to please you back, smiling all day, helping you around the house, more loyal, satisfied, caring, loving*

<sup>59</sup> FAQs stands for *Frequently Asked Questions* in CMC.

*and all that other good stuff. Men just adore a girl that knows how to give perfect head - and that's VERY rare from my experience, which is far from small.*

*Trust me on this.*

*You can not even imagine the transformation a great blow job can do to your relationship - it can flourish. Amazing blow jobs can save your relationship, your marriage, even get back a guy - make him fall in love with you again, spice up your sex life - everything. Why not invest in a skill like that? It's an essential skill for every quality woman out there. Even if you're thinking like feminist right now, try it yourself - and you'll be amazed by the consequences. In the end, making him happier will make you much happier as well. I forgot to mention that the amount of arguing in your relationship will probably be cut in half, or less.*

*Of course, there's a negative effect. He'll probably get addicted to you, and might start acting like a complete loser, he might become afraid of losing such an angel and become a bit insecure. But I'll explain you how to overcome that 😊*

*(...) The real reason for writing this book is that... great blow jobs can change the world, YOU can change the world with your mouth. Yes, believe it or not - with blow jobs. If all of you gave better blow jobs, the world would be a happier place, full of happy, satisfied couples, less divorces, more children, less frustration, more smiles, less crimes - and... world peace 😊*

*Ciao,*

*your blowjob instructor,*

*Jack*

**DO NOT PART WITH YOUR MONEYS! SOUNDS LIKE A CON!!!!!!!**

*(CS\_SEX\_Jack's Blowjob Lessons\_THREAD)*

As it can be observed in this example, androcentrism still plays an important role in transmitting sexist attitudes indirectly. Although it can be considered that this is done in a humorous tone, as we saw in section 5.3.1, humour must be considered as a clear discourse feature that helps transmit indirect sexism. Moreover, if humour helps disguise androcentrism, as it is the case of this example, the sexist effect can be claimed to be double or, in other words, the sexist effect is multiplied since readers are under the risk of being influenced either by one or another discourse feature.

In this particular case, androcentrism can be observed, for example, in *Of course it's real, blowjobs are a crucial part of a successful relationship. Accept that as a fact - most guys would leave you for a girl that gives better blowjobs than you.* In these sentences, the writer is strengthening the idea of competition among women. Anxiety and fear are promoted among women by means of the idea that men are the centre of their universe. This androcentric perspective creates a climate where women's main mission must be competing with each other in order to get a man. Moreover, the sentences *What if I have a certain problem that's unique? / I'll give my best to help you send me an email - to the "VIP" email address which is only for the girls that have read the book* also contribute to create an androcentric perspective by positioning the writer of this text as a great source of light. The writer of the text, who can be claimed to



perform a masculine gender identity, offers himself as the solution to a great humanitarian problem. His text can be claimed to give off the idea that, by extension, all men tend to have a solution for every problem. Again, heterosexism is considered the norm and no references to other possible gender relations are offered. Relationships are only described in heterosexual terms and, moreover, men are considered the centre of these relationships. On the one hand, they never need help to carry out their main purpose in life but, on the other, women are depicted as always in need of extra help coming from men, an idea which can be claimed to rely on the traditional gender stereotype of the helpless woman.

Finally, androcentrism can be claimed to be especially visible in Question 11 and the last paragraph. Heterosexism again is emphasised, heterosexuality is considered the norm and men are placed at the centre of relationships. Moreover, men's sexuality must be considered the basis of any heterosexual relationship and women are described as in urgent need of developing the necessary skills in order to keep them happy in this respect. If women do so, the world will be a better place for human kind and, although women are described as having a crucial role in that transformation of the world, what is relevant for our purpose is the fact that it is by pleasing their men that this secondary objective is obtained. This, on the one hand, helps transmit very traditional and sexist gender stereotypes and scripts and, on the other, contributes to an androcentric perspective of heterosexual relationships.

Again, we are aware of the humorous tone with which this text may have been written. We consider that androcentrism here is rather open and direct and, therefore, the mask of humour and irony helps disguise it or offers the writer the possibility of denying it in case of direct attack. However, as we are claiming throughout this thesis, we consider that the fact that this text remains open to interpretation in CMC makes it extremely damaging in terms of the transmission of sexist attitudes, because what seems obvious is that androcentrism and sexism are present in this text. It is every individual's responsibility either to accept this or fight against it but, however, it will remain there.

A similar example can be observed in thread number 121 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_How to give him the best sex ever\_THREAD*. In this particular case, just from the title, it can be observed how men are placed at the centre of the action. In this case, the original poster asks for particular advice on what would be the best practices that should be implemented in order to satisfy her/his partner in sexual terms. The concern

with this issue, as we are observing, is a constant theme in these cyber communities of practice, which reveals a subliminal androcentric perspective in itself. A few posts later another participant intervenes with the following comment:

### Example 305

Maybe this article could help you:

"7 Tips on How to Satisfy Him in Bed Better Than Any Other Woman

Ladies, if you are serious about satisfying him better than ever before – listen up. Men aren't as complicated as they may seem at first. If you want to conquer him and make him go insane over you, you have to give him the best sex humanly possible. You have to give him more pleasure in bed than he got from all the other women he's been with before you. The thing is that you don't have to be the best in the World, you just have to better than other women he comes across with. And that's not that hard, considering that the average woman is clueless when it comes to satisfying a guy completely.

I won't tell you what you would like to hear, I'll tell you what actually works, in real life. If you to hear fairy tales, you are free to leave, if you want results, read on.

1. Learn how to give proper blow jobs. Really, this is an almost mandatory skill that you have to master. If he ever got better oral from a woman before you, he'll expect at least the same quality for you. Men rarely go backwards sexually and if he got amazing oral before, he'll wish to continue getting it from you as well. Learn the art of oral sex and you'll immediately be among the top 10% of women that know how to satisfy a man completely. A woman that's great in bed but has no idea how to give proper oral is just considered as incomplete. It's worth learning it.
2. Do what other women will not. That's the second step. To truly satisfy your guy you have to be ready to do what other women find "disgusting" or "yukee". Show total devotion. If you really like this guy there is nothing that can disgust you about him. Swallowing shouldn't even be a question. Do all the kinky stuff you can imagine and let go sexually. If you are constantly thinking whether doing "this" or "that" will make him think that you are S-word (you know what), you'll never end up being the best he could have. Let go and be free, have fun with him and make his satisfaction your satisfaction. Deny nothing. If he wants anal, do it, try it. Be open for new things.
3. Show total devotion by being more submissive. It is natural that men want to dominate in bed, so let him do it. Most men feel more manly if they can take control and have sex with you all around the house, take control over you and dominate you. Let him do this, be his "slave" and submit to him sexually, let him do ( and enjoy it ) anything he wants to do with you in bed. Be flexible and open about new things. Be open for learning new things and experimenting, but don't force things, make things fun instead of forced.
4. Start talking dirty, or dirtier. The right words can be like magic. If you know what to say, when to say it and most importantly How to say it, your man will explode from pleasure instantly. Learn what makes him go nuts and tell the right things at the right moments. Nothing is more boring that a woman that makes no sound in bed and when we have to wonder whether she's dead or not. Be active in bed, flexible, let him move you around. Also – if you say the Wrong things and are afraid you might sound stupid, you probably will end up sounding stupid. Be confident. If you believe in what you say, anything you say will sound good. That's why it's more important how you say it than what you say exactly. Talk dirty to him and Be "dirtier" in every way possible. Be his personal Porn Star and he'll love you for it.

5. Surprise him when he least expects it. There's nothing worse than monotony in bed. That's why you should have sex Outside of the bedroom, as often as possible. Make it memorable. Give him head in the car. Wake him up with a blow job. Have sex in a public toilet, or in his office. When he comes home, "attack" him the moment he comes in the house. Kill the routine. There's nothing nicer than being wanted. Be sexy for him and initiate things. You should never be asked to go down on him, instead do it yourself and do it for your own pleasure, not his.

6. Work out regularly. Yes, you should take care of your looks as much as possible. Work out regularly, smell good and be as tight as possible. If you are light and easy for him to carry around in bed your sex life will be much more satisfying. This is the cold hard truth. And don't do this because of him, do it because of yourself. You'll feel a lot sexier in your own body and you'll be more self confident. If you feel sexier in your body you'll attract him 10 times more sexually. Be fit, eat good food and take care of yourself. Silky, soft skin and a tight body, where you smell amazing will make every guy go mental just when he looks at you. Make this a lifestyle decision (staying fit) and do it together with him. You'll see how this can transform your sex life completely and you'll please him much more like this.

7. Role play. Role playing can be great and it will make your sex life a lot more fun. You should role play all the time, but do it sometimes to spice things up. Role playing is great as it gives you freedom to experiment and be somebody else, discover each others fantasies and fulfill them at least in an imaginary way. It's better if he does it with you, than with somebody else:) Except if his fantasy is having you and your best girlfriend together in a threesome. Well – a girlfriend that really loves him would even do that just to satisfy him.

The good thing is that you already have the right mindset for being a "perfect girlfriend" (or wife) and that's your willingness to satisfy him. That's a great quality and it will get you far, as everything you give, comes back, eventually. So give, give and give some more and you'll see your relationship transform (and your sex life:) Start applying some of these essential tips and you'll go far. Most importantly: Have fun!"

If you need more tips, just look for Jack's Blowjob Lessons, that guide is just amazing!

(CS\_SEX\_How to give him the best sex ever\_THREAD)

First of all, it can be observed how this participant presupposes that the original poster is a woman asking for advice on how to please her man. The references in the article to the *ladies* and how to *satisfy him in bed better than any other woman* lead readers to construct a mental image of the advice seeker as female and the receiver of the pleasure as male. This, again, places men at the centre of the action and women as natural givers which, in sum, could be considered as the basic principle of androcentrism.

Sentences like *conquer him and make him go insane over you, you have to give him the best sex humanly possible. You have to give him more pleasure in bed than he got from all the other women* help reinforce this idea and, besides, contribute to the construction of an almost natural fight among women who must compete with each other in order to conquer a man. Moreover, statements like *considering that the average*

*woman is clueless when it comes to satisfying a guy completely* also strengthen traditional gender stereotypes and place women in a lower position classifying them as naturally unable. As a result, there is a need for a market to be created in which whether institutions or other individuals, especially men, need to train women in how to behave in society.

How a woman must behave in a heterosexual relationship is defined, at least in this article, in relation to the sexual techniques she must develop in order to please her man in such a way that he does not feel the natural need to go with another woman. In such a situation, what is implied is that any infidelity on the part of the man will be the only responsibility of the woman in the relationship who has not fulfilled her role and, therefore, the man has been almost forced by her to cheat or leave the relationship. This can be observed, for example, in tip number 7, where women are encouraged to role play in order to provide their men with different and attractive activities that deter them from looking outside the relationship. Moreover, we would suggest that, although this reasoning entails an androcentric perspective, however, this is not only pernicious for women, since the image of men that is transmitted is also a stereotypical and gendered one, according to which their sexual nature controls them.

The list of tips provided for women to please their men in bed help the writer illustrate how women must behave in order to be successful in a relationship and, therefore, in society. For example, giving extremely satisfactory fellatio is a *mandatory skill* every woman must have a good command of. The basic reason for this is the fact that, otherwise, men must feel the need to look for this sexual pleasure in other women because *A woman that's great in bed but has no idea how to give proper oral is just considered as incomplete*.

In tip number 2 and tip number 3 it can be observed how androcentrism is deployed under a mask of modern ideas on femininity. The writer expresses the idea that women must *deny nothing* and *show total devotion by being submissive*. Again, no direct sexist linguistic element can be found here, no corpus linguistics tool would help us identify these words as sexist under any objective criteria, however, the use the writer makes of them leads the reader to construct a mental image of femininity which is inferior to masculinity. Men are considered the standard and women must do *what other women will not* in order to win one of them. From a different perspective, this could be considered a conflicting and, therefore, a sexist message since, on the one hand, women are encouraged to behave in a certain homogeneous way but, on the

other, a certain deviation from the norm is necessary in order for men to focus on them. Moreover, a denigrating image of women is encouraged under the idea that men need to *dominate* in order to feel *more manly*. Women are encouraged to behave as *slaves* but, however, a modern sense of femininity must be added. Women must *enjoy* this state of slavery since they are supposed to be open and flexible in relation to sexual practices. It can be observed how this new idea of femininity present in these communities of practice is used as an indirect veil that helps transmit very sexist and traditional roles for women under the mask of modernity and active role, as it can be observed, for example, in *make things fun instead of forced*. Something similar can be observed in tip number 6, where women are encouraged to work out in order to look fit and hot for their men but, at the same time, they should do it for themselves. However, the androcentric trap lies in the fact that women's self-confidence is constructed on the basis of their acceptance by men.

Moreover, the use of imperatives like *Be confident / Be his personal Porn Star / Surprise him when he least expects it / Be sexy for him and initiate things* help reinforce the idea that women are dominated by men and these should be considered the centre of every action. In all these imperative sentences, although the active agents are women, the beneficiaries of the action are men and, therefore, they are placed again at the centre of the action. However, these imperative sentences may be considered as conflicting messages if we take into account ideas like the one expressed in *You should never be asked to go down on him, instead do it yourself and do it for your own pleasure*, where women are supposed to innately know how to behave. The underlying idea would be that men expect women to be trained and not waste their time in telling women what they should do to please them because, probably, they have more important things to do. We would suggest that androcentrism, although not directly or openly stated, can be found in this kind of conflicting messages.

Moreover, what is of special importance for our analysis of how indirect sexism is transmitted in this kind of CMC is the last sentence provided by the participant in this discussion. After having copied this text, which, from our perspective, deploys a clear androcentric perspective at least in certain parts of its discourse, the participant contributes to the discussion by claiming *If you need more tips, just look for Jack's Blowjob Lessons, that guide is just amazing!* This statement can be considered as an acceptance of what is being claimed in the article. Although some readers or participants in this discussion may have interpreted this article as an instance of

humour, what is relevant is that the original poster of this message considers that it is interesting and a good piece of advice, therefore, accepting all the ideological gendered and sexist implications latent in it.

We consider that the following example also serves as an illustration of how androcentrism is deployed throughout discourse. In thread number 86 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_REL\_Why you're not married...\_THREAD*, the original poster starts this discussion with no further comments or ideas than those expressed by an intertextual element. The original poster starts her/his message with a link to a website and the copied text from that source where we can read:

### Example 306

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tracy-mcmillan/why-youre-not-married\\_b\\_822088.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tracy-mcmillan/why-youre-not-married_b_822088.html)

You want to get married. It's taken a while to admit it. Saying it out loud -- even in your mind -- feels kind of desperate, kind of unfeminist, kind of definitely not you, or at least not any you that you recognize. Because you're hardly like those girls on TLC saying yes to the dress and you would never compete for a man like those poor actress-wannabes on *The Bachelor*.

You've never dreamt of an aqua-blue ring box.

Then, something happened. Another birthday, maybe. A breakup. Your brother's wedding. His wife-elect asked you to be a bridesmaid, and suddenly there you were, wondering how in hell you came to be 36-years-old, walking down the aisle wearing something halfway decent from J. Crew that you could totally repurpose with a cute pair of boots and a jean jacket. You started to hate the bride -- she was so effing happy -- and for the first time ever you began to have feelings about the fact that you're not married. You never really cared that much before. But suddenly (it was so sudden) you found yourself wondering... Deep, deep breath... Why you're not married.

Well, I know why.

How? It basically comes down to this: I've been married three times. Yes, three. To a very nice MBA at 19; a very nice minister's son at 32 (and pregnant); and at 40, to a very nice liar and cheater who was just like my dad, if my dad had gone to Harvard instead of doing multiple stints in federal prison.

I was, for some reason, born knowing how to get married. Growing up in foster care is a big part of it. The need for security made me look for very specific traits in the men I dated -- traits it turns out lead to marriage a surprisingly high percentage of the time. Without really trying to, I've become a sort of jailhouse lawyer of relationships -- someone who's had to do so much work on her own case that I can now help you with yours.

But I won't lie. The problem is not men, it's you. Sure, there are lame men out there, but they're not really standing in your way. Because the fact is -- if whatever you're doing right now was going to get you married, you'd already have a ring on it. So without further ado, let's look at the top six reasons why you're not married.

1. You're a Bitch.

Here's what I mean by bitch. I mean you're angry. You probably don't think you're angry. You think you're super smart, or if you've been to a lot of therapy, that you're setting boundaries. But the truth is you're pissed. At your mom. At the military-industrial complex. At Sarah Palin. And it's scaring men off.

The deal is: most men just want to marry someone who is nice to them. I am the mother of a 13-year-old boy, which is like living with the single-cell protozoa version of a husband. Here's what my son wants out of life: macaroni and cheese, a video game, and Kim Kardashian. Have you ever seen Kim Kardashian angry? I didn't think so. You've seen Kim Kardashian smile, wiggle, and make a sex tape. Female anger terrifies men. I know it seems unfair that you have to work around a man's fear and insecurity in order to get married -- but actually, it's perfect, since working around a man's fear and insecurity is big part of what you'll be doing as a wife.

## 2. You're Shallow.

When it comes to choosing a husband, only one thing really, truly matters: character. So it stands to reason that a man's character should be at the top of the list of things you are looking for, right? But if you're not married, I already know it isn't. Because if you were looking for a man of character, you would have found one by now. Men of character are, by definition, willing to commit.

Instead, you are looking for someone tall. Or rich. Or someone who knows what an Eames chair is. Unfortunately, this is not the thinking of a wife. This is the thinking of a teenaged girl. And men of character do not want to marry teenaged girls. Because teenage girls are never happy. And they never feel like cooking, either.

## 3. You're a Slut.

Hooking up with some guy in a hot tub on a rooftop is fine for the ladies of Jersey Shore -- but they're not trying to get married. You are. Which means, unfortunately, that if you're having sex outside committed relationships, you will have to stop. Why? Because past a certain age, casual sex is like recreational heroin -- it doesn't stay recreational for long.

That's due in part to this thing called oxytocin -- a bonding hormone that is released when a woman a) nurses her baby and b) has an orgasm -- that will totally mess up your casual-sex game. It's why you can be f\*\*k-buddying with some dude who isn't even all that great and the next thing you know, you're totally strung out on him. And you have no idea how it happened. Oxytocin, that's how it happened. And since nature can't discriminate between marriage material and Charlie Sheen, you're going to have to start being way more selective than you are right now.

## 4. You're a Liar.

It usually goes something like this: you meet a guy who is cute and likes you, but he's not really available for a relationship. He has some condition that absolutely precludes his availability, like he's married, or he gets around town on a skateboard. Or maybe he just comes right out and says something cryptic and open to interpretation like, "I'm not really available for a relationship right now."

You know if you tell him the truth -- that you're ready for marriage -- he will stop calling. Usually that day. And you don't want that. So you just tell him how perfect this is because you only want to have sex for fun! You love having fun sex! And you don't want to get in a relationship at all! You swear!

About ten minutes later, the oxytocin kicks in. You start wanting more. But you don't tell him that. That's your secret -- just between you and 22,000 of your closest girlfriends. Instead, you hang around, having sex with him, waiting for him to figure out that he can't live without you. I have news: he will never "figure" this out. He already knows he can live without you just fine. And so do you. Or you wouldn't be lying to him in the first place.

## 5. You're Selfish.

If you're not married, chances are you think a lot about you. You think about your thighs, your outfits, your naso-labial folds. You think about your career, or if you don't have one, you think about doing yoga teacher training. Sometimes you think about how marrying a wealthy guy -- or at least a guy with a really, really good job -- would solve all your problems.

Howevs, a good wife, even a halfway decent one, does not spend most of her day thinking about herself. She has too much s\*\*t to do, especially after having kids. This is why you see a lot of celebrity women getting husbands after they adopt. The kids put the woman on notice: Bitch, hello! It's not all about you anymore! After a year or two of thinking about someone other than herself, suddenly, Brad Pitt or Harrison Ford comes along and decides to significantly other her. Which is also to say -- if what you really want is a baby, go get you one. Your husband will be along shortly. Motherhood has a way of weeding out the lotharios.

6. You're Not Good Enough.

Oh, I don't think that. You do. I can tell because you're not looking for a partner who is your equal. No, you want someone better than you are: better looking, better family, better job.

Here is what you need to know: You are enough right this minute. Period. Not understanding this is a major obstacle to getting married, since women who don't know their own worth make terrible wives. Why? You can fake it for a while, but ultimately you won't love your spouse any better than you love yourself. Smart men know this.

I see this at my son's artsy, progressive school. Of 183 kids, maybe six have moms who are as cute as you're trying to be. They're attractive, sure. They're just not objects. Their husbands (wisely) chose them for their character, not their cup size.

Alright, so that's the bad news. The good news is that I believe every woman who wants to can find a great partner. You're just going to need to get rid of the idea that marriage will make you happy. It won't. Once the initial high wears off, you'll just be you, except with twice as much laundry.

Because ultimately, marriage is not about getting something -- it's about giving it. Strangely, men understand this more than we do. Probably because for them marriage involves sacrificing their most treasured possession -- a free-agent penis - - and for us, it's the culmination of a princess fantasy so universal, it built Disneyland.

The bottom line is that marriage is just a long-term opportunity to practice loving someone even when they don't deserve it. Because most of the time, your messy, farting, macaroni-and-cheese eating man will not be doing what you want him to. But as you give him love anyway -- because you have made up your mind to transform yourself into a person who is practicing being kind, deep, virtuous, truthful, giving, and most of all, accepting of your own dear self -- you will find that you will experience the very thing you wanted all along:

Love. 🍷🍷

(CS\_REL\_Why you're not married...1\_THREAD)

The only possible clues about the communicative intention of the sender are the emoticons added at the end of the text which do not appear in the original source. From them we can interpret that the original poster laughs at the ideas contained in this message. However, it is every individual's responsibility to interpret this laugh as an accessory or insulting one. Nevertheless, what we consider of special importance, as it has been mentioned in different examples throughout the different sections of this chapter, is the fact that the sexist ideas transmitted by the text are there, open for interpretation and, therefore, with the pernicious potential of transmitting and maintaining sexist attitudes without further control or criticism.



We consider that this message deploys an androcentric perspective all along. The main idea of the text is that every woman, regardless of her opinions, background, dreams, aspirations or lifestyle will desire, at one point in her life, to get married. The idea that women need a man in their lives in order to be complete and happy is the main idea of this text and, therefore, men are placed at the centre of the stage. The writer of the text explains that, at a particular time in every woman's life, we start wondering why we are not married, even if this is not an idea that has been present in our life up to that moment, women need to search security and stability at a certain moment in their lives. The writer, who has been married three times, presents her experience and knowledge about the issue in order to offer light to those desperate women who need to put a man in their lives.

The writer presents six reasons that may justify why any woman reading this text is not married. A clear sign of androcentrism is present in *But I won't lie. The problem is not men, it's you*, where, if anyone is to blame for the fact that a woman is not married, it is always the woman herself who is not doing something right. Being a bitch, swallow, a slut, a liar, selfish or not good enough are the basic reasons she gives why a woman may not be married. The ideas behind these reasons are, from our perspective, extremely sexist since they help transmit very traditional ideas on gender and gender relations. Women are described as needing to please their men, of course, assuming that heterosexuality is the norm. Showing yourself as a happy, calm and relaxed woman is essential in order to obtain their main objective in life, a man to share their lives with. Nevertheless, these characteristics need to be faked if they do not come naturally to them because, otherwise, women will fail in their basic objective.

Moreover, traditional stereotypes are used to describe both men and women. On the one hand, men are described, basically, by using the image of the writer's son, as simple, plane and sexual beings. On the other hand, women are described as complex, cold and competing beings. This, in turn, although done subtly along the text, can be critically pointed at in particular linguistic examples like *Here's what my son wants out of life: macaroni and cheese, a video game, and Kim Kardashian or the oxytocin kicks in. You start wanting more. But you don't tell him that. That's your secret -- just between you and 22,000 of your closest girlfriends*, where no explicit overt sexist item is used but where a clear gendered vision is presented where the man is located at the centre of every action.

On many other occasions, however, androcentrism is not deployed throughout long and complex discourses but in concrete and specific claims made by certain participants. This can be observed, for example, in thread number 106 from the same forum, *CS\_SEX\_Do you mind them masturbating\_THREAD*:

Example 307

I was really surprised a few years ago when my friend said her boyfriend didn't masterbate now he was with her and she'd be really offended if he did. I thought this was ridiculous and couldn't see a problem with it.

At the time I hadn't had a relationship and thought perhaps I just didn't understand, but i've been in one for a year now and really don't see a problem with it, if i'm not there I see no reason for him to not 'sort himself out'.

Her reasoning was she'd feel she wasn't giving him enough if he had to do it on his own. I think she also said she just didn't like the idea of him doing it. I wouldn't feel like that at all, I know that my boyfriend will often do it the day before he comes over or something so that he can last longer and stuff, I think it's actually quite considerate really :P

(*CS\_SEX\_Do you mind them masturbating1\_THREAD*)

Once the problem has been presented, the original poster states her/his position by claiming that she/he has no problem with masturbation. In fact, she differentiates between the time when she/he was not in a relationship and now that she/he is. The original poster considers that this situation, the fact of being or not in a relationship, may change one's perception of the world. Now that she/he forms part of the people in a relationship she/he can give her/his opinion about this issue. The original poster presents a conflicting message with that of her friend by claiming that she/he sees no affront in her partner masturbating. However, a few lines later, in the words *Her reasoning was she'd feel she wasn't giving him enough if he had to do it on his own. [...] I wouldn't feel like that at all, I know that my boyfriend will often do it the day before he comes over or something so that he can last longer and stuff, I think it's actually quite considerate really*, the original poster is revealing a hidden perspective in which men are the main focus of attention. She believes that the girl mentioned, the one who had problems with masturbation, really had those because she thought that she was not enough for her partner, that she could not satisfy her partner's sexual needs and, therefore, he had to *sort himself out*. We can assume that, underlying this idea, as in previous examples, there is an androcentric perspective that locates men over women and these in an inferior position in which they have to satisfy their men. This, besides, is a traditional script which, after being constantly repeated in different forms and

contexts, as the ones presented in the examples in this section, may permeate the minds of the participants in these CMC environments and communities of practice. However, the original poster claims that she/he does not agree with that idea and that she/he actually knows that her/his partner masturbates before seeing her/him. This is seen from her/his perspective as a considerate act because it will allow him to last longer and, therefore, the original poster's needs will have more time to be fulfilled, i.e. the time he lasts and no more, by the way. Nevertheless, if we go a bit deeper into that comment, we could suggest that what the original poster is actually doing is justifying her/his partner's act of masturbation and, again, establishing a natural bond between men and sex. We could imply that the original poster, in spite of trying to show an open image of her/himself, what she/he is actually doing is suggesting that men have greater sexual needs than women and that these need to be satisfied one way or another. This, again, presents stereotypical and traditional roles for both men and women. On the one hand, men are shown as extremely sexually demanding and women as always trying to provide men with satisfaction, either by actively interfering or by passively allowing them to satisfy their needs in other ways. Moreover, the side smiley *:P* is used at the end of the sentence as a multimodal element. This icon is used when the sender of the messages seeks agreement with their interlocutors. When we stick our tongue out in conversation we are performing a communicative intention, we are indirectly asking for our interlocutors' agreement and sympathy. In this specific context, the sender of the message is inciting other users to agree with her/his ideas and, therefore, to accept the subliminal message she/he is projecting. Nevertheless, as we mentioned earlier, each individual receiver will interpret this message in different terms and their reaction will also be different.

Something similar can be observed in thread number 141, *CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls....relief on bad week!!\_THREAD*. In this particular example, the original poster presents the problem that raises the discussion. We would suggest that, in this particular case, the original poster performs the gender identity of hegemonic masculinity transmitted by these communities of practice as presented in Chapter 4. One of the main reasons is that she/he identifies her/himself with a male persona and adheres to the traditional script of the strong and innate connection between men and sexuality. Regarding this idea, the fact that her/his girlfriend is on her period once a month is becoming a serious problem for her/him because she/he does not get the attention she/he thinks she/he deserves despite trying to get it by means of treating her/his girlfriend

better for her/his interest. Moreover, we consider that the fact that being on the period is described as the *bad week* can be considered to connotatively transmit sexist attitudes, since this collocation cannot be claimed to refer to women's personal feelings in this particular case but to men's lack of sexual attention during that period:

#### Example 308

Just wondered what happens with ur boyfriends/husbands etc when u r on ur period i.e do they get left to sort themselves, is it blowjob week or do u even carry on having sex??

The reason I ask is that I get nothing from my gf, not even a suggestion of anything. Doesn't matter how much I look after her, run her baths, buy her chocolate, fill her hot water bottle...nothing. I've brought it up before but it gets me nowhere. I'm running out of patience and something which shouldnt be an issue is becoming a big one!

(CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls....relief on bad week!!1\_THREAD)

A few posts later, the original poster intervenes again claiming that she/he understands various comments that have already been made which point out to the fact that being on the period can be extremely difficult for some women. However, the original poster still considers that she/he deserves certain amount of sexual attention *even if she is out of action*. She/he further justifies this statement by providing a personal example in which she/he has been out of action due to something *worse than a period*, and she/he still fulfilled her/his sexual obligations with her/his girlfriend. Nevertheless, it is important to notice how the fulfilment of her/his sexual obligations was not only carried out taking into account her/his girlfriends' needs but also the fact that she/he missed sexual contact which, from our perspective, may be classified as an instance of androcentrism:

#### Example 309

I get ur point and i understand cramps are really bad. Believe me if I didn't have a regular five knuckle shuffle I'd burst 😊but it's nice to get a bit of sexual attention even if she's out of action. I've been out of action with sumthing worse than a period and felt disgusting and sex was thelast thing on my mind but I still went down on her regularly bcos I missed sexual contact and wanted to keep her satisfied!!

(CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!1\_THREAD)

The idea that men are naturally more sexual than women and that they are the centre of attention is also a recurrent androcentric theme in this discussion. Because of the roots of this gender script, the particular instances in which men control themselves

and their sexual impulses are considered as heroic acts which need, in a way, to be rewarded. Moreover, women's indoctrination in fulfilling their heterosexual partner's desires also contributes to maintain this androcentric perspective, as it can be observed in the following examples from this thread:

#### Example 310

i think you have to respect the fact that she might not be feeling great when shes on and just because you do nice things for her doesnt me you should expect sexual favours in return! you should do these things because you love her!  
my OH never mentions having sex or getting a bj when im on and if he did i would get annoyed and not want to do it, and because he doesnt ask he often gets a bj or anal sex from me, so try having a little more respect and you might get somewhere!  
(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 311

I've never had sex when on but i do try to keep my man satisfied because he works away and i like to be as intimate as possible when he's home even if i am "out of action"! Usually i give him blow jobs and full body massages and stuff just to keep him happy 😊  
(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!5\_THREAD*)

These examples may also serve to illustrate how androcentrism can be transmitted in concrete ideas with strong ideological loads. For example, the ideological construction of sex in these cyber communities of practice is very much related to penetration and, therefore, the active role of men in sex. Any other practices are not classified as sex in themselves but as *other things* which may be substitutes of real or full sex understood from an androcentric perspective:

#### Example 312

We have sex when i'm on but near the end. Even when i'm at my heaviest i still initiate it but we end up doing other things besides sex. [...]  
(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 313

I don't have periods (hurray Implanon), but when I did I abstained from sex, too messy, always have white sheets UGH. But I'd give him a hand/BJ if necessary. [...]  
(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!1\_THREAD*)

#### Example 314

[...] I wouldnt have sex tho coz I think its a bit ickey, but he gets well spoiled coz i dont think he shud have to go without just coz I have to.  
(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!2\_THREAD*)

## Example 315

Instead of bringing her a cup of tea, why not lay down on the sofa/in bed with her, give her some romantic attention rather than sexual attention, kiss her for a bit. Maybe thats more of a way to turn her on than expecting her to sort you out  
 (CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!3\_THREAD)

Later on in the discussion, the original poster intervenes again with the following comment. There, the original poster recognises that her/his words may be considered sexist or, at least, inappropriate in the context where this cyber community of practice develops since she/he expects a *lynching* for his comment. Nevertheless, she/he exerts her/his right to freedom of speech and expresses her/his idea on how she/he considers she/he should be rewarded for helping her/his girlfriend in going through her period. In a way, she/he tries to describe himself as a hero who does things to help her/his woman out of her problems and, as such, deserves a reward:

## Example 316

It seems girls are either very unselfish and look after their man no matter what or just have no thoughts of anything sexual at all. There seems to be no middle ground.  
 I honestly do think I deserve to be rewarded if I look after her and make her time of the month as comfortable as possible so I dont think it's too much to ask for the odd blow or hand job at some point when she feels less ill. It takes what.... 10 or 20 mins and would keep me happy.  
 Women seem to be getting more and more selfish with regards to sex and everything is geared to what women want. I think us men need to grow back our nuts and demand to be looked after haha I look forward to a lynching  
 (CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!2\_THREAD)

Androcentrism does also come to the surface in this discussion through conflicting messages. It is not difficult to find particular instances where certain individuals start their interventions by accusing the original poster of being unfair since men do not need to be rewarded for having to wait patiently during their partner's period yet they consider that the innate bond between men and sex needs to be satisfied by women in some way or another. Therefore, paying more attention to men's needs than women's themselves, as it can be observed in the following examples, is strengthened in these comments:

## Example 317

Okay I have to say I see both sides of the argument here. Yes when I'm on the first few days of my period I'm not feeling very flipping sexy! I feel spotty and bloated

and BLEURGH! BUT... Nor would I expect my man to go a whole week without any form of intimacy.Plus I often find (probably because we know I know I can't have it) that my libido rockets in "that week". Sometimes not being able to have actual penetration can be great fun. It means you have to take your time and the want but can't have atmosphere really intensifies things. And yes if I have to be a little selfless and do stuff for him that he can't do for me then well he has a whole three weeks to make it up to me...

(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!3\_THREAD*)

#### Example 318

I can understand you are frustrated, but its a little unfair to say you should be rewarded. You should be doing those things for her anyway if you love her.

On saying that though, i always make sure my man gets plenty of action when im on. I dont feel horny when im cramping or heavy but id still give him a hand or blow job!! we have had sex while im on and its a bit gross and sore for me, i still did it though, its a bit better with a condom, looks less horrific lol!!

Usually though i feel quite horny when im on, but whether im in the mood or not ill still pleasure my man thats just the way i am.

(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!4\_THREAD*)

#### Example 319

I think the maybe if you kiss her she'll do this kind of posts are genuinely trying to help?

Anyway, i'm kinda with you on this one Andy. I agree you maybe haven't come across very well 😊Yes it's not long out of the month, but i sort of see what you mean. I've got i think the same STI you've got and it gets me every 1/2 months, but i don't ignore my OH sexually when its around. And its really frustrating not being able to fully participate but i still want to give him something, even though i'm in raw agony sometimes! I would feel like i was ignoring him if i didn't, even though hes never said that, so its not hard just to make your OH happy for 10 mins. Its just a given to me.

(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!5\_THREAD*)

#### Example 320

[...] there will probably be 8 days every 28 when I can't do anything, and I hope my OH will understand that

But if the pain is minimal then of course I'll pleasure him; if the bleeding is light, I also don't mind having sex while on (though sometimes it's very painful, but I'll usually give it a go).

(*CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!6\_THREAD*)

Some other threads in our corpus also display very particular instances of androcentrism in concrete examples. This may be the case of thread number 129 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, titled *CS\_SEX\_Magic number\_THREAD*. On this particular occasion, the thread deals with what participants refer to as the *magic number*, that is, the number of people a person has slept with. It can be observed how certain participants consider that sleeping with women and not men may be different in terms

of identifying a particular act as sex or not. Again, the idea that real and full sex involves male penetration permeates the discourse:

Example 321

are these numbers just men you have slept with or does a member of the same sex count?

(CS\_SEX\_Magic number1\_THREAD)

Thread number 133 from the same forum, CS\_SEX\_New rules\_THREAD, can also be claimed to ooze androcentrism sheltered under the same ideas in relation to sex presented in Example 321. In this case, certain interventions suggest that any sexual practice that does not involve penetration, at least by a fake penis, as it may be the case of lesbian couples, would not be classified as having sex:

Example 322

Well, lesbians can't have penetrative sex without strap ons...so that's probably why

(CS\_SEX\_New rules1\_THREAD)

Example 323

I just noticed spookz comment. NO....sex is never classified as anything other than penetrative. I've never heard anyone refer to having had sex with someone when in fact they mean kissed or gave/received oral or whatever else!

Lillys\_games you can't have me I'm spoken for. Your flirting is in vain I'm afraid but there's plenty more fish in the sea!!

(CS\_SEX\_New rules3\_THREAD)

Example 324

She is actually but I'll tell her anyway thanks!! You do need a d.i.c.k to f.u.c.k trust me. If a guy goes down on a woman he would never claim to have had sex with her, would he??

(CS\_SEX\_New rules3\_THREAD)

Thread number 140 from the same forum also provides an interesting example of androcentrism. The original poster opens this discussion asking for help in the search of what she/he terms *porn for women*. The original poster further specifies this term by claiming that she/he is not looking for woman on woman kind of porn neither the *crap for men that's out there*. The first intervention in this discussion is reproduced in the following example. There, the participant shows surprise in front of what may be considered something non-existent, *porn for women*. Apart from the lack of recognition



of women's specific sexual needs, the following statement also contributes to project an image in which men are considered the norm against which any other human being, regardless of their gender, must be measured:

#### Example 325

What on earth is porn for women?  
 Surely you lot get turned on by the same stuff predominantly  
 (*CS\_SEX\_Pornography especially for women1\_THREAD*)

It is not difficult to find similar examples in the *Men's Health forum*. In Thread number 18, for example, *MH\_REL\_Single and needamale perspective\_THREAD*<sup>60</sup>, the original poster identifies him/herself with a female gender identity and starts this discussion in the search of advice that may guide him/her in obtaining his/her objective, a man. After a few suggestions, the original poster intervenes again with the following comment:

#### Example 326

d4ve, i suspect you are a fan of a boob sandwich?? 🤔 beau, i ve tried the online dating thing, mixed success, i am a sociable person, but with men i fancy, i fall to pieces! i also live in a tiny wee place where there are no eligible bachelors so im taking the plunge and moving to somewhere bigger, where there is more opportunities for jobs etc. i suppose i will have to grab my balls (not in the literal sense 🤔)

(*MH\_REL\_Single and needamale perspective1\_THREAD*)

The expression used in the last sentence of this intervention sheds light into what can be considered as androcentric perspective. The expression *i will have to grab my balls* and the extra information added between brackets, *not in the literal sense*, together with the emoticon added at the end of it, may help identify an instance of androcentrism. The original poster feels the need to express the necessity of plucking up his/her courage and approach men in a different way in order to obtain his/her objective. However, the expression he/she uses makes reference to a typical male action, that of touching their testicles, sometimes a spontaneous reaction, when men need to do something courageous. Moreover, the fact that the original poster laughs at the fact that this is not an expression that can be applied literally to his/her situation, since he/she has no testicles, demonstrates the way in which the male perspective is embedded into

<sup>60</sup> See section 5.3.1 for further information on this thread.

society, especially when associated with stereotypical male features such as courage or bravery.

In thread number 28 from the same forum it can also be observed how men are considered the centre of every action, in this case, the centre of any sexual act. The original poster starts this discussion with the aim of getting specific advice that may improve his/her ability in giving cunnilingus. However, several participants intervene in the discussion, distorting the original objective. These participants redirect the conversation towards the necessity of men's satisfaction during the sexual act. These participants claim that, under no circumstances should women have cunnilingus hadn't they given fellatio before. This fact may be perceived as an example of androcentrism where men are considered the most important figures during the sexual act and whose satisfaction must be imposed on women:

#### Example 327

My tip is to never go down on a girl that won't give you a blow job in return. It just spoils them.

Stuff that, never go down on a girl who hasn't already given you a blow job. She has to earn it, ffs<sup>61</sup>...

(*MH\_SEX\_Advice on licking your girlfriend out2\_THREAD*)

#### Example 328

ok LL so kissing her urethra could give her a UTI but %&\*\$# in a lads mouth is not even given a mention by you. heartless 😏 [...]

and and under no circumstances even if you really really want to never give a lickout until your d!ck has been in and around her mouth. i love giving lick outs but rules are rules

(*MH\_SEX\_Advice on licking your girlfriend out2\_THREAD*)

Finally, thread number 40 from the same forum, *MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm\_THREAD*, may also provide us with good concrete examples of androcentrism in our corpus. This discussion spins around a particular case where the original poster exposes his/her difficulties in keeping up rhythm with his/her partner during the sexual act. In Example 329 a participant in the discussion intervenes claiming that he/she expects his/her partner to know what exactly he/she wants from her/him in bed. This participant suggests that women tend to ask for approval and advice regarding sexual action and men want their heterosexual partners to be indoctrinated enough to know what the exact things they should be doing in bed are. In Example 330 this idea is

<sup>61</sup> *Ffs* stands for *for fuck sake*.

supported by the fact that women's needs are considered as unimportant during or after sex. The stereotypical idea that women need to feel loved after sex is emphasised in this example and, at the same time, devalued by the scorn expressed in the comments of the poster. Furthermore, the last example extends this stereotypical image of women in need of affection during or after sex. Although the writer of this post does not identify him/herself with that stereotype because *I just wanna go to sleep and not feel like a water bottles hugging me*, the following sentence –*Had a couple of boyfriends ... called me mantastic*– help reinforce the idea that men must be the centre of attention and their needs and demands should be firstly taken into account:

#### Example 329

I remember in my youth hearing girls saying "what you thinking?" or "what would you want me to do?", to be honest, i don't want to have to tell you, you should be using your own mind to think of ways to please me...

(MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm2\_THREAD)

#### Example 330

Another thing which i used to hate, is if when youve finished the girl would sort of not let you go to sleep by hugging you or wanting you to spoon them...i like my sleep and my own personal space. Thank god I'm in a relationship where I dont have to bother about these things anymore!

(MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm2\_THREAD)

#### Example 331

[...] I haven't had a ONS since I was a teen!

I don't tend to be cuddly or want to talk or spoon after sex, I just wanna go to sleep and not feel like a water bottles hugging me.

Had a couple of boyfriends take offence to it and called me mantastic. 🤔

(MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm2\_THREAD)

We consider that all the examples presented in this section contribute to validate Mills' (2008) suggestion that androcentrism still plays an essential role in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes. As we have observed in this specific section, many of the examples provided are long and extensive pieces of text which do not contain specific and open sexist elements but, still, project an image of the world in which the dualistic gender divide between men and women is very much strengthened. Furthermore, that gender divide is not presented as egalitarian since the male part of the division is always praised or put as the centre of attention of any act, especially those related with sex. This fact, on the one hand, helps reinforce the idea that women are a

subordinated and homogeneous group of human beings who need to get a man in order to be complete and, in order to do so, they must adhere to certain norms of behaviour in which men are considered superior to them. On the other hand, the extensive connection between men and sex also contributes to further reinforce the traditional script of the innate connection between men and sex which, in turn, also helps transmit a sexist and gendered vision of society.

In any case, we consider that androcentrism is a very subtle and subjective discourse feature which needs to be brought up to light when felt or detected in discourse. As we suggested earlier, senders of particular messages or other interlocutors may contest our vision of the message and suggest that no androcentrism was intended or detected in a given message. However, as it is the case with the other discourse features analysed in this chapter –and as Mills (2008) suggests– we consider that new forms of subtle and indirect sexism are better fought against by means of visible and critical analyses. Of course, the possibility of being accused of not understanding the context or reading too much into lines is always there but we strongly believe that it is our right and obligation, both as critical discourse analysts and as citizens, to present to other members of our communities of practice and society in general what may be considered as sexist and, therefore, pernicious for the correct and healthy development of our society.

In this section, as it was the case with section 5.3.5 dealing with collocations and discourse constellations, we may notice how the number of examples may be more visible than the discourse explanations themselves. This derives from the intrinsic nature of these specific discourse features, as it was explained at the end of section 5.3.5. We consider that the nature of androcentrism –as it was the case with collocations and discourse constellations– leads researchers to the presentation of different kinds of examples. In the case of discourse constellations and collocations, the intrinsic characteristics of this discourse feature claimed for the presentation of a wide variety of examples that, sometimes, may be considered overwhelming but that we deemed important in order to highlight concrete ideological and critical ideas. Something similar occurs with the discourse feature of androcentrism. However, in this case, the intrinsic nature of this discourse mechanism claims for the presentation of long and well-articulated examples in which, most of the times, no particular lexical or linguistic elements signal the androcentric perspective. Nevertheless, these long and complex

examples are a living proof of the complexities and intricate ways in which discourse may intervene in the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes.

This, of course, leads us, as we claimed earlier, to validate Mills' (2008) inclusion of the category of androcentrism as one of the main discourse features by means of which sexism can be transmitted by means of language. Nevertheless, as it has been highlighted here and in previous sections, and as it will be further developed in section 6.2, we believe that Mills' (2008) model, although perfectly suitable for the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism in our specific corpus of CMD, should also be submitted to further criticism. Just as a hint, it is important to highlight, as we did in sections 5.3.3, 5.3.4 and 5.3.5, that we would not consider the particular discourse feature of androcentrism as especially characteristic or relevant within the concrete context of CMD under analysis in this study. We consider that the intrinsic nature of the phenomenon makes it a wide-ranging and rather universal mechanism that may not be considered concrete of this specific context of communication. Unlike humour and presuppositions, which strongly depend on the social and medium factors of the CMD under scrutiny here, we consider that androcentrism –as it was the case with conflicting messages, scripts and metaphors or collocations and discourse constellations– should be better considered a discourse feature that helps maintain sexist attitudes through linguistic mechanisms but which, because of its intrinsic nature, should not be classified as specific of the kind of CMD under analysis here.

With all this information in mind, we conclude that it is important to make explicit the fact that this chapter has served us for the purpose of validating Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism in a concrete corpus of CMD. Nevertheless, as it has been discerned in each section, and as it will be further explained in section 6.2, different considerations should also be presented. On the one hand, it is important to highlight that even though all the categories presented by Mills' (2008) have been found to be present in the analysis of our corpus, we believe that, because of the concrete medium and social factors of the specific communicative situations under analysis here, not all of them appear as equally relevant. We have brought forward how, because of these social and medium factors, humour and presuppositions should be considered as more salient categories than the other discourse features presented by Mills' (2008) in relation to the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism in this specific corpus. On the other hand, besides, we also want to put on display that, after having submitted our corpus to the detailed analysis presented in this chapter, we also believe that other

categories should be included in order to improve Mills' (2008) model and adapt it to the specificities of our particular CMD corpus. As we mentioned earlier, however, these ideas will be further developed in Chapter 6, more precisely, in section 6.2, when the specific answers to our concrete research questions will be presented.

**Section III**

**Conclusions and**

**Future Directions**





**Chapter 6**  
**Conclusions of the Project**  
**and Future Research**  
**Directions**

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## 6. Conclusions of the Project and Future Research Directions

At this point, looking at what has been explained in this project in order to have a general overview of the work done so far must be considered an essential step.

Section I served as a presentation and explanation of the main theoretical concepts that sustain this project. There, three different chapters were included where the different basic theoretical and conceptual notions of our thesis were developed and explained in detail. Section II consisted of two different chapters. Firstly, a quantitative and qualitative description of our corpus was carried out and, secondly, a detailed analysis of that corpus was provided where the main theoretical and conceptual notions of Section I were applied, thus forming the practical application of our work.

It was in Section I, Chapter 3, where a detailed presentation of the tool that was going to be followed for the critical analysis of our corpus was presented and explained. Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) was presented as the most suitable toolkit for the analysis of computer-mediated discourse (CMD) intended to be followed in this project, more precisely, the main aim of this research was that of analysing the negotiation of gender (in)equalities by means of the use of indirect linguistic sexism in virtual socio-ideological texts (online discussion forums) associated to institutional discourses (online gendered magazines) targeted at specific communities of practice ([heterosexual] men and women from the UK, consumers and participants of these discourses).

It has already been mentioned that the negotiation of social practices online should be considered as a social practice *per se* where linguistic and multimodal elements mingle in a way that favours researchers' access to data both from a micro and a macro level (Herring 2004). In consonance with this vision of CMD, CMDA can be claimed to be an approach with both a linguistic and a social focus. In this light, the main theoretical assumptions of CMDA are (Herring 2004): i) that discourse, on the one hand, exhibits recurrent patterns which may help researchers identify ideological traces; ii) that discourse is also understood as freedom of choice since individuals choose among the linguistic and communicative material at their disposal in order to convey particular meanings and ideas; and iii) that discourse and, especially CMD, is considered to be shaped by the technological features of the computer-mediated communication systems at the disposal of its users.

As these are the main theoretical assumptions of this approach, its five-step procedure seems, from our perspective, quite useful to researchers following interests similar to ours. The first step within CMDA is that of stating the main research questions that motivate a particular study. The second is that of selecting the specific and adequate data where the main research questions are to be tested. The third step in this procedure is that of the operationalization of the key concepts that sustain a specific research. The fourth is the definition and application of a specific method of analysis to the selected data in order to empirically test the research questions posited in the first step. Finally, the fifth step of this approach is that related to the issues of interpretation of the main results extracted from the empirical analysis.

It is precisely this fifth step of the CMDA the one that we will present in this final chapter of our work. In section 3.2.1, we have already mentioned how, from an ideal perspective, the interpretation of the results extracted from the analysis should take into account both the medium and social factors specific to the environment in which the investigation has been carried out. In so doing, three different levels –namely the data, the research questions and the possible future directions– should be taken into account. With this structure in mind, a balanced position is intended here where open and broad generalisations are limited by the specificities of the CMD under analysis. Based on these ideas, this chapter is, therefore, structured under the three levels of interpretation proposed by the CMDA presented by Herring (2004). The first section of this chapter will include the general conclusions of this project, that is, we will briefly summarise and synthesise the main data and information contained in this investigation in order to present a compact and concise summary of our study. The second section of this chapter will deal with the specific answers found to our research questions and the interpretation of the main results extracted from our analysis. Finally, a third section will be included where the broadest level of interpretation will be implemented, that is, where the results of our investigation will help us delimit specific roads or paths that can or should be followed in future investigations related to the one carried out here, that is, regarding both linguistic sexism and CMC. This will require the extrapolation of our main particular findings to prospective alternative situations that may contribute to enrich both the fields of study of linguistic sexism within feminist language and gender studies and CMC.

## 6.1. General Conclusions of the Project

As we have just mentioned, the first section of this final chapter will deal with the first level of interpretation proposed by the CMDA (Herring 2004), that is, a brief summary and synthesis of the main data presented here.

We started this project by claiming that the main premise under which this investigation was started was that of an intense, inseparable and dynamic connection between language, thought and society. Empirical and daily observations can make this connection manifest but our main concern here was that of an academic approach to this idea.

As we briefly explained in the introduction to this study, different streams of thought have approached the dynamic and flexible connection between language thought and reality. On the one hand, there is a well-established view which considers that there is no connection at all among these elements and that languages are mere systems of symbols that serve a plain communicative purpose. On the other hand, a second torrent of opinion considers that there is a connection between languages, thought and society, however, different shades or degrees of commitment to this claim can be found. Some consider that languages are a reflection of the society in which they are created and, therefore of their users and creators' minds. Others consider that languages determine the society in which they are used by means of shaping their users' minds. Finally, there is a third group of people who consider that both options are correct, that is, they believe that languages both reflect and determine the socio-ideological systems of the societies and cultures in which they are used. It is precisely this final position the one that allows us to claim that there is a strong and flexible dialectic connection between language, thought and society (Holtgraves and Yoshihisa 2008). It is this dynamic connection between these three elements that allows us to claim that, therefore, social variables, such as gender, have an intense connection with linguistic and ideological issues, which is the basis of this research.

Using this as our main premise, we can claim that our investigation can be framed within what is known as feminist language and gender studies. More precisely, our main contribution in this field of research has to do with an analysis of how the relation between gender and language is manifested, represented and created by means of subtle linguistic resources in particular communities of practice particularly salient in the highly technological era in which we live.

This objective led us to follow a community of practice (CofP) framework according to which the concrete sociolinguistic question under analysis in this thesis should be studied in a relevant and salient locus for a qualitative analysis of the representations of gender (in)equalities in language use. In so doing, a further and more general study of the institutional or broader social framework in which those communities were embedded was also aimed at.

Having established our main objective in this study we decided to present some basic and central concepts to our investigation in the introduction to this research. We considered that this was the place where the most relevant conceptual issues of our investigation should be presented because these would constitute the framework of our research.

The terms *discourse* and *ideologies* can be claimed to be essential in understanding more recent conceptions of *power*. *Discourse* was defined here as a three-fold concept in which textual material, discursive practices and social practices mingle in order to create a tangible product where ideologies can be directly analysed. This is so because ideologies, understood as systems of ideas or shared representations (Van Dijk 2006), can be claimed to be acquired, confirmed, changed and perpetuated by members of particular societies by means of discourse. The relationship between gender and language, therefore, can be claimed to be manifested and created by means of discourse which, at the same time, has an ideological basis which, on the one hand, can be said to condemn and even penalise any deviation from the norm but which, on the other hand, can be used by members of societies as starting points to create or transform ideologies.

Based on this connection between discourse and ideologies, it can be understood how the routinization of certain linguistic practices or discourses become common ground in certain societies and cultures and, therefore, may pass unnoticed by researchers and language users. This routinization of discursive practices can be claimed to be the basis of the negotiation of power in modern societies. The sometimes subtle or indirect repetition of recurrent patterns of discourse that are sociocognitively coded and decoded by members of different societies and cultures help maintain the sense of community and common endeavour. This systematicity of opinions, concepts and ways of behaving within particular contexts are the basis of hegemony, that is, the internalisation of norms and acts routinized by means of discourses promulgated in our everyday life.

Having, therefore, explained the main concepts on which our research is based and having also stated our main objective in the introduction, we proceeded to Section I, which contains the main theoretical and conceptual notions of our research. Section I consists of three main chapters. Chapter 1 was devoted to the explanation and description of the main conceptual notion of our research, that of indirect linguistic sexism. Chapter 2 served the purpose of presenting the context in which our investigation was going to be carried out, namely that of online gendered magazines and online discussion forums. Finally, in Chapter 3, the tools of analysis that were going to be used in our study were presented and analysed. Let us now synthesise the main information provided in each of them.

Chapter 1, entitled *Indirect Linguistic Sexism*, was devoted to define, locate and present a brief historical outline of the focal point of our thesis, – i.e. indirect linguistic sexism. For this purpose, we firstly presented a panoramic view of both feminism and gender studies as political and academic movements. The idea of dimorphism is behind both movements since the conception that the human race is divided into two biological differentiated categories, that of men and women, settles the basis for social, ideological and linguistic differences, which are the basis of both feminism and gender and language studies.

Feminism can be understood as a political and academic movement that emerged, with First Wave Feminism, around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Anglo-Saxon countries. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, feminism had acquired a consistent political and social agenda that turned around key concepts such as education, social issues and employment.

These first breaths of feminism were followed, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, by what is known as Second Wave Feminism. This second stage is characterised by the emergence of the concept of gender as a separate but yet linked idea to that of biological sex. The understanding of the human race as both physical but also social beings started to have an influence on different domains such as sociology, psychology, anthropology or language studies. Nevertheless, the idea of gender was by that time conceived of as a stable, dual and concrete category that was applied to people according to their biological sex.

However, it was by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> when the concept of gender started to be conceived of as a changeable, malleable and dynamic category that depended, not only on the biological sex of the person, but also

on other social and cultural variables. The notion of the performativity of gender in different communicative contexts started to permeate the discourses of scholars interested in feminist issues. By this time, the idea of power appeared onto the stage as a fundamental concept related to gender since power was no longer understood as an individual force but as a form of negotiation in different contexts. This new universe in the conception of gender and human relations has been labelled as Third Wave Feminism.

Almost hand in hand with these feminist waves, the emergence and development of gender and language studies can be analysed from an almost parallel perspective. The emergence of gender and language studies can be traced back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, during Second Wave Feminism. As we mentioned, by this time, the social differences between the sexes were studied from different domains and language, understood as a vehicle for human communication and the expression and creation of reality, was one of them. Moreover, this period also witnessed a discursive turn within language studies, a turn towards a more pragmatic look at languages which was, in fact, a crucial issue in the convergence of feminism and language and gender studies.

Gender and language studies can, in general terms, be classified into two different branches, namely i) that of the study of how men and women use language and ii) the study of how gender is represented in language. Both branches can be viewed from a feminist or non-feminist perspective, as we saw in Chapter 1. However, there is a movement in gender and language studies at the moment that defends a feminist perspective. Moreover, these two branches have also developed towards more modern perceptions in which a dynamic and flexible conception of gender is essential. Since men and women can no longer be considered as homogeneous and static groups of people, gender can no longer be perceived as an abstract and pre-existing category that plays a role in language or social performance. Instead, gender is now perceived as something people do in specific communicative situations as a conscious choice. Because of this new conception, studies on language and gender started to move away from the analysis of specific and concrete linguistic examples into the study of broader discursive contexts where the performance of gender could be analysed. Nevertheless, although this may seem a separation from the original standards of feminism as a fight against differences, the new conception of gender as a localised practice still bears a strong connection with broader socio-cultural frameworks that determine individuals' particular and localised choices. Therefore, a feminist perspective –understood as a



political and academic cause in favour of human equality– can (and should) still be applied to gender and language studies.

Going a step further into the study of language and gender, and focusing on the second branch mentioned above, we find the study of what has been called linguistic sexism. As it can be inferred, within the study of how gender is represented in and by languages, the concept of sexism plays a relevant role. The concept of sexism, understood as discrimination or as a bias in specific fields paying particular attention to gender and sex issues can, of course, be applied to languages.

The study of linguistic sexism emerged during Second Wave Feminism and, therefore, with the appearance of gender and language studies. This particular field of analysis has also undergone a strong but fluid development towards the adaptation of newer models and concepts within both feminism and gender studies. The constructivist approach and the discursive turn have strongly influenced the development of the study of linguistic sexism up to the point where different levels can be identified. As Mills (2008) suggests, the beginnings of this field of study were centred upon the analysis of concrete and specific lexical items, or even syntactical structures, that could mark a gender bias in language in favour of men. Women were claimed to be trivialised, omitted and devalued by means of linguistic mechanisms below the lexical or the syntactic level of language, a phenomenon which can be labelled as direct linguistic sexism. The consequences of this kind of analysis can be seen in what is known as the Feminist Language Reform (Pauwels 1998), whose main objective is the eradication of linguistic sexism and the obtaining of gender equality in language.

However, this first stage within the study of linguistic sexism had to adapt itself to the new constructivist model within feminist theory and the newer discursive turn in linguistic studies. This adaptation resulted into the emergence of what is known as the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism. The idea that power, gender and meaning are negotiated in context led researchers in this field to focus on more subtle and indirect manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism which went beyond the lexical and the syntactic level. Now, discourse is taken into account in the analysis of this phenomenon. Because of this, particular and localised examples of language use are subjected to analysis and studied from a constructivist and pragmatic perspective. This, again, can (and should) be done from a feminist perspective that seeks the objective of human equality in every social, cultural and ideological domain.

Having outlined the main tendencies within both feminism and gender and language studies and, therefore, having explained the general conceptual framework of the main concept under study in this project, it was high time to scrutinise the context where that concept was going to be studied.

Chapter 2 of this project, entitled *Online Magazines and the Gender Perspective*, was devoted to examine the topic of traditional gendered magazines targeted at men and women. However, since we were interested in the analysis of how gender and linguistic sexism was manifested in new and contemporary means of communication, we decided to centre upon the online versions of those publications.

In this chapter, we stated that online magazines can be considered as virtual gendered spaces at an institutional level which irradiate an influence on localised discursive practices. Due to this idea, we considered that it was essential to present a brief history of the institutional genre of gendered magazines in order to have an overview of its importance in the new technological and virtual world.

By reason of the constructivist ideas within feminism and gender and language studies, performativity can be claimed to be based on the acquisition, appropriation and use of different models presented to individuals which are considered to be acceptable in specific communities of practice. Those models can be understood as sources of power since, although they can be modified or fought against, they present dominant (gendered) discourses that can influence individuals' lives.

In this chapter we devoted a few paragraphs to describe what can be considered the main essential characteristics of magazines as a form of popular culture or genre. For example, ideas related to their main function as market products, the audiences to which they are addressed, the main purposes regarding both text producers and text interpreters and their recognisable discourse (in spite of their heterogeneous organisational structure) were explained in this chapter.

The fact of dealing in detail with the figures of text producer and text interpreter was very important for our purpose of describing the context of gendered magazines. We mentioned how magazines can be considered as models of socio-ideological behaviour for individuals of certain communities of practice and, therefore, how these models can be claimed to be sources of power. This power is held, mainly, by text producers who, from their creative perspective, construct an ideal persona to which their product is addressed. However, this power is negotiated with text interpreters who take those ideals and accept, adapt, modify or reject them according to their needs within

their own specific communicative contexts. It is here where we located the interconnection between the institutional and the local, where gendered magazines and their recent online versions could be claimed to be favourable loci for the analysis of social gender (in)equalities from the perspective of Third Wave Feminism and the new approaches to the phenomenon of linguistic sexism within gender and language studies.

In order to go in depth into this claim, we presented a section where the connection between lifestyle magazines and gender was studied. The basically economic interest of the genre almost intrinsically favours a dichotomous vision of society where the gender war, although in subtle and indirect ways, still maintains traditional and stereotypical gender roles that ensure the continuation of specific markets for their products (Alexander 2003).

Lifestyle magazines, as gendered textual genres, play a fundamental role in constructing, maintaining and spreading a variety of gendered discourses of femininities and masculinities. As we explained, this is mainly achieved through discourse, paying particular attention to linguistic and multimodal elements characteristic of the genre.

The hegemonic forms of masculinities and femininities promoted by these publications were claimed to be as varied as magazines themselves. However, as Dellinger (2004: 547) suggests, there are certain forms which can be considered “legitimate and protected versions” of masculinities and femininities in particular societies.

In the case of the hegemonic form of femininity promulgated by lifestyle gendered magazines targeted at women, we studied how the image they present of women intends to be a generalist one. The image of women is linked to a sub-cultural group, that of women, but not to society as a whole. Therefore, the world of women can be easily identified by means of certain concerns which are claimed to be shared by all women. Women’s lifestyle magazines were found to spin around particular repertoires of femininity that, in very general terms, were connected to i) trivial or non-relevant things; ii) the idea that women are simple beings interested in worldly matters; iii) relationships and sex were found to be the major spheres that determined women’s actions in life; and iv) beauty and physical appearance were claimed to be the ways for women to enter those spheres. Therefore, although trying to project an image of women which is appropriate to the Third Wave feminist era in which we live, women’s lifestyle magazines still rely on very traditional and stereotypical conceptions of the feminine

gender identity. These contradictions between modern and old, between egalitarian and stereotypical are behind the consumption ethics that regulate these publications.

Dealing with the hegemonic form of masculinity promoted by men's lifestyle magazines, it is important to remember that their history is, because of cultural and social reasons, shorter than that of their female counterparts. Before the 1980s, men were considered as sources of production with a stable and firm identity and role within society. Nevertheless, the social and cultural changes of the time in terms of political and social action led society as a whole towards the search of new models for masculinity. A new market was opened up, therefore, where men were presented with different models of masculinity to be copied or adapted by individuals in specific communicative contexts. As it was the case with women's publications, lifestyle magazines targeted at men also claim a generalist vision trying to cover a wide readership, but, contrary to that objective, they restrict their potential consumer market by depicting a limited number of gendered aspects. Nevertheless, while in the case of women's magazines the image of hegemonic femininity promulgated could be claimed to be rather homogeneous, in the case of men's publications two main forms of hegemonic masculinities can be detected. On the one hand, the figure of the *New Man* appeared around the 1980s. The new advances that different feminist movements had achieved in varied social and cultural domains led society towards the creation of a new figure that matched that new reality. The *New Man* can be claimed to be a gentle breeze against traditional and stereotypical forms of patriarchal masculinity where personal and family care can be considered as primary defining features of this figure. On the other hand, the *New Lad*, which emerged in the 1990s, can be considered a backlash against the feminist achievements in previous decades. This new form of hegemonic masculinity is characterised by a return to traditional patriarchal ideals such as the objectification of women, individuality, and the control of the public sphere. Again, the tension created by these different repertoires works in favour of the consumption ethics promulgated by gendered lifestyle magazines.

It is important to remember that these forms of hegemonic masculinity and femininity are presented to individuals by means of different sources of power, such as lifestyle magazines, and, later on, their acceptance, modification, adaptation or rejection depends on individuals' circumstances and communicative contexts during their social and gender performance.

The second section of this chapter dealt with the new ways in which gendered publications can be presented to their audience. Online gendered lifestyle magazines, as their printed counterpart, can be considered as gendered spaces at an institutional level with shared but also specific features.

This new means of communication, known as digital media, has promoted the emergence of the concept of digital media users (Livingston and Lievrow 2002) as a more suitable term to refer to the audience of these online publications. The control over the navigation and the interactivity that can be created with this online genre can be considered as essential features of online gendered magazines. This extra feature, provided by means of technological advances, allows users to interact with the institutional level. Therefore, online gendered magazines –or more precisely, specific sections within them, such as online discussion forums– can be considered as the perfect scenarios for the critical analysis of how social and gender identities are created and negotiated in context. The blend of the institutional and the local level provides – we believe– the perfect scenario for the analysis intended in this project.

In this chapter we also explained how CMC, integrated into new forms of digital media, allows researchers to bridge the gap in the analysis of how language and gender interplay in the constitution of different version of gender identity (Gregorio-Godeo and Molina-Plaza 2007) in localised examples framed by institutional broader structures because, as we explained in section 2.2.2 of this study, identity performativity or self-representation is “neither a matter of free choice (owing to its dependence on hegemonic discourses) nor of production only”; instead “gender construction is effective only if the recipient recognizes a performance as intelligibly gendered” (Motschenbacher 2009: 19) within the constantly shifting rules of specific groups or communities.

We consider that the analysis of the discursive construction of social and gender identities in CMC will allow us to expose current and real manifestations of the way linguistic sexism may play a role in it in the English language.

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 dealt with the main concept under analysis in this project and the context where it was decided to be studied respectively. Chapter 3, entitled *Indirect Linguistic Sexism and Online Discussion Forums: Tools for a Critical Analysis*, was devoted to analyse the most appropriate tools of analysis, taking into account our primary objective –that of analysing localised instances of social and gender identity negotiations through the phenomenon of linguistic sexism– and the

context selected for that purpose –the localised environment of online discussion forums ascribed to the gendered institutional area of online lifestyle magazines targeted at (heterosexual) men and women.

Firstly, the notions of multimodality, CMC and CMD were considered as the main theoretical concepts that framed our research. The rise of the Internet due to new technological breakthroughs and the emergence of new forms of communication such as CMC during the 1990s have marked an inflexion point in the analysis of any form of human behaviour. The web can now be considered as a space where individuals may exchange information and negotiate social power by means of, generally speaking, linguistic mechanisms supplemented by multimodal resources.

In this light, CMC can be considered a new means of communication which contributes to the appearance of hybrid models of action and interaction among individuals. Because of this, it was in this section of this chapter where we made special emphasis on analysing the concepts of identity and community within the new environment of CMC. These may be considered conflicting and often confusing terms within the sphere of CMC since the online environment provides new specificities that need to be addressed when describing these terms. Moreover, the main characteristics of CMC and some of the most relevant advantages and disadvantages of this new field of study were presented in the first section of this chapter.

All in all, we claimed that the Internet and CMC should be conceived of as extremely interesting loci of analysis for researchers interested in the study of multimodal and contextual performances of social and gender identities, as it is our case.

The following section in this chapter was devoted to present the main features of CMD where language economy, the imitation of spoken features or the use of creative ways of self-expression were considered salient characteristics. We consider that CMD –by means of open public examples of direct and authentic data which require no transcription and which can further be analysed by specific software tools– offers critical discourse analysts interested in the study of the relationships between language, thought and reality an invaluable field for investigation.

The second section of this chapter also dealt with the problems researchers usually find in the classification of CMD genres within pre-established categories. We explained how Herring (2007) presents a faceted scheme classification where both

medium and social factors are taken into account in the process of delimiting and defining the data extracted from CMD.

We made special emphasis in pointing out the fact that both current trends within feminist gender and language studies and CMC tend towards a non-essentialist perspective where performativity and construction are better studied from a localised perspective that, with the pertinent critical tools and the necessary care, can later on be extrapolated to broader societal, institutional and political structures.

In this chapter, we also devoted a section to the specific study of CMD, or language used in CMC, as a fruitful field of research for gender and language researchers. The inception of these studies during the 1980s were very much influenced by the trends of Second Wave Feminism and the study of both interaction styles and the way gender is represented in language. However, these two branches of study were conditioned by the specificities of the medium where they are analysed and notions such as anonymity, mask, persona or globalisation reveal themselves as relevant within this new field of study.

Nevertheless, what we consider of special relevance for our analysis is the fact that studies into the relationships between gender and language in CMD from a performative and feminist perspective should continue to be carried out. This will help unveil the intricate connections between language, thought and society from a newer and a very interesting light which will allow language users to become aware of the most common discursive practices that surround them and the social implications they may entail.

An explanation of the tools that were going to be used in this project in order to carry out our main objective followed the explanation of the importance of the terms multimodality, CMC and CMD and their relation and relevance for language and gender studies.

We considered that the CMDA proposed by Herring (2004) provided a perfect theoretical framework for our interest in analysing social and gender negotiations of power by means of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism in CMD. CMDA was defined as a “methodological toolkit and a set of theoretical lenses through which to make observations and interpret the results of empirical analysis” (Herring 2004). Its focus both on micro and macro level phenomena perfectly suited our intentions of carrying out a localised analysis with broader structural and critical objectives.

More precisely, this methodological framework was carried out in five stages that structured the subsequent sections of our thesis.

STEP 1 taken within our CMDA of indirect linguistic sexism was that of establishing the main research questions and hypotheses that guided our study. In our case, we decided to focus on: i) How is the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism manifested and negotiated in the discourse of online discussion forums ascribed to well-known gendered magazines targeted at men and women?; and ii) Can the model of indirect linguistic sexism proposed by Mills (2008) be applied to the concrete environment where we have decided to focus our research or, on the contrary, should certain categories be eliminated or added taking into account the specificities of the context?

STEP 2 in our research was that of selecting and describing the concrete corpus where our empirical research was going to be carried out in order to provide an answer to our research questions and verify or reject our initial hypotheses. As we mentioned, our corpus consisted of more than 2.500.000 words extracted from specific threads of two online discussion forums ascribed to two relevant lifestyle gendered magazines.

In STEP 3 of our methodological framework, the operationalization of the key concepts of our investigation was carried out. We tried to define and explain in detail what the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism is and present a classification, based on Mills (2008), of its main characteristics and manifestations.

STEP 4, that is, that of the selection and application of a specific method of analysis, was carried out in two different sections of this study. The selection and explanation of the specific method of analysis was done at the end of Chapter 3. The reason was because we considered that Section I—which consists of the basic theoretical notions of our work—should include the theoretical description of both the methodology and the specific paradigm chosen for our investigation. However, the practical application of that paradigm was carried out in Chapter 5, included in Section II, the practical application of our work. In our case, due to the nature of our corpus and the pragmatic-discursive characteristics of the phenomenon under analysis, we considered that the paradigm that better suited our intentions was that of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). We believe that this paradigm allowed us to face our objectives and research questions from an adequate perspective. This paradigm has Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its basis. This paradigm is grounded on philosophical concepts, on the construction of identities in discourse and the negotiation



of power and its relation to ideology, society and culture from a feminist perspective (Lazar 2005b, 2007; Lehtonen 2007, Marling 2010).

Finally, STEP 5 deals with the interpretation of results. This last step, the one being developed in this chapter, is carried out in three different levels taking into account: i) the general conclusions taken from our work; ii) the provision of specific answers to our research questions; and iii) the presentation of a look towards future directions within our field of research. These three levels of interpretations are carried out paying particular attention to both the specific medium and social factors of our investigation.

After having described and explained the main concept under study in this thesis, the context where it was going to be analysed and both the general methodological framework and the specific paradigm chosen to carry out our investigation, Section II of our project was devoted to present a practical application of all the theoretical notions presented in Section I.

Section II consists of two different chapters. In the first one, STEP 1 and STEP 2 from our CMDA are carried out, while STEP 3 and STEP 4 are carried out in the second chapter of Section II.

Chapter 4, entitled *Corpus Description: Collection Process and Characterisation*, was devoted to be specific about our concrete intention in this project. STEP 1 of our CMDA was intended to be carried out by the presentation of the specific research questions that guided our study, more precisely, a desire to know i) how indirect linguistic sexism works in the specific context selected for our investigation and ii) whether Mills' (2008) model for this phenomenon fits or needs to be adapted to the specificities of the medium.

Moreover, the second section of this chapter dealt specifically with STEP 2 of our CMDA, the description and characterisation of the corpus chosen for our empirical investigation. As Farvid and Braun (2006) suggest, current investigations in feminist gender and language studies, being consistent with the performative idea of gender, should take into account not only women's representations but also men's negotiation of their own identities in context. Our objective of presenting a study about the discursive negotiation of social and gender identities by means of the use of indirect linguistic sexism that emerge in the online communities of practice in the public online discussion forums of two relevant gendered publications strongly moved us towards this performative and non-restrictive vision of the study of gender.

With this objective in mind, we decided to focus on a corpus that could satisfy our demands from the point of view of both structure and contents. The methodological principles of our corpus tried to provide an overview of the material selected for our purposes and its adequacy to our objectives. The selection of the corpus was done paying attention to the genre, the popularity and the gender of the readership of the online publications selected for our analysis, therefore, justifying their adequacy. Besides, we further delimited our investigation by focusing on concrete temporal (three natural months: May, June and July 2011) and thematic (the topics of sex and relationships) criteria. Moreover, it was in this section where we anticipated our intention of carrying out both quantitative and qualitative analyses of that material selected. Being consistent with the new trends and demands of Third Wave Feminist Studies, we considered that combining and applying these two approaches to our linguistic material would tremendously benefit our investigation. Furthermore, information on the specific collection process and the structural organisation of our corpus was provided in order to shed light into the image of the material at our disposal. For that purpose, specific information about the downloading period and methods used, the file formats of our corpus, the cleaning process or the naming system was provided.

Following the technical description of our corpus, a more contextual description where information on the two specific institutional frameworks of our research, *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*, was presented. We had already explained how gendered lifestyle magazines can be claimed to be characterised by the construction and transmission of hegemonic and unequal gender constructions by means of subtle and indirect linguistic and multimodal mechanisms. Therefore, the description and characterisation of the hegemonic and unequal constructions projected and (re)created by these two publications was crucial for our purpose.

On the one hand, we explained how *Cosmopolitan* can probably be considered the most widely read women's magazine both in its printed and online versions. This publication constructs a virtual sense of community and alignment by means of different techniques that help construct a brand under which its readership finds shelter. Here, both traditional and progressive ideas and stereotypes on gender identities and gender relations can be found. For example, we mentioned how heterosexuality is displayed within *Cosmopolitan*, despite its desire to be projected as a modern and open publication, as almost the only possible option for gender relations. In order to compensate this traditional vision, women are represented as active social agents who,

however, must carry out their activities and achieve their objectives by means of sexuality and physical appearance, which can be claimed to be the two major source of power for women according to this publication. This is so because, as a consequence of heterosexuality, men are considered the main target of women's life and, as such, they are the cause of great fear, stress, anxiety and trauma. Because women must compete with each other in order to get their primary objective, great sexual and social skills need to be developed which will lead them to get the perfect man. This often contradictory world is presented to *Cosmopolitan's* readerships as a playful fantasy which, from one point of view, protects itself from anti-sexist attacks but which, additionally, helps transmits long-established conceptions of gender and gender relations indirectly.

On the other hand, *Men's Health* was claimed to be the male counterpart of *Cosmopolitan*. We explained how here, again, stereotypical and often contradictory models of masculinity and femininity are presented. Nevertheless, the hegemonic form of masculinity presented in this publication can be considered to go hand in hand with the figure of the *New Man*. Contrary to more traditional forms of masculinity, men are usually depicted as highly interested in their physical appearance and muscularity is considered an analogous important feature to that of thinness in women's publications. Besides, designer clothing, automobiles or gadgets are presented as symbols of the *status quo* men must acquire or have in society in order to be considered proper icons of their group. Moreover, the fact of making the perfect partner for the new liberated and modern woman projected by women's publications can also be considered an essential feature of the men belonging to this category. Although these may seem rather progressive and non-offensive forms addressed to men in order to equate their social condition to that of women, many authors (Stibbe 2004) have revealed how this new form of hegemonic masculinity can be extremely harmful for men's physical and mental health. These, in fact, as it was the case with women's publications, should be considered new discourses which, although subtly and indirectly, contribute to the maintenance of gender inequality.

After describing the specific institutional framework where our investigation is carried out, we proceeded in this chapter to a detailed description of the localised environment of our research. First of all, we focused on the macroscopic structure of the online version of the selected gendered publications. We explained how, because of commercial and ideological reasons, they both share a similar hyperstructure. Their

visual organisation and display are organised around specific gendered sections that help construct the hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity projected in each of them. Moreover, we provided detailed and concrete information on the main section where we focused our attention, that of online discussion forums as localised gendered spaces. Following, Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme, we provided an overview of both the social and medium factors that help delimit the CMD where our investigation is located and the two cyber communities of practice ascribed to them. The fact that these two online forums share many similar aspects but are also characterised by concrete and gendered ones, led us to claim that the institutional framework does have an impact on the local space. We could easily identify, thanks to quantitative data on the most relevant topics for each cyber community of practice, the most important topics in each gendered space. Having done so, our main intention was that of analysing how those main relevant discourses were negotiated within the local space by specific members of these cyber communities of practice. We did so by means of the study of the resource of indirect linguistic sexism in these local spaces, which helped us study how gender identities are constructed and negotiated within local environments under the influence of higher institutional gendered structures.

The last section of this chapter, therefore, led us to a detailed and careful description of the process followed in order to face such a dynamic and vast environment. The last section of this chapter was devoted to the explanation of how our corpus (consisting of all the active threads for the months of May, June and July 2011 within the topics of sex and relationships in each publication) was fenced in into a mini-corpus by means of the use of analytical corpus linguistics tools. The quantitative information provided by these technological means helped us delimit a huge corpus into a more manageable amount of data that was adequate in terms of extension and content to carry out a qualitative feminist critical discourse analysis.

Following STEP 1 and STEP 2 of our CMDA, which were carried out in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 was devoted to accomplish STEP 3 and STEP 4 of our methodological procedure. More precisely, we dedicated the first section of this chapter to the operationalization of the key concept of our research, the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism. We considered that, following the current developments within feminist gender and language studies, the new forms and manifestations of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism could no longer be approached from the perspective of the Feminist Language Reform. Instead, discursive and pragmatic

approaches should be applied that led researchers to go in depth into less stigmatised and more subtle forms of sexism in language. We explained how our social and gender identities are performed within local practices framed by broader institutional structures that socially delimit our performances in terms of what is acceptable or not in those particular situations. Because of this, and following Mills (2008), we claimed that indirect linguistic sexism is mainly “a resource available within the language” (Mills 2008: 124) that may lead language users to express their ideas and conceptions on gender and gender relations and, at the same time, perform their own gender identity. Because of its dynamic and fluid nature, it is very difficult to talk about concrete categories of indirect linguistic sexism, however, Mills (2008) proposes a model of the main manifestations this phenomenon may adopt. This first section was devoted to the explanation and description of humour, presuppositions, conflicting messages, scripts and metaphors, collocations and androcentrism as the six main manifestations of indirect linguistic sexism proposed by Mills (2008).

The next section of Chapter 5 was devoted to carry out STEP 4 of our CMDA, that is, the explanation of the specific paradigm chosen for our investigation and the practical and empirical application of it to a specific corpus. The specific paradigm chosen in order to carry out our qualitative discourse analysis of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism in such a specific corpus of CMD was FCDA. As we mentioned when recapitulating the information contained in Section I, which was devoted to the theoretical and methodological notions of our research, the full explanation of the paradigm chosen was done in section 3.2.2. However, that information was briefly re-taken in this chapter in order to be consistent with the procedure of our methodological framework and the coherence of the project. Therefore, we briefly reviewed the main principles and ideas of FCDA and, later on, an empirical and practical application of it into our specific corpus was carried out. In the exploitation of our corpus, Mills’ (2008) classification of indirect linguistic sexism into six main manifestations was adopted, therefore, we presented concrete examples that we considered fitted into the categories of humour, presuppositions, conflicting messages, scripts and metaphors, collocations and androcentrism. These examples were analysed in detail and the different nuances extracted were taken into account with the purpose of providing organised and well-supported arguments that helped us test Mills’ (2008) model for our specific corpus of localised and gendered CMD.

The present chapter is devoted to carry out STEP 5 of our CMDA, that is, the interpretation of the results extracted from our investigation. This first section is designated to present a summary and recompilation of the main concepts, notions and ideas expressed throughout this research. In this way, we will be able to present a panoramic trip throughout our study that will allow us to have a clear vision of the steps taken and the main results obtained. The second section, moreover, will be devoted to present a detailed answer to the specific research questions of our investigation. There, apart from the general and broader view of our work presented in this first section, a more concrete vision will be provided. We will try to understand how the concept of indirect linguistic sexism works in this specific context of CMD and, moreover, we will attempt to refine Mills' (2008) model in ways that are consistent with our analysis. We will also interpret these results from the perspective of FCDA in order to conclude our interpretation. Finally, a third section will be included in this final chapter which will deal with some of the main roads or paths that could be followed in the field of feminist language and gender studies with regard to the analysis of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism and CMC.

## **6.2. Answers to Our Research Questions and Interpretation of Results**

The second section of this chapter will be devoted to the provision of the answers to our concrete research questions in this investigation. Moreover, we will also offer a brief interpretation of our results from the perspective of the FCDA model presented in section 3.2.2.

The first of the two research questions that guided this study was stated in the following terms:

- 1) How is indirect linguistic sexism manifested and negotiated in the context / discourse of online discussion forums ascribed to specific gendered online magazines?

The first point to be dealt with here is that, as we mentioned in Chapter 4, references to both indirect and direct linguistic sexism would have been taken into account if they were considered to be relevant for our analysis.

In the case of direct linguistic sexism, we claim that no relevant or salient examples have been found. This could be justified by the already-mentioned influence of the institutional discourse over the local discourse. That is, we consider that the institutional framework where our two forums are ascribed, that is, the online versions of the gendered lifestyle magazines *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health*, justifies that not many overt forms of sexism are present in the localised practices of their online discussion forums. We consider that the digital media users of these two discourses, in part or as a whole, agree with the ideology of the context in which they are participating. Nevertheless, some may consider that these digital media users also interact in particular contexts in order to contravene the hegemonic discourses promulgated by the institutional frameworks. Whatever the specific situation of individual participants in our corpus may be, we consider that the almost total absence of direct forms of linguistic sexism is a proof that the institutional discourses of the specific online gendered lifestyle magazines chosen for this analysis have an impact on the way their digital media users interact and construct their own social and gender identities.

Nevertheless, as it happens with the (online) magazines themselves, sometimes examples of direct or overt sexism can be found. This is the case of words like *bitch* or *slut* as found in Examples 11, 79, 263, 289 or 306.

Also, as it can be observed in Example 27, some metaphors are used as jokes and, therefore, as processes according to Mills' (2008) classification of direct linguistic sexism. In this particular example, the joke, which can be considered as overtly sexist is, however, framed by a hedge (*I'm gonna get killed for this...*) that helps negotiate the social and gender identity of the poster of the joke. As we have observed in the analysis of our corpus, most manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism are carried out through indirect mechanisms and, when done in direct ways, they are often modified or hedged by indirect mechanisms. This is so because, taking into account the ideas on the performativity of gender in context, this indirect frames or hedges allow digital media users in this particular context to negotiate their social and gender identities paying particular attention to the open institutional framework in which they are participating, thus hiding or protecting their non-politically correct manifestations or actions under the mask of indirectness and subtlety.

Moreover, a third case must be noted when analysing the way linguistic sexism is manifested in our corpus. The third and most prominent case of the manifestations of

linguistic sexism in our corpus is that dealing with linguistic sexism which is manifested indirectly by means of subtle discourse features that help transmit sexist attitudes in a veiled way. More precisely, and following Mills' (2008) model, we have identified six main discourse features that may help digital media users manifest or identify indirect manifestations of linguistic sexism in this kind of CMD, that is humour, presuppositions, conflicting messages, scripts and metaphors, collocations and androcentrism. These must be considered the main discourse features by means of which indirect linguistic sexism finds its way in this specific context of CMD. Our analysis of particular and concrete examples in section 5.3 gave us an extended and detailed analysis of how these indirect and subtle discourse features are used by digital media users in their localised practices ascribed to the institutional framework of online gendered publications in order to negotiate their social and gender identities in relation to the phenomenon of sexism.

Therefore, the first approximation to our first research question leads us to suggest that the phenomenon of linguistic sexism is mainly manifested in our corpus in three different situations:

- a) by means of some rather anecdotic direct or overt linguistic forms of sexism intended to manifest an overt sexist attitude;
- b) by means of direct or overt linguistic forms of sexism framed by indirect hedges or modulators. In this case, humorous and ironic tones are intended which perniciously hide the overt sexist attitudes under the potential of the denial for accusations;
- c) by means of indirect or covert linguistic and discursive forms of sexism which help transmit sexist and stereotypical ideas in a veiled and subtle way.

Nevertheless, and paying particular attention to section 5.3 of our study, we would suggest that the main and more relevant manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism in the context of online discussion forums ascribed to specific gendered online magazines are carried out by means of indirect linguistic and discursive mechanisms.

Additionally, there is a second viewpoint we must take into account when attempting to answer our first research question. So far, we have discussed what the main manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism in our corpus are but,



however, this first question also attempts to analyse how those manifestations are negotiated within discourse.

Because of this second perspective, we should further approach our first research question from the perspective of social and gender identity negotiations in this specific context of CMD. More precisely, we consider that, having noted down the main manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism in our corpus, in order to explain how this phenomenon is negotiated in the specific context of online discussion forums ascribed to concrete gendered online publications, it is important to focus on whether and how these indirect and subtle discourse features are permitted, agreed to, maintained or fought against.

We consider that this part of our analysis is particularly interesting for feminist language and gender studies since the specificities of the CMD analysed in our investigation has allowed us to study non-mediated negotiations of meanings and social and gender identities, which can be considered a rather innovative area within our specific field of study.

On the one hand, when considering how indirect linguistic sexism is negotiated in this specific context of CMD or, in other words, what effects it may produce in digital media users participating in this concrete context, it is important to mention that one of the possible answers found in our corpus is that the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism may, indeed, pass unnoticed or uncontested. In section 5.3, we have been able to witness how many concrete examples of indirect linguistic and discourse mechanisms passed unnoticed and uncontested by other participants in the same thread. This was particularly the case of presuppositions, as in Example 72, where traditional but sexist and taken-for-granted images or ideas on gender and gender behaviour pass unnoticed and remain uncontested by other participants in the same thread. This was also the case with scripts and metaphors or the rather common androcentric perspective where the routinization of certain images and roles becomes common knowledge in specific communities of practice and cultures and, therefore, unless immersed in a critical analysis of particular communicative situations, as it is our case, the way we communicate and the mechanisms we use remain mainly unobserved.

On the other hand, a second important effect or way in which indirect linguistic sexism is negotiated in this particular context of CMD is by means of its overt acceptance. For instance, Example 17 demonstrates how the poster, who performed a female gender identity, decided to play the game started in the thread and play with the

idea of breasts being essential for men in order to be accepted in a mainly male-dominated forum. Although by means of an indirect game, this poster accepted that women's physical appearance and sexuality is essential when attempting to enter into a male-dominated space and, therefore, helped transmit very pernicious and sexist attitudes through his/her negotiation of his/her own social and gender identity. Something similar was observed in Example 3, where the poster of the *i-joke*, although by means of a humorous comment, is in fact accepting previous sexist comments which referred to the observable differences between women and men's jobs and roles within a relationship. Therefore, whether the acceptance of indirect sexist comments is done by means of direct or indirect mechanisms, as in the examples re-taken in this paragraph, what is relevant for our purpose of identifying the main effects this phenomenon may produce in this particular context of CMD is that it sometimes, whether overtly or covertly, is accepted and agreed to by other digital media users.

Apart from being unnoticed or accepted, we would suggest that indirect manifestations of linguistic sexism in our corpus are also frequently challenged, whether directly or indirectly. For instance, Example 95 reveals how certain participants directly label particular interventions as conflicting and, therefore, mark their sexist attitude. Moreover, Example 72 and Example 116 are extracted from a thread where the original poster wishes to denounce a situation she/he found overtly *sexist*. However, many other examples reveal how indirect manifestations of linguistic sexism are also fought against or challenged by means of the use of another or the same indirect discourse feature signalling indirect linguistic sexism. This would be the case where, for example, humour is used to evince a sexist attitude and another participant utters another sexist comment to demonstrate how sexist the first participant was. In other words, our analysis has served to observe how certain digital media users employ the same mechanisms used to signal indirect linguistic sexism in order to unveil the pernicious effects it may produce –see for instance the explanations provided for Example 11 or Example 13. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that there is a possible drawback to this kind of fight against indirect linguistic sexism. Again, the fact that it is individual digital media users the ones who interpret those messages according to their particular communicative situations leave the door open for a sexist interpretation of intended anti-sexist or critical comments.

Therefore, in the same way we proposed three main manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism in our corpus in order to cope with the first

approximation to our first research question (what are the main manifestations of the phenomenon of linguistic sexism?), with the intention of dealing with the second approximation to our first research question (and how is this phenomenon mainly negotiated in our corpus?), we would summarise that four main effects or negotiation processes have been identified in our analysis in relation to indirect linguistic sexism:

- a) it may pass (whether consciously or unconsciously) unnoticed or uncontested;
- b) it may be (whether consciously or unconsciously) agreed to or accepted;
- c) it may be challenged or fought against (whether successfully or not) by means of the use of direct mechanisms or attacks; and
- d) it may be challenged or fought against (whether successfully or not) by means of the use of indirect and subtle mechanisms.

Bearing all this in mind, that is, the main information on how linguistic sexism is both mainly manifested and negotiated in our corpus, we would also suggest that, since it is a phenomenon that takes place at a local level, the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism should be considered an extremely complex one in terms of its main manifestations and the effects it may produce in digital media users. Moreover, as we mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, since we are trying to move away from gender and CMC essentialism, no generalisations should be made in terms of both the phenomenon itself and the medium in which it is analysed in this project. The results presented in this section should be considered in relation to the specificities of the phenomenon and the medium under analysis here. As we have manifested throughout this study, we consider that the best way of approaching both the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism and the context of CMD is by means of localised examples that allow researchers to investigate concrete instances about which broader implications could be speculated with the right critical perspective. From this standpoint, and taking into account the particular context or institutional framework in which the localised examples presented in this study take place, we would claim that precisely the complexity of both the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism and the context of CMD help reinforce and maintain the genre of (online) gendered publications. We believe that the complexity of the negotiation of social and gender identities at the localised level of online discussion forums is nourished by the complexity of the genre of (online) gendered publications but, besides, this complexity

at a local level helps reinforce the institutional framework in which they appear. In other words, from our analysis of how the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism is manifested and negotiated in the localised context of online discussion forums ascribed to gendered online publications, we would suggest that, in terms of the relationships established among these two spheres, there is no noise that interferes with the fluid relationship between the institutional and the local. We believe that there is a relative coherence between what happens at the institutional and at the local levels, which, in fact, reinforces the idea that language, thought and reality are interconnected and have a flexible and dynamic relationship.

Moving a step forward within this section, we should now focus on providing a specific answer to our second research question in this project:

- 2) Are there any differences or different categories of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism to those established by Mills (2008) that have to do with the specific features of the context / discourse being analysed?

We have claimed throughout this dissertation how this investigation has allowed us to apply the model of indirect linguistic sexism proposed by Mills (2008) to a specific context, that of CMD in online discussion forums associated to specific gendered online magazines.

This investigation has provided us with a practical application of that model into a specific a delimited corpus created according to specific and concrete research objectives. Having approached our corpus from a broader perspective, we were able to answer our first research question, that is, how linguistic sexism is manifested and negotiated in localised practices ascribed to institutional gendered spaces. As mentioned earlier, indirect linguistic sexism is, according to our study, the main way sexism finds its way into this specific corpus. Therefore, it was necessary for our research to carry on analysing how these manifestations of indirect linguistic sexism were expressed and negotiated in discourse. In order to do so, Mills' (2008) model or classification of discourse features that may signal indirect linguistic sexism was used. Following our analysis in section 5.3, we can claim that Mills' (2008) model perfectly served the purpose of analysing indirect linguistic sexism in our specific CMC corpus. We consider that, despite the fact that this model was firstly created having in mind rather literary or more institutional or formal contexts, the fact that it can also be applied to

localised examples of informal language –more precisely, CMD, and even more precisely, to the language used in online discussion forums ascribed to specific gendered institutional frameworks– has also been demonstrated with our investigation.

Nevertheless, it is important to mention that, although the six categories presented in Mills' (2008) model have been found to be relevant for our analysis of this specific discourse, we believe that some of them could be considered especially salient in our corpus. We think that, because of the specificities of the medium and social factors of this specific kind of CMD, certain categories or discourse features that allow individuals to identify or express indirect linguistic sexism should be specially taken into account.

Paying attention to the analysis of particular examples presented in section 5.3, we would conclude that the discourse feature of humour reveals itself as particularly salient in expressing indirect linguistic sexism in this specific context. We believe that specific medium and social factors of this kind of CMD favour the prominence of humour and irony as a discourse feature that floats in the air in many examples of our corpus and, therefore, turns out to be vital for the indirect transmission of sexist attitudes by means of discursive mechanisms in this specific context. Some of the medium and social factors that moved us to consider this idea are, for example, the relationships established among participants in this specific environment. The fact that they don't know each other and are, somehow, protected by anonymity or the creation of a digital persona, allows individual digital media users to be humorous without the fear of not getting the expected answer from their interlocutors. Given the case, these participants could easily opt for disappearing from the forum or thread with no further consequences. On the contrary, we consider that face to face conversations, where the negotiation of individual's face is done *in flesh* and with *real* consequences, the use of humour or irony to express sexist attitudes may bring greater or more serious consequences and, therefore, is more carefully used than in CMD.

Another specific medium and social factor that has led us to consider that humour is a salient discourse feature in the transmission of indirect linguistic sexism in CMD is the fact that digital media users make use of a specific kind or variety of language. As we explained in section 3.2.1, the language of Internet is mainly characterised by an informal register that indirectly favours the use of jokes, irony or puns. The fact that digital media users have to negotiate their social and gender identities by means of, mainly, the language and multimodal elements they use, can be

considered a crucial fact since the perspective of negotiating one's face in this specific context is rather different. More precisely, we consider that interactions in online discussion forums are driven by the desire to be accepted as one of the community and, therefore, the idea of others liking you may lead digital media users to try to be nice and pleasant by means of the use of jokes and irony that may help them negotiate their own identities easily in this specific context.

This may lead us to think about the tone of many interactions analysed in our corpus. It can be easily observed how the attempt to create a sense of camaraderie is present in many interactions of online discussion forums. Ideas such as friendliness, comfort or relaxation favour the use of irony and humour from a performative perspective. Since this discourse feature can be considered to play a crucial role in the creation of a sense of commonness and community among members, it is, therefore, not difficult to imagine why humour and irony might be chosen by different digital media users in this particular context to indirectly express their sexist attitudes.

Finally, we can also believe that the different purposes for intervening in specific online discussion forums ascribed to concrete gendered spaces can also be considered a reason why humour can be felt as a salient discourse feature to mark or detect indirect linguistic sexism in this specific medium. The fact of seeking advice, having a good time or analysing others' situations can be regarded, as we mentioned in section 3.1.2., as some of the most relevant purposes for communicating within online discussion forums. We consider that, the use of humour and irony in these contexts may help digital media users to break the ice and, therefore, fulfil their primary communicative purposes.

We consider that these specific medium and social factors of our corpus, together with a subjective feeling extracted from our analysis in section 5.3., may lead us to claim that humour can be considered an especially relevant discourse feature that helps transmit and identify indirect linguistic sexism in this specific context of CMD.

Moreover, we think that another of the six categories or discourse features presented by Mills' (2008) model should be considered as especially salient in our corpus, it is the case of presuppositions and implicatures. Based on our analysis, we believe that this specific discourse feature can be claimed to be particularly relevant for the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism in this specific context from the perspective of both digital media users and –even more importantly– the researchers' perspective.

On the one hand, from the perspective of digital media users, it is important to highlight that they do not really know who they are interacting with. Digital media users perform and encounter different personas and, by means of linguistic presuppositions, certain textual traces that individuals may choose to leave in their discourse, participants are expected to infer or figure out who is the individual they are interacting with. Many other times, no textual traces are left for digital media users to infer something about their interlocutors and implicatures and reliance on common knowledge and shared background are the only possible pillars where they can rest their inferences. Digital media users must be very conscious about the fact that online interaction is governed by different rules to those of face to face communication or even non-virtual but yet technological communication, such as telephone conversations, where interlocutors have a certain knowledge or information about the people they are interacting with, that is, their age, sex, gender, profession, ideology, etc. However, in CMC, and especially in the case on online discussion forums, this information about other interlocutors is, generally speaking, non-existent and, because of the specificities of the medium and social factors, presuppositions and implicatures are a crucial discourse feature for digital media users. Moreover, as we have shown in section 5.3, this discourse feature has also been detected as crucial in relation to the transmission and identification of indirect sexist practices in our specific corpus.

On the other hand, from the perspective of researchers interested in feminist language and gender issues, we consider that the discourse feature of presuppositions and implicatures also plays a crucial role. As researchers, we must also make assumptions about the transmission and interpretations of covert meanings. In other words, as observers and analysts, we must interpret the interpreter's interpretation and, therefore, base our own interpretation on presuppositions or implicatures themselves. We have already explained how for digital media users the specific context CMC constantly favours playing with or using presuppositions and implicatures but, besides, researchers of that specific context, when facing a particular discussion or example, are also indirectly forced, because of the specificities of the medium, to put into play certain presupposition mechanisms that allow them to provide certain contexts with concrete meanings. This can be observed, for example, in our use of the dual pronouns *he/she* or *she/he* when referring to interlocutors in particular examples. Because of our background knowledge and competence of the context of the gendered institutional spaces being analysed, implicatures reveal themselves as crucial when claiming that

*Cosmopolitan* users tend to be women and *Men's Health* users tend to be men. However, as we cannot be sure of it because digital media users negotiate and perform their social and gender identities in context, dual pronouns were considered a good discourse feature that allowed us to present our inferences being flexible with the possibilities the online reality offers digital media users. Moreover, it is important to mention that, despite the fact that in particular examples certain textual traces led us to identify particular interlocutors as a *he* or a *she* regardless of the forum in which they were participating, we decided to continue marking that this was just a presupposition extracted from the particular context by keeping on using dual pronouns in our explanations. Since there is no way to prove whether our presuppositions were right or wrong, true or false, the use of dual pronouns was the way we found to assume that our presuppositions could be wrong.

With this information in mind, it is important to state that, in relation to our second research question, so far we have claimed that i) Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism can successfully be applied to the study of a new context and a new type of language which has, *per se*, strong and vital implications for feminist language and gender researchers. Moreover, we can also suggest that ii) although all six categories or discourse features identified by Mills (2008) as potential markers of indirect linguistic sexism are present in our analysis, we would claim that two specific categories –humour and presuppositions and implicatures– should be considered as especially salient in our corpus because of some of the specific medium and social factors of this kind of CMD. Moreover, we consider that, in order to successfully answer our second research question, a third important aspect should also be taken into account, namely, iii) the fact that a new category or discourse feature should be added to Mills' (2008) model of indirect linguistic sexism in order to cover certain specific features of indirect linguistic sexism in this particular context, the discourse feature of multimodality.

As we have seen throughout many examples in section 5.3, multimodal elements should be considered an essential part of meaning construction and interpretation, together with social and gender identity performance, in CMC. For instance, Examples 1, 3, 5, 6, 14, 33 or 307 display different multimodal elements. More precisely, Example 1 and Example 307 make use of what have been called *smileys*, that is, the use of letters or orthographical signs combined in specific ways to project an image and, therefore, perform an action. Usually, faces are intended by the use of smileys and, consequently,



the transmission of certain attitudes, tones or intentions that, otherwise, may get lost in CMC. Digital media users make use of this resource in order to complement their interactions with certain resources that can supply the lack of face to face communication and, therefore, ease the transmission-interpretation process. Moreover, Examples 3, 5, 6, 14 and 33 make use of what have been called *emoticons*. These are small pictures, generally speaking, displaying faces showing different emotions. These could be considered the evolution, in a way, of smileys. There are specific media or digital spaces that provide their users with emoticons to be used in their interactions but, many others are restricted to the use of keyboard signs. This may be one of the reasons why, sometimes, some of them are used instead of the others. However, in the case of the online discussion forums analysed in this study, emoticons are available for their digital media users and, therefore, the selection of smileys or emoticons depends merely on the individuals' choices or communicative intentions. These emoticons also help digital media users transmit and make their communicative intentions clearer. However, as it was mentioned in different examples, again, it is the receiver's interpretation of the message the one that counts. Because of this, although particular emoticons, such as that used in Example 3, may be used by their original posters to negotiate their own social and gender identity as non-sexist after having posted an overtly sexist comment, it is the individual reader the one who will interpret these multimodal elements in one way or another, depending on their specific communicative situation.

Therefore, and following the analysis and examples from section 5.3, we would suggest that smileys and emoticons should be considered as multimodal elements that are commonly used in CMD by digital media users in order to negotiate and perform their social and gender identities in context. Moreover, we would also suggest that these multimodal elements should also be considered as discourse features that help signal, identify or negotiate indirect linguistic sexism in themselves.

This can probably be more clearly observed in other examples found in our corpus where other multimodal elements, rather than smileys and emoticons, are used. For example, in thread number 111 from the *Cosmopolitan* forum, *CS\_SEX\_Everyman watches porn\_THREAD*<sup>62</sup>, the original poster starts a debate about the stereotypical and sexist idea that men are intrinsically and naturally connected to sex and, therefore, sexual practices, such as watching porn, inevitably form part of their everyday life. The

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<sup>62</sup> See Example 1, 103 and 121 for more information on this thread.

thread develops throughout 9 pages of discussion where several participants intervene to show their agreement or disagreement with the original poster's idea. Some of these participants, as mentioned when answering our research question number one, decide to openly state an accusation of sexism directed at the original poster. Some others, however, decide to make explicit the sexism implicit in the original poster's comment by means of a discursive feature traditionally used to signal indirect linguistic sexism such as irony which, in this particular case, is used to defend a non-sexist position and accuse the original poster of being sexist. This debate of whether the original poster had been sexist or not with her/his comment is further enriched by the contribution of another participant who decides to post the picture displayed in Image 3.

It can be observed how several politicians are shown in a discussion. British Prime Minister David Cameron is depicted in the left side of the picture with a speech bubble containing a sexist comment, *Calm down, dear!* It could be considered that, although no overt sexist

item is used, the fact that this politician is uttering an order, together with a term of endearment, in a political and formal context, could be seen as a form of patronising and, therefore, as an indirect form of sexism. In the same image, a woman



Image 3. Multimodal element 1

showing a gesture of disbelief is demarcated by a red square. Next to her, another man is highlighted by means of another speech bubble in which he is claiming apologies for the woman.

We consider that, by means of this image, the participant is expressing her/his opinion about the sexist comments of the original poster and, moreover, she/he is indirectly asking for apologies. Therefore, this example supports our claim that multimodal elements are, or can be, used in this specific context of CMD in order to negotiate and perform one's own social and gender identity but also to manifest or negotiate indirect linguistic sexism.

Another example of how multimodal elements are used in this specific context of CMC for the purpose just mentioned can be found in thread number 21 from the same forum, *CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies2\_THREAD*<sup>63</sup>. There, the original poster starts a discussion where she/he is looking for opinions about men's reactions when seeing their partners. A debate is created where several participants, many times in a humorous tone, discuss about women and men's differences when approaching their partners. Particularly relevant for our purpose are those comments that suggest that men do in fact feel butterflies in their stomachs when seeing their partners but, in order not to be considered unmasculine, they neglect the fact or, rather, call it by another name. It is the particular case of one of the participants who, performing a hegemonic masculine identity, claims that she/he has never had that feeling. Following this comment, another participant posts the picture displayed in Image 4.

There, two images of the same cartoon are depicted. In the first one, a normal or even disconcerted image of the man is shown but, right below, the same character is depicted with a suspicious face. These images are framed by a black trimming and the words *Oh! I see what you did there.* We consider that by means of posting this multimodal element, the poster is carrying out a performative act, she/he is showing an attitude that, by means of merely linguistic mechanism could be lost or misinterpreted. We believe that the poster is negotiating her/his persona within the forum by, first, claiming that she/he has detected something strange in the masculine persona claiming, in a humorous tone, that she/he does not feel butterflies because he is a *macho*. Following that first detection, disbelief is manifested where this new poster, by means of a suspicious face, tries to manifest that she/he considers that the masculine persona in the forum is actually playing the gender game. We consider that this kind of negotiation of both identities and the phenomenon of indirect sexism by means of multimodal



Image 4. Multimodal element 2

<sup>63</sup> See Example 4, 61 and 125-125 for more information on this thread.

elements is particularly relevant for modern societies and cultures because they reveal new forms of communication and negotiation of meanings that, in the same way as other forms of meaning negotiation, permeate broader societal and cultural structures.

In these two examples we have been able to observe how social and gender identities, but also the phenomenon of indirect sexism, can be manifested and negotiated in this particular form of CMC. With the following example we want to make even more relevant the way the phenomenon of indirect sexism can be both manifested and negotiated by means of the discourse feature of multimodal elements. In thread number 13 from the *Men's Health* forum, *MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting*

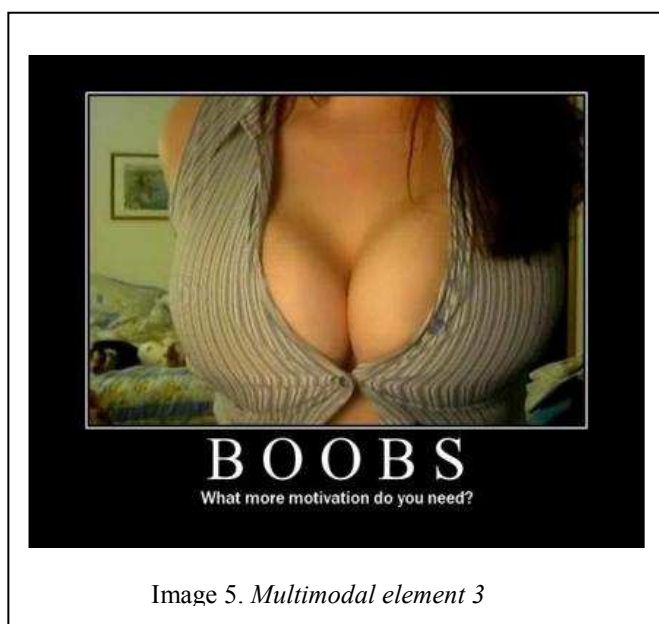


Image 5. Multimodal element 3

*pseudo sisters\_THREAD*<sup>64</sup>, a discussion is held where participants share opinions and advice about what the best techniques for getting a girlfriend are. At a particular point, the discussion turns into a debate about the quoting system of the forum, therefore, openly bringing to light notions related to the specific medium factors of this concrete context and communicative

situation. It is in this sub-discussion of this particular thread where one participant decides to post the picture displayed in Image 5 in order to check whether the quoting system and the visual display of the forum allow participants to post images within quotes. What is of particular relevance for our purpose is the fact that this particular interlocutor decided to post this image and not any other. Moreover, as it happens in Image 4, the image is framed by a black trimming and the words *Boobs. What more motivation do you need?* are written at the bottom. We consider that this multimodal element is used in reply to an earlier post where another participant complained about the fact that he/she should be studying for his/her exams instead of wasting his/her time checking out the quoting system of the forum. This image, together with the words that accompany it, may lead readers and participants in this forum to interpret that women's

<sup>64</sup> See Example 57 and 127 for more information on this thread.

objectification is more than a reason for wasting their time. Moreover, the humorous and ironic tone of the words included in the image, again, may help the poster of the image negotiate his/her own social and gender identity in the forum. On the one hand, he/she is contributing to colour the forum with the ideas on gender and gender relations projected by the institutional framework to which the forum is ascribed and, therefore, contributes to treat women as sexual beings used to enhance men's almost divine sexual needs. This, in fact, although indirectly and under the mask of humour, is subtly contributing to transmit sexist attitudes towards both sexes. On the other hand, again, this manifestation of indirect linguistic sexism by means of a multimodal element can be interpreted in different ways by other participants or readers of the thread. Therefore, although some may consider that the fact of posting this image and words is just a funny act of the poster, some others may perceive the indirect sexism present in it. However, what remains, as it was the case in other examples presented throughout this project, is the fact that sexism is being subtly and indirectly transmitted for particular interlocutors to be interpreted, accepted, rejected or challenged according to particular communicative contexts and situations.

All in all, we believe that the second research question that guided this study has also been answered in this section of our project. Having tested Mills' (2008) model for indirect linguistic sexism in our specific corpus of CMD, we can suggest that this model can perfectly be used in order to analyse instances of informal and localised forms of language usage. Moreover, we would also suggest that, although this model has served our purpose of analysing indirect manifestations of linguistic sexism in this particular corpus and, although the six categories presented by Mills (2008) have been found to be present in our corpus, we have also discovered that some of them may result particularly relevant in the context we are analysing. Because of some specific social and medium factors of the concrete context of CMC we are facing in this project, we consider that both the category of humour and that of presuppositions and implicatures may turn out to be specially relevant for digital media users to manifest and negotiate their social and gender identities by means of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism in the particular context of online discussion forums. Moreover, this section has also served to provide an expansion to Mills' (2008) model, paying particular attention to the analysis of our specific corpus. After having carried out a detailed feminist critical discourse analysis of our corpus, we consider that Mills' (2008) model could be improved by adding the discourse feature of multimodal elements to those categories that can be used

in order to negotiate one's own social and gender identity but also to interpret or manifest indirect linguistic sexism. We consider that, again, the specific social and medium factors of the context we are facing here encourage the inclusion of this category into the original model. This would, therefore, extend and consequently cover different discourse features that may help language users identify indirect manifestations of linguistic sexism in different contexts and communicative situations.

After having provided the answers to the two specific research questions that guided this study, we consider that it is now time we provided a general interpretation of the results obtained in this investigation. We will do so by retaking the FCDA proposed in section 3.2.2 of this project based on Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) work. We consider that by means of briefly explaining how we have dealt with each of the principles of CDA according to these authors from a feminist perspective would be a good way of self-criticism.

Firstly, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) suggest that CDA addresses social problems. They consider that this is a praxis-oriented methodology which focuses on specific theoretical and localised analyses in order to provide broader explanations that have a social and/or political repercussion. In other words, CDA focuses on the "analysis of linguistic and semiotic aspects of social processes and problems" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 271). This focus on social problems directly leads to consider CDA as interdisciplinary in nature and, in turn, as having a focus at different levels of linguistic analysis in order to develop a critical awareness of the particular struggles or problems related to particular instances of language use. Looking at this from a feminist perspective, as it is our case, in our particular investigation we have addressed social processes such as the performance and negotiation of gender identities which "have a partly linguistic-discursive character. This follows from the fact that social and political changes in contemporary society generally include a substantive element of cultural and ideological change" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 271). This is true for the phenomenon under study in this project, that of indirect linguistic sexism as well as for the communicative environment in which it is analysed. As we mentioned in section 2.2.2, online discussion forums may be considered relevant places to carry out a research on social problems. This is so because online forums users access these spaces with the general aim of getting a direct (by means of other users' replies) or indirect (by means of reading other users' posts) answer to their doubts or questions. It can be inferred then that when certain doubts and questions are presented by a great number of

forums users, they can be understood as social problems relevant to a specific community of practice. In our case, the procedure carried out in our FCDA led us to highlight some social problems within the specific topics of sex and relationships that seemed especially relevant for the communities of practice of the *Cosmopolitan* and *Men's Health* online forums users.

The second principle of CDA according to the model presented in section 3.2.2 is the analysis of the discursive nature of power relations. As we explained in the introduction to this project, power in contemporary societies and cultures is no longer considered as a unilateral phenomenon but as a constant and discursive negotiation where there is often a “struggle for control” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 272). According to this new conception of power, we can claim that it is, therefore, mainly exercised and negotiated in and through discourse. Throughout this project we have claimed that relations among individuals in particular communities and contexts are established by means of discursive mechanisms such as language or multimodal elements. This is particularly true for the context of CMC and the negotiation of social and gender identities in online discussion forums where participants, by means of language and concrete medium factors negotiate their online identities and, therefore, the structure of the power relations that regulate their communicative context. This can be more clearly observed in the effects indirect sexism may produce on digital media users where, as we saw earlier in this chapter, challenges, acceptance, adhesion or direct rejection can be used as strategies individuals have to (re)negotiate power in these particular communities of practice adhered to concrete institutional frameworks.

In this research we have also studied the reciprocal relationship between society and culture as constitutive elements. CDA is based on the idea that “discourse constitutes society and culture, as well as being constituted by them” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 273). From this perspective, representations, relations and identities are considered as the three main domains of social life that are affected by this dialectal and dynamic interconnection between discourse, society and culture. From the FCDA perspective attempted in this project we could claim that we have endeavoured to analyse the way in which that dynamic and flexible relation between language, thought and reality is manifested in localised practices and performances of social and gender identities by means of the phenomenon on indirect linguistic sexism. We consider that our particular analysis has allowed us to observe how the social domains of gender representations, relations and identities are discursively constructed in the specific

context of online discussion forums ascribed to gendered online institutional spaces. In this particular case, it is very important to refer again to the socio-cognitive elements involved in the interpretation process. There, society and culture play a major role in delimiting or marking certain acceptable paths of interpretation, however, as we have been claiming throughout this project, individual particular schemas, cognitive and emotional worlds also play a crucial role in that interpretation process. Therefore, we consider that this project and the particular examples presented in it in relation to gender and gender relations have allowed us to observe how discourse, in fact, constitutes society and culture and is, at the same time, constituted by them.

The fourth principle of CDA according to the model presented in section 3.2.2 of this project assumes that discourse does ideological work. Ideologies have been broadly defined in this study as ways of constructing and representing society by means of the reproduction of unequal power relations. As stated by Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 275), ideologies should also be understood as often “false or ungrounded constructions of society” that are transmitted among individual by means of communicative practices which rely on hegemonic models of power uncritically or unconsciously transmitted as unquestionable truths. From a FCDA, this has been approached in this study in the analysis of how the hegemonic forms of masculinities and femininities promulgated by the institutional frameworks of the online gendered publications to which the online discussion forums were ascribed are negotiated in the localised practices at the level of the community of practice. In order to do so, we analysed in detail both texts and text interpretations in order to be able to observe how ideological work in relation to gender and gender identities was being done by means of discourse. Our particular FCDA allowed us to observe how the hegemonic forms of masculinities and femininities transmitted by the institutional structures were negotiated in localised contexts of concrete communicative and social practices.

We consider that throughout this research we have also dealt with the fifth principle of CDA from a feminist perspective, that is, we have also analysed the way in which discourse is historical. “Discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking the context into consideration” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 276). Since context is crucial for discourse production and interpretation, history becomes a vital concept for discourse analysts. Discourse is always related to and based on past situations, events, and negotiations that, in a way, are determinant for current communicative situations. This reliance on historicity and context leads us to consider



that intertextuality, that is, the interconnection of different discourses, is also vital for discourse creation and interpretation. From the FCDA undertaken in this project, we consider that the historical and discursive construction and interpretation of gender and gender relations by means of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism in a particular context of CMD has also been demonstrated. We believe that our analysis provides us with relevant examples of how the particular history of specific communities of practices, in this case, those of men and women consumers and participants of specific gendered institutionalised frameworks, influences the way in which they negotiate both their social and gender identities by means of the resource of indirect linguistic sexism. The history behind the institutional framework and the personal history behind each individual digital media user intervene in the construction and interpretation of discourse in this particular context in relation to gender and gender relations.

The sixth principle of CDA taken into account in this study from a feminist perspective has been the analysis of the mediated link between text and society. As we have been claiming along this dissertation, there are dynamic and flexible connections established between social and cultural structures and processes with those of texts and discourses. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) suggest, these links between society and text are mediated by orders of discourse where cognitive components reveal themselves as especially relevant. In other words, these authors suggest that individuals rely on specific socio-cognitive resources that allow them to interpret concrete texts and discourses attending to both individual meaning and group or social interpretations. From a FCDA, our research has attempted to analyse the way in which particular participants in these communities of practice have manifested the mediation produced between text and society in their own discursive production. As we mentioned when dealing with the specific role of presuppositions and implicatures in the analysis of indirect linguistic sexism in this specific context of CMD, we consider that this project has also served the purpose of unveiling not only the mediation between text and society produced in localised examples of our corpus but also in the specific analyses of particular examples provided where our own mediation is also presented.

We consider that this thesis has also allowed us to demonstrate the explanatory and interpretative nature of CDA from a feminist perspective. We have explained and exemplified in different parts of this project how discourse can easily be interpreted differently by different individuals according to their particular and concrete

communicative situations. The context, the history behind that content and the particular individuals involved, their schema, emotions, attitudes, the particular social and gender identity chosen at a particular communicative interaction, etc. all of these, and many other variables, can influence a particular and individual interpretation of discourse. In section 5.3 of our study many examples have been provided that have attempted to demonstrate how discourse is only contextually and individually interpreted and understood. Moreover, our own interpretation and understanding of particular examples is also determined by the specific situations in which we face this project. Our background information of the context, our competence over discourse and the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism, our mother tongue or our particular emotional circumstances have, definitely, played a part in our analysis. Nevertheless, we have always attempted to unmask our interpretations and explanations in a way that our project could benefit from an open feminist critical discourse attitude.

Finally, the last principle of CDA according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997) is that it is a form of social action and, from the feminist perspective intended in this project, we consider that this research constitutes a social, academic and political action in itself. We have attempted to uncover the opaqueness present in power relations, more precisely, those related to social and gender identity performance and negotiations by means of the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism. We have tried to be explicit about our competence, intentions, objectives and methods throughout this project, thus making explicit our academic, political and social intentions in relation to the fields of feminist gender and language studies and CMC.

We consider that, after our exercise of self-criticism in terms of the FCDA paradigm presented in section 3.2.2 of this project, the interpretation of the main results extracted from our investigation has also been carried out. Therefore, this second section of Chapter 6 has served us as a double-purpose, on the one hand, the main answers to the research questions guiding this study were presented and, on the other, the interpretation of the results extracted from our investigation were interpreted under the light of the FCDA intended in this research.

### **6.3. Future Directions**

Having provided a summary and synthesis of the main ideas presented in this investigation in the first section of this chapter and having also offered the specific

answers to our research questions and the interpretation of the main results extracted from our research in the second, we will devote this final section to the presentation of some paths or the future directions that, from our perspective, studies focused on the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism and CMC could undertake.

We consider that the investigation presented here has demonstrated, by means of a detailed and precise analysis of localised practices of language use, how a particular phenomenon or resource at the disposal of language users –i.e. indirect linguistic sexism– can be used to negotiate and perform one’s own social and gender identity within particular communities of practice ascribed to broader institutionalised frameworks. We believe that this investigation has demonstrated that local and discursive practices, despite being complex, dynamic and context-dependent, also have a broader institutional component. In other words, we believe that our investigation has demonstrated how a connection or mediation can be established between the use of indirect linguistic sexism at the institutional level of online gendered publications and the maintenance or (re)creation of gender stereotypes and sexist ideologies at the local level of particular communities of practice that take participation in the discourse of online discussion forums ascribed to these institutional contexts. Moreover, we consider that this mediation is not unilateral and that the local practices carried out within the online discussion forums by individual digital media users also nourish the institutional framework in which their interaction takes place.

Therefore, the dynamic and flexible relationships between language thought and reality on which we started this investigation has been demonstrated by this empirical, academic and political study. We consider that the Third Wave feminist perspective adopted in this project has allowed us to unveil the subtle and indirect ways in which the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism is used by particular language users to perform and negotiate their social and gender identities. This, under the right critical perspective, also allows us to unveil the influences and connections between the local and the institutional and, therefore, encourages us to continue investigating the ways in which the intricate relations between language, thought and reality are manifested and affect the world in which we live, more precisely, in relation to gender issues.

After having provided a general impression of what our study may mean in the field of feminist gender and language studies, we consider that more detailed paths or future directions can be pointed at.

On the one hand, an important field we believe must be exploited for the benefit of both studies on the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism and CMC is that of multimodality. We consider that, after having provided concrete answers to the specific research questions that guided and motivated this investigation, our feeling is that more serious and systematic studies on multimodality should be carried out. The importance of the Internet and CMC in contemporary societies and the era in which we live is more than a fact. This, from our perspective, requires new methods of analysis to be developed that allow researchers from different disciplines to approach this environment with the necessary tools to analyse a new but yet indispensable field for studies related to human evolution. The connection between the virtual and the social worlds can be explained in terms of linguistic material but it also needs to be approached in terms of the multimodal elements which contribute to meaning creation and interpretation. This is so because, when talking about the creation of meaning, we are also talking about the performance of our own social and gender identity, about the (re)creation of society and culture themselves since, as meaning, they only exist in context.

This idea leads us to suggest that future research on the field of CMC should take very much into account the specificities of the particular medium in which they are carried out. We consider that studying different CMD will provide researchers from different disciplines with a broader idea of how CMD works and affects or determines our everyday life. In terms of feminist language and gender studies focusing on the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism, different investigations in diverse CMC contexts may provide distinct answers to the research questions provided in this investigation. Probably, Mills' (2008) model may be found worthless for a different CMD corpus; probably, other discourse features may be highlighted as the most relevant in different contexts; or probably different categories, apart from multimodality, may be found to be crucial in a different corpus. As we have already mentioned, context-specific studies will bring different medium and social factors into play which will determine the results of the investigations. From the perspective of Third Wave Feminism and the non-essentialist vision of this project, we consider that future investigations on the field of indirect sexism will strongly benefit from this special and localised studies which will provide different facades of the same phenomenon and, therefore, will contribute to construct a more elaborated panoramic view of this mechanism in a broader societal and cultural perspective.

We also consider that if these localised and context-specific studies, especially within the relevant field of CMC, are carried out over a period of time, researchers and society as a whole will be able to observe how the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism evolves through time in different communities of practice ascribed to institutional or broader societal structures. The creation of a field of research where systematic studies of localised corpora analysing the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism will lead to an invaluable database or body of research in which the development of this phenomenon could be traced and analysed along time. Therefore, a chronological but also disperse (in terms of geo-localisation) body of research could be created where different languages and CMD will bear witness to the development of indirect linguistic sexism. This will, in fact, benefit critical discourse studies from a feminist perspective which will be in a position where generalisations could be claimed having a more stable basis of empirical research.

After having pointed at some of the ideas or contexts in which the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism should be studied in terms of its vital connection with CMC, we consider that some indications on methodological issues should also be taken into account. We consider that this project has demonstrated the enormous benefits that CL can offer to (F)CDAs within CMC. As we have explained, the web constitutes an incalculable field of information for researchers interested in different disciplines. From our perspective as linguists interested in the field of feminist language and gender studies, CL analyses can strongly benefit our investigations. Quantitative methodologies can provide critical discourse analyses with objective corpora of data that will allow them to approach the web from a qualitative and scientific perspective. As we mentioned in this project, (F)CDAs have been criticised for their unsystematicity and many have complained about their unscientific nature. Because of this reason, we consider that further studies that try to merge quantitative and qualitative analyses should be carried out within the field of feminist gender and language studies. Researchers should work forwards obtaining, creating or designing different methods of analysis that combine these two scientific disciplines for the benefit of discourse and social studies.

Finally, we wish to finish this study with a personal comment. Our general feeling after carrying out this passionate investigation is that the phenomenon of indirect linguistic sexism, far from being dead or being an old-fashioned idea coming from feminist circles, is a phenomenon very much alive. Its presence and (re)negotiation

in CMC makes us feel that its life, far from coming to its end, is being invigorated by new means of expression and new discourse features through which it can indirectly and subtly find its way into society. We strongly believe that indirect linguistic sexism is a pernicious and highly damaging human resource that contributes to the maintenance and (re)creation of gender inequalities and, as such, we consider that studies on this phenomenon should strongly be encouraged, especially within the relevant field of CMC, in order to try to come to terms with its working order and its effects over our evolution.

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# Resumen

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## **Objetivos y estructura de la tesis doctoral**

La tesis doctoral que aquí se presenta surge como consecuencia de un interés tanto académico como personal por la intensa, flexible y dinámica relación entre lenguaje, pensamiento y realidad. Consideramos que estos tres elementos están constituidos como entidades independientes pero que, a su vez, se constituyen entre sí de manera recíproca.

Desde esta perspectiva entendemos que el lenguaje puede definirse como una herramienta utilizada por los seres humanos para comunicarse, para identificar el mundo que les rodea y para relacionarse con él. Es decir, podríamos decir que el lenguaje tiene, principalmente, una faceta informativa y una faceta social.

El mundo que nos rodea y en el que el ser humano se desenvuelve puede considerarse un mundo complejo y heterogéneo, sin embargo, hay una característica que es identificable a lo largo y ancho del planeta: el dimorfismo. Este concepto viene a definir una realidad tangible, el hecho de que la especie humana está dividida en dos categorías biológicamente distintas: el hombre y la mujer.

Es esta división biológica la que dio lugar al nacimiento de los estudios de género y lenguaje y, dentro de ellos, al del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico. Este campo de estudios trata de ahondar, precisamente, en cómo una realidad visible como es el dimorfismo tiene relación con otras aparentemente menos observables como el pensamiento o el lenguaje. Siguiendo esta estela, el proyecto que aquí presentamos pretende servir de ejemplo para demostrar que, efectivamente, la relación entre lenguaje, pensamiento y realidad es una relación flexible e intensa que puede manifestarse y ser analizada en fenómenos concretos como es el caso del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico.

El sexismo lingüístico puede entenderse como un sesgo de género en el lenguaje (Crawford and Fox 2007). Las actitudes sexistas de individuos concretos pueden manifestarse y negociarse en las interacciones mediante el lenguaje de forma directa o indirecta (Mills 2008). Si bien el lenguaje nos permite ser sexistas de forma aberrante y abierta, la sociedad ha ido evolucionando haciendo que las desigualdades de género sean cada vez menos aceptadas por la inmensa parte de la ciudadanía (occidental). Sin embargo, siguen existiendo individuos cuya ideología o actitud hacia la vida les mueven a querer expresar su disconformidad con esta igualdad y sus ideas sobre estereotipos de género. Para poder expresar estas ideas sin ser sancionados o recriminados socialmente

estos usuarios hacen uso de otros mecanismos más sutiles o indirectos para expresar su visión de la realidad. El lenguaje ofrece a los usuarios una gran variedad de mecanismos mediante los cuales el concepto de género puede ser tratado de forma sexista o no atendiendo a diferentes variables como la intención comunicativa, el contexto, la actitud o la ideología.

El concepto de género ha sido un concepto clave dentro de los estudios culturales y sociales. En sus orígenes, el género se entendía como una serie de atributos y rasgos sociales y culturales asociados a la categoría de sexo, es decir, hombres y mujeres debían comportarse y actuar de maneras determinadas, incluyendo su comportamiento lingüístico, teniendo como punto diferenciador el sexo con el que habían nacido. Posteriormente, el concepto de género fue perfilándose como un constructo social diferente al sexo pero unido a él. Hoy en día, y atendiendo a la teoría constructivista de la performatividad de género (Butler 1990), el género es entendido como una variable de la identidad social de los individuos que es flexible, dinámica y cambiante y que los individuos adaptan a las situaciones comunicativas concretas en las que se desenvuelven o a las comunidades de práctica en las que interactúan.

En el contexto actual en el que nos encontramos, los seres humanos hemos encontrado nuevas vías de comunicación que distan mucho de las que nuestros antepasados de hace sólo unas décadas tenían a su disposición. Hoy en día, las nuevas tecnologías y, más concretamente, los ordenadores personales e internet están presentes en las vidas de casi todos los individuos de la sociedad occidental. Este hecho ha propiciado el surgimiento de nuevos medios de comunicación y, por tanto, ha favorecido el surgimiento de nuevos campos de estudios donde la relación entre lenguaje, pensamiento y realidad resulta especialmente relevante para nuestra sociedad actual.

Desde esta perspectiva, el presente proyecto pretende analizar el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto y la negociación de las (des)igualdades de género en textos socio-ideológico virtuales (foros de discusión online) asociados a discursos institucionales (revistas online: *Cosmopolitan* y *Men's Health*) dirigidos a comunidades de práctica concretas (hombres y mujeres [heterosexuales] del Reino Unido consumidores y participantes de estos discursos).

Esta tesis doctoral, por tanto, se enmarca dentro de una de las ramas de los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje, más concretamente, la rama en la que se estudian el análisis lingüístico y discursivo de las representaciones y negociaciones de

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género. Pese a que somos conscientes de que el sexismo lingüístico indirecto se puede encontrar en todos los ámbitos de nuestra vida privada y pública, consideramos que la construcción discursiva de las identidades sociales en los espacios virtuales nos permitirá desvelar manifestaciones modernas, reales y actualizadas de este fenómeno en lengua inglesa, la cual, por otro lado, puede considerarse una importante *lingua franca* mundial aparte de una de las lenguas más representativas en el ciberespacio.

Nuestro objetivo principal en este proyecto, como hemos mencionado, es el análisis del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto desde una perspectiva pragmático-discursiva propia de la tercera ola feminista y de las corrientes actuales dentro de los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje.

Para ello, utilizaremos un corpus de cerca de 2.500.000 de palabras extraído de dos foros de discusión online adscritos a dos revistas de gran impacto dentro del mercado de las publicaciones dirigidas a hombres y mujeres, *Cosmopolitan* y *Men's Health*. Consideramos que el análisis de este fenómeno lingüístico-ideológico-discursivo en este corpus concreto nos permitirá:

- 1) Perfilar el concepto de sexismo lingüístico en un entorno que consideramos especialmente relevante en cuanto a la construcción de identidades en la sociedad actual. Consideramos que un análisis localizado enmarcado dentro del modelo de comunidad de práctica nos permitirá estudiar qué es o cómo se define este fenómeno en estos contextos determinados además de ayudarnos a identificar dónde y cómo surge el mismo en situaciones comunicativas concretas.
- 2) Analizar manifestaciones concretas del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en inglés. Consideraremos que las mayores y más dañinas manifestaciones de sexismo lingüístico que se pueden encontrar tanto a nivel institucional como local se dan en un plano indirecto y, por ello, consideramos que su análisis puede tener importantes implicaciones no sólo lingüísticas si no también sociales.
- 3) Catalogar las manifestaciones del fenómeno del sexismo indirecto en espacios virtuales. Pese a que Mills (2008) presenta una completa y detallada clasificación de lo que podrían considerarse las manifestaciones más relevantes

de este fenómeno, consideramos que la aplicación práctica de este modelo en un corpus de características tan concretas puede llevarnos a encontrar o perfilar nuevas categorías del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto propias y relevantes en el contexto de la comunicación en espacios virtuales mediante medios tecnológicos.

- 4) Estudiar las repercusiones del uso del sexismo lingüístico indirecto a nivel institucional (revistas online) en el mantenimiento o (re)creación de estereotipos de género / ideologías de género en comunidades de práctica concretas asociadas a esos discursos institucionales (foros de interacción virtual). De este modo podremos comprobar si los discursos presentes a nivel institucional son re-creados y mantenidos por las comunidades de práctica seguidoras de ese discurso así como comprobar si los medios y manifestaciones utilizados para crear ese discurso son los mismos o diferentes a nivel local. Además, esto nos permitirá estudiar el impacto del sexismo lingüístico indirecto desde una visión globalizadora e inclusiva ya que se estudiará en relación a las mujeres pero también a los hombres (*New Lad, New Man*– Benwell 2007) plasmando de este modo un amplio espectro de estereotipos y lenguaje que denigra y perjudica a ambos sexos.

Para llevar a cabo estos objetivos concretos, dos preguntas de investigación guiarán nuestro estudio:

- 3) ¿Cómo se manifiesta y negocia el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en el contexto o discurso de las discusiones online en foros de internet adscritos a revistas online concretas dirigidas a mujeres y hombres?
- 4) ¿Hay diferencias o categorías distintas del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto a aquellas presentadas por Mills (2008) que tengan que ver con las características concretas del contexto o discurso que pretendemos analizar en esta investigación?

Con todo esto, consideramos que esta tesis es una humilde contribución a los incipientes pero ricos estudios dentro del campo de los estudios feministas de género y

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lenguaje interesados en el análisis del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico y la comunicación virtual o mediada por ordenador. Consideramos que este proyecto contribuye a los modelos discursivos que integran perspectivas lingüísticas y sociales de modo que el discurso puede ser analizado desde el punto de vista de la interacción entre individuos como desde el de la construcción de identidades (Talbot 1992).

Para llevar a cabo nuestro objetivo principal, la introducción a este trabajo presenta y define los conceptos clave que conforman las herramientas de análisis para nuestro propósito. La relación dinámica entre pensamiento, lenguaje y realidad se hace manifiesta y se negocia dentro de comunidades de práctica concretas. Esta dinámica relación a tres bandas se fundamenta en conceptos como: *discurso* (definido como una práctica lingüística, discursiva y social), *ideología* (entendida como las ideas o repertorios socio-cognitivos compartidos que polarizan los discursos dentro de determinadas comunidades de práctica), *contexto* (entendido, por un lado, como el contexto lingüístico, el género, la situación social o el entendimiento que se crea y es creado en una situación comunicativa concreta; por otro lado, como una práctica discursiva, como la producción y recepción de las estrategias que se necesitan para llevar a cabo una comunicación satisfactoria) o *conocimiento* (entendido como los instrumentos cognitivos en la percepción y relación con la realidad y la adecuación de los interlocutores a la misma).

Estos conceptos claves definen el marco en el que el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto será analizado desde una perspectiva constructivista y feminista propia de la tercera ola feminista de los estudios de género y lenguaje. Para ser coherentes con este marco y poder llevar a cabo nuestro objetivo, la tesis doctoral que aquí se presenta se estructura en tres secciones básicas.

La Sección I, *Conceptos básicos*, consta de tres capítulos en los que se presentan, describen y analizan los principales conceptos teóricos de esta investigación.

El Capítulo 1, *Sexismo lingüístico indirecto*, está dedicado a la presentación, localización, definición y ejemplificación del concepto principal de esta tesis, el sexismo lingüístico indirecto. Para ello, se procede a una presentación panorámica en forma de breve resumen sobre el desarrollo cronológico de los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje donde se enmarca este concepto. Este capítulo examina cómo diferentes autores han presentado alternativas y soluciones para el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico atendiendo a las especificidades del momento histórico y cultural en el que se presentaron. Sin ninguna duda, el giro pragmático que tomaron los estudios

lingüísticos desde los años 60 y 70 significó un punto de inflexión en relación al estudio del fenómeno que nos concierne ya que, desde entonces, la perspectiva discursiva ha gobernado en su mayoría las investigaciones sobre este fenómeno. Además, en este capítulo analizamos cómo los aspectos de género se mezclan con aspectos políticos y sociales y cómo la interdisciplinaridad se convierte en un elemento clave en este campo de estudio. La gran variedad de trabajos publicados sobre el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico ponen de manifiesto que este es un campo que interesa tanto a lingüistas como a investigadores sociales. Sin embargo, la comunidad científica necesita nuevos estudios donde se analicen en profundidad tanto la naturaleza del fenómeno como los cambios que está sufriendo en su desarrollo y adaptación a la cambiante realidad en la que vivimos, especialmente en relación a los nuevos modelos de comunicación. De este modo, este primer capítulo nos permite posicionarnos en relación a la localización del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto dentro de la disciplina de los estudios feministas de género y nos permite tener una visión más clara del principal concepto estudiado en esta investigación.

El Capítulo 2, *Revistas online y la perspectiva de género*, está dedicado a describir y delinear las características principales del contexto o marco dónde el principal concepto de esta investigación (el sexismo lingüístico indirecto) es estudiado. Tanto internet como los elementos interactivos de los medios de comunicación virtuales favorecen un tipo de análisis local y delimitado propio de los estudios discursivos en los que las instituciones, la hegemonía, la sociedad y la cultura interactúan y se relacionan mutuamente en la negociación de las relaciones de poder. Con esto en mente, es importante mencionar que nuestro estudio pretende ser coherente tanto con las recientes investigaciones sobre género y lenguaje así como con el interés demostrado por los analistas críticos del discurso sobre aspectos de género. Más concretamente, nuestro objetivo principal es el análisis del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto y la negociación de las (des)igualdades de género en textos socio-ideológicos (foros de discusión online) adscritos a discursos institucionales (revistas online: *Cosmopolitan* y *Men's Health*) dirigidos a comunidades de prácticas concretas (hombre y mujeres [heterosexuales] del Reino Unido consumidores y participantes en esos discursos). En este sentido, tanto los espacios de género de las revistas tradicionalmente dirigidas a hombres y mujeres como los espacios locales de género de los foros de discusión online son estudiados en detalle desde la perspectiva de las nuevas tecnologías y su relación con la comunicación virtual, el género y los estudios críticos del discurso. Por lo tanto,



este capítulo nos permite tener una visión del contexto en el que el principal concepto de esta tesis es analizado.

Habiendo descrito tanto el concepto principal de esta tesis como el contexto en el que es analizado, el siguiente capítulo de esta tesis, el Capítulo 3, *El sexismo lingüístico indirecto y los foros de discusión online: herramientas para un análisis crítico*, nos permite analizar las herramientas metodológicas que son utilizadas para llevar a cabo nuestro propósito. Las nociones de multimodalidad, comunicación digital o mediada por ordenador así como la de discurso mediado por ordenador son tratados casi como conceptos filosóficos. Consideramos que las características intrínsecas de nuestro corpus y la naturaleza del fenómeno que pretendemos analizar en este trabajo nos encaminan hacia un tipo de investigación que va más allá de lo puramente lingüístico. Por un lado, los espacios virtuales y los textos online deben ser abordados desde el punto de vista de la multimodalidad (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001), es decir, desde la construcción del significado más allá de puros mecanismos lingüísticos como las imágenes, los efectos visuales o de sonido así como estrategias de estilo o tipografía. Además, consideramos que el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto, debido a su naturaleza dinámica, debe ser abordado desde una perspectiva crítica que tenga en cuenta aspectos pragmáticos y discursivos. Desde esta perspectiva, el Análisis del Discurso Mediado por Ordenador (Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis – CMDA, Herring 2004) es el marco teórico alrededor del cual los siguientes capítulos de nuestra tesis están estructurados. Este es un método que permite abordar el comportamiento online basándose en un conjunto de herramientas metodológicas y una serie de lentes teóricas a través de las cuales se pueden hacer observaciones e interpretar los resultados de un análisis empírico (Herring 2004). El CMDA se desarrolla en cinco pasos que serán los que delimitan nuestra actuación en los capítulos vinientes: i) paso 1, la presentación de nuestras preguntas de investigación y las hipótesis iniciales, ii) paso 2, la descripción de nuestro proceso de selección, compilación y organización del corpus, iii) paso 3, la explicación de la operacionalización de los conceptos claves de la investigación, iv) paso 4, la presentación del paradigma concreto seleccionado para llevar a cabo el estudio, y v) paso 5, la interpretación de los principales resultados.

Con todo esto, podemos afirmar que la Sección I de nuestra tesis conforma el marco teórico de nuestra investigación. Una vez descritos todos los conceptos teóricos que engloban nuestra tesis, la Sección II, *Un estudio práctico: un análisis feminista crítico del discurso de la comunicación mediada por ordenador (CM[FC]DA) del*

*sexismo lingüístico*, que consta de dos capítulos, conforma la aplicación práctica de dichos conceptos en un corpus concreto diseñado específicamente para llevar a cabo nuestro objetivo.

El Capítulo 4, *Descripción del corpus: proceso de recogida y caracterización*, está dedicado, en primer lugar, a dejar constancia del objetivo principal de este trabajo, es decir, del análisis del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto y la negociación de las (des)igualdades de género en textos socio-ideológicos virtuales asociados a discursos institucionales de género concretos y específicos de determinadas comunidades de práctica. En segundo lugar, este capítulo nos permite abordar las preguntas concretas de investigación que motivaron este estudio (paso 1 de nuestra metodología). Más concretamente, esta investigación pretende: 1) analizar cómo el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico se manifiesta y es negociado dentro del discurso de los foros de discusión online adscritos a revistas online dirigidas a mujeres y hombres y, por otro lado, 2) estudiar si el modelo de sexismo lingüístico indirecto propuesto por Mills (2008) puede ser aplicado al contexto concreto de esta investigación o si, por el contrario, éste debería ser modificado para delinear ciertas categorías o añadir algunas nuevas atendiendo al contexto concreto de este estudio. En relación a nuestra primera pregunta, nuestras hipótesis de partida giran en torno a la idea de que nuestro análisis, de hecho, demostrará que el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico se manifiesta a través de diferentes mecanismos, el del sexismo directo y el sexismo indirecto. Sin embargo, podemos predecir que, debido a la naturaleza social del entorno y la influencia del marco institucional en el que nos encontramos en este estudio, los mecanismos de sexismo indirecto serán los más destacados a la hora de manifestar y negociar actitudes sexistas a través del lenguaje para evitar sanciones o recriminaciones sociales. En relación con nuestra segunda pregunta de investigación, consideramos que nuestro análisis puede demostrar que el modelo del sexismo lingüístico indirecto presentado por Mills (2008) puede ser aplicado no sólo a contextos formales o institucionales sino también a espacios informales y creados recientemente. Sin embargo, debido a las especificidades concretas del medio en el que se centra esta investigación, consideramos que ciertos matices serán necesarios en relación a categorías concretas y, más importante aún, nuevas categorías deberían ser incluidas teniendo en cuenta las manifestaciones de negociación de significado en este entorno concreto. En este sentido, el paso 1 de nuestra metodología es abordado de manera directa en este capítulo pero, además, el paso 2, la presentación y descripción de nuestro corpus concreto es también

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llevada a cabo en este capítulo. Más concretamente, nuestra investigación empírica se centra en un corpus que consta de 2.500.000 de palabras extraídas de dos foros de discusión online adscritos a dos revistas relacionadas con aspectos de género, *Cosmopolitan* y *Men's Health*. Para describir nuestro corpus, se hará mención a conceptos relevantes dentro de los estudios de la comunicación digital –como localización, criterios de selección, recogida de datos, buscador, sistema, formato de archivo o nomenclatura– pero, además, también serán relevantes nociones organizativas –como estructuras macroscópica o microscópica– que nos permitirán delinear nuestro corpus y justificar su adecuación a nuestro objetivo.

El Capítulo 5, *Análisis del corpus*, constituye el análisis de nuestro estudio propiamente dicho. Para ser coherentes con el método elegido para esta investigación, el paso 3 de nuestra metodología, es decir, la operacionalización de los conceptos clave de la investigación, es llevada a cabo en la primera parte de este capítulo. El modelo de sexismo lingüístico indirecto presentado por Mills (2008) es utilizado para presentar una clasificación de las principales manifestaciones que este fenómeno puede presentar en el discurso. Seis categorías –humor, presuposiciones, guiones y metáforas, mensajes conflictivos, colocaciones y androcentrismo– son descritas y explicadas con gran detalle. A continuación, el paso 4, es decir, la presentación del paradigma concreto elegido para el análisis y su implementación al corpus concreto son llevadas a cabo. Debido a razones de organización, la descripción detallada del paradigma elegido está incluida en el Capítulo 3 de este estudio siguiendo la explicación de la metodología. De este modo, todos los conceptos teóricos y metodológicos están comprendidos en la misma sección, la Sección I. Sin embargo, para ser coherentes con el método elegido, el paradigma concreto seleccionado para nuestra investigación, que en nuestro caso es el Análisis Feminista Crítico del Discurso (Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis - FCDA) (Lazar 2005b, 2007; Lehtonen 2007, Marling 2010), será retomado brevemente en este capítulo. El siguiente paso es la implementación de dicho paradigma en nuestro corpus concreto y la presentación de ejemplos específicos y detallados.

Finalmente, la Sección III, *Conclusiones y futuras direcciones*, nos permite presentar los resultados principales de nuestra investigación y algunas sugerencias futuras. El Capítulo 6, *Conclusiones del proyecto y direcciones futuras de investigación*, está dedicado a llevar a cabo el paso 5 de nuestra metodología, es decir, la presentación y la interpretación de los principales resultados de nuestra investigación, lo cual es llevado a cabo en tres pasos. En primer lugar, las conclusiones generales extraídas de

nuestro estudio son presentadas en términos de un breve resumen de la información principal presentada en nuestra investigación. En segundo lugar, se presentan las respuestas concretas a nuestras preguntas de investigación, más concretamente, comprobamos cómo las hipótesis iniciales presentadas al inicio de este estudio son corroboradas. Por una parte, queda de manifiesto el hecho de que, a pesar de que el sexismo lingüístico puede ser manifestado a través de mecanismos directos e indirectos, podemos afirmar que aquellos catalogados como más encubiertos o sutiles pueden ser considerados los más relevantes en nuestra investigación. También explicamos cómo, a pesar de haber aplicado el modelo de sexismo lingüístico indirecto propuesto por Mills (2008) de forma satisfactoria a nuestro análisis de este fenómeno en nuestro corpus concreto de comunicación virtual, también se han encontrados evidencias que apuntan a que categorías concretas, como las de humor y presuposiciones, pueden ser consideradas más relevantes en este entorno comunicativo concreto debido tanto a factores sociales como del propio medio. Además, concretamos cómo la adición de una categoría extra, la de elementos multimodales, debería ser incluida en el modelo de sexismo lingüístico indirecto propuesto por Mills (2008) para poder considerarlo un modelo más adecuado al análisis del contexto concreto objeto de este estudio. Finalmente, en este último capítulo subrayamos algunas ideas que intentan arrojar luz sobre los futuros caminos que pueden seguirse en relación al análisis feminista de la relación entre género y comunicación virtual y sus implicaciones para el lenguaje, el conocimiento y la sociedad.

Una vez explicados tanto el objetivo general de nuestra tesis, como las preguntas de investigación que motivaron este estudio, así como las hipótesis iniciales y la estructura organizativa de este trabajo, vamos a proceder a presentar con más detalle – ya que ya hemos apuntado algunos aspectos en este apartado– la metodología concreta que hemos utilizado para nuestro principal objetivo en este estudio.

## **Metodología**

La negociación de prácticas sociales online debe ser considerada como una práctica social en sí misma donde elementos lingüísticos y multimodales se entremezclan de modo que favorecen el acceso de los investigadores a la información tanto desde un nivel global como desde uno más localizado. En consonancia con esta visión del discurso mediado por ordenador (Computer-Mediated Discourse - CMD), el

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Análisis del Discurso Mediado por Ordenador (Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis – CMDA) (Herring 2004) puede considerarse el métodos más apropiado para su estudio debido a su foco lingüístico y social.

Las principales premisas de este método exponen que: i) el discurso, por una parte, exhibe patrones recurrentes que pueden ayudar a los investigadores a identificar rasgos ideológicos, ii) que el discurso es también entendido como la libertad de elección de los individuos ya que estos pueden elegir entre una gran variedad de material lingüístico y no lingüístico a su disposición para poder manifestar significados concretos e ideas; y iii) que el discurso y, más concretamente, el discurso mediado por ordenador, puede ser moldeado por las características tecnológicas de la comunicación mediada por ordenador a disposición de los usuarios.

Por todo ello, consideramos que el CMDA se adapta perfectamente a nuestros objetivos y la naturaleza tanto del corpus (2.500.000 palabras extraídas de dos foros de discusión adscritos a *Cosmopolitan* y *Men's Health*) como del fenómeno que pretendemos estudiar (el sexismo lingüístico indirecto). El CMDA puede ser definido como un enfoque más que una metodología, como un set de herramientas o lentes teóricas a través de las cuales los investigadores pueden hacer observaciones e interpretar los resultados de sus investigaciones empíricas (Herring 2004). Este enfoque metodológico está dividido en cinco pasos:

- 1) Establecimiento de las preguntas de investigación e hipótesis que guiarán el estudio. En nuestro caso, las preguntas de investigación que guían nuestro estudio son: i) ¿Cómo se manifiesta y se negocia el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en el discurso de los foros de discusión online adscritos a revistas de impacto online dirigidas a hombres y mujeres?, ii) ¿Puede el modelo de Mills (2008) de sexismo lingüístico indirecto aplicarse al entorno concreto donde desarrollamos nuestra investigación o, por el contrario, deben agregarse o eliminarse determinadas categorías atendiendo a las especificidades del contexto?
- 2) Selección y descripción del corpus concreto donde se llevará a cabo la investigación empírica para poder responder a las preguntas de investigación concretas y verificar o negar las hipótesis de partida. Como hemos mencionado, en nuestro caso, nuestro corpus consta de unos 2.500.000 de palabras extraídas

de dos foros de discusión online adscritos a dos revistas de impacto dirigidas a hombres y mujeres, *Men's Health* y *Cosmopolitan*.

- 3) Operacionalización de los conceptos clave de la investigación. En nuestro caso concreto, trataremos de definir con precisión el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto así como sus manifestaciones más relevantes.
- 4) Selección y aplicación de un método de análisis concreto. En nuestro caso, debido a la naturaleza del corpus y las características pragmático-discursivas del fenómeno que pretendemos estudiar consideramos que la utilización del Análisis Crítico Feminista del Discurso (FCDA - Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis) nos permitirá afrontar nuestros objetivos generales y preguntas de investigación concretas desde una perspectiva adecuada. Este paradigma, tiene como base el Análisis Crítico del Discurso (CDA - Critical Discourse Analysis) el cual no tiene una descripción sistemática de herramientas para hacer un análisis delimitado de los corpora. Éste es un paradigma que está basado en la filosofía, en el análisis de la construcción de identidades en el discurso y la negociación de las relaciones de poder y su relación con la ideología, la sociedad y la cultura desde una perspectiva feminista (Lazar 2005, 2007; Lehtonen 2007, Marling 2010)
- 5) Interpretación de los resultados. En este último paso, tanto las conclusiones generales extraídas del trabajo, como las respuestas concretas a las preguntas de investigación, así como una mirada hacia el futuro serán tenidos en cuenta. Estos tres niveles de interpretación, a su vez, se harán atendiendo tanto a los factores del medio y sociales concretos del estudio realizado.

En términos generales, se puede afirmar que el CMDA se puede aplicar a cuatro niveles del lenguaje: 1) los fenómenos estructurales, como por ejemplo, la tipografía o la ortografía, la formación de palabras o la sintaxis; 2) el significado de las palabras, las oraciones o unidades mayores de significado; 3) el nivel interaccional, donde se tienen en cuenta nociones como el turno en la comunicación, el desarrollo del tema o la negociación; y, finalmente, 4) el nivel social, el cual incluye el análisis de nociones como conflicto, poder, o la pertenencia un grupo concreto.

Teniendo en cuenta estos niveles de actuación del CMDA y la gran cantidad de información contenida en nuestro corpus, decidimos hacer uso de una combinación de metodologías cuantitativas y cualitativas que favorecieran la consecución de nuestros objetivos.

Habiendo descrito las principales premisas sobre las que se asienta el estudio feminista crítico del discurso que se pretende de nuestro material está claro que nuestro corpus de cerca de 2.500.000 de palabras es demasiado extenso para dicho propósito. Por ello, la utilización de la Lingüística de Corpus (Corpus Linguistics – CL) nos permite delimitar nuestro corpus y reducirlo a un mini-corpus atendiendo a patrones discursivos recurrentes y relevantes para nuestra investigación.

Haciendo uso de la herramienta de corpus *Antconc*, procedemos a hacer una búsqueda de los términos más frecuentes en nuestro corpus. Una vez identificadas las frecuencias más relevantes, procedemos a la identificación de los textos donde esas frecuencias aparecen. De este modo, mediante un uso simple de herramientas de corpus conseguimos delimitar un extensísimo corpus de forma objetiva y sistemática.

Tras esta primera aproximación al corpus de forma objetiva y cuantitativa, procedemos a un análisis cualitativo del mismo siguiendo el paradigma del FCDA descrito anteriormente.

De este modo, podemos decir que la metodología utilizada para esta investigación es, en términos generales, una combinación de métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos que pretenden aunar esfuerzos en pos del análisis y el estudio de la intensa y dinámica relación entre lenguaje, pensamiento y realidad a través de la manifestación del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en el contexto concreto de la comunicación virtual

Habiendo descrito el objetivo principal de nuestro trabajo, nuestras preguntas de investigación, hipótesis iniciales y la metodología utilizada para corroborar o no las mismas, vamos a proceder ahora a presentar de manera breve las conclusiones generales de nuestra investigación.

## **Conclusiones**

Como hemos mencionado anteriormente, las conclusiones de este proyecto pueden agruparse en tres secciones principales.

En primer lugar, consideramos que la presentación de un breve resumen de la información principal de esta tesis es fundamental a la hora de poder recapitular todos los conceptos teóricos y aspectos técnicos y organizativos un este trabajo. En este apartado, de nuevo, se hace un recorrido cronológico por los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje para poder localizar el estudio del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto dentro de ellos. Las referencias a una gran cantidad de autores en relación al estudio y tratamiento de este fenómeno son esenciales para poder presentar una visión panorámica del mismo y de sus principales manifestaciones.

En segundo lugar, las conclusiones de este trabajo pretenden proporcionar una respuesta concreta a las preguntas de investigación que motivaron este estudio. Por una parte, nuestra primera pregunta de investigación pretendía analizar las principales manifestaciones del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto y su negociación en el contexto o discurso concreto de los foros de discusión online adscritos a revistas online concretas dirigidas a hombres y mujeres. Los resultados extraídos de un riguroso y pormenorizado análisis de nuestro corpus siguiendo el FCDA nos permiten concluir que una primera aproximación a esta pregunta nos dirige hacia la idea de que el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico se manifiesta principalmente en nuestro corpus de tres formas distintas:

- a) mediante la utilización bastante anecdótica de mecanismos directos de sexismo lingüísticos utilizados para manifestar una actitud abiertamente sexista;
- b) mediante la utilización de formas de sexismo lingüístico directas enmarcadas o encubiertas bajo marcos indirectos o moduladores. En este caso, el tono humorístico y la ironía suele ser la norma general que consigue esconder o camuflar las formas abiertas y directas de sexismo bajo el potencial de poder negar las acusaciones;
- c) mediante formas de sexismo lingüístico indirecto y discursivo que ayudan a transmitir ideas y actitudes sexistas y estereotípicas de género de una forma velada y sutil.

Sin embargo, atendiendo a los resultados extraídos del análisis detallado de ejemplos concretos en nuestro estudio, podemos sugerir que las manifestaciones más importantes y relevantes del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico en el contexto de los



foros de discusión online adscritos a revistas de género concretas se llevan a cabo mediante la utilización de mecanismos lingüísticos y discursivos indirectos.

Además, esta primera pregunta de investigación puede ser abordada desde otro punto de vista. Además de discutir cuáles son las principales manifestaciones del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico en nuestro corpus, es importante analizar cómo esas manifestaciones se negocian en el discurso.

Desde esta perspectiva, nuestra primera pregunta de investigación debe abordarse desde el punto de vista de la negociación de las identidades sociales y de género en este contexto específico de comunicación virtual. Más concretamente, consideramos que puede resultar especialmente relevante para los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje enmarcados dentro de la tercera ola feminista, así como para los estudios sobre comunicación virtual, el analizar cómo estas manifestaciones de sexismo lingüístico indirecto son permitidas, consensuadas, mantenidas o contraatacadas en contexto. Creemos que este análisis no mediado de las negociaciones de significado y de identidades sociales y de género es una aportación bastante novedosa para nuestro campo de estudio.

En esta línea, del mismo modo que propusimos tres manifestaciones principales para el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico en nuestro corpus, de las cuales concluimos que las formas indirectas eran las más relevantes, consideramos que es también importante destacar que esas manifestaciones indirectas son negociadas principalmente a través de cuatro efectos o procesos de negociación en nuestro corpus. Más concretamente, estas formas de sexismo lingüístico indirecto pueden:

- a) pasar inadvertidas o no contestadas (de manera consciente o inconsciente);
- b) ser aceptadas (de manera consciente o inconsciente);
- c) ser desafiadas o contraatacadas (de forma satisfactoria o no) mediante el uso de mecanismos directos o ataques; y
- d) pueden ser desafiadas o contraatacadas (de forma satisfactoria o no) mediante el uso de mecanismos indirectos y sutiles.

Con todo esto en mente, es decir, con la información sobre cómo el sexismo lingüístico se manifiesta y se negocia en nuestro corpus, nos vemos en la posición de poder sugerir que, debido a que este es un fenómeno que tiene lugar a nivel local, el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto debe ser considerado un fenómeno

tremendamente complejo en términos de sus manifestaciones y los efectos que puede producir en interlocutores concretos. Por estos motivos, consideramos que es tremendamente importante aportar datos sobre las especificidades de los estudios concretos, es decir, distanciarse del esencialismo tanto en términos de los estudios de género como en términos de los estudios sobre comunicación virtual. En este sentido, los resultados obtenidos deben tenerse en cuenta siempre atendiendo a las especificidades del medio y el fenómeno que está siendo analizado. Consideramos que el estudio de ejemplos localizados y contextualizados concretos ayuda al investigador a conseguir esa visión no esencialista y, a su vez, poder analizar de forma crítica dichos resultados para poder extraer conclusiones más globalizadoras o generales sobre el contexto concreto en el que dichas manifestaciones han tenido lugar. Desde esta perspectiva podemos concluir que, teniendo en cuenta el marco institucional en el que se enmarcan nuestros ejemplos localizados, podemos afirmar que la complejidad tanto del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto como del contexto de la comunicación virtual ayudan a reforzar y mantener el género de las revistas (online) dirigidas a hombres y a mujeres. Creemos que la complejidad de las negociaciones de las identidades sociales y de género a nivel local en los foros de discusión online se nutre de la complejidad del género de las revistas (online) para hombres y mujeres pero, a su vez, esta complejidad a nivel local ayuda a reforzar el marco institucional en el que aparecen. Creemos que hay cierta coherencia entre lo que ocurre a nivel institucional y local que, de hecho, refuerza la idea de que lenguaje, pensamiento y realidad están interconectadas y mantienen una relación flexible y dinámica.

En relación con nuestra segunda pregunta de investigación, es decir, la pregunta de si el modelo de sexismo lingüístico indirecto presentado por Mills (2008) es adaptable y fructífero para el contexto de la comunicación virtual o debe ser modificado de alguna manera, esta investigación nos ha proporcionado una confirmación de la misma en varios sentidos.

Este estudio nos ha proporcionado una aplicación práctica del modelo de sexismo lingüístico indirecto propuesto por Mills (2008) a un corpus concreto delimitado y creado atendiendo a nuestro objetivo específico de investigación. En el Capítulo 5 de este estudio podemos observar como dicho modelo ha servido de manera muy fructífera para analizar el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en un corpus concreto de comunicación virtual. Consideramos que, a pesar de que el modelo fue creado en primera instancia teniendo en mente el análisis de contextos más formales o

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institucionales, el hecho de que dicho modelo puede ser también aplicado a ejemplos localizados de lenguaje informal puede ser considerada una importante aportación de este estudio.

Sin embargo, es importante mencionar que, pese a que las seis categorías propuestas por Mills (2008) han sido localizadas y analizadas en nuestro corpus como categorías relevantes de este fenómeno en este contexto concreto, es también cierto que determinadas categorías pueden ser consideradas como más relevantes que otras. Debido a las especificidades del discurso mediado por ordenador, determinadas categorías tienden a ser utilizadas con mayor frecuencia o de manera más persistente por los usuarios de este tipo de espacios.

Por un lado, es importante destacar que la categoría del humor se manifiesta como especialmente relevante a la hora de expresar el sexismo lingüístico indirecto en este contexto concreto. Creemos que determinados factores sociales y del medio favorecen esta circunstancia. En primer lugar, el hecho de que los usuarios de estos espacios no se conocen entre ellos y están, en cierto modo, protegidos por el anonimato, hace de esta situación comunicativa una situación concreta en la que el miedo a salvaguardar la imagen es distinta a la que se puede producir en situaciones de comunicación cara a cara donde el riesgo y las repercusiones pueden ser mayores.

En segundo lugar, otro factor social y del medio que propicia la utilización del humor y la ironía como mecanismo discursivo para expresar actitudes sexistas es el hecho de que los usuarios de la comunicación virtual en el contexto de los foros de discusión online hacen uso de una variedad lingüística concreta. Consideramos que el lenguaje de internet, a nivel de comunicación de usuarios en espacios concretos y bien delimitados como es el caso de los foros online, se puede caracterizar, principalmente, por un registro informal que, indirectamente, favorece la utilización de bromas, ironía o juegos de palabras. El hecho de que los usuarios de los medios de comunicación online tengan que negociar sus identidades sociales y de género a través de, principalmente, el lenguaje y elementos multimodales puede ser considerado un hecho concluyente ya que la perspectiva de la negociación de identidades es bien distinta a la de la comunicación cara a cara. Más concretamente, el deseo de querer ser aceptado como un miembro de la comunidad de práctica de determinados foros de discusión online puede influir directamente en la utilización de estrategias lingüísticas y discursivas para gustar a otros como son las bromas o la ironía de modo que determinados usuarios puedan negociar sus identidades de forma sencilla en estos contextos concretos.

Esto nos puede llevar a pensar en el tono de las interacciones analizadas en nuestro corpus. Puede ser fácilmente analizable cómo el intento de crear una sensación de camaradería y fraternidad está presente en muchas interacciones de nuestros foros de discusión. Ideas como la amistad, el confort o la relajación favorecen la utilización de la ironía y el humor desde una perspectiva performativa.

Finalmente, otro factor social y del medio que puede favorecer la prevalencia de esta categoría del modelo de Mills para el sexismo lingüístico indirecto es el hecho de que las intervenciones en los foros de internet se dan por diversos motivos pero, principalmente, atendiendo a las intenciones comunicativas de búsqueda de consejos, pasar un buen rato o simplemente analizar las situaciones de otros en relación a ámbitos concretos –como el sexo o las relaciones de pareja, como es el caso de nuestro análisis. En estos casos, la utilización del humor y la ironía pueden ayudar a los usuarios de la comunicación digital a romper el hielo y, por lo tanto, a cumplir sus principales intenciones comunicativas.

Por otro lado, otra de las seis categorías presentadas por Mills (2008) puede ser también considerada como especialmente relevante en nuestro corpus desde el punto de vista de los usuarios pero, también, desde la del investigador, es la categoría de las presuposiciones.

Por un lado, atendiendo a la perspectiva de los usuarios de la comunicación virtual, es importante destacar que ellos no saben realmente con quién están interactuando. Los usuarios de la comunicación virtual representan y se encuentran con diferentes *personas* y es mediante las presuposiciones, es decir, determinados rasgos lingüísticos que los interlocutores deciden dejar patentes, que otros participantes deben inferir o imaginar quién es la persona con la cual están interactuando. Otras veces no hay rasgos lingüísticos en los que basarse y son meras implicaturas basadas en conocimiento compartido lo que puede aportar la clave. Los usuarios de la comunicación virtual deben ser muy conscientes de que la interacción online está gobernada por reglas distintas a las de la comunicación cara a cara, e incluso a las de la comunicación no virtual como es el caso de la comunicación tecnológica –como las conversaciones telefónicas– donde los interlocutores sí suelen tener cierta información real sobre la persona con la que interactúan como el sexo, la edad, la profesión, la ideología, etc. Sin embargo, en la comunicación virtual o mediada por ordenador, como es el caso de los foros online, esta información es, generalmente, inexistente y, debido a estas especificidades de los factores sociales y del medio concreto que analizamos,

consideramos que las presuposiciones son especialmente relevantes en este contexto en relación a la transmisión y la identificación de prácticas indirectas sexistas en nuestro corpus.

Por otro lado, desde el punto de vista de los investigadores interesados en aspectos relacionados con el género y el lenguaje desde una perspectiva feminista, consideramos que la categoría de presuposiciones e implicaturas juega también un papel esencial. Como investigadores nosotros debemos hacer juicios sobre la transmisión e interpretación de significados encubiertos. Es decir, como observadores y analistas, debemos interpretar la interpretación de interpretador y, por lo tanto, basar nuestras propias interpretaciones en presuposiciones o implicaturas. Los investigadores de la comunicación mediada por ordenador no están exentos de las repercusiones de los factores sociales y del medio ya que deben jugar con presuposiciones e implicaturas para poder dotar de significado determinados contextos.

Con todo esto, es importante recapitular que en relación a nuestra segunda pregunta de investigación, por el momento, hemos i) afirmado que el modelo de Mills (2008) para el sexismo lingüístico indirecto puede ser aplicado de manera satisfactoria a nuevos contextos y nuevos tipos de lenguaje que tienen especial relevancia para los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje, como son los espacios virtuales de comunicación. Además, también podemos sugerir que ii) a pesar de que las seis categorías presentadas por Mills (2008) están presentes en nuestro corpus, dos de ellas, el humor y las presuposiciones, son especialmente relevantes en el contexto en el que se centra esta investigación debido a factores sociales y del medio concretos. Sin embargo, un tercer aspecto debe ser tenido en cuenta en relación a la respuesta de nuestra segunda pregunta de investigación, iii) el hecho de que una nueva categoría debería ser añadida al modelo del Mills (2008) de sexismo lingüístico indirecto para considerar que dicho modelo cubre específicas manifestaciones del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en este contexto determinado, más concretamente, la categoría de elementos multimodales.

Tras el análisis detallado presentado en el Capítulo 5 de nuestra tesis podemos concluir que los elementos multimodales contribuyen a la construcción de significado y la interpretación del mismo, a la vez que participan en la construcción de las identidades sociales y de género, en el contexto concreto de comunicación virtual analizada en este proyecto.

Consideramos que tanto el uso de emoticonos como de otros elementos multimodales como imágenes o hipervínculos a otras páginas ayudan a los usuarios de estos espacios a negociar sus propias identidades sociales y de género en el contexto de determinadas comunidades de práctica y, además, contribuyen a la trasmisión de actitudes sexistas y la trasmisión de estereotipos de género de forma indirecta y camuflada. Tras desarrollar un análisis feminista crítico del discurso de nuestro corpus llegamos a la conclusión de que el modelo de Mills (2008) puede beneficiarse de la inclusión de la categoría de elementos multimodales para el análisis del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto. Consideramos que, de nuevo, los factores concretos sociales y del medio que analizamos en este proyecto favorecen la inclusión de esta categoría en el modelo original. Esto, por lo tanto, extendería y cubriría las diferentes manifestaciones discursivas que pueden ser utilizadas por los usuarios de la comunicación virtual para manifestar y negociar actitudes sexistas en diferentes contextos y situaciones comunicativas.

Habiendo resumido las conclusiones extraídas de nuestro estudio para responder de manera concreta a las dos preguntas de investigación que motivaron este estudio, las conclusiones de esta tesis doctoral se cierran con unas pequeñas aportaciones en relación a los caminos futuros que pueden ser emprendidos en relación al estudio del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto y la comunicación mediada por ordenador.

Por un lado, nuestra investigación nos lleva a apuntar en dirección de la multimodalidad. Consideramos que estudios detallados y sistemáticos sobre este fenómeno podrían contribuir de manera extraordinaria a los estudios feministas de lenguaje y género, más concretamente, a los relacionados con el sexismo lingüístico indirecto pero, además, a los estudios de la comunicación mediada por ordenador, uno de los principales medios de comunicación en nuestra sociedad hoy en día. La conexión entre el mundo virtual y el social puede ser explicada en términos lingüísticos pero, desde luego, debe ser enriquecida y complementada con aportaciones sobre la especificidad del medio, como son los aspectos multimodales que contribuyen a la construcción y negociación del significado.

Esto nos lleva a destacar la importancia de realizar estudios concretos y localizados que ayuden a delimitar y conformar una imagen general del vasto espacio que abarca la comunicación mediada por ordenador. Sería muy interesante poder analizar cómo el fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico se manifiesta y se negocia en distintos espacios virtuales y cómo las relaciones entre lo local y lo institucional

fluctúan en diferentes ámbitos. De este modo, tanto los investigadores en aspectos de género y lenguaje como los de comunicación mediada por ordenador podrían disponer de un gran cuerpo de estudios que, pese a ser localizados y concretos, pueden ofrecer una perspectiva global de la evolución de determinados fenómenos desde una perspectiva diacrónica y contextualizada.

Además, desde el punto de vista metodológico, consideramos que esta investigación es un ejemplo de como la combinación de métodos cuantitativos junto a métodos cualitativos puede favorecer el resultado de investigaciones relacionadas con fenómenos lingüísticos discursivos y contextos donde la cantidad de información puede ser desbordante. Creemos que los investigadores interesados en estos campos de estudio deben trabajar hacia la obtención, creación o diseño de diferentes métodos de análisis que combinen estas dos disciplinas científicas para el beneficio de los estudios sociales y del discurso.

Con todo ello, consideramos que esta tesis doctoral es una pequeña aportación al campo de los estudios feministas de género y lenguaje, más concretamente, al del fenómeno del sexismo lingüístico indirecto en el entorno de la comunicación virtual que demuestra que este fenómeno, lejos de estar desapareciendo, cobra fuerza y encuentra nuevos medios de manifestación en nuevos medios de comunicación. Creemos que el sexismo lingüístico indirecto es una estrategia humana dañina que contribuye al mantenimiento y la (re)creación de las desigualdades de género y, como tal, consideramos que estudios sobre dicho fenómeno deben favorecerse, especialmente en el campo de las nuevas comunicaciones, para poder comprender su funcionamiento y sus efectos sobre nuestra evolución.





# Appendices

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## APPENDIX I. Cosmopolitan's Forum Structure

# COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | **FORUMS** | SHOP | DIRECTORY

## FORUMS

FORUM RSS 

[Forum Home](#)

## Cosmopolitan Forums

Topic	Posts	Last post
<b>General</b>		
<b>General</b> Get away from it all! Come here to chat with friends about things that don't fit in any other forum. Please consider whether another forum would be better suited before posting, as your topic will be	Topics: <b>28836</b>	Aug 26, 2011 05:15:44 PM <b>Re: The weekend has landed :D</b> By: <b>Naughty_87</b>
<b>Giveaways &amp; Competitions</b> Every week we give away small items in our forum competition - so keep an eye out for what's up for grabs!	Topics: <b>176</b>	Aug 26, 2011 04:46:16 PM <b>Cosmo's writing competition: My biggest school memory</b> By: <b>Webby_webm...</b>
<b>Web Chats</b> Got a question that needs an expert answer? Join Cosmo's live web chats with top professionals from the worlds of counselling, sex and relationships, health and fitness, beauty and fashion.	Topics: <b>14</b>	Aug 08, 2011 10:50:03 AM <b>Re: kissing</b> By: <b>mightydevi...</b>
<b>Introduce Yourself</b> Just signed up? Use this forum to introduce yourself and get acquainted with other Cosmo girls	Topics: <b>1535</b>	Aug 26, 2011 05:04:22 PM <b>Re: Hola!</b> By: <b>Clurrrrr</b>
<b>Messageboards</b>		
<b>Sex</b> Drop your inhibitions and talk about all subjects sexual. From emotional issues to hot techniques.	Topics: <b>21226</b>	Aug 26, 2011 05:07:09 PM <b>Re: sex toys- bit of advice please</b> By: <b>chazlevy</b>
<b>Relationships</b> From your man to your mum or your best friend, discuss your latest relationship dreams and dilemmas.	Topics: <b>36991</b>	Aug 26, 2011 05:20:19 PM <b>Re: threatening suicide....</b> By: <b>robyn_21</b>
<b>Centrefolds</b> Who's your favourite? Who are you desperate to see strip off for your eyes only? Discuss it here.	Topics: <b>571</b>	Aug 26, 2011 09:21:14 AM <b>Re: Channel 5 Newsreaders</b> By: <b>sofute</b>

<p><b>Style &amp; Shopping</b> Share your fashion quandaries and make-up must-haves with other Cosmo readers.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>12982</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 03:40:45 PM <b>What network are you on?</b> By: <b>xMissNx</b></p>
<p><b>Career &amp; Cash</b> If you're searching for the job of your dreams, have a cash quandary or having a work crisis, chat here.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>7645</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 02:29:17 PM <b>Enterprise Rent-A-Car</b> By: <b>vintagepri...</b></p>
<p><b>Diet &amp; Fitness</b> Talk about the latest diets and fitness fads and share advice on getting in shape.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>9865</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 05:01:35 PM <b>Re: Boxing</b> By: <b>EmmyXsnowf...</b></p>
<p><b>Gynae</b> Got an STI worry or chronic period pain, discuss your most intimate problems with other readers.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>5146</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 04:33:00 PM <b>Re: small 'cuts' between vagina+anus</b> By: <b>lynds6</b></p>
<p><b>Entertainment</b> Your chance to give us the skinny on what you think of the latest films, fiction or TV shows.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>2189</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 05:25:30 PM <b>Re: Worst ever final episodes</b> By: <b>Paynebynam...</b></p>
<p><b>Celebrity Gossip</b> From the latest Hollywood coupling to red carpet disasters, tell us what you think here.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>1008</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 11:30:57 AM <b>Re: Scripted Moments at Kim Kardashian's wedding- Have real life moments become fake?</b> By: <b>Elisa_beth</b></p>
<p><b>Jokes &amp; Games</b> Laughter is the best therapy so share your favourite jokes and have some fun with a few games.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>1094</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 12:12:32 PM <b>Re: Did you/Do you?</b> By: <b>Kirst__X</b></p>
<p><b>Beauty</b> Can't get the hang of liquid eyeliner? Want to rave about your fab new mascara? Swap your beauty secrets here.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>13109</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 11:58:09 AM <b>Re: tend skin on ingrown hairs?</b> By: <b>shazarena</b></p>
<p><b>Travel</b> Found a hip hotel? Want to share your holiday hotspots? Share your desintation info here.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>1765</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 10:19:26 AM <b>Favourite moment this summer</b> By: <b>Willows21</b></p>
<p><b>Reality TV</b> Chat about all your favourite reality shows... Big Brother, X Factor, Strictly Come Dancing... whatever floats your boat</p>	<p>Topics: <b>457</b></p>	<p>Aug 22, 2011 05:06:13 PM <b>Re: Last years Big Brother</b> By: <b>the-cosmos...</b></p>
<p><b>Pregnancy &amp; Parenting</b> Whether you're trying to conceive, already expecting or a mum of several years, talk about your kids here.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>2576</b></p>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 12:16:20 PM <b>Re: So happy!!</b> By: <b>Elvenpath</b></p>
<p><b>Weddings</b> Share tips and advice on how to make your wedding a special day to remember.</p>	<p>Topics: <b>960</b></p>	<p>Aug 25, 2011 04:37:45 PM <b>The National Wedding Show 2011</b> By: <b>smithandmo...</b></p>

<p><b>Music</b> Wax lyrical about your favourite new band or tell the world about the gig of a lifetime.</p>	Topics: <b>1033</b>	<p>Aug 25, 2011 10:42:00 PM <b>SW4</b> By: <b>Sar_001</b></p>
<p><b>Food &amp; Drink</b> Swap recipes, diet tips and restaurant recommendations with fellow food and drink lovers.</p>	Topics: <b>1444</b>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 12:18:52 PM <b>Re: eating kiwi skin</b> By: <b>Elvenpath</b></p>
<p><b>Pets</b> Upload your cute pics, discuss the latest trick your pet learnt or get advice on caring for animals in our new Pets forum!</p>	Topics: <b>795</b>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 05:01:57 PM <b>Re: Old English Sheepdogs!</b> By: <b>MissPotato...</b></p>
<p><b>Health</b> A place seek help and share advice on mental and physical health issues</p>	Topics: <b>2775</b>	<p>Aug 26, 2011 09:44:37 AM <b>Re: Do you know of a good hangover cure?</b> By: <b>Willows21</b></p>
<p><b>Cosmo on Campus</b> Heading to Uni, or already on campus? Chat to other students and share your tips, problems and advice on Uni life here</p>	Topics: <b>234</b>	<p>Aug 24, 2011 06:21:34 PM <b>Re: Self-catered or catered halls?</b> By: <b>JezebelJin...</b></p>
<b>Chatroom essentials</b>		
<p><b>Community Rules</b> Please read our House Rules before using the Cosmopolitan.co.uk discussion forums.</p>	Topics: <b>4</b>	<p>Jul 13, 2011 10:49:23 PM <b>Re: CHAT ROOM RULES - PLEASE READ AND ABIDE BY THEM</b> By: <b>Olive-Oyl</b></p>
<p><b>Feedback &amp; Help</b> Having trouble using the site? Got a suggestion for how to make Cosmopolitan.co.uk better? Let us know here.</p>	Topics: <b>685</b>	<p>Aug 25, 2011 02:39:19 PM <b>Subscribe to threads</b> By: <b>SugarSweet...</b></p>

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## APPENDIX II. Cosmopolitan's Forum Threads

# COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK

HOME | LOVE & SEX | MEN | FASHION | HAIR & BEAUTY | LIFESTYLE | TV | CAMPUS | DATING | BLOGS | **FORUMS** | SHOP | DIRECTORY

### Relationships

Topics	Author	Post	Last post
Are you good at forgiving?	-Polly-	Replies:34 Views: 400	Jul 31, 2011 11:18:36 PM Re: Are you good at forgiving? By: vintagepri...
its happened again :(	Oblongchee...	Replies:41 Views: 996	Jul 31, 2011 09:56:32 PM Re: its happened again :( By: Oblongchee...
Sleeping together	Lauracolli...	Replies:3 Views: 152	Jul 31, 2011 09:46:12 PM Re: Sleeping together By: the-cosmos...
Where did you meet your bfriend	fienchen24...	Replies:19 Views: 264	Jul 31, 2011 09:41:34 PM Re: Where did you meet your bfriend By: Lil-Pee
I've turned into one of them!!! :O	ForeverFam...	Replies:10 Views: 302	Jul 31, 2011 08:42:39 PM Re: I've turned into one of them!!! :O By: loveweddin...
Do i give my ex boyfriend another chance?	pinky151	Replies:1 Views: 81	Jul 31, 2011 08:20:51 PM Re: Do i give my ex boyfriend another chance? By: -Shooting-...
How do I play this?	Bexy67	Replies:2 Views: 99	Jul 31, 2011 08:15:23 PM Re: How do I play this? By: annieapple...
What now?	Infinity89	Replies:2 Views: 89	Jul 31, 2011 08:13:55 PM Re: What now? By: Sarsaparil...
Single girl in a modern world...	Confuzzled...	Replies:6 Views: 185	Jul 31, 2011 07:46:08 PM Re: Single girl in a modern world... By: dutch25
That one person you cannot stop liking	I_want_to_...	Replies:1 Views: 186	Jul 31, 2011 07:34:22 PM Re: That one person you cannot stop liking By: CheekyVimt...
Such a nice compliment!	Lina_Lena	Replies:9 Views: 200	Jul 31, 2011 07:22:36 PM Re: Such a nice compliment! By: doyoulikep...
Have I done the wrong thing? Please help...	alittlelos...	Replies:5 Views: 197	Jul 31, 2011 07:19:19 PM Re: Have I done the wrong thing? Please help... By: CheekyVimt...
Struggling to forgive & forget...	jellybean1...	Replies:19 Views: 685	Jul 31, 2011 06:01:43 PM Re: Struggling to forgive & forget... By: EmmyXsnowf...
On A break now boyfriends ignoring me....HELP!!!	Danielle_1...	Replies:2 Views: 105	Jul 31, 2011 05:30:00 PM Re: On A break now boyfriends ignoring me....HELP!!! By: pumpkin121
Friend or foe??	tillysilly	Replies:4 Views: 116	Jul 31, 2011 04:04:50 PM Re: Friend or foe?? By: tillysilly
2nd first date!	jimmi85	Replies:11 Views: 282	Jul 31, 2011 03:49:25 PM Re: 2nd first date! By: CheekyVimt...
Friends old before their time!	Confuzzled...	Replies:0	Jul 31, 2011 01:56:01 PM

		Views: 95	Friends old before their time! By: Confuzzled...
I don't know how to deal with this....	EnglishMee...	Replies:14 Views: 423	Jul 31, 2011 01:30:13 PM Re: I don't know how to deal with this.... By: Velouria_
Do you believe in fate?	I_want_to_...	Replies:6 Views: 94	Jul 31, 2011 12:26:03 PM Re: Do you believe in fate? By: Velouria_
too much too fast too young.	04era	Replies:3 Views: 182	Jul 31, 2011 01:09:07 AM Re: too much too fast too young. By: EmmyXsnowf...
Boyfriend or Ex-Boyfriend?	Jessia1201	Replies:7 Views: 238	Jul 30, 2011 10:28:19 PM Re: Boyfriend or Ex-Boyfriend? By: Jessia1201
Hmm	MissMoooo	Replies:2 Views: 151	Jul 30, 2011 09:21:33 PM Re: Hmm By: lauriee
Neighbours man!	Squiiiiire...	Replies:2 Views: 141	Jul 30, 2011 08:57:46 PM Re: Neighbours man! By: Squiiiiire...
How to suggest open(ish) relationship	smeca	Replies:32 Views: 872	Jul 30, 2011 06:11:23 PM Re: How to suggest open(ish) relationship By: bowl-of-or...
Do you judge?	_Ripcurl_	Replies:18 Views: 552	Jul 30, 2011 04:34:22 PM Re: Do you judge? By: annieapple...
My jealousy is ruining my relationship :(	SweetChili...	Replies:12 Views: 387	Jul 30, 2011 04:11:30 PM Re: My jealousy is ruining my relationship :( By: annieapple...
From one extreme to the other.	Infinity89	Replies:13 Views: 282	Jul 30, 2011 02:17:13 PM Re: From one extreme to the other. By: EmmyXsnowf...
OH or boyfriend?	Rosie_Posi...	Replies:26 Views: 370	Jul 30, 2011 01:36:08 PM Re: OH or boyfriend? By: CatFacey
What would you do?	Wishingona...	Replies:6 Views: 205	Jul 30, 2011 12:22:10 PM Re: What would you do? By: Wishingona...
boyfriend help!	vintagepri...	Replies:8 Views: 116	Jul 30, 2011 10:39:38 AM Re: boyfriend help! By: vintagepri...
30th birthday present	cosmoprinc...	Replies:3 Views: 82	Jul 29, 2011 10:53:46 PM Re: 30th birthday present By: spaldingsb...
one hour to go!	DollieTops	Replies:4 Views: 153	Jul 29, 2011 09:17:29 PM Re: one hour to go! By: EmmyXsnowf...
I'm getting married!	CorleUK	Replies:10 Views: 188	Jul 29, 2011 08:27:17 PM Re: I'm getting married! By: csibannist...
Guy needs advice, please.	Christophe...	Replies:5 Views: 160	Jul 29, 2011 08:18:23 PM Re: Guy needs advice, please. By: naomi5000
Help with my best friends horrible bf!	xMayxMayx	Replies:8 Views: 168	Jul 29, 2011 05:48:08 PM Re: Help with my best friends horrible bf! By: xMayxMayx
lonely summer :(	Molly_X	Replies:7 Views: 376	Jul 29, 2011 04:37:14 PM Re: lonely summer :( By: Molly_X
Cheating on my BF	Jess557	Replies:54 Views: 882	Jul 29, 2011 04:03:02 PM Re: Cheating on my BF By: Jaguar_Ski...
a bit of advice - closure	jelly_bean...	Replies:2 Views: 105	Jul 29, 2011 03:43:12 PM Re: a bit of advice - closure By: jelly_bean...
Good things about being single?	Lauren17_x...	Replies:16	Jul 29, 2011 03:41:35 PM

		Views: 236	Re: Good things about being single? By: PixieDust_
Would you be friends with yourself?	xxblondiel...	Replies:51 Views: 447	Jul 29, 2011 02:28:25 PM Re: Would you be friends with yourself? By: Cpt_Awesom...
Am I right to be miffed??	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:2 Views: 189	Jul 29, 2011 01:48:51 PM Re: Am I right to be miffed?? By: Dhun-na-nG...
Oh god..is it that time already??	lushley666	Replies:11 Views: 306	Jul 29, 2011 01:09:10 PM Re: Oh god..is it that time already?? By: jelly_bean...
Why has he joined dating agency? Opinions pls.	Lai80	Replies:14 Views: 373	Jul 29, 2011 12:06:57 PM Re: Why has he joined dating agency? Opinions pls. By: F_Is_4_Fin...
In Love shoot	madzx11	Replies:0 Views: 83	Jul 29, 2011 10:46:01 AM In Love shoot By: madzx11
First Date..	Molly_X	Replies:1 Views: 141	Jul 29, 2011 12:41:25 AM Re: First Date.. By: CaitlinJay...
ive done it again!!!	cocopopsuk...	Replies:1 Views: 108	Jul 28, 2011 09:43:29 PM Re: ive done it again!!! By: EpicDom
sleeping together... x x	jemilou	Replies:21 Views: 896	Jul 28, 2011 08:46:34 PM Re: sleeping together... x x By: jemilou
Help! Is he interested?	jessiewhit...	Replies:5 Views: 129	Jul 28, 2011 08:43:58 PM Re: Help! Is he interested? By: SweetChili...
The break up war	CheekyVimt...	Replies:35 Views: 652	Jul 28, 2011 08:09:51 PM Re: The break up war By: Sirona_x
The break up war	CheekyVimt...	Replies:35 Views: 653	Jul 28, 2011 08:09:51 PM Re: The break up war By: Sirona_x
Why isn't he texting me?	blair_neve	Replies:8 Views: 321	Jul 28, 2011 08:08:40 PM Re: Why isn't he texting me? By: Sirona_x
REALLY stuck...	_Ripcurl_	Replies:37 Views: 406	Jul 28, 2011 07:35:38 PM Re: REALLY stuck... By: EmmyXsnowf...
Do you and your OH come as a package?	Robyn_US	Replies:25 Views: 330	Jul 28, 2011 06:52:59 PM Re: Do you and your OH come as a package? By: Divine-Int...
Worried about OH	bunnymum	Replies:1 Views: 119	Jul 28, 2011 05:33:55 PM Re: Worried about OH By: SweetChili...
How can I get closure?	whoistosay	Replies:1 Views: 67	Jul 28, 2011 05:29:08 PM Re: How can I get closure? By: SweetChili...
He has gf but loves me and i love him	Drizzydrak...	Replies:44 Views: 504	Jul 28, 2011 03:46:18 PM Re: He has gf but loves me and i love him By: BeautifulD...
breaking his heart?	Jessia1201	Replies:5 Views: 193	Jul 28, 2011 02:03:42 PM Re: breaking his heart? By: dutch25
Holding of the Hands...	-JellyBell...	Replies:28 Views: 609	Jul 28, 2011 01:56:32 PM Re: Holding of the Hands... By: stengirluk
'Ex' keeps calling me, help please :)	mellb00	Replies:39 Views: 636	Jul 28, 2011 08:40:57 AM Re: 'Ex' keeps calling me, help please :) By: Purplemons...
argh! toxic guys.	_tarantulo...	Replies:6 Views: 246	Jul 27, 2011 11:58:15 PM Re: argh! toxic guys. By: Imperialis...



boyfriends girl mates	juicylucyy	Replies:22 Views: 573	Jul 27, 2011 11:41:49 PM Re: boyfriends girl mates By: juicylucyy
My Bf Kissed another girl while drunk	EmmyD1	Replies:10 Views: 427	Jul 27, 2011 11:00:45 PM Re: My Bf Kissed another girl while drunk By: Laenni
friendly vs flirty	clarebear_...	Replies:24 Views: 283	Jul 27, 2011 10:54:08 PM Re: friendly vs flirty By: Voraciousl...
how do i tell him i love him???	nikkykitty...	Replies:2 Views: 117	Jul 27, 2011 08:09:57 PM Re: how do i tell him i love him???
He has gf but loves me and i love him	Drizzydrak...	Replies:44 Views: 507	By: Jelly_Baby... Jul 28, 2011 03:46:18 PM Re: He has gf but loves me and i love him By: BeautifulD...
breaking his heart?	Jessia1201	Replies:5 Views: 194	Jul 28, 2011 02:03:42 PM Re: breaking his heart? By: dutch25
Holding of the Hands...	-JellyBell...	Replies:28 Views: 611	Jul 28, 2011 01:56:32 PM Re: Holding of the Hands... By: stengirluk
'Ex' keeps calling me, help please :)	mellb00	Replies:39 Views: 637	Jul 28, 2011 08:40:57 AM Re: 'Ex' keeps calling me, help please :) By: Purplemons...
argh! toxic guys.	_tarantulo...	Replies:6 Views: 247	Jul 27, 2011 11:58:15 PM Re: argh! toxic guys. By: Imperialis...
boyfriends girl mates	juicylucyy	Replies:22 Views: 575	Jul 27, 2011 11:41:49 PM Re: boyfriends girl mates By: juicylucyy
My Bf Kissed another girl while drunk	EmmyD1	Replies:10 Views: 429	Jul 27, 2011 11:00:45 PM Re: My Bf Kissed another girl while drunk By: Laenni
friendly vs flirty	clarebear_...	Replies:24 Views: 286	Jul 27, 2011 10:54:08 PM Re: friendly vs flirty By: Voraciousl...
how do i tell him i love him???	nikkykitty...	Replies:2 Views: 118	Jul 27, 2011 08:09:57 PM Re: how do i tell him i love him???
Single stigma?	hartnec	Replies:1 Views: 119	By: Jelly_Baby... Jul 27, 2011 05:24:47 PM Re: Single stigma? By: ForeverFam...
Bad patch	sazzy86	Replies:10 Views: 204	Jul 27, 2011 04:36:53 PM Re: Bad patch By: DrTinycat
need some advice.. heartbroken!	Nicolaaaxx	Replies:3 Views: 368	Jul 27, 2011 02:45:46 PM Re: need some advice.. heartbroken! By: Nicolaaaxx
Make or Break date night with the EX	cosmoprinc...	Replies:40 Views: 567	Jul 27, 2011 01:22:11 PM Re: Make or Break date night with the EX By: holmedog
does anybody dream about their ex?	fairydrago...	Replies:2 Views: 58	Jul 27, 2011 11:51:13 AM Re: does anybody dream about their ex? By: fairydrago...
In need of a cheering up	noonoo24	Replies:15 Views: 239	Jul 27, 2011 11:30:11 AM Re: In need of a cheering up By: noonoo24
cheating but jealous...	bitmessedu...	Replies:4 Views: 204	Jul 27, 2011 11:10:41 AM Re: cheating but jealous... By: loved2011
Normal	Velouria_	Replies:13 Views: 213	Jul 27, 2011 09:27:05 AM Re: Normal By: -JellyBell...
What's he playing at?!	Semt9	Replies:11 Views: 535	Jul 26, 2011 11:15:27 PM Re: What's he playing at?! By: Semt9

Meeting his Ex and feeling insecure and jealous :/ LillieSuns...		Replies:2 Views: 110	Jul 26, 2011 10:51:45 PM Re: Meeting his Ex and feeling insecure and jealous :/ By: Elvenpath
mom is making me feel depressed	zooqueen2	Replies:4 Views: 113	Jul 26, 2011 10:25:19 PM Re: mom is making me feel depressed By: zooqueen2
When does harmless flirting become harmful?	annieapple...	Replies:33 Views: 574	Jul 26, 2011 09:22:00 PM Re: When does harmless flirting become harmful? By: -Evily-
friend withdrawing money from our joint account!!	-Polly-	Replies:29 Views: 626	Jul 26, 2011 08:30:44 PM Re: friend withdrawing money from our joint account!! By: Velouria_
Am I in the wrong?	sazzy86	Replies:27 Views: 476	Jul 26, 2011 08:02:27 PM Re: Am I in the wrong? By: loved2011
Not too sure anymore...	pinkbow_	Replies:10 Views: 296	Jul 26, 2011 05:45:45 PM Re: Not too sure anymore... By: nennemz
I think im manic depressiant?	HelloKitty...	Replies:4 Views: 117	Jul 26, 2011 05:44:06 PM Re: I think im manic depressiant? By: Summer_Sun...
Boyfriend's issues with ex-girlfriend.	Saamx	Replies:7 Views: 244	Jul 26, 2011 03:57:05 PM Re: Boyfriend's issues with ex-girlfriend. By: Sarsaparil...
loving someone and being in love.	Jessia1201	Replies:11 Views: 367	Jul 26, 2011 02:10:17 PM Re: loving someone and being in love. By: Velouria_
Bringing back intimacy	confusedco...	Replies:5 Views: 134	Jul 26, 2011 12:04:26 PM Re: Bringing back intimacy By: confusedco...
How to get more independance from parents	lucyinthea...	Replies:9 Views: 718	Jul 26, 2011 11:07:23 AM Re: How to get more independance from parents By: lucyinthea...
So embarrassed!	CaitlinJay...	Replies:14 Views: 511	Jul 26, 2011 02:30:19 AM Re: So embarrassed! By: Tash_X
Finding things really hard	JoeyyXx	Replies:19 Views: 389	Jul 26, 2011 12:42:29 AM Re: Finding things really hard By: EmmyXsnowf...
Lack of contact	CheekyVimt...	Replies:7 Views: 184	Jul 26, 2011 12:02:17 AM Re: Lack of contact By: CheekyVimt...
A Friends Guy Best Friend & Me	Lohey	Replies:1 Views: 84	Jul 25, 2011 10:08:13 PM Re: A Friends Guy Best Friend & Me By: PotNoooodl...
:D	clarebear_...	Replies:23 Views: 314	Jul 25, 2011 09:56:40 PM Re: :D By: bowl-of-or...
I don't get why I'm the only one bothered by this?	Durbeyfiel...	Replies:16 Views: 520	Jul 25, 2011 09:54:02 PM Re: I don't get why I'm the only one bothered by this? By: bowl-of-or...
Anniversary	starsabrin...	Replies:9 Views: 130	Jul 25, 2011 09:36:30 PM Re: Anniversary By: Clara2401
What would you choose?	Naughty_87	Replies:28 Views: 409	Jul 25, 2011 08:15:42 PM Re: What would you choose? By: Jo_used_to...
My dating ad lol	sunshine23...	Replies:12 Views: 350	Jul 25, 2011 07:18:26 PM Re: My dating ad lol By: HotdogHand...
confused	brunettexb...	Replies:2 Views: 139	Jul 25, 2011 06:41:01 PM Re: confused By: brunettexb...

Do I have a right to be annoyed?	SomewhereO...	Replies:6 Views: 170	Jul 25, 2011 06:37:48 PM Re: Do I have a right to be annoyed? By: PeachyPeti...
How do I get on with his sister?	queencent	Replies:1 Views: 108	Jul 25, 2011 05:23:39 PM Re: How do I get on with his sister? By: foofan22
In need of some serious advice! I'm in knots!	Tassssshhh	Replies:2 Views: 143	Jul 25, 2011 05:20:19 PM Re: In need of some serious advice! I'm in knots! By: Heavy-Wing...
Weird feelings about the Ex	Brr_ItsCol...	Replies:3 Views: 150	Jul 25, 2011 03:32:50 PM Re: Weird feelings about the Ex By: Brr_ItsCol...
Getting him back	cosmoprinc...	Replies:15 Views: 208	Jul 25, 2011 02:23:33 PM Re: Getting him back By: cosmoprinc...
Would you ever...	juicylucyy	Replies:36 Views: 814	Jul 25, 2011 02:18:08 PM Re: Would you ever... By: Lil-Pee
Arguing over the ex...	LA2345	Replies:2 Views: 116	Jul 25, 2011 01:54:21 PM Re: Arguing over the ex... By: tinkerbell...
Feeling down about love..	Star-Panda	Replies:2 Views: 139	Jul 25, 2011 01:38:55 PM Re: Feeling down about love.. By: bunnikinsu...
Venting.	Kelathyn	Replies:0 Views: 83	Jul 25, 2011 10:52:19 AM Venting. By: Kelathyn
I don't know what to think?	cupcake_sp...	Replies:4 Views: 188	Jul 25, 2011 09:02:28 AM Re: I don't know what to think? By: Heavy-Wing...
Help!! Crush on partners best friend.	belles7	Replies:12 Views: 232	Jul 25, 2011 12:36:32 AM Re: Help!! Crush on partners best friend. By: JoeyyXx
I think it's time	noonoo24	Replies:18 Views: 632	Jul 25, 2011 12:16:23 AM Re: I think it's time By: MsRosenrot
How do you find the time for eachother when you work full time?	Kylera7	Replies:9 Views: 336	Jul 25, 2011 12:08:51 AM Re: How do you find the time for eachother when you work full time? By: Kylera7
older guys :S HELP !?!	LMGN	Replies:9 Views: 248	Jul 24, 2011 10:13:16 PM Re: older guys :S HELP !?! By: slowdancu...
Finally setting the cat amongst the pigeons....	Candy_Girl...	Replies:4 Views: 336	Jul 24, 2011 07:32:28 PM Re: Finally setting the cat amongst the pigeons.... By: bowl-of-or...
Guy looking for advice	TheHULK_12	Replies:12 Views: 406	Jul 24, 2011 05:52:17 PM Re: Guy looking for advice By: TheHULK_12
'Why can't i find a man?	shawnthoma...	Replies:4 Views: 204	Jul 24, 2011 04:58:17 PM Re: 'Why can't i find a man? By: CheekyVimt...
Dumped while working abroad...	Juk6	Replies:2 Views: 210	Jul 24, 2011 04:01:20 PM Re: Dumped while working abroad... By: Jo_used_to...
should the love of your life really be your best friend?	sassyblond...	Replies:8 Views: 393	Jul 24, 2011 10:00:11 AM Re: should the love of your life really be your best friend? By: b-rabbit
Relationship doubts/Fear of missing out etc	tea_and_ca...	Replies:10 Views: 321	Jul 24, 2011 09:18:37 AM Re: Relationship doubts/Fear of missing out etc By: NickyLou20
Feeling down about love..	Star-Panda	Replies:2 Views: 140	Jul 25, 2011 01:38:55 PM Re: Feeling down about love.. By: bunnikinsu...
Venting.	Kelathyn	Replies:0	Jul 25, 2011 10:52:19 AM

		Views: 84	Venting. By: Kelathyn
I don't know what to think?	cupcake_sp...	Replies:4 Views: 189	Jul 25, 2011 09:02:28 AM Re: I don't know what to think? By: Heavy-Wing...
Help!! Crush on partners best friend.	belles7	Replies:12 Views: 233	Jul 25, 2011 12:36:32 AM Re: Help!! Crush on partners best friend. By: JoeyyXx
I think it's time	noonoo24	Replies:18 Views: 634	Jul 25, 2011 12:16:23 AM Re: I think it's time By: MsRosenrot
How do you find the time for eachother when you work full time?	Kylera7	Replies:9 Views: 337	Jul 25, 2011 12:08:51 AM Re: How do you find the time for eachother when you work full time? By: Kylera7
older guys :S HELP !?!	LMGN	Replies:9 Views: 249	Jul 24, 2011 10:13:16 PM Re: older guys :S HELP !?! By: slowdancu...
Finally setting the cat amongst the pigeons....	Candy_Girl...	Replies:4 Views: 337	Jul 24, 2011 07:32:28 PM Re: Finally setting the cat amongst the pigeons.... By: bowl-of-or...
Guy looking for advice	TheHULK_12	Replies:12 Views: 407	Jul 24, 2011 05:52:17 PM Re: Guy looking for advice By: TheHULK_12
'Why can't i find a man?	shawnthoma...	Replies:4 Views: 205	Jul 24, 2011 04:58:17 PM Re: 'Why can't i find a man?' By: CheekyVimt...
Dumped while working abroad...	Juk6	Replies:2 Views: 211	Jul 24, 2011 04:01:20 PM Re: Dumped while working abroad... By: Jo_used_to...
should the love of your life really be your best friend?	sassyblond...	Replies:8 Views: 394	Jul 24, 2011 10:00:11 AM Re: should the love of your life really be your best friend? By: b-rabbit
Relationship doubts/Fear of missing out etc	tea_and_ca...	Replies:10 Views: 322	Jul 24, 2011 09:18:37 AM Re: Relationship doubts/Fear of missing out etc By: NickyLou20
Gift for mum and her fiance?	mellb00	Replies:6 Views: 48	Jul 24, 2011 01:40:55 AM Re: Gift for mum and her fiance? By: mellb00
Planning ahead	x_mills_x	Replies:4 Views: 189	Jul 23, 2011 10:34:28 PM Re: Planning ahead By: BeautifulD...
Anniversary Ideas?	EpicDom	Replies:4 Views: 115	Jul 23, 2011 09:58:03 PM Re: Anniversary Ideas? By: EpicDom
im falling for a guy whos got a gitlfrend...	BubblyBrun...	Replies:9 Views: 315	Jul 23, 2011 09:45:39 PM Re: im falling for a guy whos got a gitlfrend... By: loved2011
Its a mess....	FatBarbieD...	Replies:37 Views: 974	Jul 23, 2011 09:00:04 PM Re: Its a mess.... By: mellb00
He cheated on his ex...	seventhsen...	Replies:29 Views: 634	Jul 23, 2011 07:55:56 PM Re: He cheated on his ex... By: bowl-of-or...
Am I being over-sensitive...	Mary_Sue	Replies:14 Views: 380	Jul 23, 2011 06:21:05 PM Re: Am I being over-sensitive... By: Faustus_
The pull and push game!	tillysilly	Replies:2 Views: 201	Jul 23, 2011 10:30:02 AM Re: The pull and push game! By: tillysilly
Arguing	sazzy86	Replies:13 Views: 276	Jul 22, 2011 11:47:16 PM Re: Arguing By: EpicDom
Ps3	HelloKitty...	Replies:4 Views: 149	Jul 22, 2011 11:20:19 PM Re: Ps3

Am I right to be angry?	sazzy86	Replies:24 Views: 702	By: jemilou Jul 22, 2011 10:53:20 PM Re: Am I right to be angry? By: bowl-of-or...
Cheating..	LA2345	Replies:3 Views: 154	Jul 22, 2011 10:45:42 PM Re: Cheating.. By: bowl-of-or...
His Birthday	PotNoooodl...	Replies:4 Views: 89	Jul 22, 2011 10:17:39 PM Re: His Birthday By: Mary_Sue
I found out...	360_journe...	Replies:71 Views: 756	Jul 22, 2011 09:08:48 PM Re: I found out.. By: Mary_Sue
Can't forget about him	MP1988	Replies:5 Views: 249	Jul 22, 2011 07:33:26 PM Re: Can't forget about him By: puddycat
fiance's career causing issues with relationship	confusedgu...	Replies:9 Views: 276	Jul 22, 2011 06:15:19 PM Re: fiance's career causing issues with relationship By: mellb00
Have you ever sent a letter to an ex?	stacism107	Replies:11 Views: 259	Jul 22, 2011 06:02:07 PM Re: Have you ever sent a letter to an ex? By: Fishy-Fish
Experience...	Blondieeuk...	Replies:2 Views: 160	Jul 22, 2011 05:15:23 PM Re: Experience.. By: loved2011
Confused - Help!	cittycatty	Replies:2 Views: 104	Jul 22, 2011 05:08:00 PM Re: Confused - Help! By: loved2011
Am I being fair here?	pumpkin121	Replies:18 Views: 324	Jul 22, 2011 02:58:26 PM Re: Am I being fair here? By: Oblongchee...
(HELP!!) What does he mean when he says "I understand if you want to leave"	Clara2401	Replies:2 Views: 120	Jul 22, 2011 01:30:59 PM Re: (HELP!!) What does he mean when he says By: c__jay
Resent my friend/flatmate because of her dogs	lilygirl_x	Replies:27 Views: 508	Jul 22, 2011 12:37:03 PM Re: Resent my friend/flatmate because of her dogs By: MullaghDan...
Help! Date on Saturday!!	oxfordblon...	Replies:2 Views: 108	Jul 22, 2011 09:14:01 AM Re: Help! Date on Saturday!! By: Cigarettes...
Advice on a friendship issue??	Gabbauk2	Replies:2 Views: 92	Jul 22, 2011 08:54:23 AM Re: Advice on a friendship issue?? By: Sarsaparil...
F.A.O. ELsis	fedupuk2	Replies:0 Views: 80	Jul 22, 2011 12:06:09 AM F.A.O. ELsis By: fedupuk2
guilty because dad died	fedupuk2	Replies:14 Views: 216	Jul 22, 2011 12:04:12 AM Re: guilty because dad died By: fedupuk2
Happy :)	brokenwing...	Replies:8 Views: 192	Jul 21, 2011 10:57:27 PM Re: Happy :) By: EpicDom
am i being stupid?	sweetrelea...	Replies:15 Views: 224	Jul 21, 2011 10:09:07 PM Re: am i being stupid? By: xIndiaRose...
Moving in with my boyfriend.	chocolatec...	Replies:18 Views: 430	Jul 21, 2011 08:32:50 PM Re: Moving in with my boyfriend. By: Mary_Sue
He won't commit to me again!	cosmoaddic...	Replies:18 Views: 393	Jul 21, 2011 07:35:28 PM Re: He won't commit to me again! By: CheekyVimt...
Will he change?	stacieeuk	Replies:8 Views: 169	Jul 21, 2011 07:20:07 PM Re: Will he change? By: CanYouBeMy...
Boyfriend on hold and not contacted me	Tiggertail...	Replies:76 Views:	Jul 21, 2011 07:10:18 PM Re: Boyfriend on hold and not contacted me

		1783	By: xIndiaRose...
He won't commit to me again!	cosmoaddic...	Replies:18 Views: 394	Jul 21, 2011 07:35:28 PM Re: He won't commit to me again! By: CheekyVimt...
Will he change?	stacieeuk	Replies:8 Views: 170	Jul 21, 2011 07:20:07 PM Re: Will he change? By: CanYouBeMy...
Boyfriend on hold and not contacted me	Tiggertail...	Replies:76 Views:	Jul 21, 2011 07:10:18 PM Re: Boyfriend on hold and not contacted me
Considering entering a LDR	ForeverFam...	1785 Replies:6 Views: 119	By: xIndiaRose... Jul 21, 2011 05:54:54 PM Re: Considering entering a LDR By: Faustus_
normal motherly behaviour??	xkayleighx...	Replies:16 Views: 370	Jul 21, 2011 04:32:42 PM Re: normal motherly behaviour?? By: puddycat
why couldnt he change?	forever_br...	Replies:2 Views: 137	Jul 21, 2011 02:53:22 PM Re: why couldnt he change? By: Oblongchee...
Relationship with mums	souninspir...	Replies:27 Views: 309	Jul 21, 2011 02:10:06 PM Re: Relationship with mums By: Sparklexxx...
Random Question	Kylera7	Replies:6 Views: 163	Jul 21, 2011 12:49:37 PM Re: Random Question By: XGeminiXuk
Boyfriend tries to have sex with my when I'm asleep	Sweetiuk	Replies:190 Views: 2099	Jul 21, 2011 12:14:11 PM Re: Boyfriend tries to have sex with my when I'm asleep By: LilMoneyBa...
Did he just want me for sex or does he want more?	purple_fis...	Replies:11 Views: 394	Jul 21, 2011 10:22:09 AM Re: Did he just want me for sex or does he want more? By: emilliiee
Am I being taken for an idiot?!	tracybeth	Replies:6 Views: 231	Jul 21, 2011 10:07:48 AM Re: Am I being taken for an idiot?! By: LouLouLips
At what point do you have to decide?	_TickledPi...	Replies:5 Views: 331	Jul 21, 2011 10:06:44 AM Re: At what point do you have to decide? By: Danax2
I need some advice :(	chels-xo1	Replies:4 Views: 114	Jul 21, 2011 09:43:55 AM Re: I need some advice :( By: chels-xo1
Moronic Friend Rant	Sink-Or-Sw...	Replies:7 Views: 227	Jul 21, 2011 09:31:40 AM Re: Moronic Friend Rant By: Sink-Or-Sw...
Any thoughts	elinglesuk	Replies:14 Views: 319	Jul 21, 2011 08:01:17 AM Re: Any thoughts By: elinglesuk
my mum is so unfair!	tigz2k11	Replies:19 Views: 332	Jul 20, 2011 11:14:23 PM Re: my mum is so unfair! By: Tash_X
Tips on how to put up with my best friend's t**t of a boyfriend	sassy_lady...	Replies:3 Views: 152	Jul 20, 2011 10:23:42 PM Re: Tips on how to put up with my best friend's t**t of a boyfriend By: Mary_Sue
Friends setting you up	Rhi-Rhi100...	Replies:5 Views: 130	Jul 20, 2011 10:23:31 PM Re: Friends setting you up By: Inner_City...
Your OH speaking too his ex.	esjayx3	Replies:33 Views: 537	Jul 20, 2011 09:40:40 PM Re: Your OH speaking too his ex. By: EpicDom
Idiot of a sister.	Miss_Arrbe...	Replies:4 Views: 367	Jul 20, 2011 08:09:48 PM Re: Idiot of a sister. By: AngryChees...
Friends OH cheating?!..	Kerasi_bel...	Replies:32 Views: 385	Jul 20, 2011 07:36:01 PM Re: Friends OH cheating?!..

Mixed Signs	barbiedoll...	Replies:5 Views: 214	By: loved2011 Jul 20, 2011 05:11:58 PM Re: Mixed Signs By: barbiedoll...
shitty insecure mood	cherryred0...	Replies:18 Views: 424	Jul 20, 2011 04:41:38 PM Re: shitty insecure mood By: Arlandria_
some girlie advice please =D	Lilmissgig...	Replies:2 Views: 151	Jul 20, 2011 04:07:56 PM Re: some girlie advice please =D By: ticz2k11
Should you get back with your ex?	CarlaMT	Replies:10 Views: 225	Jul 20, 2011 03:16:31 PM Re: Should you get back with your ex? By: Fishy-Fish
Moving in with boyfriend	TeenyQueen	Replies:28 Views: 630	Jul 20, 2011 01:27:02 PM Re: Moving in with boyfriend By: elliehanfr...
emotional blackmail?	Beautiful-...	Replies:4 Views: 252	Jul 20, 2011 01:19:33 PM Re: emotional blackmail? By: -JellyBell...
The ex...	LA2345	Replies:1 Views: 113	Jul 20, 2011 11:37:59 AM Re: The ex... By: smileychic...
Ex partners	CanYouBeMy...	Replies:7 Views: 231	Jul 20, 2011 11:32:07 AM Re: Ex partners By: x-alwaysad...
Sudden death	Mhtmail	Replies:9 Views: 380	Jul 20, 2011 10:15:16 AM Re: Sudden death By: Mhtmail
bit of a rant!	princesspi...	Replies:2 Views: 113	Jul 20, 2011 09:07:32 AM Re: bit of a rant! By: smileychic...
Help! I'm married & considering an affair with a married man I met online	CONFUSEDGL...	Replies:40 Views: 507	Jul 20, 2011 02:33:01 AM Re: Help! I'm married & considering an affair with a married man I met online By: lilygirl_x
Psychic readings	Psychicria	Replies:1 Views: 85	Jul 20, 2011 01:45:08 AM Re: Psychic readings By: lilygirl_x
Complicated Relationship.....Need help! :(	MLH2014	Replies:5 Views: 162	Jul 20, 2011 12:15:09 AM Re: Complicated Relationship.....Need help! :( By: MLH2014
boyfriend with an eye for the ladies....	RoseGirl06	Replies:32 Views: 727	Jul 19, 2011 10:43:39 PM Re: boyfriend with an eye for the ladies.... By: RoseGirl06
My Intense Female Friend	Persephone...	Replies:10 Views: 465	Jul 19, 2011 10:17:49 PM Re: My Intense Female Friend By: Persephone...
Busy boyfriend advice...	xIndiaRose...	Replies:6 Views: 181	Jul 19, 2011 09:57:23 PM Re: Busy boyfriend advice... By: hulahoop84...
(HELP!!) What does he mean when he says "I understand if you want to leave"	Clara2401	Replies:3 Views: 130	Jul 19, 2011 08:54:36 PM Re: (HELP!!) What does he mean when he says By: Bear-Bardo...
What the hell's my problem!?!	CheekyVimt...	Replies:1 Views: 164	Jul 19, 2011 08:09:46 PM Re: What the hell's my problem!?! By: CheekyVimt...
Think I might have a problem.	HelloKitty...	Replies:27 Views: 445	Jul 19, 2011 07:27:59 PM Re: Think I might have a problem. By: SLN448
How would you read this?	littleoran...	Replies:29 Views: 892	Jul 19, 2011 07:21:31 PM Re: How would you read this? By: jellybean1...
Dating a British boy... Differences btw French and British	pompom15	Replies:2 Views: 150	Jul 19, 2011 07:20:19 PM Re: Dating a British boy... Differences btw French and British By: pompom15

Feel threatened by ex/exes	MissModest...	Replies:2 Views: 114	Jul 19, 2011 06:28:59 PM Re: Feel threatened by ex/exes By: bowl-of-or...
boyfriend's friend :/	princesspi...	Replies:4 Views: 163	Jul 19, 2011 04:46:18 PM Re: boyfriend's friend :/ By: princesspi...
Made a mistake?	cannot_thi...	Replies:9 Views: 267	Jul 19, 2011 03:45:50 PM Re: Made a mistake? By: Oblongchee...
I haven't heard from him all day	Day-trippe...	Replies:48 Views: 965	Jul 19, 2011 03:00:05 PM Re: I haven't heard from him all day By: Zeta-
Weed	bowl-of-or...	Replies:22 Views: 401	Jul 19, 2011 02:24:01 PM Re: Weed By: Naughty_87
home from uni, summer loneliness :(	bunnikinsu...	Replies:4 Views: 128	Jul 19, 2011 02:19:36 PM Re: home from uni, summer loneliness :( By: pumpkin121
violent relationships	tigz2k11	Replies:1 Views: 71	Jul 19, 2011 01:04:45 PM Re: violent relationships By: clarebear_...
im so paranoid	tigz2k11	Replies:7 Views: 133	Jul 19, 2011 12:44:18 PM Re: im so paranoid By: I-Like-Can...
Help!	ChloeSylvi...	Replies:1 Views: 34	Jul 19, 2011 12:29:31 PM Re: Help! By: smileychic...
Marriage Boredom	summerbree...	Replies:5 Views: 282	Jul 19, 2011 10:58:12 AM Re: Marriage Boredom By: summerbree...
(HELP) What does he mean when he says "I understand if you want to leave"	Clara2401	Replies:3 Views: 136	Jul 19, 2011 09:16:42 AM Re: (HELP) What does he mean when he says By: Clara2401
Making the first move.. i.e kissing	sunshine23...	Replies:5 Views: 203	Jul 19, 2011 12:34:11 AM Re: Making the first move.. i.e kissing By: caterpilla...
Finding it hard...	_Ripcurl_	Replies:8 Views: 157	Jul 19, 2011 12:10:37 AM Re: Finding it hard... By: EmmyXsnowf...
I cheated on my boyfriend	1984kw	Replies:11 Views: 319	Jul 18, 2011 09:59:16 PM Re: I cheated on my boyfriend By: mellb00
Dating when you have a child.	slowdanceu...	Replies:10 Views: 161	Jul 18, 2011 09:32:25 PM Re: Dating when you have a child. By: Eldoris
My fiancé doesn't love me	xxJellyFis...	Replies:9 Views: 316	Jul 18, 2011 09:19:18 PM Re: My fiancé doesn't love me By: xxJellyFis...
'i dont know what i want'	abiiix	Replies:7 Views: 271	Jul 18, 2011 09:03:11 PM Re: 'i dont know what i want' By: brunettexb...
happy thread!	jobiuk	Replies:11 Views: 130	Jul 18, 2011 08:59:51 PM Re: happy thread! By: clarebear_...
Conversation topics	CheekyVimt...	Replies:5 Views: 177	Jul 18, 2011 08:37:46 PM Re: Conversation topics By: CanYouBeMy...
Help, my boyfriend lied.	georginarr...	Replies:15 Views: 355	Jul 18, 2011 08:19:37 PM Re: Help, my boyfriend lied. By: CheekyVimt...
Struggling to trust...	LA2345	Replies:2 Views: 67	Jul 18, 2011 08:14:24 PM Re: Struggling to trust... By: LA2345
Why do men feel trapped in relationships?	catesteven...	Replies:3 Views: 172	Jul 18, 2011 07:49:51 PM Re: Why do men feel trapped in relationships? By: Mary_Sue



I just feel like a rant	x-alwaysad...	Replies:5 Views: 141	Jul 18, 2011 05:46:43 PM Re: I just feel like a rant By: Roobalooba
Trouble making friend throwing a party...	ForeverFam...	Replies:1 Views: 166	Jul 18, 2011 05:24:26 PM Re: Trouble making friend throwing a party... By: foofan22
friend getting me down!	lovelybone...	Replies:1 Views: 138	Jul 18, 2011 05:18:22 PM Re: friend getting me down! By: foofan22
I want a boyfriend, but ive lost all confidense:/	CaitlinJay...	Replies:3 Views: 112	Jul 18, 2011 05:12:46 PM Re: I want a boyfriend, but ive lost all confidense:/ By: Bear-Bardo...
Its over! 2 Julys in a row ..	kiirst123	Replies:1 Views: 232	Jul 18, 2011 05:12:45 PM Re: Its over! 2 Julys in a row .. By: foofan22
Men don't tell	scarlett12...	Replies:3 Views: 212	Jul 18, 2011 03:53:03 PM Re: Men don't tell By: -Evily-
told boyfriend i'm bi	strawberry...	Replies:27 Views: 493	Jul 18, 2011 03:20:26 PM Re: told boyfriend i'm bi By: CorleUK
confused.com...	jo-ho	Replies:4 Views: 112	Jul 18, 2011 02:55:56 PM Re: confused.com... By: smileychic...
Is he still interested in his ex?	sassyblond...	Replies:3 Views: 112	Jul 18, 2011 02:35:28 PM Re: Is he still interested in his ex? By: LittleGirl...
Don't know why I feel weird about this...	blonde_bar...	Replies:11 Views: 334	Jul 18, 2011 01:11:36 PM Re: Don't know why I feel weird about this... By: Danax2
Thinking of breaking up as cannot cope	Pixie_Dust...	Replies:10 Views: 292	Jul 18, 2011 12:46:49 PM Re: Thinking of breaking up as cannot cope By: I-Like-Can...
Have you ever regretted summer romance?	CarlaMT	Replies:1 Views: 68	Jul 18, 2011 12:20:06 PM Re: Have you ever regretted summer romance? By: LilMissJuk...
Got told something pretty shocking by boyfriend :/	leverano	Replies:29 Views: 1230	Jul 18, 2011 10:56:31 AM Re: Got told something pretty shocking by boyfriend :/ By: Vee2
Bored now	Squiiiiire...	Replies:5 Views: 179	Jul 18, 2011 10:12:16 AM Re: Bored now By: Nadireth
I love my boyfriend but I hate our relationship!	Amber_193	Replies:1 Views: 191	Jul 17, 2011 11:35:51 PM Re: I love my boyfriend but I hate our relationship! By: onlygirl11
My brother - I don't know what to do anymore	xray3	Replies:6 Views: 215	Jul 17, 2011 11:19:02 PM Re: My brother - I don't know what to do anymore By: Rosee2uk
Boys.....	loisapple	Replies:5 Views: 308	Jul 17, 2011 10:23:48 PM Re: Boys..... By: loisapple
Advice please	jj06uk	Replies:1 Views: 63	Jul 17, 2011 08:27:09 PM Re: Advice please By: Naughty_87
Meeting My BF's Son for the First Time...	LillieSuns...	Replies:7 Views: 156	Jul 17, 2011 07:26:55 PM Re: Meeting My BF's Son for the First Time... By: LillieSuns...
Am I just a bit paranoid?	brokenwing...	Replies:3 Views: 115	Jul 17, 2011 06:19:34 PM Re: Am I just a bit paranoid? By: Naughty_87
Anyone else get this?	oicurmt	Replies:2 Views: 99	Jul 17, 2011 06:11:27 PM Re: Anyone else get this? By: oicurmt
Dating from a blokes perspective ...	elvis_dude	Replies:9 Views: 397	Jul 17, 2011 05:54:44 PM Re: Dating from a blokes perspective ...

Where is this relationship going?	shellybabe...	Replies:2 Views: 122	By: Squiiiire... Jul 17, 2011 05:52:18 PM Re: Where is this relationship going? By: shellybabe...
Other Halfs Birthday Stripper	Jcx3	Replies:34 Views: 575	Jul 17, 2011 05:50:36 PM Re: Other Halfs Birthday Stripper By: dutch25
Saying 'I love you'	Athemistia	Replies:17 Views: 449	Jul 17, 2011 04:56:15 PM Re: Saying 'I love you' By: jobiuk
He broke my heart.	xxlizame	Replies:5 Views: 261	Jul 17, 2011 03:51:49 PM Re: He broke my heart. By: CheekyVimt...
He broke my heart.	xxlizame	Replies:5 Views: 262	Jul 17, 2011 03:51:49 PM Re: He broke my heart. By: CheekyVimt...
Where have you gone wrong?	ForeverFam...	Replies:1 Views: 120	Jul 17, 2011 03:47:41 PM Re: Where have you gone wrong? By: CheekyVimt...
Honeymoon Period - How long did yours last?	melanie_me...	Replies:31 Views: 851	Jul 17, 2011 03:43:52 PM Re: Honeymoon Period - How long did yours last? By: Pipa_R
Single & not excatly loving it.	Chloerwarr	Replies:6 Views: 254	Jul 17, 2011 12:33:51 AM Re: Single & not excatly loving it. By: Naughty_87
Women, please help!	Essien_	Replies:5 Views: 192	Jul 17, 2011 12:31:10 AM Re: Women, please help! By: Naughty_87
Online Dating	jd_uk	Replies:2 Views: 43	Jul 17, 2011 12:14:51 AM Re: Online Dating By: jd_uk
And so it continues...	forevereff...	Replies:2 Views: 158	Jul 16, 2011 10:22:18 PM Re: And so it continues... By: Elvenpath
My boyfriend and his best mate.. help!	0o--Sarah	Replies:9 Views: 356	Jul 16, 2011 09:53:20 PM Re: My boyfriend and his best mate.. help! By: blonde_bar...
Actions speak louder than words?	-missmonke...	Replies:2 Views: 157	Jul 16, 2011 09:09:49 PM Re: Actions speak louder than words? By: forevereff...
:(	Chloerwarr	Replies:3 Views: 157	Jul 16, 2011 07:23:56 PM Re: :( By: CheekyVimt...
my bloody mother	Oblongchee...	Replies:11 Views: 217	Jul 16, 2011 06:31:55 PM Re: my bloody mother By: Oblongchee...
*cringe* awkward...	Xkissmysas...	Replies:17 Views: 534	Jul 16, 2011 05:58:51 PM Re: *cringe* awkward... By: Velouria_
The elusive lads holiday!	Strawberry...	Replies:4 Views: 226	Jul 16, 2011 05:18:34 PM Re: The elusive lads holiday! By: kanye_east...
shes moved out :-(	jimmi85	Replies:6 Views: 220	Jul 16, 2011 05:00:39 PM Re: shes moved out :-( By: jimmi85
Friends think he's the reason I'm stressed?	SQSLW	Replies:12 Views: 184	Jul 16, 2011 04:23:08 PM Re: Friends think he's the reason I'm stressed? By: CheekyVimt...
Friends think he's the reason I'm stressed?	SQSLW	Replies:12 Views: 185	Jul 16, 2011 04:23:08 PM Re: Friends think he's the reason I'm stressed? By: CheekyVimt...
no friends	pinkfluffy...	Replies:3 Views: 146	Jul 16, 2011 04:04:30 PM Re: no friends By: Naughty_87
The perfect night in with your OH	kittyeatme	Replies:26 Views: 484	Jul 16, 2011 03:56:33 PM Re: The perfect night in with your OH

Best relationship analogy ever!	annieapple...	Replies:14 Views: 472	By: Chrisvamp Jul 16, 2011 03:26:56 PM Re: Best relationship analogy ever! By: x_mills_x
Can you ever forgive and forget?	Niax	Replies:7 Views: 163	Jul 16, 2011 03:13:00 PM Re: Can you ever forgive and forget? By: CheekyVimt...
Everything going wrong..	sweetcheek...	Replies:3 Views: 118	Jul 16, 2011 11:59:33 AM Re: Everything going wrong.. By: Juice_City
Relationship is getting me down, temporarily?	Day-trippe...	Replies:5 Views: 179	Jul 16, 2011 10:37:37 AM Re: Relationship is getting me down, temporarily? By: Day-trippe...
boyfriend troubles...	autumn_fla...	Replies:2 Views: 177	Jul 15, 2011 10:07:32 PM Re: boyfriend troubles... By: autumn_fla...
Fun things to do...	Kerasi_bel...	Replies:9 Views: 181	Jul 15, 2011 10:04:51 PM Re: Fun things to do... By: crystalbet...
Potentially ill relative, what can I do?	Hanky-Pank...	Replies:5 Views: 58	Jul 15, 2011 09:51:46 PM Re: Potentially ill relative, what can I do? By: Summer_Sun...
How to be less high maintenance.....	Sparkles24...	Replies:4 Views: 168	Jul 15, 2011 09:48:25 PM Re: How to be less high maintenance..... By: bowl-of-or...
I like Lady Gaga but my OH likes that nark Katy Perry	Babygurlxj...	Replies:23 Views: 396	Jul 15, 2011 09:06:04 PM Re: I like Lady Gaga but my OH likes that nark Katy Perry By: Velouria_
Why does he want me to stay over when hes not going to be around?	LucyLou31	Replies:12 Views: 210	Jul 15, 2011 08:55:59 PM Re: Why does he want me to stay over when hes not going to be around? By: JFC91
how do people cope in the real world!?	princesspi...	Replies:12 Views: 377	Jul 15, 2011 03:42:26 PM Re: how do people cope in the real world!? By: -JellyBell...
Question.....	Miss_hh31	Replies:9 Views: 174	Jul 15, 2011 02:58:31 PM Re: Question..... By: Sian-Danie...
A guy's behaviour	mango-	Replies:9 Views: 288	Jul 15, 2011 01:37:46 PM Re: A guy's behaviour By: mango-
Eternally single, any insight please, I could do with some advice	Cherriesan...	Replies:54 Views: 938	Jul 15, 2011 01:15:40 PM Re: Eternally single, any insight please, I could do with some advice By: Paynebynam...
Need some advice	MISSY2025	Replies:8 Views: 200	Jul 15, 2011 12:26:14 PM Re: Need some advice By: LittleGirl...
Am I to blame? Advice please	ThePrinces...	Replies:11 Views: 277	Jul 15, 2011 11:07:06 AM Re: Am I to blame? Advice please By: Zeta-
Falling for the wrong person	azadeh3	Replies:7 Views: 270	Jul 15, 2011 10:44:33 AM Re: Falling for the wrong person By: bunnikinsu...
i find it so hard to express emotions	strawberry...	Replies:1 Views: 65	Jul 15, 2011 01:42:31 AM Re: i find it so hard to express emotions By: Jo_used_to...
Is this worth going back to?	Charla8	Replies:1 Views: 101	Jul 15, 2011 12:00:37 AM Re: Is this worth going back to? By: Jo_used_to...
How to know where it's going...	achaoticlo...	Replies:1 Views: 78	Jul 14, 2011 11:49:40 PM Re: How to know where it's going... By: Jo_used_to...
what does it mean when..	stush	Replies:2 Views: 130	Jul 14, 2011 11:34:39 PM Re: what does it mean when..

Really annoyed	Squiiiiire...	Replies:4 Views: 196	By: Arlandria_ Jul 14, 2011 11:28:15 PM Re: Really annoyed By: Squiiiiire...
Different ideas for a date!	oohlalaaa	Replies:7 Views: 101	Jul 14, 2011 11:08:41 PM Re: Different ideas for a date! By: oohlalaaa
fallen out of love	jeannes91	Replies:6 Views: 151	Jul 14, 2011 10:34:04 PM Re: fallen out of love By: sminkypink...
When is a relationship over	rachdow	Replies:9 Views: 283	Jul 14, 2011 10:20:09 PM Re: When is a relationship over By: xparadisep...
My mum is evil!	MP1988	Replies:18 Views: 352	Jul 14, 2011 09:57:25 PM Re: My mum is evil! By: AngryChees...
How do you know when you love someone?	wholelotta...	Replies:13 Views: 226	Jul 14, 2011 07:56:04 PM Re: How do you know when you love someone? By: b-rabbit
He broke my heart.	xxlizamc	Replies:1 Views: 23	Jul 14, 2011 07:38:01 PM Re: He broke my heart. By: xxlizamc
Stingy Boyfriend	Mulanloves...	Replies:57 Views: 937	Jul 14, 2011 07:12:34 PM Re: Stingy Boyfriend By: jo-ho
Sleeping together	souninspir...	Replies:30 Views: 556	Jul 14, 2011 07:05:13 PM Re: Sleeping together By: souninspir...
sour friendship	midgetjem1	Replies:10 Views: 147	Jul 14, 2011 06:24:16 PM Re: sour friendship By: midgetjem1
Should I wait and give him time or let him go forever?	fienchen24...	Replies:7 Views: 297	Jul 14, 2011 04:52:08 PM Re: Should I wait and give him time or let him go forever? By: AngryChees...
Making the first move online	MISSY2025	Replies:32 Views: 227	Jul 14, 2011 04:46:21 PM Re: Making the first move online By: MISSY2025
I'll regret it if I don't	CheekyVimt...	Replies:28 Views: 896	Jul 14, 2011 03:26:20 PM Re: I'll regret it if I don't By: CheekyVimt...
Jealousy =(!!!	jelly_and_...	Replies:2 Views: 130	Jul 14, 2011 03:16:40 PM Re: Jealousy =(!!! By: x-alwaysad...
Tonight is date number 3	brokenwing...	Replies:1 Views: 50	Jul 14, 2011 02:21:14 PM Re: Tonight is date number 3 By: wholelotta...
Opinions on school / social experience about friends	benjammand...	Replies:5 Views: 87	Jul 14, 2011 01:17:44 PM Re: Opinions on school / social experience about friends By: jlushh
what do you do when the one person you're supposed to be with dies?	abcdefghijklhuk	Replies:9 Views: 368	Jul 14, 2011 01:00:12 PM Re: what do you do when the one person you're supposed to be with dies? By: jlushh
Jobless Partner.....	Miss-Moan-...	Replies:31 Views: 541	Jul 14, 2011 12:30:16 PM Re: Jobless Partner..... By: Bear-Bardo...
Problem with my housemates that makes me sound like my Mother!	littlemons...	Replies:13 Views: 268	Jul 13, 2011 10:41:41 PM Re: Problem with my housemates that makes me sound like my Mother! By: xxblondiel...
He works ridiculous hours, can it work?	-Polly-	Replies:6 Views: 222	Jul 13, 2011 10:02:36 PM Re: He works ridiculous hours, can it work? By: Lil_Miss_R...
What would you do in this situation?	xMissNx	Replies:10	Jul 13, 2011 09:38:33 PM

		Views: 242	Re: What would you do in this situation? By: xMissNx Jul 13, 2011 09:16:24 PM
Do you believe in love at first sight ?	Ban_BLONDi...	Replies:30 Views: 383	Re: Do you believe in love at first sight ? By: Mary_Sue Jul 13, 2011 08:46:20 PM
Boyfriend's friends and me...	eljaytea	Replies:3 Views: 182	Re: Boyfriend's friends and me... By: Mary_Sue Jul 13, 2011 08:26:31 PM
Why would a guy cheat a week before his wedding?	cuddlytoy	Replies:15 Views: 398	Re: Why would a guy cheat a week before his wedding? By: esjayx3 Jul 13, 2011 07:34:08 PM
Should i go out with him?	csibannist...	Replies:6 Views: 132	Re: Should i go out with him? By: HotdogHand... Jul 13, 2011 06:41:03 PM
he cheated on me and I still love him, help!	jo-ho	Replies:8 Views: 258	Re: he cheated on me and I still love him, help! By: coolkatuk Jul 13, 2011 06:23:38 PM
Verbal attack by best friends boyfrined UPDATE	slowdanceu...	Replies:16 Views: 360	Re: Verbal attack by best friends boyfrined UPDATE By: Imperialis... Jul 13, 2011 05:28:28 PM
Unwanted third person..	WelshRose1	Replies:14 Views: 239	Re: Unwanted third person.. By: WelshRose1 Jul 13, 2011 04:29:08 PM
Do we have a future?	Elvenpath	Replies:11 Views: 292	Re: Do we have a future? By: GlitzAndGl... Jul 13, 2011 04:01:38 PM
Marriage?	x-Calliope...	Replies:38 Views: 498	Re: Marriage? By: bone_machi... Jul 13, 2011 02:55:44 PM
Very sad today - would like to hear some words of wisdom!	Millaqq_77	Replies:10 Views: 354	Re: Very sad today - would like to hear some words of wisdom! By: Guerrilla_... Jul 13, 2011 09:55:32 AM
What would you do?! Dilemma/Mess!	Blondie-J	Replies:10 Views: 278	Re: What would you do?! Dilemma/Mess! By: LittleGirl... Jul 13, 2011 09:30:27 AM
John Mayer- Dreaming with a Broken Heart	x-alwaysad...	Replies:1 Views: 65	Re: John Mayer- Dreaming with a Broken Heart By: Jordylumps... Jul 12, 2011 11:31:01 PM
Would you be offended...	Robyn_US	Replies:60 Views: 607	Re: Would you be offended... By: Robyn_US Jul 12, 2011 09:51:18 PM
What do you do when...	cupcake_sp...	Replies:5 Views: 219	Re: What do you do when... By: Elsis_ Jul 12, 2011 09:51:03 PM
Facebook	xPARISxuk	Replies:25 Views: 472	Re: Facebook By: xMissNx Jul 12, 2011 09:51:18 PM
What do you do when...	cupcake_sp...	Replies:5 Views: 220	Re: What do you do when... By: Elsis_ Jul 12, 2011 09:51:03 PM
Facebook	xPARISxuk	Replies:25 Views: 472	Re: Facebook By: xMissNx Jul 12, 2011 08:48:36 PM
New Boyfriend! :D	hellotreac...	Replies:5 Views: 175	Re: New Boyfriend! :D By: hellotreac... Jul 12, 2011 08:29:11 PM
Bestfriend problems	xMissNx	Replies:10 Views: 186	Re: Bestfriend problems By: xMissNx Jul 12, 2011 07:54:52 PM
Stupid Jealousy!	Mysteries_...	Replies:12 Views: 287	Re: Stupid Jealousy! By: Oblongchee... Jul 12, 2011 07:19:07 PM
Confused could do with some advice :/	stargirl72	Replies:4	Jul 12, 2011 07:19:07 PM

		Views: 84	Re: Confused could do with some advice :/
			By: Oblongchee...
Rant - His mum (again!)	Kelathyn	Replies:5 Views: 178	Jul 12, 2011 07:17:25 PM Re: Rant - His mum (again!) By: Kelathyn
Single or taken?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:31 Views: 504	Jul 12, 2011 07:15:23 PM Re: Single or taken? By: Cheesecake...
:(	Molly_X	Replies:5 Views: 127	Jul 12, 2011 06:47:41 PM Re: :( By: stargirl72
left while pregnant	DancingInT...	Replies:4 Views: 212	Jul 12, 2011 06:37:14 PM Re: left while pregnant By: Molly_X
i could do with a little bit of advice...	rainydayze	Replies:73 Views: 594	Jul 12, 2011 06:05:25 PM Re: i could do with a little bit of advice... By: CheekyVimt...
This might sounds ungrateful but...	xLilPixiex	Replies:11 Views: 282	Jul 12, 2011 05:35:51 PM Re: This might sounds ungrateful but... By: Naughty_87
Need some advice please :)	kylabean-	Replies:4 Views: 60	Jul 12, 2011 05:25:54 PM Re: Need some advice please :) By: loved2011
Relationship Advice PLEASE!!	Ban_BLONDi...	Replies:7 Views: 157	Jul 12, 2011 05:24:06 PM Re: Relationship Advice PLEASE!! By: Ban_BLONDi...
He's a pest! :/	coolkatuk	Replies:5 Views: 138	Jul 12, 2011 04:55:22 PM Re: He's a pest! :/ By: Vee2
How do you know when it's time to break up?	Panettauk	Replies:6 Views: 189	Jul 12, 2011 03:43:04 PM Re: How do you know when it's time to break up? By: Panettauk
Do you ever have commitment-phobe moments...	Robyn_US	Replies:15 Views: 181	Jul 12, 2011 03:29:30 PM Re: Do you ever have commitment-phobe moments... By: annieapple...
feeling a bit lost...	princesspi...	Replies:6 Views: 103	Jul 12, 2011 12:42:16 PM Re: feeling a bit lost... By: princesspi...
you were all right!	fresh_face	Replies:65 Views: 1146	Jul 12, 2011 10:36:59 AM Re: you were all right! By: Natboosh
A very tricky situation with my boyfriend	TeenyQueen	Replies:18 Views: 781	Jul 12, 2011 10:35:04 AM Re: A very tricky situation with my boyfriend By: TeenyQueen
All moved in but struggling	Bumblebee1...	Replies:7 Views: 89	Jul 12, 2011 10:22:09 AM Re: All moved in but struggling By: Bumblebee1...
alcohol & relationship...O.M.G	cocopopsuk...	Replies:2 Views: 111	Jul 12, 2011 12:15:55 AM Re: alcohol & relationship...O.M.G By: Jo_used_to...
Lessons in Love	CheekyVimt...	Replies:54 Views: 894	Jul 11, 2011 10:44:23 PM Re: Lessons in Love By: Mulanloves...
Stories changing	pistachio_...	Replies:15 Views: 365	Jul 11, 2011 10:32:00 PM Re: Stories changing By: pistachio_...
Jelous or generally just pissed off?	Molly_X	Replies:16 Views: 383	Jul 11, 2011 10:16:44 PM Re: Jelous or generally just pissed off? By: Jo_used_to...
A 'mother' rant!! *quite long*	sweetrelea...	Replies:9 Views: 130	Jul 11, 2011 09:00:27 PM Re: A 'mother' rant!! *quite long* By: BeautifulD...
Could you ever stay with an addict?	Velouria_	Replies:25 Views: 347	Jul 11, 2011 08:42:13 PM Re: Could you ever stay with an addict? By: CheekyVimt...

Is it too soon?	PinkAngel0...	Replies:3 Views: 171	Jul 11, 2011 08:29:56 PM Re: Is it too soon? By: PinkAngel0...
Who is more sociable?	x_mills_x	Replies:19 Views: 248	Jul 11, 2011 08:29:53 PM Re: Who is more sociable? By: Yuuko_
Eeeeeeeeeeeek	vanilla_sm...	Replies:16 Views: 308	Jul 11, 2011 08:18:37 PM Re: Eeeeeeeeeeeek By: Jelly_Baby...
A 'mother' rant!! *quite long*	sweetrelea...	Replies:9 Views: 131	Jul 11, 2011 09:00:27 PM Re: A 'mother' rant!! *quite long* By: BeautifulD...
Could you ever stay with an addict?	Velouria_	Replies:25 Views: 349	Jul 11, 2011 08:42:13 PM Re: Could you ever stay with an addict? By: CheekyVimt...
Is it too soon?	PinkAngel0...	Replies:3 Views: 172	Jul 11, 2011 08:29:56 PM Re: Is it too soon? By: PinkAngel0...
Who is more sociable?	x_mills_x	Replies:19 Views: 249	Jul 11, 2011 08:29:53 PM Re: Who is more sociable? By: Yuuko_
Eeeeeeeeeeeek	vanilla_sm...	Replies:16 Views: 309	Jul 11, 2011 08:18:37 PM Re: Eeeeeeeeeeeek By: Jelly_Baby...
Female friend - unsure	callyrae	Replies:1 Views: 102	Jul 11, 2011 07:06:16 PM Re: Female friend - unsure By: callyrae
Scared..	Molly_X	Replies:1 Views: 81	Jul 11, 2011 06:52:40 PM Re: Scared.. By: Vee2
Learning to trust.	PeachyPeti...	Replies:6 Views: 212	Jul 11, 2011 05:25:39 PM Re: Learning to trust. By: PeachyPeti...
Stubborn boyfriend	fairydrago...	Replies:22 Views: 237	Jul 11, 2011 04:26:10 PM Re: Stubborn boyfriend By: LittleGirl...
Dont know what to do	lilmissblo...	Replies:5 Views: 191	Jul 11, 2011 04:12:49 PM Re: Dont know what to do By: lilmissblo...
Keeping enemies closer?	Rosee2uk	Replies:4 Views: 126	Jul 11, 2011 03:35:32 PM Re: Keeping enemies closer? By: LittleRed_...
Interfering mother in law...	Arlandria_...	Replies:25 Views: 388	Jul 11, 2011 01:32:44 PM Re: Interfering mother in law... By: barbie_86
Help?!?!	Pipsss	Replies:2 Views: 92	Jul 11, 2011 12:39:10 PM Re: Help?!?! By: Pipsss
Honesty = best policy??	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:14 Views: 236	Jul 11, 2011 12:16:08 PM Re: Honesty = best policy?? By: Dhun-na-nG...
Need to get this off my chest :(	puddycat	Replies:7 Views: 276	Jul 11, 2011 11:11:53 AM Re: Need to get this off my chest :( By: DairyMilkC...
messy	forevereff...	Replies:9 Views: 246	Jul 11, 2011 10:38:13 AM Re: messy By: forevereff...
cheater	recarter2	Replies:9 Views: 207	Jul 11, 2011 07:22:43 AM Re: cheater By: jellybean1...
Does he sound genuinely interested?	Mango-Sorb...	Replies:3 Views: 127	Jul 10, 2011 11:03:24 PM Re: Does he sound genuinely interested? By: CheekyVimt...
Please Help...	iloveshoes...	Replies:6 Views: 111	Jul 10, 2011 10:38:25 PM Re: Please Help... By: Naughty_87

Its finally happening!!!!	pinknails3	Replies:2 Views: 179	Jul 10, 2011 08:36:55 PM Re: Its finally happening!!!! By: Sparklexxx...
obsessive?	Cherry__Dr...	Replies:6 Views: 158	Jul 10, 2011 07:59:18 PM Re: obsessive? By: Cherry__Dr...
we got into an arguement	CookieCake...	Replies:6 Views: 193	Jul 10, 2011 07:52:07 PM Re: we got into an arguement By: esjayx3
'Best' friends	bexyp	Replies:4 Views: 206	Jul 10, 2011 07:31:08 PM Re: 'Best' friends By: Molly_X
Ahhhh	Molly_X	Replies:11 Views: 197	Jul 10, 2011 07:19:31 PM Re: Ahhhh By: Molly_X
I dont feel like were getting anywhere...	cupcake_sp...	Replies:1 Views: 106	Jul 10, 2011 07:16:21 PM Re: I dont feel like were getting anywhere... By: elvis_dude
Someone Give a Little Time	SexyCandyP...	Replies:10 Views: 169	Jul 10, 2011 05:43:29 PM Re: Someone Give a Little Time By: fresh_face
Age gap relationship	sunshine23...	Replies:17 Views: 232	Jul 10, 2011 05:31:40 PM Re: Age gap relationship By: Danax2
Friendships	Hannahmont...	Replies:2 Views: 64	Jul 10, 2011 04:23:42 PM Re: Friendships By: Hannahmont...
My OH has requested I stop doing our ironing nude on the balcony	Babygurlxj...	Replies:13 Views: 403	Jul 10, 2011 02:32:23 PM Re: My OH has requested I stop doing our ironing nude on the balcony By: Chica_Gale...
Am I exaggerating or what should I do?	jodie187	Replies:5 Views: 266	Jul 10, 2011 02:21:45 PM Re: Am I exaggerating or what should I do? By: jodie187
Am I exaggerating or what should I do?	jodie187	Replies:5 Views: 267	Jul 10, 2011 02:21:45 PM Re: Am I exaggerating or what should I do? By: jodie187
My man and money	bexyp	Replies:10 Views: 230	Jul 10, 2011 01:48:22 PM Re: My man and money By: CheekyVimt...
Friends with ex?	MsSlagatho...	Replies:9 Views: 143	Jul 10, 2011 12:17:12 PM Re: Friends with ex? By: fresh_face
Siblings won't talk to me because of parents :(	CheekyVimt...	Replies:8 Views: 177	Jul 10, 2011 11:46:24 AM Re: Siblings won't talk to me because of parents :( By: CheekyVimt...
For guys only- cheating?!	BlondeBomb...	Replies:8 Views: 275	Jul 10, 2011 09:33:18 AM Re: For guys only- cheating?! By: c__jay
Boyfriends / Partners who work away from home	nic_irwin8...	Replies:1 Views: 65	Jul 10, 2011 12:43:13 AM Re: Boyfriends / Partners who work away from home By: Purplemons...
My friend said disabled people are disgusting	XxLauraf90...	Replies:7 Views: 169	Jul 09, 2011 10:55:41 PM Re: My friend said disabled people are disgusting By: bone_machi...
i know hes cheatin on her!	BlondeBomb...	Replies:10 Views: 192	Jul 09, 2011 09:06:39 PM Re: i know hes cheatin on her! By: CheekyVimt...
could you get away with having an affair?	annieapple...	Replies:68 Views: 938	Jul 09, 2011 08:50:00 PM Re: could you get away with having an affair? By: Mary_Sue
Pleeease give me advice!	lucy92uk	Replies:5 Views: 133	Jul 09, 2011 08:39:27 PM Re: Pleeease give me advice! By: Mary_Sue
Ex's families	WatchTheSu...	Replies:5	Jul 09, 2011 07:51:44 PM



		Views: 142	Re: Ex's families By: KellyJay Jul 09, 2011 07:47:51 PM
does he like me??!	ellabellac...	Replies:6 Views: 198	Re: does he like me??! By: Squiiiiire... Jul 09, 2011 06:45:48 PM
Staying Strong	xXRachieXx...	Replies:1 Views: 84	Re: Staying Strong By: CheekyVimt... Jul 09, 2011 06:15:17 PM
Hi! I could use some friendly advice.	tequila_mo...	Replies:2 Views: 82	Re: Hi! I could use some friendly advice. By: CheekyVimt... Jul 09, 2011 04:58:13 PM
Should i stay or should i go?	Girlygirlu...	Replies:7 Views: 121	Re: Should i stay or should i go? By: Danniihxx Jul 09, 2011 03:31:02 PM
any ideas for romantic things i could do for my bf ...	megzimoo	Replies:4 Views: 118	Re: any ideas for romantic things i could do for my bf ... By: Arlandria_... Jul 09, 2011 03:03:52 PM
ARGHHHHHHHHH...	DairyMilkC...	Replies:27 Views: 534	Re: ARGHHHHHHHHH... By: CheekyVimt... Jul 09, 2011 12:38:23 PM
Activities with your OH?	LuckyGaluk	Replies:7 Views: 169	Re: Activities with your OH? By: DairyMilkC... Jul 09, 2011 10:29:24 AM
MY boyfriend will not stop eating!!! grrr	aussieauss...	Replies:8 Views: 305	Re: MY boyfriend will not stop eating!!! grrr By: c__jay Jul 08, 2011 10:38:51 PM
My Bf and his EX	Lady-Jones	Replies:10 Views: 349	Re: My Bf and his EX By: bone_machi... Jul 08, 2011 09:25:50 PM
HELP! What to do...	GlitterPug	Replies:7 Views: 137	Re: HELP! What to do... By: GlitterPug Jul 08, 2011 08:14:48 PM
HELP !!!! MOMS !!!! arghhhhh!	JLG_16	Replies:1 Views: 71	Re: HELP !!!! MOMS !!!! arghhhhh! By: -Evily- Jul 08, 2011 07:46:19 PM
Won't delete his one night stand off facebook	Smoooch	Replies:22 Views: 680	Re: Won't delete his one night stand off facebook By: lilidhx Jul 08, 2011 06:05:52 PM
Getting involved with my housemate...	PrettyLitt...	Replies:5 Views: 170	Re: Getting involved with my housemate... By: doyoulikep... Jul 08, 2011 05:32:14 PM
Maybe I'm being insensitive but...	blackandwh...	Replies:31 Views: 588	Re: Maybe I'm being insensitive but... By: CorleUK Jul 08, 2011 04:56:46 PM
Shall i delete his number and move on?	xDiAmOnDSh...	Replies:5 Views: 246	Re: Shall i delete his number and move on? By: Heavy-Wing... Jul 08, 2011 04:26:00 PM
Yikes!!!	Robyn_US	Replies:22 Views: 447	Re: Yikes!!! By: Robyn_US Jul 08, 2011 02:23:55 PM
Rant!	sazzy86	Replies:10 Views: 231	Re: Rant! By: smileychic... Jul 08, 2011 02:18:37 PM
why am I such a selfish, lazy human being who doesn't care ?	antonialov...	Replies:13 Views: 388	Re: why am I such a selfish, lazy human being who doesn't care ? By: AbsintheFa... Jul 08, 2011 01:31:58 PM
Am I wrong to be a bit mift?? advice please ladies :)	xxlizamc	Replies:11 Views: 429	Re: Am I wrong to be a bit mift?? advice please ladies :) By: CheekyVimt... Jul 08, 2011 02:23:55 PM
Rant!	sazzy86	Replies:10 Views: 232	Re: Rant! By: smileychic... Jul 08, 2011 02:18:37 PM
why am I such a selfish, lazy human being who	antonialov...	Replies:13	Jul 08, 2011 02:18:37 PM

doesn't care ?		Views: 389	Re: why am I such a selfish, lazy human being who doesn't care ? By: AbsintheFa... Jul 08, 2011 01:31:58 PM
Am I wrong to be a bit mift?? advice please ladies :)	xxlizame	Replies:11 Views: 430	Re: Am I wrong to be a bit mift?? advice please ladies :) By: CheekyVimt... Jul 08, 2011 12:53:14 PM
advice urgently needed!	jimmi85	Replies:12 Views: 519	Re: advice urgently needed! By: jimmi85 Jul 08, 2011 12:20:28 PM
Reading too much into this..?	Jessiiikau...	Replies:6 Views: 214	Re: Reading too much into this..? By: Chica_Gale... Jul 07, 2011 11:34:00 PM
im taking it out on him :(	ilovepengu...	Replies:3 Views: 132	Re: im taking it out on him :( By: ilovepengu... Jul 07, 2011 10:55:17 PM
Is it possible...	NickyLou20	Replies:22 Views: 423	Re: Is it possible... By: CheekyVimt... Jul 07, 2011 10:33:30 PM
Want to find my real dad...	blondieee8...	Replies:1 Views: 31	Re: Want to find my real dad... By: CheekyVimt... Jul 07, 2011 09:43:01 PM
Bullied by my sister	MP1988	Replies:12 Views: 162	Re: Bullied by my sister By: CheekyVimt... Jul 07, 2011 08:54:37 PM
Cheating	Blondieeuk...	Replies:15 Views: 369	Re: Cheating By: Oblongchee... Jul 07, 2011 08:28:29 PM
When guys...	Confuzzled...	Replies:19 Views: 335	Re: When guys... By: CheekyVimt... Jul 07, 2011 07:58:09 PM
meeting the parents	doyoulikep...	Replies:8 Views: 250	Re: meeting the parents By: SLN448 Jul 07, 2011 07:10:53 PM
Feeling confused please help x	jolinda23	Replies:3 Views: 147	Re: Feeling confused please help x By: CheekyVimt... Jul 07, 2011 06:11:11 PM
Does he like me?	brokenwing...	Replies:4 Views: 142	Re: Does he like me? By: CheekyVimt... Jul 07, 2011 04:45:20 PM
Talking about ex-bf/gf's/ being paranoid about bfs ex's	lola_pinku...	Replies:15 Views: 418	Re: Talking about ex-bf/gf's/ being paranoid about bfs ex's By: captaincru... Jul 07, 2011 01:55:46 PM
Ehy did she react so dramatically?	brokenwing...	Replies:4 Views: 192	Re: Ehy did she react so dramatically? By: emilieeeee Jul 07, 2011 11:23:39 AM
Thinking about ex - should I get in touch?	wishing_x	Replies:9 Views: 249	Re: Thinking about ex - should I get in touch? By: nuttymare Jul 07, 2011 10:47:14 AM
My OH emailed his ex girlfriend	Miss-Bubbl...	Replies:7 Views: 230	Re: My OH emailed his ex girlfriend By: bone_machi... Jul 07, 2011 09:22:17 AM
Curious about LDRs	ForeverFam...	Replies:11 Views: 293	Re: Curious about LDRs By: Divine-Int... Jul 07, 2011 07:57:58 AM
Cancer and my friend...	xparadisep...	Replies:10 Views: 151	Re: Cancer and my friend... By: xparadisep... Jul 07, 2011 02:43:17 AM
Working on relationship?	Kerasi_bel...	Replies:17 Views: 365	Re: Working on relationship? By: Paynebynam... Jul 07, 2011 01:51:21 AM
Urgent advice needed on new housemate	Gossip_Gir...	Replies:2 Views: 98	Re: Urgent advice needed on new housemate By: Appletini_... Jul 07, 2011 12:44:09 AM
Ugh, Should I forgive him?	_Ripcurl_	Replies:29	Jul 07, 2011 12:44:09 AM

		Views: 510	Re: Ugh, Should I forgive him? By: _Ripcurl_
Is it worth having her back in my life?	couchiex3	Replies:19 Views: 408	Jul 06, 2011 09:59:02 PM Re: Is it worth having her back in my life? By: Vee2
Case of too little too late	cannot_thi...	Replies:3 Views: 254	Jul 06, 2011 08:37:04 PM Re: Case of too little too late By: Nauticalbu...
my boyfriend who i love like crazy is getting scared and distant i dont know wat to do =(	skillzy	Replies:5 Views: 303	Jul 06, 2011 08:04:41 PM Re: my boyfriend who i love like crazy is getting scared and distant i dont know wat to do =( By: CheekyVimt...
He called things off :(	CheekyVimt...	Replies:8 Views: 414	Jul 06, 2011 07:39:34 PM Re: He called things off :( By: CheekyVimt...
Not sure how to move on from this or what to think.	_katiexoxo	Replies:10 Views: 353	Jul 06, 2011 07:38:06 PM Re: Not sure how to move on from this or what to think. By: CheekyVimt...
BF's friends	PorcelainD...	Replies:2 Views: 149	Jul 06, 2011 06:31:49 PM Re: BF's friends By: PorcelainD...
do I or don't I?	blonde_bea...	Replies:12 Views: 291	Jul 06, 2011 06:07:51 PM Re: do I or don't I? By: Lilmissgig...
return of the ex	c7e457efde...	Replies:7 Views: 250	Jul 06, 2011 04:37:35 PM Re: return of the ex By: MessalinaL...
Mum problems	HoneyAndLe...	Replies:7 Views: 101	Jul 06, 2011 01:43:34 PM Re: Mum problems By: HoneyAndLe...
Don't think he's over his ex	Scarlet51	Replies:47 Views: 1204	Jul 06, 2011 12:47:34 PM Re: Don't think he's over his ex By: Fearless_x
How to tell him I like him?	purple_fis...	Replies:4 Views: 163	Jul 06, 2011 08:56:16 AM Re: How to tell him I like him? By: smileychic...
Guy I really like coming over to my house tomorrow?	katler	Replies:1 Views: 116	Jul 06, 2011 07:00:32 AM Re: Guy I really like coming over to my house tomorrow? By: brokenwing...
Boyfriend Blues!	xxlizamc	Replies:4 Views: 264	Jul 06, 2011 12:03:39 AM Re: Boyfriend Blues! By: stacism107
Engagement Rings	butcher189...	Replies:17 Views: 278	Jul 05, 2011 11:19:49 PM Re: Engagement Rings By: crystalbet...
Selfish.	Kelathyn	Replies:5 Views: 217	Jul 05, 2011 09:11:46 PM Re: Selfish. By: Kelathyn
What would you do?	noonoo24	Replies:64 Views: 1026	Jul 05, 2011 08:57:32 PM Re: What would you do? By: JFC91
What to do?! Help pleeease	BeautifulD...	Replies:12 Views: 179	Jul 05, 2011 08:41:16 PM Re: What to do?! Help pleeease By: BeautifulD...
absolutely heartbroken	DancingInT...	Replies:7 Views: 300	Jul 05, 2011 07:46:42 PM Re: absolutely heartbroken By: DancingInT...
Please help me I have mada a huge mistake and cheated on my husband. I am so guilty	aqualuk	Replies:58 Views: 1339	Jul 05, 2011 07:36:43 PM Re: Please help me I have mada a huge mistake and cheated on my husband. I am so guilty By: Heavy-Wing...
Please make it stop!	XxSmilesar...	Replies:3 Views: 154	Jul 05, 2011 07:23:05 PM Re: Please make it stop! By: dutch25

AUDITIONS FOR BRAND NEW SKY DATING GAME SHOW	hannahs11	Replies:2 Views: 62	Jul 05, 2011 07:21:49 PM Re: AUDITIONS FOR BRAND NEW SKY DATING GAME SHOW By: dutch25
Move in or move on: what should I do?	Lucy_in_di...	Replies:7 Views: 229	Jul 05, 2011 06:57:53 PM Re: Move in or move on: what should I do? By: Tess_inser...
AUDITIONS FOR BRAND NEW SKY DATING GAME SHOW	hannahs11	Replies:2 Views: 62	Jul 05, 2011 07:21:49 PM Re: AUDITIONS FOR BRAND NEW SKY DATING GAME SHOW By: dutch25
Move in or move on: what should I do?	Lucy_in_di...	Replies:7 Views: 230	Jul 05, 2011 06:57:53 PM Re: Move in or move on: what should I do? By: Tess_inser...
Why do people act like this? Confused!	raq244	Replies:9 Views: 204	Jul 05, 2011 06:34:17 PM Re: Why do people act like this? Confused! By: Jo_used_to...
So confused	carly22uk	Replies:4 Views: 118	Jul 05, 2011 06:01:30 PM Re: So confused By: Jo_used_to...
changing friendships	Teapots_an...	Replies:11 Views: 243	Jul 05, 2011 05:34:39 PM Re: changing friendships By: XxSmilesar...
bf doesn't want me to dress up for him.. weird or not?	sminkypink...	Replies:43 Views: 683	Jul 05, 2011 04:46:55 PM Re: bf doesn't want me to dress up for him.. weird or not? By: CatFacey
Family	Velouria_	Replies:5 Views: 134	Jul 05, 2011 01:57:53 PM Re: Family By: smileychie...
How can I put this nicely?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:2 Views: 311	Jul 05, 2011 01:43:27 PM Re: How can I put this nicely? By: CheekyVimt...
which is worse?	Oblongchee...	Replies:13 Views: 310	Jul 05, 2011 01:30:44 PM Re: which is worse? By: Sparklexxx...
What's the most outrageous thing you've done with your partner?	FC027	Replies:4 Views: 190	Jul 05, 2011 01:14:30 PM Re: What's the most outrageous thing you've done with your partner? By: sminkypink...
Awkward Situation?	MullaghDan...	Replies:13 Views: 227	Jul 05, 2011 01:08:37 PM Re: Awkward Situation? By: XGeminiXuk
So embarrassed I want to die	xray3	Replies:10 Views: 418	Jul 05, 2011 10:04:56 AM Re: So embarrassed I want to die By: Jessiikau...
I am so upset and dont know what to do!	eyewannabe	Replies:9 Views: 314	Jul 04, 2011 10:34:19 PM Re: I am so upset and dont know what to do! By: eyewannabe
How to re-connect with family members	SirenX	Replies:4 Views: 94	Jul 04, 2011 10:24:20 PM Re: How to re-connect with family members By: SirenX
How do you know if some1 is the 1	angelbabe2...	Replies:1 Views: 104	Jul 04, 2011 09:29:22 PM Re: How do you know if some1 is the 1 By: pinknails3
Verbal attack by best friends boyfriend	slowdanceu...	Replies:39 Views: 542	Jul 04, 2011 09:06:26 PM Re: Verbal attack by best friends boyfriend By: Kelathyn
Turning into a crazy person!	Pumpkin_87	Replies:7 Views: 189	Jul 04, 2011 07:51:02 PM Re: Turning into a crazy person! By: CheekyVimt...
Please help!	willow87uk	Replies:10 Views: 167	Jul 04, 2011 07:25:36 PM Re: Please help! By: smileychie...
playing hard to get?	Molly_X	Replies:11 Views: 410	Jul 04, 2011 06:13:15 PM Re: playing hard to get?

Abusive EX - New partner?	cannot_thi...	Replies:1 Views: 75	By: Molly_X Jul 04, 2011 06:12:51 PM Re: Abusive EX - New partner? By: Sparklexxx...
Meeting my estranged Mom?	Robyn_US	Replies:11 Views: 118	Jul 04, 2011 04:57:10 PM Re: Meeting my estranged Mom? By: Robyn_US
Bit confused?	sweet_madd...	Replies:11 Views: 290	Jul 04, 2011 04:49:18 PM Re: Bit confused? By: lilidhx
how often do you see your oh?	the-cosmos...	Replies:32 Views: 544	Jul 04, 2011 04:41:14 PM Re: how often do you see your oh? By: lilidhx
Flirting with OH	littleoran...	Replies:2 Views: 185	Jul 04, 2011 04:16:24 PM Re: Flirting with OH By: littleoran...
Lovey Dovey	Blondieeuk...	Replies:4 Views: 158	Jul 04, 2011 01:56:41 PM Re: Lovey Dovey By: Arlandria_...
Mum kicked me out...	ilovepengu...	Replies:3 Views: 257	Jul 04, 2011 01:34:14 PM Re: Mum kicked me out... By: CheekyVimt...
He's driving me crazy!	CookieCake...	Replies:12 Views: 625	Jul 04, 2011 01:27:08 PM Re: He's driving me crazy! By: CookieCake...
how do you get your partner to be more dominant in the bedroom?	queencent	Replies:2 Views: 109	Jul 04, 2011 01:21:22 PM Re: how do you get your partner to be more dominant in the bedroom? By: smileychic...
What do you think of Plentyoffish.com	sunshine23...	Replies:15 Views: 202	Jul 04, 2011 11:53:16 AM Re: What do you think of Plentyoffish.com By: Fearless_x
So annoyed..Again!	xPARISxuk	Replies:3 Views: 166	Jul 04, 2011 09:52:20 AM Re: So annoyed..Again! By: xPARISxuk
Meeting my estranged Mom?	Robyn_US	Replies:11 Views: 119	Jul 04, 2011 04:57:10 PM Re: Meeting my estranged Mom? By: Robyn_US
Bit confused?	sweet_madd...	Replies:11 Views: 291	Jul 04, 2011 04:49:18 PM Re: Bit confused? By: lilidhx
how often do you see your oh?	the-cosmos...	Replies:32 Views: 545	Jul 04, 2011 04:41:14 PM Re: how often do you see your oh? By: lilidhx
Flirting with OH	littleoran...	Replies:2 Views: 186	Jul 04, 2011 04:16:24 PM Re: Flirting with OH By: littleoran...
Lovey Dovey	Blondieeuk...	Replies:4 Views: 159	Jul 04, 2011 01:56:41 PM Re: Lovey Dovey By: Arlandria_...
Mum kicked me out...	ilovepengu...	Replies:3 Views: 258	Jul 04, 2011 01:34:14 PM Re: Mum kicked me out... By: CheekyVimt...
He's driving me crazy!	CookieCake...	Replies:12 Views: 626	Jul 04, 2011 01:27:08 PM Re: He's driving me crazy! By: CookieCake...
how do you get your partner to be more dominant in the bedroom?	queencent	Replies:2 Views: 111	Jul 04, 2011 01:21:22 PM Re: how do you get your partner to be more dominant in the bedroom? By: smileychic...
What do you think of Plentyoffish.com	sunshine23...	Replies:15 Views: 203	Jul 04, 2011 11:53:16 AM Re: What do you think of Plentyoffish.com By: Fearless_x
So annoyed..Again!	xPARISxuk	Replies:3 Views: 168	Jul 04, 2011 09:52:20 AM Re: So annoyed..Again! By: xPARISxuk

Why Am I Doing This!	katler	Replies:1 Views: 114	Jul 04, 2011 02:34:13 AM Re: Why Am I Doing This! By: FanOfNaugh...
The dreaded Ex	Independan...	Replies:3 Views: 113	Jul 04, 2011 01:35:46 AM Re: The dreaded Ex By: Independan...
My Mum and her new boyfriend	tuppyl2	Replies:37 Views: 567	Jul 03, 2011 11:44:06 PM Re: My Mum and her new boyfriend By: Chica_Gale...
Plea help I don't know what to do	kittyeatme	Replies:2 Views: 84	Jul 03, 2011 11:14:42 PM Re: Plea help I don't know what to do By: Michelle_8...
So confused, someone give me a slap please	xray3	Replies:8 Views: 404	Jul 03, 2011 10:32:07 PM Re: So confused, someone give me a slap please By: littleoran...
Have I ballsed it up?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:27 Views: 456	Jul 03, 2011 10:21:31 PM Re: Have I ballsed it up? By: CheekyVimt...
Flatmate situation is getting too much!	blondiee8...	Replies:25 Views: 609	Jul 03, 2011 08:52:11 PM Re: Flatmate situation is getting too much! By: blondiee8...
Am I wrong?	tvaddictuk	Replies:12 Views: 190	Jul 03, 2011 01:01:33 PM Re: Am I wrong? By: tvaddictuk
is it me or is he being very inconsiderate?	answerme1	Replies:9 Views: 437	Jul 03, 2011 12:14:25 PM Re: is it me or is he being very inconsiderate? By: tvaddictuk
What does "lock down" mean..	CookieCake...	Replies:9 Views: 338	Jul 03, 2011 11:56:50 AM Re: What does By: CookieCake...
Fear of being unloved!?	ForeverFam...	Replies:4 Views: 134	Jul 03, 2011 11:55:05 AM Re: Fear of being unloved!? By: CookieCake...
when in a relationship are you a jelous person??	megzimoo	Replies:22 Views: 435	Jul 03, 2011 01:20:46 AM Re: when in a relationship are you a jelous person?? By: JessiccaR
What should I say to 'we are just friends'	Lai80	Replies:15 Views: 328	Jul 03, 2011 01:11:11 AM Re: What should I say to 'we are just friends' By: blonde_bea...
reoccurring dreams about ex	xxbarbie-d...	Replies:3 Views: 52	Jul 03, 2011 12:18:22 AM Re: reoccurring dreams about ex By: DairyMilkC...
Should I let him go?	Nic_The_Sp...	Replies:12 Views: 244	Jul 03, 2011 12:01:25 AM Re: Should I let him go? By: xmelissaxx
Present Help for BF!	KellyLouis...	Replies:1 Views: 57	Jul 02, 2011 11:43:56 PM Re: Present Help for BF! By: DairyMilkC...
The first move...	Confuzzled...	Replies:6 Views: 129	Jul 02, 2011 11:05:10 PM Re: The first move... By: FanOfNaugh...
do you feel more confident when your single, or in a relationship?	xxbarbie-d...	Replies:37 Views: 573	Jul 02, 2011 11:02:45 PM Re: do you feel more confident when your single, or in a relationship? By: xmelissaxx
Anyone else had this feeling as its driving me mad?!	alice_lond...	Replies:6 Views: 256	Jul 02, 2011 09:51:10 PM Re: Anyone else had this feeling as its driving me mad?! By: CyberCandy...
Sex with someone in a relationship	clarebear_...	Replies:19 Views: 688	Jul 02, 2011 03:47:14 PM Re: Sex with someone in a relationship By: JustMe1001
Things are Good!	Sink-Or-Sw...	Replies:14 Views: 238	Jul 02, 2011 03:44:46 PM Re: Things are Good! By: Arlandria_...

Is he trying to make me jealous?	Bubbles494	Replies:2 Views: 118	Jul 02, 2011 10:16:44 AM Re: Is he trying to make me jealous? By: Bubbles494
uh oh, dont think I'm over my ex. (long ramble, sorry!)	cityisadra...	Replies:3 Views: 135	Jul 02, 2011 12:37:50 AM Re: uh oh, dont think I'm over my ex. (long ramble, sorry!) By: Brr_ItsCol...
silliest thing you've been jealous of?	Brr_ItsCol...	Replies:7 Views: 268	Jul 02, 2011 12:24:15 AM Re: silliest thing you've been jealous of? By: Brr_ItsCol...
Facebook friends	MP1988	Replies:11 Views: 283	Jul 01, 2011 11:21:55 PM Re: Facebook friends By: jlushh
age gap in your relationship ..	megzimoo	Replies:21 Views: 254	Jul 01, 2011 11:10:05 PM Re: age gap in your relationship .. By: _fairyhand...
cant.move.on....him this time	fresh_face	Replies:28 Views: 542	Jul 01, 2011 11:04:31 PM Re: cant.move.on....him this time By: fresh_face
Just met him and now I'm going on holiday!!	maryuk4	Replies:5 Views: 164	Jul 01, 2011 10:55:33 PM Re: Just met him and now I'm going on holiday!! By: kiirst123
Who made the first move?	Izzy_Wizzy...	Replies:9 Views: 124	Jul 01, 2011 10:42:33 PM Re: Who made the first move? By: Elsis_
Did he cheat on me?	happyfoxyg...	Replies:9 Views: 231	Jul 01, 2011 10:38:34 PM Re: Did he cheat on me? By: BluerThanM...
Bed time Story	EmilyP2000	Replies:5 Views: 133	Jul 01, 2011 10:26:08 PM Re: Bed time Story By: misschocoh...
seeing your ex after 3 months.	tors2	Replies:1 Views: 62	Jul 01, 2011 10:23:26 PM Re: seeing your ex after 3 months. By: CheekyVimt...
eh?	_tarantulo...	Replies:8 Views: 286	Jul 01, 2011 10:01:27 PM Re: eh? By: _tarantulo...
"we've gone too far down this road to continue"	Sugar_Plum...	Replies:2 Views: 228	Jul 01, 2011 09:57:32 PM Re: By: Sugar_Plum...
Urgh!!	Kylera7	Replies:4 Views: 180	Jul 01, 2011 08:20:49 PM Re: Urgh!! By: Kylera7
He's turned his phone off...	_Ripcurl_	Replies:9 Views: 232	Jul 01, 2011 08:09:07 PM Re: He's turned his phone off... By: _Ripcurl_
Controlling Boyfriend	Victoriaxo...	Replies:23 Views: 513	Jul 01, 2011 07:11:12 PM Re: Controlling Boyfriend By: AngryChees...
your ideal man ..	megzimoo	Replies:1 Views: 63	Jul 01, 2011 06:17:16 PM Re: your ideal man .. By: CheekyVimt...
Is there such thing as forever friends?	xparadisep...	Replies:4 Views: 86	Jul 01, 2011 05:09:49 PM Re: Is there such thing as forever friends? By: xparadisep...
Feeling so down.....	cosmofreak...	Replies:5 Views: 148	Jul 01, 2011 02:51:12 PM Re: Feeling so down..... By: Candy_Appl...
Bromance..again...	lushley666	Replies:10 Views: 284	Jul 01, 2011 02:19:48 PM Re: Bromance..again... By: x_mills_x
bald or balding guys	df84	Replies:88 Views: 781	Jul 01, 2011 01:20:01 PM Re: bald or balding guys By: Sarsaparil...
Hot 'n' Cold	paiiigetur...	Replies:26 Views: 401	Jul 01, 2011 12:33:03 PM Re: Hot 'n' Cold

You have to love yourself before someone else can love you?	Infinity89	Replies:15 Views: 273	By: _tarantulo... Jul 01, 2011 11:56:37 AM Re: You have to love yourself before someone else can love you? By: CarcrashTV
Why you're not married...	angel879	Replies:61 Views: 1191	Jul 01, 2011 09:31:09 AM Re: Why you're not married... By: Vee2
How do you deal with strong emotion?	Imperialis...	Replies:6 Views: 138	Jul 01, 2011 01:21:14 AM Re: How do you deal with strong emotion? By: Kylera7
How to get a boyfriend?	CroydonGir...	Replies:20 Views: 473	Jun 30, 2011 11:28:05 PM Re: How to get a boyfriend? By: CroydonGir...
How to go about this? Mum shutting me out?	mellb00	Replies:8 Views: 140	Jun 30, 2011 11:11:59 PM Re: How to go about this? Mum shutting me out? By: mellb00
Do you still find others attractive?	xparadisep...	Replies:22 Views: 308	Jun 30, 2011 11:10:48 PM Re: Do you still find others attractive? By: Heavy-Wing...
what advice should i give?	viennetta	Replies:4 Views: 74	Jun 30, 2011 10:56:22 PM Re: what advice should i give? By: viennetta
Rules of online dating..?	brokenwing...	Replies:2 Views: 46	Jun 30, 2011 10:48:41 PM Re: Rules of online dating..? By: brokenwing...
Depressed about being a virgin!	MP1988	Replies:16 Views: 356	Jun 30, 2011 09:48:14 PM Re: Depressed about being a virgin! By: XxLauraf90...
Reality crushes you probably shouldn't have!	ForeverFam...	Replies:2 Views: 78	Jun 30, 2011 09:19:42 PM Re: Reality crushes you probably shouldn't have! By: MissIndepe...
Handling raging insecurity	axela-x	Replies:12 Views: 187	Jun 30, 2011 09:00:22 PM Re: Handling raging insecurity By: _Ripcurl_
Boyfriend gets really angry easily	mel_e101	Replies:9 Views: 234	Jun 30, 2011 08:52:52 PM Re: Boyfriend gets really angry easily By: mel_e101
Your OH parents	xPARISxuk	Replies:20 Views: 303	Jun 30, 2011 08:31:56 PM Re: Your OH parents By: LittleRed_...
Not knowing what to say or do about things :/	Pinupdoll9...	Replies:54 Views: 330	Jun 30, 2011 06:06:42 PM Re: Not knowing what to say or do about things :/ By: smileychic...
Going on a date with someone I met online	brokenwing...	Replies:6 Views: 165	Jun 30, 2011 05:51:41 PM Re: Going on a date with someone I met online By: doyoulikep...
Facebook a help or a hinderance?	Infinity89	Replies:20 Views: 434	Jun 30, 2011 05:06:21 PM Re: Facebook a help or a hinderance? By: CanYouBeMy...
Prenups	The_rits	Replies:44 Views: 271	Jun 30, 2011 04:18:15 PM Re: Prenups By: c__jay
"I don't believe in love"	Kelathyn	Replies:19 Views: 334	Jun 30, 2011 11:25:03 AM Re: By: fandangoes
Spoilt brat or reasonable request?	weepfrolg	Replies:20 Views: 490	Jun 30, 2011 06:56:11 AM Re: Spoilt brat or reasonable request? By: BG73
GETTING BACK WITH UR EX; REGRETS OR JOY?	missmalm	Replies:9 Views: 143	Jun 30, 2011 12:39:55 AM Re: GETTING BACK WITH UR EX; REGRETS OR JOY? By: arianlibra
Understanding Men!	loisapple	Replies:3 Views: 117	Jun 30, 2011 12:28:51 AM Re: Understanding Men! By: SirenX



getting a date	F_Is_4_Fin...	Replies:2 Views: 97	Jun 29, 2011 09:54:02 PM Re: getting a date By: Mary_Sue
Have I upset her?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:5 Views: 151	Jun 29, 2011 09:30:10 PM Re: Have I upset her? By: CheekyVimt...
OH god ... i dont get men !	JLG_16	Replies:21 Views: 369	Jun 29, 2011 08:59:25 PM Re: OH god ... i dont get men ! By: oldermenlo...
Trust	misscath	Replies:4 Views: 98	Jun 29, 2011 08:56:10 PM Re: Trust By: Ed_In_The_...
Is he upto something? ... confuseed :(	ER_1991	Replies:7 Views: 214	Jun 29, 2011 08:31:29 PM Re: Is he upto something? ... confuseed :( By: JLG_16
Your relationship with your BF? Am I expecting too much with mine?	pumpkin121	Replies:12 Views: 289	Jun 29, 2011 06:44:53 PM Re: Your relationship with your BF? Am I expecting too much with mine? By: smileychic...
Taking a "step-mum" role	Knickers3	Replies:12 Views: 154	Jun 29, 2011 06:32:20 PM Re: Taking a By: dutch25
I can't stop reading my boyfriends texts! Help!	xoHelloKit...	Replies:20 Views: 581	Jun 29, 2011 05:50:34 PM Re: I can't stop reading my boyfriends texts! Help! By: pumpkin121
He's gone to Vegas!	xIndiaRose...	Replies:6 Views: 186	Jun 29, 2011 05:41:01 PM Re: He's gone to Vegas! By: xIndiaRose...
"I really like you, but I dont want a relationship"	Blonde-Abs...	Replies:45 Views: 579	Jun 29, 2011 04:48:45 PM Re: By: Velouria_
What does he want?I'm confused!!	Cherries_8...	Replies:9 Views: 176	Jun 29, 2011 04:22:42 PM Re: What does he want?I'm confused!! By: Cherries_8...
Family gathering	Sarahbear8...	Replies:17 Views: 157	Jun 29, 2011 03:59:17 PM Re: Family gathering By: I-Like-Can...
Parents vs. Fiancè	Suffuk	Replies:4 Views: 144	Jun 29, 2011 03:10:52 PM Re: Parents vs. Fiancè By: I-Like-Can...
This has presented a pretty unpleasant situation	Imperialis...	Replies:4 Views: 231	Jun 29, 2011 02:53:55 PM Re: This has presented a pretty unpleasant situation By: LittleGirl...
5 things you love about being single	clarebear_...	Replies:33 Views: 809	Jun 29, 2011 01:30:47 PM Re: 11 things you love about being single By: Shoppings...
What to do.....	Beautiful-...	Replies:4 Views: 210	Jun 29, 2011 11:58:17 AM Re: What to do..... By: Beautiful-...
He hates me going out!	Lauracolli...	Replies:10 Views: 183	Jun 29, 2011 09:47:46 AM Re: He hates me going out! By: Faustus_
Should I confront them about this?	GlitterFre...	Replies:5 Views: 153	Jun 29, 2011 09:27:53 AM Re: Should I confront them about this? By: Zeta-
Third Wheel	Peepsweep	Replies:4 Views: 177	Jun 29, 2011 12:49:33 AM Re: Third Wheel By: Tash_X
found out my friend slept with my ex...do i confront her?	annabanana...	Replies:23 Views: 483	Jun 29, 2011 12:14:05 AM Re: found out my friend slept with my ex...do i confront her? By: ilovegagau...
Paranoia?	Zombehband...	Replies:5 Views: 157	Jun 28, 2011 11:03:13 PM Re: Paranoia? By: Zombehband...
What to do, i feel like i'm in limbo..	daaisychai...	Replies:1	Jun 28, 2011 10:38:16 PM

		Views: 133	Re: What to do, i feel like i'm in limbo.. By: Lauracoli... Jun 28, 2011 10:33:12 PM
Experience with ex is threatening new potential relationship	CheekyVimt...	Replies:3 Views: 168	Re: Experience with ex is threatening new potential relationship By: CheekyVimt... Jun 28, 2011 10:31:03 PM
RANT	Lil_Miss_R...	Replies:11 Views: 201	Re: RANT By: Lil_Miss_R... Jun 28, 2011 10:03:40 PM
He's going on holiday for 2 weeks	Becky_Efc2...	Replies:11 Views: 244	Re: He's going on holiday for 2 weeks By: Becky_Efc2... Jun 28, 2011 09:18:55 PM
Unanswered Questions	pink_nails	Replies:2 Views: 106	Re: Unanswered Questions By: pink_nails Jun 28, 2011 08:42:45 PM
Realtionships at work...	LHH92	Replies:6 Views: 168	Re: Realtionships at work... By: midgetjem1 Jun 28, 2011 07:56:52 PM
Give up now or wait and hope	parrot56	Replies:2 Views: 169	Re: Give up now or wait and hope By: echome1 Jun 28, 2011 06:03:23 PM
How do you deal with kids?	Kat2208	Replies:16 Views: 281	Re: How do you deal with kids? By: Jezabel_0 Jun 28, 2011 05:58:10 PM
I fear a good friend is pulling away from me.	Rinse	Replies:5 Views: 186	Re: I fear a good friend is pulling away from me. By: SkyHighHee... Jun 28, 2011 05:38:38 PM
Weird Dream!	Hanky-Pank...	Replies:8 Views: 100	Re: Weird Dream! By: angelic666... Jun 28, 2011 05:31:57 PM
damn im so confused	strawberry...	Replies:2 Views: 53	Re: damn im so confused By: strawberry... Jun 28, 2011 04:08:20 PM
would you be a little offended or annoyed?	MissPotato...	Replies:6 Views: 271	Re: would you be a little offended or annoyed? By: MissPotato... Jun 28, 2011 01:50:27 PM
Fiance travelling with air hostess friend to dubai...!!!	missmalm	Replies:8 Views: 218	Re: Fiance travelling with air hostess friend to dubai...!!! By: naomi5000 Jun 28, 2011 12:46:26 PM
Does your OH get moody easily?	couchix3	Replies:8 Views: 216	Re: Does your OH get moody easily? By: Heavy-Wing... Jun 28, 2011 12:30:32 PM
Heartbroken. Pining for my ex. Please help...	ChloeStar_	Replies:11 Views: 341	Re: Heartbroken. Pining for my ex. Please help... By: ChloeStar_ Jun 28, 2011 11:55:55 AM
What in the hell do I do?	LittleGirl...	Replies:34 Views: 608	Re: What in the hell do I do? By: LittleGirl... Jun 28, 2011 11:26:56 AM
Hassle from his ex	x-nessie-x	Replies:0 Views: 101	Hassle from his ex By: x-nessie-x Jun 28, 2011 11:14:41 AM
advice... obviously!	cannot_thi...	Replies:5 Views: 114	Re: advice... obviously! By: Hitting_Th... Jun 28, 2011 11:00:34 AM
Touchy area	Sink-Or-Sw...	Replies:3 Views: 266	Re: Touchy area By: Sink-Or-Sw... Jun 28, 2011 09:06:55 AM
wot do i do?? :(	CherriePie...	Replies:4 Views: 133	Re: wot do i do?? :( By: I-Like-Can... Jun 28, 2011 02:42:46 AM
Does my first ex still like me?	arianlibra	Replies:4 Views: 72	Re: Does my first ex still like me? By: _Ripcurl_ Jun 28, 2011 01:48:59 AM
Ex asked about my recent break up	sparklenig...	Replies:3 Views: 120	Re: Ex asked about my recent break up

Moving out.	Brr_ItsCol...	Replies:19 Views: 322	By: arianlibra Jun 28, 2011 12:12:16 AM Re: Moving out. By: NickyLou20
have i now..no idea about men?!	fresh_face	Replies:33 Views: 421	Jun 27, 2011 10:20:13 PM Re: have i now..no idea about men?! By: fresh_face Jun 27, 2011 08:05:12 PM
Awkward Situation with Male Work Colleague. Advice Please.	Nervous1	Replies:20 Views: 333	Re: Awkward Situation with Male Work Colleague. Advice Please. By: Cpt_Awesom...
What is the longest you have gone...	crystalbet...	Replies:16 Views: 400	Jun 27, 2011 07:38:05 PM Re: What is the longest you have gone... By: Bear-Bardo...
I feel like such a loser!	MISSY2025	Replies:8 Views: 350	Jun 27, 2011 07:35:09 PM Re: I feel like such a loser! By: miss-lom
i have no say in what he does :[	Ashlee_Lou	Replies:11 Views: 188	Jun 27, 2011 07:29:02 PM Re: i have no say in what he does :[ By: Mary_Sue
Really in need of help	MissPotato...	Replies:11 Views: 316	Jun 27, 2011 07:26:47 PM Re: Really in need of help By: JoeyyXx
Just an excuse?	ilovegagau...	Replies:10 Views: 240	Jun 27, 2011 06:53:30 PM Re: Just an excuse? By: slowdancu...
Why is it ME worrying?!	JoeyyXx	Replies:1 Views: 162	Jun 27, 2011 04:30:51 PM Re: Why is it ME worrying?! By: DairyMilkC...
BF is a virgin.....	Beautiful-...	Replies:1 Views: 167	Jun 27, 2011 03:45:56 PM Re: BF is a virgin..... By: I-Like-Can...
Just need to get this out.	Danax2	Replies:19 Views: 560	Jun 27, 2011 12:59:26 PM Re: Just need to get this out. By: Sirona_x
Stabbed... Feels like it anyway.	S_Williams...	Replies:13 Views: 615	Jun 27, 2011 12:46:10 PM Re: Stabbed... Feels like it anyway. By: S_Williams...
How did you meet your OH?	sweet_madd...	Replies:18 Views: 250	Jun 27, 2011 12:27:12 PM Re: How did you meet your OH? By: kylie2011n...
Your oh taking another girl on a date for charity?	Abbibee	Replies:34 Views: 484	Jun 27, 2011 12:14:20 PM Re: Your oh taking another girl on a date for charity? By: Jo_used_to...
Help - I'm too paranid!!	Bubbles494	Replies:5 Views: 140	Jun 26, 2011 11:18:09 PM Re: Help - I'm too paranid!! By: xxJellyFis...
Emotional after sex	x-alwaysad...	Replies:8 Views: 266	Jun 26, 2011 10:10:42 PM Re: Emotional after sex By: CheekyVimt...
Trusting him around the ex..	Smartieeee6...	Replies:5 Views: 219	Jun 26, 2011 08:14:05 PM Re: Trusting him around the ex.. By: Jelly_Baby...
green eyed monster :/	lovelybone...	Replies:4 Views: 194	Jun 26, 2011 08:09:52 PM Re: green eyed monster :/ By: Jelly_Baby...
Close friends of opposite sex	Co_Co_Ice	Replies:9 Views: 251	Jun 26, 2011 08:00:39 PM Re: Close friends of opposite sex By: Jelly_Baby...
Am i a control freak? Honest answers please...	pistachio_...	Replies:6 Views: 240	Jun 26, 2011 07:49:08 PM Re: Am i a control freak? Honest answers please... By: Jelly_Baby...
Mam problem again...really don't see what's not to get :S	BeautifulD...	Replies:35 Views: 359	Jun 26, 2011 05:10:50 PM Re: Mam problem again...really don't see what's not to get :S

Havent heard from him :-)	CherriePie...	Replies:12 Views: 272	By: BeautifulD... Jun 26, 2011 01:31:07 PM Re: Havent heard from him :-) By: CherriePie... Jun 26, 2011 11:13:16 AM
Am I being picky or what? BF and effort for relationship...	pumpkin121	Replies:0 Views: 137	Am I being picky or what? BF and effort for relationship... By: pumpkin121 Jun 26, 2011 08:23:50 AM
Is this acceptable behaviour in a relationship?	flamenco_d...	Replies:49 Views: 974	Re: Is this acceptable behaviour in a relationship? By: Zeta- Jun 26, 2011 01:21:28 AM
What does your man do that makes you smile?	katler	Replies:35 Views: 477	Re: What does your man do that makes you smile? By: Smoooch Jun 26, 2011 12:29:42 AM
Was there a spark straight away?	-Evily-	Replies:18 Views: 310	Re: Was there a spark straight away? By: cependant Jun 25, 2011 11:49:41 PM
Can you put a price on...	Mary_Sue	Replies:2 Views: 118	Re: Can you put a price on... By: Mary_Sue Jun 25, 2011 08:58:49 PM
He broke up as he couldn't keep this d*ck up, could it still work?	sweetheart...	Replies:4 Views: 207	Re: He broke up as he couldn't keep this d*ck up, could it still work? By: b-rabbit Jun 25, 2011 03:05:41 PM
Confused!	ThePrinces...	Replies:5 Views: 178	Re: Confused! By: AngryChees... Jun 25, 2011 12:02:22 PM
I'm moving away... boyfriend acting very strange! babycakes8...		Replies:3 Views: 214	Re: I'm moving away... boyfriend acting very strange! By: RuthSaysTh... Jun 25, 2011 10:39:01 AM
Boyfriend cheated..don't know what to do	Niax	Replies:34 Views: 733	Re: Boyfriend cheated..don't know what to do By: AngryChees... Jun 25, 2011 09:27:13 AM
very jealous of my boyfriends exes	christine2...	Replies:3 Views: 128	Re: very jealous of my boyfriends exes By: bone_machi... Jun 25, 2011 03:06:51 AM
Ignored for 5 days....	gp_love	Replies:23 Views: 420	Re: Ignored for 5 days.... By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 25, 2011 01:48:57 AM
Commitment Issues.	xxblondiel...	Replies:13 Views: 439	Re: Commitment Issues. By: xxblondiel... Jun 25, 2011 01:31:57 AM
I think I want to end it.	xxstaceyxx...	Replies:5 Views: 264	Re: I think I want to end it. By: x-charli-x Jun 25, 2011 01:14:04 AM
OH's talking to Ex's	x-charli-x	Replies:13 Views: 249	Re: OH's talking to Ex's By: x-charli-x Jun 24, 2011 11:53:53 PM
Rant	xPARISxuk	Replies:2 Views: 102	Re: Rant By: Jo_used_to... Jun 24, 2011 11:52:19 PM
Just want a bit of fun...	LouiseSW	Replies:6 Views: 144	Re: Just want a bit of fun... By: Sirona_x Jun 24, 2011 11:34:45 PM
Skinny dipping...	x_mills_x	Replies:15 Views: 239	Re: Skinny dipping... By: Voraciousl... Jun 24, 2011 11:22:43 PM
Stupid teenage Facebook relationships!!!	kateplate6...	Replies:58 Views: 1239	Re: Stupid teenage Facebook relationships!!! By: Smoooch Jun 24, 2011 10:06:59 PM
Very insecure!	ThePrinces...	Replies:7 Views: 155	Re: Very insecure! By: ThePrinces... Jun 24, 2011 07:07:29 PM
Confidence?	x-Calliope...	Replies:8 Views: 183	Re: Confidence?

How do you react to your OH flirting?	crystalbet...	Replies:28 Views: 422	By: Mary_Sue Jun 24, 2011 10:59:56 AM Re: How do you react to your OH flirting? By: I-Like-Can... Jun 24, 2011 10:53:25 AM
I like a married man blah blah whine whine update.	lillys_gam...	Replies:5 Views: 305	Re: I like a married man blah blah whine whine update. By: Sirona_x Jun 24, 2011 10:52:49 AM
Is there something wrong with me?	Trueloveba...	Replies:2 Views: 147	Re: Is there something wrong with me? By: SkyHighHee... Jun 24, 2011 09:29:40 AM
How similar are you?	Brr_ltsCol...	Replies:11 Views: 224	Re: How similar are you? By: Heavy-Wing... Jun 24, 2011 01:57:06 AM
some things not right...	Cheve-Ride...	Replies:13 Views: 381	Re: some things not right... By: Jo_used_to... Jun 24, 2011 01:46:14 AM
About cheating - again	chicauk4	Replies:11 Views: 227	Re: About cheating - again By: x-charli-x Jun 23, 2011 11:48:58 PM
Is it really your business?	kateplate6...	Replies:36 Views: 767	Re: Is it really your business? By: Jelly_Baby... Jun 23, 2011 11:41:00 PM
Saying I Love You	JoeyyXx	Replies:4 Views: 181	Re: Saying I Love You By: Jelly_Baby... Jun 23, 2011 11:22:25 PM
why does he accuse me of cheating 24/7?	Ma9iCa1	Replies:18 Views: 248	Re: why does he accuse me of cheating 24/7? By: Jelly_Baby... Jun 23, 2011 11:17:45 PM
Boy Banter?	sweet_madd...	Replies:28 Views: 656	Re: Boy Banter? By: Jelly_Baby... Jun 23, 2011 11:11:52 PM
LOOK!! :D	BeautifulD...	Replies:12 Views: 259	Re: LOOK!! :D By: Jelly_Baby... Jun 23, 2011 11:06:44 PM
What would be your first thought?	vixenp8	Replies:3 Views: 158	Re: What would be your first thought? By: poppyseedu... Jun 23, 2011 09:24:49 PM
boys boys boysssss <3	kacie-mai	Replies:4 Views: 137	Re: boys boys boysssss <3 By: Jelly_Baby... Jun 23, 2011 08:41:47 PM
Are men too lazy to date?	lisaven	Replies:15 Views: 261	Re: Are men too lazy to date? By: robyn_21 Jun 23, 2011 06:41:31 PM
Reacting to ex's announcing he's seeing someone else	Daisey_8	Replies:4 Views: 148	Re: Reacting to ex's announcing he's seeing someone else By: bone_machi... Jun 23, 2011 03:36:01 PM
Don't know if he wants to be with me...	purplegirl...	Replies:8 Views: 199	Re: Don't know if he wants to be with me... By: kateplate6... Jun 23, 2011 03:28:56 PM
Leaving and boyfriend doesn't seem to care *update*	emma1988xx...	Replies:5 Views: 213	Re: Leaving and boyfriend doesn't seem to care *update* By: emma1988xx... Jun 23, 2011 02:35:23 PM
Emotional involvement/detachment	pink_nails	Replies:5 Views: 258	Re: Emotional involvement/detachment By: doyoulikep... Jun 23, 2011 01:24:41 PM
Are me too lazy to date?	lisaven	Replies:0 Views: 23	Are me too lazy to date? By: lisaven Jun 23, 2011 08:43:30 AM
Deleting old pictures	Sian-Danie...	Replies:16 Views: 412	Re: Deleting old pictures By: Fearless_x Jun 23, 2011 08:19:20 AM
Moving in..	xPARISxuk	Replies:3 Views: 142	Re: Moving in..

Relationships you never thought you'd have?	x-Calliope...	Replies:20 Views: 676	By: poppyseedu... Jun 23, 2011 02:54:53 AM Re: Relationships you never thought you'd have? By: JoeyyXx
engaged after four months	sparkleand...	Replies:46 Views: 947	Jun 23, 2011 02:15:04 AM Re: engaged after four months By: c__jay
Big row with my mum, what to do???	MissPotato...	Replies:3 Views: 123	Jun 23, 2011 12:25:20 AM Re: Big row with my mum, what to do???
Where is your line?	CorleUK	Replies:9 Views: 388	By: bone_machi... Jun 22, 2011 11:00:08 PM Re: Where is your line? By: Red_Sorsha
breaking up	emily08080...	Replies:12 Views: 163	Jun 22, 2011 10:38:15 PM Re: breaking up By: crystalbet...
Help!	Peachyyyy7	Replies:6 Views: 248	Jun 22, 2011 07:06:29 PM Re: Help! By: Peachyyyy7
a mans 'right to porn' (and lie about it)	Purplemons...	Replies:140 Views: 1168	Jun 22, 2011 06:59:19 PM Re: a mans 'right to porn' (and lie about it) By: MISSY2025
Having babies..is there ever a right time? And can a man ever be ready for them?	missmalm	Replies:5 Views: 160	Jun 22, 2011 06:24:23 PM Re: Having babies..is there ever a right time? And can a man ever be ready for them? By: missmalm
Slight moan about a friend - am I being unreasonable or is he?	MISSY2025	Replies:4 Views: 155	Jun 22, 2011 03:50:58 PM Re: Slight moan about a friend - am I being unreasonable or is he? By: emilieeeee
I can't stop reading my boyfriends texts! Help!	xoHelloKit...	Replies:1 Views: 49	Jun 22, 2011 03:05:58 PM Re: I can't stop reading my boyfriends texts! Help! By: xoHelloKit...
First date nerves	cannot_thi...	Replies:1 Views: 77	Jun 22, 2011 12:54:54 PM Re: First date nerves By: smileychic...
Moving on after death of a partner	Kentgirl1	Replies:17 Views: 396	Jun 22, 2011 11:24:03 AM Re: Moving on after death of a partner By: hanj1
How do I tell him to toughen up?	Smoooch	Replies:4 Views: 242	Jun 22, 2011 10:35:18 AM Re: How do I tell him to toughen up? By: dutch25
Everyone/thing is getting me down...i need cheering up :(	blondiee8...	Replies:3 Views: 206	Jun 22, 2011 01:39:16 AM Re: Everyone/thing is getting me down...i need cheering up :( By: Jo_used_to...
Help!	Peachyyyy7	Replies:6 Views: 249	Jun 22, 2011 07:06:29 PM Re: Help! By: Peachyyyy7
a mans 'right to porn' (and lie about it)	Purplemons...	Replies:140 Views: 1169	Jun 22, 2011 06:59:19 PM Re: a mans 'right to porn' (and lie about it) By: MISSY2025
Having babies..is there ever a right time? And can a man ever be ready for them?	missmalm	Replies:5 Views: 161	Jun 22, 2011 06:24:23 PM Re: Having babies..is there ever a right time? And can a man ever be ready for them? By: missmalm
Slight moan about a friend - am I being unreasonable or is he?	MISSY2025	Replies:4 Views: 156	Jun 22, 2011 03:50:58 PM Re: Slight moan about a friend - am I being unreasonable or is he? By: emilieeeee
I can't stop reading my boyfriends texts! Help!	xoHelloKit...	Replies:1 Views: 50	Jun 22, 2011 03:05:58 PM Re: I can't stop reading my boyfriends texts! Help! By: xoHelloKit...
First date nerves	cannot_thi...	Replies:1 Views: 78	Jun 22, 2011 12:54:54 PM Re: First date nerves By: smileychic...

Moving on after death of a partner	Kentgirl1	Replies:17 Views: 398	Jun 22, 2011 11:24:03 AM Re: Moving on after death of a partner By: hanj1
How do I tell him to toughen up?	Smoooch	Replies:4 Views: 243	Jun 22, 2011 10:35:18 AM Re: How do I tell him to toughen up? By: dutch25
Everyone/thing is getting me down...i need cheering up :(	blondiee8...	Replies:3 Views: 207	Jun 22, 2011 01:39:16 AM Re: Everyone/thing is getting me down...i need cheering up :( By: Jo_used_to...
I miss him..	sasquatch1	Replies:10 Views: 239	Jun 22, 2011 01:35:38 AM Re: I miss him.. By: wholelotta...
Confidence	shortyuk4	Replies:7 Views: 253	Jun 21, 2011 10:36:54 PM Re: Confidence By: Babygurlxj...
Mental abuse in relationships (bit long)	sweetgirl_...	Replies:30 Views: 1469	Jun 21, 2011 10:19:05 PM Re: Mental abuse in relationships (bit long) By: -JellyBell...
Love him, dump him?	NiTa37	Replies:1 Views: 174	Jun 21, 2011 09:11:41 PM Re: Love him, dump him? By: Ann-Summer...
Very confused...	confusedco...	Replies:6 Views: 155	Jun 21, 2011 09:10:54 PM Re: Very confused... By: Zeta-
How to take rejection	pink_nails	Replies:15 Views: 336	Jun 21, 2011 09:10:31 PM Re: How to take rejection By: TurquoiseD...
Relationships that never happened....	MP1988	Replies:10 Views: 516	Jun 21, 2011 08:04:43 PM Re: Relationships that never happened.... By: Teapots_an...
Would you be offended by this?	gina__	Replies:20 Views: 723	Jun 21, 2011 07:59:52 PM Re: Would you be offended by this? By: claireloui...
Fallen for someone else!	Lou_Ivy	Replies:9 Views: 357	Jun 21, 2011 06:45:17 PM Re: Fallen for someone else! By: xmelissaxx
Unreasonable requests	annieapple...	Replies:24 Views: 525	Jun 21, 2011 06:43:18 PM Re: Unreasonable requests By: Purplemons...
i need him back	-just--me-	Replies:12 Views: 210	Jun 21, 2011 06:11:37 PM Re: i need him back By: emma1988xx...
Proposal	souninspir...	Replies:18 Views: 400	Jun 21, 2011 05:29:18 PM Re: Proposal By: Roo_Roo_4_...
opinions?	Blondieeuk...	Replies:13 Views: 236	Jun 21, 2011 02:43:12 PM Re: opinions? By: Blondieeuk...
Is it that simple?	MP1988	Replies:3 Views: 133	Jun 21, 2011 02:29:56 PM Re: Is it that simple? By: MP1988
Very Confused :(	bekkiboo90	Replies:1 Views: 119	Jun 21, 2011 12:04:44 PM Re: Very Confused :( By: smileychic...
How many is too many?	Blind_Melo...	Replies:15 Views: 261	Jun 21, 2011 10:36:02 AM Re: How many is too many? By: gp_love
man flu	abaker22	Replies:4 Views: 57	Jun 21, 2011 08:58:16 AM Re: man flu By: abaker22
confused! advice?	autumn_fla...	Replies:3 Views: 198	Jun 21, 2011 01:20:04 AM Re: confused! advice? By: littleoran...
boyfriend going to magaluf.	abiiix	Replies:40 Views:	Jun 21, 2011 12:02:15 AM Re: boyfriend going to magaluf.

		2360	By: Elle_Hards Jun 20, 2011 11:10:21 PM
Getting more and more frustrated	Danniihxx	Replies:85 Views: 859	Re: Getting more and more frustrated By: robyn_21 Jun 20, 2011 11:05:29 PM
How do I deal with jealousy ?	Warrington...	Replies:12 Views: 246	Re: How do I deal with jealousy ? By: Victoriaxo... Jun 20, 2011 10:33:15 PM
Don't think I love him any more	cannot_thi...	Replies:18 Views: 455	Re: Don't think I love him any more By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 20, 2011 09:54:42 PM
Help!! Guy problem!!	blondebaby...	Replies:4 Views: 115	Re: Help!! Guy problem!! By: blondebaby... Jun 20, 2011 09:45:32 PM
Condom in wallet....	emsiepie	Replies:45 Views: 1042	Re: Condom in wallet.... By: StarrGirrl Jun 20, 2011 07:48:18 PM
Cheating on a fiancee within a long distance relationship?	Dahlia900	Replies:77 Views: 423	Re: Cheating on a fiancee within a long distance relationship? By: blonde_bar... Jun 20, 2011 06:46:55 PM
Rant	sazzy86	Replies:1 Views: 62	Re: Rant By: smileychic... Jun 20, 2011 05:58:33 PM
what can i do for a romantic evening when its raining?	beccimarie	Replies:1 Views: 64	Re: what can i do for a romantic evening when its raining? By: kateplate6... Jun 20, 2011 05:40:08 PM
Best friends getting together?	-Emski	Replies:3 Views: 122	Re: Best friends getting together? By: JessiccaR Jun 20, 2011 05:18:24 PM
Do people really not know?	HelloBenjy	Replies:20 Views: 717	Re: Do people really not know? By: annieapple... Jun 20, 2011 04:02:09 PM
opinions please	jobiuk	Replies:1 Views: 86	Re: opinions please By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 20, 2011 03:09:27 PM
Sexless relationship help...?	jellyfrogs	Replies:11 Views: 426	Re: Sexless relationship help...? By: _UnDeFiNeD... Jun 20, 2011 01:49:18 PM
Daughter wants her ears pierced	Mary_Sue	Replies:79 Views: 547	Re: Daughter wants her ears pierced By: kiki2020 Jun 20, 2011 01:43:57 PM
Back again and SO loved up! :D	LittleRed_...	Replies:1 Views: 119	Re: Back again and SO loved up! :D By: AbsintheFa... Jun 20, 2011 01:27:54 PM
Variations around the country in relationship ideals	Danniihxx	Replies:24 Views: 295	Re: Variations around the country in relationship ideals By: LittleRed_... Jun 20, 2011 12:18:52 PM
Leaving in a week and boyfriend doesn't seem to care	emma1988xx...	Replies:26 Views: 630	Re: Leaving in a week and boyfriend doesn't seem to care By: emma1988xx... Jun 20, 2011 12:02:45 PM
Eeeeeeeeeek! What a difference a day makes!	cannot_thi...	Replies:7 Views: 191	Re: Eeeeeeeeeek! What a difference a day makes! By: cannot_thi... Jun 20, 2011 07:52:20 AM
White guy Black girl	LiciousX	Replies:25 Views: 505	Re: White guy Black girl By: stevensmit... Jun 20, 2011 01:03:52 AM
Squeeeeeeeeeeeee :D !!!	The_rits	Replies:14 Views: 360	Re: Squeeeeeeeeeeeee :D !!! By: littleoran... Jun 20, 2011 12:14:33 AM
Any other girls got this issue?	Roo_Roo_4_...	Replies:11 Views: 562	Re: Any other girls got this issue? By: Roo_Roo_4_... Jun 19, 2011 08:50:08 PM
Breaking up is hard to do.....	Beautiful-...	Replies:6	



		Views: 278	Re: Breaking up is hard to do..... By: Beautiful...
boyfriend/mum problem	Gem_1	Replies:4 Views: 195	Jun 19, 2011 06:08:56 PM Re: boyfriend/mum problem By: cependant
Expectations ..	_country_b...	Replies:3 Views: 208	Jun 19, 2011 05:40:21 PM Re: Expectations .. By: Cpt_Awesom...
Silly jealous rant!	sazzy86	Replies:4 Views: 199	Jun 19, 2011 04:56:21 PM Re: Silly jealous rant! By: sazzy86
should I take a break from my hobby	Red_Sorsha	Replies:5 Views: 142	Jun 19, 2011 02:15:59 PM Re: should I take a break from my hobby By: Red_Sorsha
Do men always cheat?	smegglesuk	Replies:40 Views: 461	Jun 19, 2011 01:05:21 PM Re: Do men always cheat? By: Vee2
what if it was you, what would u do?	serena4000...	Replies:3 Views: 203	Jun 19, 2011 11:06:28 AM Re: what if it was you, what would u do? By: CheekyVimt...
First date!	dreaming_o...	Replies:1 Views: 82	Jun 19, 2011 10:33:15 AM Re: First date! By: sarahj29uk
Hello everyone :) - Ex boyfriend advice	sarahj29uk	Replies:4 Views: 167	Jun 19, 2011 10:14:15 AM Re: Hello everyone :) - Ex boyfriend advice By: sarahj29uk
I'm having a dream affair O.o	Mary_Sue	Replies:84 Views: 988	Jun 19, 2011 12:37:13 AM Re: I'm having a dream affair O.o By: SoooIrish
Blah Blah Blah	fresh_face	Replies:6 Views: 288	Jun 18, 2011 11:17:34 PM Re: Blah Blah Blah By: fresh_face
Rumour or hurtful truth? Confused.	-missmonke...	Replies:2 Views: 175	Jun 18, 2011 11:07:32 PM Re: Rumour or hurtful truth? Confused. By: blonde_bar...
I miss my bestfriend	sazzy86	Replies:6 Views: 119	Jun 18, 2011 10:30:52 PM Re: I miss my bestfriend By: sazzy86
Dilema involving ex-best friend's bf	Pino_G	Replies:15 Views: 302	Jun 18, 2011 09:26:00 PM Re: Dilema involving ex-best friend's bf By: the-dc
need a little (ok a large) push please!!!!	Beth_C9	Replies:5 Views: 369	Jun 18, 2011 03:36:42 PM Re: need a little (ok a large) push please!!!! By: lucyinthea...
what now?	jobiuk	Replies:39 Views: 463	Jun 18, 2011 02:19:16 PM Re: what now? By: blonde_bea...
little sisters won't talk to me, miss them so much :(	-Polly-	Replies:1 Views: 108	Jun 18, 2011 02:02:03 PM Re: little sisters won't talk to me, miss them so much :( By: dutch25
He's going on holiday... too much? I'm struggling to cope.	fallensymm...	Replies:6 Views: 208	Jun 18, 2011 11:26:43 AM Re: He's going on holiday... too much? I'm struggling to cope. By: gina__
Family holiday	The_rits	Replies:13 Views: 285	Jun 18, 2011 09:45:15 AM Re: Family holiday By: The_rits
Is she jealous?	brokenwing...	Replies:0 Views: 102	Jun 18, 2011 09:34:57 AM Is she jealous? By: brokenwing...
Should I hold on or let go?	gemziebee4...	Replies:6 Views: 205	Jun 18, 2011 12:52:00 AM Re: Should I hold on or let go? By: SkyHighHee...
Said something really stupid	Smoooch	Replies:14 Views: 460	Jun 17, 2011 10:37:39 PM Re: Said something really stupid

Moving back is a nightmare!	BornThisWa...	Replies:21 Views: 313	By: LilMoneyBa... Jun 17, 2011 10:31:45 PM Re: Moving back is a nightmare! By: NickyLou20 Jun 17, 2011 10:00:57 PM
How would you react....?	-JellyBell...	Replies:24 Views: 495	Re: How would you react....? By: little_one... Jun 17, 2011 08:35:08 PM
Educate me please ladies ...	elvis_dude	Replies:4 Views: 188	Re: Educate me please ladies ... By: emma1988xx... Jun 17, 2011 05:48:03 PM
How long do you think...	Miss_Arrbe...	Replies:2 Views: 154	Re: How long do you think... By: Miss_Arrbe... Jun 17, 2011 05:24:24 PM
house issues	primarni_p...	Replies:15 Views: 324	Re: house issues By: AngryChees... Jun 17, 2011 05:02:06 PM
When people offend you in terms of looks...	Danax2	Replies:35 Views: 376	Re: When people offend you in terms of looks... By: PeachyPeti... Jun 17, 2011 04:40:38 PM
Worried dater advice please	Cherries_8...	Replies:9 Views: 134	Re: Worried dater advice please By: Cherries_8... Jun 17, 2011 04:37:58 PM
Men and texting!	barbiedoll...	Replies:12 Views: 409	Re: Men and texting! By: blonde_bea... Jun 17, 2011 04:11:03 PM
seeing your ex after 3 months.	tors2	Replies:1 Views: 85	Re: seeing your ex after 3 months. By: hanj1 Jun 17, 2011 04:08:41 PM
I looked through his messages...	GlitterFre...	Replies:7 Views: 495	Re: I looked through his messages... By: Fearless_x Jun 17, 2011 03:26:08 PM
FITTY AT WORK!!	hanj1	Replies:1 Views: 79	Re: FITTY AT WORK!! By: Boo_Boo_Ga... Jun 17, 2011 01:56:46 PM
i'm feeling all lonely	Eldoris	Replies:4 Views: 181	Re: i'm feeling all lonely By: Eldoris Jun 17, 2011 01:55:03 PM
Confusion!	_ShadowsOf...	Replies:4 Views: 178	Re: Confusion! By: Rach_McQue... Jun 17, 2011 12:56:24 PM
Away with work...	Jessiiikau...	Replies:2 Views: 92	Re: Away with work... By: Jessiiikau... Jun 17, 2011 12:16:30 PM
My house & boyfriends mates.. what would you do?	naomi5000	Replies:7 Views: 203	Re: My house & boyfriends mates.. what would you do? By: naomi5000 Jun 17, 2011 10:34:18 AM
Why is it that I only attract the attention of men who just want sex?	Infinity89	Replies:16 Views: 443	Re: Why is it that I only attract the attention of men who just want sex? By: gina__ Jun 17, 2011 07:46:53 AM
Ex contacts after 9 months	CheekyVimt...	Replies:8 Views: 240	Re: Ex contacts after 9 months By: Sparklexxx... Jun 17, 2011 01:53:42 AM
married man - what is wrong with me??	lillys_gam...	Replies:109 Views: 1165	Re: married man - what is wrong with me?? By: lillys_gam... Jun 17, 2011 12:07:36 AM
Meeting my type	just-curio...	Replies:41 Views: 305	Re: Meeting my type By: just-curio... Jun 16, 2011 10:31:43 PM
Being called 'baby'	apple-sham...	Replies:58 Views: 915	Re: Being called 'baby' By: Mary_Sue Jun 16, 2011 10:08:58 PM
My ex was a idiot wasn't he?	TurquoiseD...	Replies:33 Views: 436	Re: My ex was a idiot wasn't he? By: Velouria_

The new FWB relationship trend thread	Purplemons...	Replies:14 Views: 280	Jun 16, 2011 09:51:34 PM Re: The new FWB relationship trend thread By: Fishy-Fish
Would it be wrong to ask for his email?	cupcake_sp...	Replies:13 Views: 341	Jun 16, 2011 09:45:47 PM Re: Would it be wrong to ask for his email? By: ooh-la-la
Your boyfriends ex partners...	Blind_Melo...	Replies:26 Views: 436	Jun 16, 2011 09:22:46 PM Re: Your boyfriends ex partners... By: happinessx...
What on Earth...?	Screamager	Replies:11 Views: 181	Jun 16, 2011 08:23:22 PM Re: What on Earth...? By: Screamager
6 years, can I say goodbye?	Louibuk	Replies:3 Views: 167	Jun 16, 2011 08:13:43 PM Re: 6 years, can I say goodbye? By: emma1988xx...
I'm curious about how others might react	GeorgeMonk...	Replies:16 Views: 293	Jun 16, 2011 07:51:52 PM Re: I'm curious about how others might react By: Shnuuk
showing the first signs of becoming controlling?	xxbarbie-d...	Replies:12 Views: 274	Jun 16, 2011 07:27:56 PM Re: showing the first signs of becoming controlling? By: LilMoneyBa...
Friends boyfriend, bitchiness and tension	Squiiiiire...	Replies:5 Views: 100	Jun 16, 2011 06:42:55 PM Re: Friends boyfriend, bitchiness and tension By: Squiiiiire...
Happy little things :)	MissJazzDa...	Replies:7 Views: 212	Jun 16, 2011 05:02:06 PM Re: Happy little things :) By: nosiph0123
Should I ask him about this?	Smoooch	Replies:7 Views: 341	Jun 16, 2011 04:16:21 PM Re: Should I ask him about this? By: Heavy-Wing...
Should a hypothetical head jizz...	Velouria_	Replies:7 Views: 250	Jun 16, 2011 01:34:41 PM Re: Should a hypothetical head jizz... By: Velouria_
leaving the country...	serena4000...	Replies:4 Views: 143	Jun 16, 2011 12:27:03 PM Re: leaving the country... By: c__jay
Help please..	Kelbiz	Replies:4 Views: 118	Jun 16, 2011 11:27:32 AM Re: Help please.. By: gina__
He Doesn't Like Kissing :(	xLilPixiex	Replies:9 Views: 337	Jun 16, 2011 07:59:34 AM Re: He Doesn't Like Kissing :( By: xLilPixiex
How long before you....	_TickledPi...	Replies:53 Views: 1203	Jun 15, 2011 11:25:37 PM Re: How long before you.... By: staceyxox
How do I settle in moving in with his parents?	kittyeatme	Replies:1 Views: 117	Jun 15, 2011 10:01:04 PM Re: How do I settle in moving in with his parents? By: xparadisep...
So is this good? Or should I take my colleagues advice and just "leave it"	ForeverFam...	Replies:20 Views: 295	Jun 15, 2011 08:57:39 PM Re: So is this good? Or should I take my colleagues advice and just By: ForeverFam...
closed down boyfriend!	babycakesD	Replies:4 Views: 171	Jun 15, 2011 08:46:02 PM Re: closed down boyfriend! By: PikNMix
someone slap me please!	jobiuk	Replies:10 Views: 334	Jun 15, 2011 08:41:23 PM Re: someone slap me please! By: PikNMix
Is potential earning power something you consider when dating someone?	Athemistia	Replies:66 Views: 765	Jun 15, 2011 08:01:58 PM Re: Is potential earning power something you consider when dating someone? By: Chrisvamp
Cheating	kiirst123	Replies:140 Views: 1335	Jun 15, 2011 07:36:17 PM Re: Cheating By: Chrisvamp

Replaying	smithy25	Replies:6 Views: 168	Jun 15, 2011 07:21:22 PM Re: Replaying By: Vee2
alcohol in a relationship	xkxtx91	Replies:29 Views: 689	Jun 15, 2011 07:09:00 PM Re: alcohol in a relationship By: Chrisvamp
He's my best friend, but ive totally fallen for him ...	Prinny20	Replies:2 Views: 119	Jun 15, 2011 06:56:04 PM Re: He's my best friend, but ive totally fallen for him ... By: RuthSaysTh...
would you consider this cheating?	LoveNspark...	Replies:34 Views: 580	Jun 15, 2011 06:50:32 PM Re: would you consider this cheating? By: babycakesD
Sisters wedding dress, what would you have done>	slowdanceu...	Replies:26 Views: 584	Jun 15, 2011 06:41:46 PM Re: Sisters wedding dress, what would you have done> By: sexyminx23...
College Crush, though it ain't mutual.	NatalieS7	Replies:12 Views: 267	Jun 15, 2011 06:28:20 PM Re: College Crush, though it ain't mutual. By: Kelathyn
Am I overreacting or is this not normal?	brokenwing...	Replies:1 Views: 132	Jun 15, 2011 05:35:48 PM Re: Am I overreacting or is this not normal? By: Scotty-gir...
College Crush, though it ain't mutual.	NatalieS7	Replies:12 Views: 267	Jun 15, 2011 06:28:20 PM Re: College Crush, though it ain't mutual. By: Kelathyn
Am I overreacting or is this not normal?	brokenwing...	Replies:1 Views: 132	Jun 15, 2011 05:35:48 PM Re: Am I overreacting or is this not normal? By: Scotty-gir...
Boyfriend's grieving	lucyinthea...	Replies:9 Views: 258	Jun 15, 2011 02:46:30 PM Re: Boyfriend's grieving By: _sassysass...
What is he playing at?	strawberry...	Replies:7 Views: 205	Jun 15, 2011 02:16:03 PM Re: What is he playing at? By: strawberry...
the trouble with being single...	xHottieLot...	Replies:6 Views: 369	Jun 15, 2011 01:29:16 PM Re: the trouble with being single... By: xHottieLot...
When things get sexist...	SQSLW	Replies:32 Views: 466	Jun 15, 2011 11:39:57 AM Re: When things get sexist... By: DrTinycat
what do i do?	nuttymare	Replies:46 Views: 761	Jun 15, 2011 11:24:03 AM Re: what do i do? By: nuttymare
Lies...	and_then_c...	Replies:24 Views: 497	Jun 15, 2011 11:23:03 AM Re: Lies... By: DrTinycat
First date Hug?	HunnyRose	Replies:30 Views: 957	Jun 15, 2011 08:50:11 AM Re: First date Hug? By: Sparklexxx...
she can't cope!	babycakesD	Replies:4 Views: 163	Jun 15, 2011 01:25:47 AM Re: she can't cope! By: babycakesD
getting over your first love.	tors2	Replies:3 Views: 150	Jun 14, 2011 11:57:30 PM Re: getting over your first love. By: JoeyyXx
does he realy love me? please help im confused?	grangemano...	Replies:23 Views: 558	Jun 14, 2011 10:16:23 PM Re: does he realy love me? please help im confused? By: EmmyXsnowf...
Angry at boyfriends mate. RAWR!	EmmyXsnowf...	Replies:9 Views: 370	Jun 14, 2011 10:08:17 PM Re: Angry at boyfriends mate. RAWR! By: EmmyXsnowf...
Relationship stresses,is it really worth it?	the-dc	Replies:1 Views: 128	Jun 14, 2011 09:54:12 PM Re: Relationship stresses,is it really worth it? By: Rach_McQue...

blasted AF!!!	jobiuk	Replies:3 Views: 183	Jun 14, 2011 09:02:48 PM Re: blasted AF!!! By: jobiuk
what to do? am i just too jealous	lolly1985	Replies:4 Views: 155	Jun 14, 2011 07:57:36 PM Re: what to do? am i just too jealous By: BeautifulD...
The Baby Thing	PrincessSu...	Replies:14 Views: 295	Jun 14, 2011 07:43:35 PM Re: The Baby Thing By: dutch25
What do you do when you fancy a friend, and you have a boyfriend, who you love?	cupcake_sp...	Replies:12 Views: 245	Jun 14, 2011 06:09:03 PM Re: What do you do when you fancy a friend, and you have a boyfriend, who you love? By: RuthSaysTh...
"Date night" ideas	tiredteach...	Replies:4 Views: 138	Jun 14, 2011 06:06:40 PM Re: By: spaced_gir...
How do I make myself feel good enough?	LaughUntil...	Replies:5 Views: 200	Jun 14, 2011 05:11:02 PM Re: How do I make myself feel good enough? By: LaughUntil...
does he deserve another chance?	cannot_thi...	Replies:17 Views: 284	Jun 14, 2011 02:54:48 PM Re: does he deserve another chance? By: c__jay
how to finish it	Sparklexxx...	Replies:7 Views: 237	Jun 14, 2011 01:25:20 PM Re: how to finish it By: Sparklexxx...
Rant about unreliable friend	Canyoufeel...	Replies:2 Views: 168	Jun 14, 2011 01:14:34 PM Re: Rant about unreliable friend By: ChaCha_x
Do i carry on?	gp_love	Replies:5 Views: 132	Jun 14, 2011 11:56:25 AM Re: Do i carry on? By: gp_love
who does the asking out?	sexyminx23...	Replies:11 Views: 185	Jun 14, 2011 09:31:23 AM Re: who does the asking out? By: sexyminx23...
Bad experience - how to not let it affect my confidence?	flamenco_d...	Replies:3 Views: 155	Jun 14, 2011 08:00:17 AM Re: Bad experience - how to not let it affect my confidence? By: flamenco_d...
Ex-boyfriend troubles	x-alwaysad...	Replies:18 Views: 394	Jun 13, 2011 11:09:49 PM Re: Ex-boyfriend troubles By: x-alwaysad...
Feel like sh!t	strawberry...	Replies:16 Views: 479	Jun 13, 2011 10:45:33 PM Re: Feel like sh!t By: babycakesD
how did u meet your OH?	leeniepie	Replies:41 Views: 538	Jun 13, 2011 10:34:44 PM Re: how did u meet your OH? By: Lai80
Was this Facebook status out of order???	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:45 Views: 810	Jun 13, 2011 10:13:02 PM Re: Was this Facebook status out of order??? By: Lai80
Was this Facebook status out of order???	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:45 Views: 811	Jun 13, 2011 10:13:02 PM Re: Was this Facebook status out of order??? By: Lai80
whats the worst you've done...	fresh_face	Replies:6 Views: 283	Jun 13, 2011 10:02:54 PM Re: whats the worst you've done... By: fresh_face
What exactly does "It's sorted" mean?	Gonkspamst...	Replies:17 Views: 460	Jun 13, 2011 09:45:54 PM Re: What exactly does By: Gonkspamst...
Cosmopolitan mag is looking for couples...	Deskface	Replies:13 Views: 1082	Jun 13, 2011 09:15:16 PM Re: Cosmopolitan mag is looking for couples... By: xKittyxuk1
Looking at other women	Kelathyn	Replies:9 Views: 197	Jun 13, 2011 08:54:43 PM Re: Looking at other women By: annieapple...
Jealousy	sparksfly-...	Replies:3	Jun 13, 2011 07:04:53 PM

		Views: 186	Re: Jealousy By: Kelathyn Jun 13, 2011 05:54:34 PM
he wants a friend with benefits but I want more than that!	blonde_bea...	Replies:17 Views: 390	Re: he wants a friend with benefits but I want more than that! By: crystalbet... Jun 13, 2011 04:39:30 PM
my mum and my OH	abaker22	Replies:6 Views: 242	Re: my mum and my OH By: abaker22 Jun 13, 2011 03:20:35 PM
Ditched for the mates	lilmissblo...	Replies:29 Views: 580	Re: Ditched for the mates By: lilmissblo... Jun 13, 2011 03:09:56 PM
Counselling	and_then_c...	Replies:3 Views: 80	Re: Counselling By: LittleGirl... Jun 13, 2011 02:40:15 PM
really dont know how to take this.....?	CherriePie...	Replies:18 Views: 429	Re: really dont know how to take this.....? By: MessalinaL... Jun 13, 2011 02:37:26 PM
Upset/Lonely - help?!	I-Like-Can...	Replies:9 Views: 175	Re: Upset/Lonely - help?! By: MessalinaL... Jun 13, 2011 02:03:46 PM
Ann Summers Question	-JellyBell...	Replies:17 Views: 420	Re: Ann Summers Question By: Claireybea... Jun 13, 2011 01:13:21 PM
Jealousy driving me insane	fallensymm...	Replies:6 Views: 250	Re: Jealousy driving me insane By: fallensymm... Jun 13, 2011 12:54:56 PM
Is it worth pursuing?	Infinity89	Replies:4 Views: 174	Re: Is it worth pursuing? By: Infinity89 Jun 13, 2011 12:02:07 PM
I'm way too negative :(	rach_lilgi...	Replies:10 Views: 251	Re: I'm way too negative :( By: Heptet Jun 13, 2011 11:58:15 AM
friend and her causes!!	Sparklexxx...	Replies:12 Views: 261	Re: friend and her causes!! By: SkyHighHee... Jun 13, 2011 11:57:33 AM
I broke someones heart :/	kt-135	Replies:2 Views: 103	Re: I broke someones heart :/ By: -Isabelle- Jun 13, 2011 10:28:02 AM
deserving to be happy	jobiuk	Replies:12 Views: 289	Re: deserving to be happy By: jobiuk Jun 12, 2011 11:02:31 PM
A little squeal this morning!	Sezzy_xo	Replies:9 Views: 357	Re: A little squeal this morning! By: Sezzy_xo Jun 12, 2011 07:46:48 PM
So, so confused, and don't know what to do :(	Kate522	Replies:3 Views: 199	Re: So, so confused, and don't know what to do :( By: sexyminx23... Jun 12, 2011 07:42:38 PM
lonely	kburton_20	Replies:4 Views: 131	Re: lonely By: sexyminx23... Jun 12, 2011 06:07:37 PM
'My Rules' at the request of Emzypoos	kateplate6...	Replies:71 Views: 753	Re: 'My Rules' at the request of Emzypoos By: GlitterFre... Jun 12, 2011 05:22:42 PM
We've broken up	x_mills_x	Replies:5 Views: 344	Re: We've broken up By: Charlotte... Jun 12, 2011 05:15:25 PM
How to get my OH to purpose?	-Isabelle-	Replies:16 Views: 253	Re: How to get my OH to purpose? By: Roo_Roo_4_... Jun 12, 2011 04:38:50 PM
boyfriend not wanting to want..	not-perfec...	Replies:1 Views: 159	Re: boyfriend not wanting to want.. By: Shini7k Jun 12, 2011 01:05:29 PM
How to get over someone?	Louiseuk18	Replies:3 Views: 122	Re: How to get over someone? By: xxblondiel...

how do I approach this?	blonde_bea...	Replies:1 Views: 111	Jun 12, 2011 09:42:51 AM Re: how do I approach this? By: Cherry-che...
Sleeping Patterns.	So_Fee	Replies:5 Views: 197	Jun 12, 2011 01:30:04 AM Re: Sleeping Patterns. By: So_Fee
I just need to vent...	Velouria_	Replies:24 Views: 603	Jun 12, 2011 01:20:31 AM Re: I just need to vent... By: Velouria_
deserving to be happy	jobiuk	Replies:12 Views: 290	Jun 13, 2011 10:28:02 AM Re: deserving to be happy By: jobiuk
A little squeal this morning!	Sezzy_xo	Replies:9 Views: 358	Jun 12, 2011 11:02:31 PM Re: A little squeal this morning! By: Sezzy_xo
So, so confused, and don't know what to do :(	Kate522	Replies:3 Views: 200	Jun 12, 2011 07:46:48 PM Re: So, so confused, and don't know what to do :( By: sexyminx23...
lonely	kburton_20	Replies:4 Views: 132	Jun 12, 2011 07:42:38 PM Re: lonely By: sexyminx23...
'My Rules' at the request of Emzypoos	kateplate6...	Replies:71 Views: 754	Jun 12, 2011 06:07:37 PM Re: 'My Rules' at the request of Emzypoos By: GlitterFre...
We've broken up	x_mills_x	Replies:5 Views: 345	Jun 12, 2011 05:22:42 PM Re: We've broken up By: Charlottie...
How to get my OH to purpose?	-Isabelle-	Replies:16 Views: 254	Jun 12, 2011 05:15:25 PM Re: How to get my OH to purpose? By: Roo_Roo_4_...
boyfriend not wanting to want..	not-perfec...	Replies:1 Views: 160	Jun 12, 2011 04:38:50 PM Re: boyfriend not wanting to want.. By: Shini7k
How to get over someone?	Louiseuk18	Replies:3 Views: 123	Jun 12, 2011 01:05:29 PM Re: How to get over someone? By: xxblondiel...
how do I approach this?	blonde_bea...	Replies:1 Views: 112	Jun 12, 2011 09:42:51 AM Re: how do I approach this? By: Cherry-che...
Sleeping Patterns.	So_Fee	Replies:5 Views: 198	Jun 12, 2011 01:30:04 AM Re: Sleeping Patterns. By: So_Fee
I just need to vent...	Velouria_	Replies:24 Views: 604	Jun 12, 2011 01:20:31 AM Re: I just need to vent... By: Velouria_
Is he too dominating?	sweetheart...	Replies:27 Views: 371	Jun 12, 2011 12:41:58 AM Re: Is he too dominating? By: xray3
talking on the phone to my guy. . . .	kareemaB	Replies:6 Views: 304	Jun 11, 2011 09:50:15 PM Re: talking on the phone to my guy. . . . By: kareemaB
Ryan Giggs has been having an 8 yr affair with sister in law??? WTF???	OMGStylish	Replies:63 Views: 871	Jun 11, 2011 09:41:32 PM Re: Ryan Giggs has been having an 8 yr affair with sister in law??? WTF???
silly boys.	_tarantulo...	Replies:4 Views: 236	By: c__jay Jun 11, 2011 09:35:45 PM Re: silly boys. By: _tarantulo...
3rd year anniversary...	pistachio_...	Replies:2 Views: 87	Jun 11, 2011 07:31:14 PM Re: 3rd year anniversary... By: LilMissJuk...
affection	jobiuk	Replies:13 Views: 374	Jun 11, 2011 04:58:16 PM Re: affection By: Cherry-che...
So confused!! :(	rebelgirlx...	Replies:7 Views: 257	Jun 11, 2011 04:20:49 PM Re: So confused!! :(

he asked permission to cheat on me.. advise?	emmaxo3	Replies:198 Views: 2856	By: rebelgirlx... Jun 11, 2011 03:51:50 PM Re: he asked permission to cheat on me.. advise? By: brunettexb...
should you apologise when you're not at fault?	jobiuk	Replies:22 Views: 186	Jun 11, 2011 02:28:05 PM Re: should you apologise when you're not at fault? By: jobiuk
Where has the thoughtfulness gone?	Canyoufeel...	Replies:9 Views: 177	Jun 11, 2011 02:04:20 PM Re: Where has the thoughtfulness gone? By: Canyoufeel...
Masterbating.	HelloKitty...	Replies:41 Views: 586	Jun 11, 2011 12:32:22 PM Re: Masterbating. By: HelloKitty...
Don't Know What To Do	CrowdieGir...	Replies:10 Views: 304	Jun 11, 2011 12:06:26 PM Re: Don't Know What To Do By: b-rabbit
argggghhh!!! men! i need a rant!	stillchasi...	Replies:5 Views: 289	Jun 11, 2011 10:15:28 AM Re: argggghhh!!! men! i need a rant! By: doyoulikep...
ok did he like me ?	CherriePie...	Replies:2 Views: 116	Jun 11, 2011 10:03:47 AM Re: ok did he like me ? By: doyoulikep...
Family taking control.	Hanky-Pank...	Replies:4 Views: 178	Jun 11, 2011 01:21:30 AM Re: Family taking control. By: fandangoes
My Brother has got depression again :(	Pino_G	Replies:11 Views: 161	Jun 11, 2011 12:35:12 AM Re: My Brother has got depression again :( By: S_Williams...
Splitting due to distance	Smartiee6...	Replies:7 Views: 197	Jun 11, 2011 12:08:32 AM Re: Splitting due to distance By: doyoulikep...
wanting someone else whilst in a relationship....does it ever have a happy ending?	smithsgirl	Replies:18 Views: 390	Jun 10, 2011 08:06:00 PM Re: wanting someone else whilst in a relationship....does it ever have a happy ending? By: Ed_In_The_...
Got the date now what??	AngelBabex...	Replies:10 Views: 168	Jun 10, 2011 07:50:33 PM Re: Got the date now what?? By: AngelBabex...
going slow....but what does that mean!	sexyminx23...	Replies:7 Views: 291	Jun 10, 2011 05:50:55 PM Re: going slow....but what does that mean! By: Jo_used_to...
He gets annoyed at my behaviour	sazzy86	Replies:7 Views: 352	Jun 10, 2011 05:12:48 PM Re: He gets annoyed at my behaviour By: kateplate6...
Boyfriend problems after 11yrs together	zooqueen2	Replies:10 Views: 501	Jun 10, 2011 04:56:42 PM Re: Boyfriend problems after 11yrs together By: zooqueen2
boys holiday ./ really worried please help	kate_lp	Replies:9 Views: 259	Jun 10, 2011 03:06:30 PM Re: boys holiday ./ really worried please help By: LittleGirl...
Is he cheating on me?	Figgy1992	Replies:11 Views: 386	Jun 10, 2011 03:01:34 PM Re: Is he cheating on me? By: LittleGirl...
GRR!!	Oblongchee...	Replies:3 Views: 156	Jun 10, 2011 12:17:05 PM Re: GRR!! By: BabyBonny
Best ways of getting over an ex	jennywren7	Replies:6 Views: 145	Jun 10, 2011 07:40:11 AM Re: Best ways of getting over an ex By: Oblongchee...
Why are men just difficult?!	LilMissEss...	Replies:5 Views: 310	Jun 10, 2011 12:55:35 AM Re: Why are men just difficult?! By: LilMissEss...
Bonjourno ladies	fresh_face	Replies:8 Views: 250	Jun 09, 2011 09:20:48 PM Re: Bonjourno ladies By: fresh_face
High maintenance	annieapple...	Replies:34	Jun 09, 2011 08:59:36 PM



		Views: 529	Re: High maintenance By: xmelissaxx Jun 09, 2011 08:49:46 PM
Is he interested or being friendly?	strawberry...	Replies:21 Views: 390	Re: Is he interested or being friendly? By: xmelissaxx Jun 09, 2011 08:02:39 PM
I can honestly say I hate my brother	LillieSuns...	Replies:23 Views: 592	Re: I can honestly say I hate my brother By: _fairyhand... Jun 09, 2011 07:43:48 PM
Gahh...What can I buy him for his birthday?!	BeautifulD...	Replies:6 Views: 119	Re: Gahh...What can I buy him for his birthday?! By: S_Williams... Jun 09, 2011 06:09:13 PM
why oh why?	silly-cat	Replies:3 Views: 158	Re: why oh why? By: Miaow8690 Jun 09, 2011 07:43:48 PM
Gahh...What can I buy him for his birthday?!	BeautifulD...	Replies:6 Views: 120	Re: Gahh...What can I buy him for his birthday?! By: S_Williams... Jun 09, 2011 06:09:13 PM
why oh why?	silly-cat	Replies:3 Views: 159	Re: why oh why? By: Miaow8690 Jun 09, 2011 05:40:35 PM
Paranoid because I am so happy... help please!	gwynn_morg...	Replies:2 Views: 103	Re: Paranoid because I am so happy... help please! By: Obiwan_Jen... Jun 09, 2011 05:29:50 PM
What my boyfriend did this morning... irritating?? babycakes8...		Replies:19 Views: 688	Re: What my boyfriend did this morning... irritating?? By: babycakes8... Jun 09, 2011 04:15:47 PM
Soo confused!!	wildcat890...	Replies:2 Views: 92	Re: Soo confused!! By: wildcat890... Jun 09, 2011 03:35:00 PM
Could you forgive a cheating boyfriend??	Kiwwwi	Replies:50 Views: 3350	Re: Could you forgive a cheating boyfriend?? By: CorleUK Jun 09, 2011 03:18:14 PM
What do i say to her!	-JellyBell...	Replies:5 Views: 161	Re: What do i say to her! By: XGeminiXuk Jun 09, 2011 02:56:55 PM
When does a FWB become more?	Sparklexxx...	Replies:2 Views: 104	Re: When does a FWB become more? By: doyoulikep... Jun 09, 2011 02:32:00 PM
Would you tell?	LA2345	Replies:16 Views: 460	Re: Would you tell? By: c__jay Jun 09, 2011 02:21:03 PM
Guess what!!!!	Robyn_US	Replies:101 Views: 999	Re: Guess what!!!! By: I-Like-Can... Jun 09, 2011 02:15:51 PM
started dating someone but feel meh hh about it	little_one...	Replies:19 Views: 298	Re: started dating someone but feel meh hh about it By: smileychic... Jun 09, 2011 01:31:49 PM
Mum being kind of inconsiderate...	PeachyPeti...	Replies:4 Views: 126	Re: Mum being kind of inconsiderate... By: PeachyPeti... Jun 09, 2011 01:31:05 PM
Brother wants to move in	Hazy_too	Replies:6 Views: 88	Re: Brother wants to move in By: DairyMilkC... Jun 09, 2011 12:27:50 PM
What is worse?	MP1988	Replies:11 Views: 187	Re: What is worse? By: clarebear_... Jun 09, 2011 11:23:50 AM
Finding messages...	Dior192011	Replies:8 Views: 276	Re: Finding messages... By: I-Like-Can... Jun 08, 2011 11:11:46 PM
Best friend problems...	-FarmGirl-	Replies:1 Views: 116	Re: Best friend problems... By: Vamp2011 Jun 08, 2011 10:39:12 PM
Trouble with the OH's family	XJXEXSXSX	Replies:16 Views: 402	Re: Trouble with the OH's family By: XJXEXSXSX

Feeling really down on myself..	caterpiIla...	Replies:5 Views: 204	Jun 08, 2011 09:37:54 PM Re: Feeling really down on myself. By: caterpiIla...
Heartbroken	sophss1	Replies:3 Views: 188	Jun 08, 2011 09:12:42 PM Re: Heartbroken By: brunettexb...
am i being played? i just dont understand him!	beachchick...	Replies:2 Views: 139	Jun 08, 2011 08:50:51 PM Re: am i being played? i just dont understand him! By: Sexy_Sarah...
advice re violence	Saphireuk1	Replies:16 Views: 280	Jun 08, 2011 08:32:18 PM Re: advice re violence By: AngryChees...
He's deleted our photos	wishing_x	Replies:9 Views: 388	Jun 08, 2011 08:04:02 PM Re: He's deleted our photos By: Ed_In_The_...
Something nice for my boyfriend?	xxlizamc	Replies:9 Views: 113	Jun 08, 2011 04:58:27 PM Re: Something nice for my boyfriend? By: -JellyBell...
What is the best way to get over an ex?	KelseighLo...	Replies:8 Views: 124	Jun 08, 2011 03:56:46 PM Re: What is the best way to get over an ex? By: nosipho123
Feeling fairly pathetic	Bexy67	Replies:35 Views: 455	Jun 08, 2011 03:47:06 PM Re: Feeling fairly pathetic By: DrTinycat
So messed up...	LovelyJubb...	Replies:10 Views: 217	Jun 08, 2011 03:29:03 PM Re: So messed up... By: LovelyJubb...
'Trying' to kiss somebody - cheating?	Heavy-Wing...	Replies:34 Views: 426	Jun 08, 2011 03:12:37 PM Re: 'Trying' to kiss somebody - cheating? By: annieapple...
Going out with "married" man: will he leave her for me?	ananas8	Replies:39 Views: 815	Jun 08, 2011 03:01:53 PM Re: Going out with By: dutch25
Getting asked out ...	elvis_dude	Replies:2 Views: 128	Jun 08, 2011 12:07:39 PM Re: Getting asked out ... By: Inner_City...
How can I feel okay about my boyfriend going to Vegas??	jeeys	Replies:26 Views: 432	Jun 08, 2011 11:31:21 AM Re: How can I feel okay about my boyfriend going to Vegas?? By: DrTinycat
How can I feel okay about my boyfriend going to Vegas??	jeeys	Replies:26 Views: 434	Jun 08, 2011 11:31:21 AM Re: How can I feel okay about my boyfriend going to Vegas?? By: DrTinycat
A poor mans 21st..(	MissJazzDa...	Replies:8 Views: 216	Jun 08, 2011 11:10:32 AM Re: A poor mans 21st..( By: Fearless_x
It's a secret!	annieapple...	Replies:14 Views: 468	Jun 08, 2011 11:03:43 AM Re: It's a secret! By: Red_Sorsha
Should I be honest or diplomatic, or a wee bit of both?	Red_Sorsha	Replies:9 Views: 316	Jun 08, 2011 10:54:14 AM Re: Should I be honest or diplomatic, or a wee bit of both? By: Red_Sorsha
Ex Boyfriend..... should we get back together??	jdmjordan	Replies:11 Views: 217	Jun 08, 2011 09:46:29 AM Re: Ex Boyfriend..... should we get back together?? By: DrTinycat
Insecure about technique	IrishRose3...	Replies:8 Views: 376	Jun 07, 2011 11:21:55 PM Re: Insecure about technique By: IrishRose3...
feeling a bit used	viennetta	Replies:3 Views: 140	Jun 07, 2011 10:23:58 PM Re: feeling a bit used By: Paynebynam...
Is it inconsiderate or not?	BabyBonny	Replies:9 Views: 282	Jun 07, 2011 09:06:29 PM Re: Is it inconsiderate or not?

the usual facebook paranoia	Abbibee	Replies:26 Views: 375	By: size12_and... Jun 07, 2011 09:05:35 PM Re: the usual facebook paranoia By: Fearless_x
found out he's on a dating website, create an "alias" - he asked me/her out! how to break it to h...	BRinyblond...	Replies:56 Views: 1136	Jun 07, 2011 06:44:43 PM Re: found out he's on a dating website, create an By: oicurmt Jun 07, 2011 06:38:18 PM
I'm being daft, help! How can I stop thinking like this?	elliebelle...	Replies:9 Views: 272	Re: I'm being daft, help! How can I stop thinking like this? By: EarthBat Jun 07, 2011 06:17:12 PM
Talking about the past...	_Ripcurl_	Replies:25 Views: 502	Re: Talking about the past... By: smileychic... Jun 07, 2011 05:43:46 PM
Domestic violence by women against men	OMGStylish	Replies:8 Views: 151	Re: Domestic violence by women against men By: discoshoes Jun 07, 2011 04:24:08 PM
:(	couchiex3	Replies:16 Views: 198	Re: :( By: couchiex3 Jun 07, 2011 03:10:44 PM
Kissing other people when in a relationship.	x-Helen-x	Replies:66 Views: 1361	Re: Kissing other people when in a relationship. By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 07, 2011 03:09:32 PM
guy driving me crazy, wont leave me the hell alone! :(	xXAlonex	Replies:14 Views: 427	Re: guy driving me crazy, wont leave me the hell alone! :( By: nosiph0123 Jun 07, 2011 03:08:37 PM
had my date, now what!	sexyminx23...	Replies:8 Views: 230	Re: had my date, now what! By: brunettexb... Jun 07, 2011 02:47:42 PM
Help, relationship advice need! Don't know where my life is going...	luckyx4	Replies:4 Views: 112	Re: Help, relationship advice need! Don't know where my life is going... By: LittleGirl... Jun 07, 2011 02:46:19 PM
blokes and their emotions	jobiuk	Replies:6 Views: 280	Re: blokes and their emotions By: brunettexb... Jun 07, 2011 11:07:07 AM
seriously pissed and confused, maybe embarrassed.	sictransit...	Replies:18 Views: 372	Re: seriously pissed and confused, maybe embarrassed. By: Danax2 Jun 07, 2011 10:35:00 AM
is once a cheat.. always a cheat?	shygirl62	Replies:25 Views: 411	Re: is once a cheat.. always a cheat? By: CherryAcid Jun 07, 2011 12:04:23 AM
I can't seem to get over my ex	lilmissblo...	Replies:2 Views: 50	Re: I can't seem to get over my ex By: lilmissblo... Jun 06, 2011 10:47:00 PM
How much is enough...?	-JellyBell...	Replies:20 Views: 404	Re: How much is enough...? By: nuttymare Jun 06, 2011 10:00:48 PM
am I over - reacting?	Jordylumps...	Replies:15 Views: 278	Re: am I over - reacting? By: MissJazzDa... Jun 06, 2011 09:06:02 PM
BIG CONFUSION	Molly_X	Replies:7 Views: 177	Re: BIG CONFUSION By: bone_machi... Jun 06, 2011 07:59:37 PM
First date??	AngelBabex...	Replies:0 Views: 54	First date?? By: AngelBabex... Jun 06, 2011 07:44:15 PM
Getting Increasingly Frustrated	BabyBonny	Replies:9 Views: 380	Re: Getting Increasingly Frustrated By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 06, 2011 06:35:20 PM
Feel like I've wasted my life	MP1988	Replies:6 Views: 280	Re: Feel like I've wasted my life By: size12_and... Jun 06, 2011 06:28:46 PM
Should I be honest or diplomatic, or a wee bit of	Red_Sorsha	Replies:0	Jun 06, 2011 06:28:46 PM

both?		Views: 26	Should I be honest or diplomatic, or a wee bit of both? By: Red_Sorsha Jun 06, 2011 06:27:58 PM
Him texting other girls. Help! What to do?	Earth_ange...	Replies:24 Views: 349	Re: Him texting other girls. Help! What to do? By: sminkypink... Jun 06, 2011 06:27:58 PM
Him texting other girls. Help! What to do?	Earth_ange...	Replies:24 Views: 349	Re: Him texting other girls. Help! What to do? By: sminkypink... Jun 06, 2011 05:04:29 PM
do you believe in fate?	1990	Replies:29 Views: 377	Re: do you believe in fate? By: Charlottie... Jun 06, 2011 04:44:16 PM
Ladies - Which of these two guys would you choose, and why?	stillhere2	Replies:35 Views: 664	Re: Ladies - Which of these two guys would you choose, and why? By: Fearless_x Jun 06, 2011 01:56:37 PM
She tried it on!	nikki_isme	Replies:12 Views: 473	Re: She tried it on! By: smithy25 Jun 06, 2011 01:14:33 PM
Working Hard	Blondieeuk...	Replies:8 Views: 123	Re: Working Hard By: AbsintheFa... Jun 06, 2011 12:47:51 PM
How to handle this?	oicurmt	Replies:10 Views: 163	Re: How to handle this? By: oicurmt Jun 06, 2011 12:20:03 PM
Signs of cheating	TuttiFruit...	Replies:3 Views: 137	Re: Signs of cheating By: sexyminx23... Jun 06, 2011 12:18:10 PM
Husband phoned chat line	MrsRW	Replies:16 Views: 513	Re: Husband phoned chat line By: sexyminx23... Jun 06, 2011 12:02:16 PM
random bloke	natalie_no...	Replies:1 Views: 75	Re: random bloke By: Sparklexxx... Jun 06, 2011 11:35:05 AM
Waiting for me to ask him or just not interested?	jkent9	Replies:15 Views: 395	Re: Waiting for me to ask him or just not interested? By: LittleGirl... Jun 06, 2011 10:51:25 AM
When is this Northern meet?	Jaguar_Ski...	Replies:0 Views: 32	When is this Northern meet? By: Jaguar_Ski... Jun 06, 2011 10:33:38 AM
Confused	Traveljunk...	Replies:7 Views: 249	Re: Confused By: abaker22 Jun 06, 2011 08:45:55 AM
GRRRRRRR	Sparklexxx...	Replies:2 Views: 151	Re: GRRRRRRR By: Sparklexxx... Jun 05, 2011 11:34:32 PM
Seeing an ex on a date!	BethanyBoo...	Replies:7 Views: 264	Re: Seeing an ex on a date! By: BethanyBoo... Jun 05, 2011 10:57:30 PM
The Mother!	_NothernGe...	Replies:2 Views: 144	Re: The Mother! By: dutch25 Jun 05, 2011 10:55:52 PM
How to pre empt the jealousy???	Weeyin87	Replies:8 Views: 184	Re: How to pre empt the jealousy??? By: strawberry... Jun 05, 2011 10:44:34 PM
Lover or Friend?	Primauk5	Replies:3 Views: 189	Re: Lover or Friend? By: Jo_used_to... Jun 05, 2011 10:38:38 PM
Being dumped..what next?	LA2345	Replies:5 Views: 190	Re: Being dumped..what next? By: Jo_used_to... Jun 05, 2011 10:37:20 PM
Falling in love "Is hard on the knees"	Wonder_Wal...	Replies:0 Views: 93	Falling in love "Is hard on the knees" By: Wonder_Wal... Jun 05, 2011 10:26:10 PM
I think you's will be proud!	fresh_face	Replies:5	Jun 05, 2011 10:26:10 PM

		Views: 212	Re: I think you's will be proud! By: Jo_used_to... Jun 05, 2011 10:21:20 PM
friends	stormynigh...	Replies:4 Views: 76	Re: friends By: sunshine23... Jun 05, 2011 09:26:28 PM
How to trust again?	Ashlee_Lou	Replies:28 Views: 231	Re: How to trust again? By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 05, 2011 09:02:58 PM
Mother in law thinks we're all going to hell!	discoshoes	Replies:15 Views: 493	Re: Mother in law thinks we're all going to hell! By: What_about... Jun 05, 2011 07:03:13 PM
Suddenly my bf wants time to think - how to deal with it?	lena_29_	Replies:4 Views: 207	Re: Suddenly my bf wants time to think - how to deal with it? By: brunettexb... Jun 05, 2011 06:50:56 PM
Is it Love ?	JellyBeans...	Replies:6 Views: 164	Re: Is it Love ? By: AngelBabex... Jun 05, 2011 06:46:24 PM
We were on a break!	-JellyBell...	Replies:12 Views: 264	Re: We were on a break! By: emma1988xx... Jun 05, 2011 05:02:40 PM
Do you want your story in Cosmo? Spill the beans for our Confessions Page!!	mojo43	Replies:4 Views: 474	Re: Do you want your story in Cosmo? Spill the beans for our Confessions Page!! By: Velouria_ Jun 05, 2011 04:30:34 PM
does he still like his ex?	kay1059209	Replies:12 Views: 267	Re: does he still like his ex? By: babycakesD Jun 05, 2011 04:05:53 PM
what on earth happened?	Jo-le-Bo	Replies:3 Views: 204	Re: what on earth happened? By: EmmyXsnowf... Jun 05, 2011 02:54:55 PM
Am I being played?	Unspeakabl...	Replies:43 Views: 575	Re: Am I being played? By: xxblondiel... Jun 05, 2011 12:45:44 PM
Is he to keen??	sunshine23...	Replies:1 Views: 110	Re: Is he to keen?? By: nannarr Jun 05, 2011 10:51:05 AM
Is he losing interest or am I reading too much into things?	pink_nails	Replies:4 Views: 163	Re: Is he losing interest or am I reading too much into things? By: kimpossibl... Jun 05, 2011 10:39:14 AM
My best friend :(	brokenwing...	Replies:1 Views: 140	Re: My best friend :( By: kimpossibl... Jun 05, 2011 10:20:06 AM
Should I contact him?	thiscouldb...	Replies:8 Views: 173	Re: Should I contact him? By: thiscouldb... Jun 05, 2011 02:18:47 AM
im in love with housemate, HELP!	berry29	Replies:6 Views: 181	Re: im in love with housemate, HELP! By: smilingswe... Jun 05, 2011 01:14:46 AM
My boyfriend just sent me a text that was meant for someone else...	Roo_Roo_4_...	Replies:198 Views: 4085	Re: My boyfriend just sent me a text that was meant for someone else... By: littleoran... Jun 04, 2011 11:41:42 PM
Which female celebs do your OH's fancy?	ooh-la-la	Replies:11 Views: 143	Re: Which female celebs do your OH's fancy? By: AngelWithA... Jun 04, 2011 10:45:57 PM
Boyfriend went on escort websites!	Loopylou7	Replies:19 Views: 365	Re: Boyfriend went on escort websites! By: SarahPie21 Jun 04, 2011 10:08:19 PM
Boyfriend problems( Oh the joys!-_-)	Gaby_3	Replies:1 Views: 125	Re: Boyfriend problems( Oh the joys!-_-) By: Oblongchee... Jun 04, 2011 09:50:08 PM
Is it too late?	lilidhx	Replies:13 Views: 153	Re: Is it too late? By: lilidhx

feels like forever	jobiuk	Replies:4 Views: 197	Jun 04, 2011 09:06:09 PM Re: feels like forever By: discoshoes
My boyfriends started going out more often with his work mates more often some of them being girl...	naomibabyy	Replies:6 Views: 148	Jun 04, 2011 07:11:24 PM Re: My boyfriends started going out more often with his work mates more often some of them being ... By: EmmyXsnowf...
got my date tomorrow....soooo nervous!	sexyminx23...	Replies:1 Views: 92	Jun 04, 2011 05:11:48 PM Re: got my date tomorrow....soooo nervous! By: BethanyBoo...
Issue with flatmate- please help!	Mulanloves...	Replies:34 Views: 382	Jun 04, 2011 05:00:16 PM Re: Issue with flatmate- please help! By: Mulanloves...
Break up at 29 - any advice?	hohouk1	Replies:6 Views: 428	Jun 04, 2011 11:26:27 AM Re: Break up at 29 - any advice? By: gina__
Which female celebs do your OH's fancy?	ooh-la-la	Replies:11 Views: 144	Jun 04, 2011 11:41:42 PM Re: Which female celebs do your OH's fancy? By: AngelWithA...
Boyfriend went on escort websites!	Loopylou7	Replies:19 Views: 367	Jun 04, 2011 10:45:57 PM Re: Boyfriend went on escort websites! By: SarahPie21
Boyfriend problems( Oh the joys!-_-)	Gaby_3	Replies:1 Views: 126	Jun 04, 2011 10:08:19 PM Re: Boyfriend problems( Oh the joys!-_-) By: Oblongchee...
Is it too late?	lilidhx	Replies:13 Views: 154	Jun 04, 2011 09:50:08 PM Re: Is it too late? By: lilidhx
feels like forever	jobiuk	Replies:4 Views: 198	Jun 04, 2011 09:06:09 PM Re: feels like forever By: discoshoes
My boyfriends started going out more often with his work mates more often some of them being girl...	naomibabyy	Replies:6 Views: 149	Jun 04, 2011 07:11:24 PM Re: My boyfriends started going out more often with his work mates more often some of them being ... By: EmmyXsnowf...
got my date tomorrow....soooo nervous!	sexyminx23...	Replies:1 Views: 93	Jun 04, 2011 05:11:48 PM Re: got my date tomorrow....soooo nervous! By: BethanyBoo...
Issue with flatmate- please help!	Mulanloves...	Replies:34 Views: 387	Jun 04, 2011 05:00:16 PM Re: Issue with flatmate- please help! By: Mulanloves...
Break up at 29 - any advice?	hohouk1	Replies:6 Views: 430	Jun 04, 2011 11:26:27 AM Re: Break up at 29 - any advice? By: gina__
What would you do?	Smartieeee6...	Replies:9 Views: 228	Jun 04, 2011 11:17:47 AM Re: What would you do? By: gina__
once a cheater always a cheater?	smithy25	Replies:3 Views: 131	Jun 04, 2011 08:27:40 AM Re: once a cheater always a cheater? By: missluella
Is this guy 'into' me or not - opinions needed!	Confuzzled...	Replies:3 Views: 157	Jun 03, 2011 11:07:39 PM Re: Is this guy 'into' me or not - opinions needed! By: Sirona_x
Which One?	Trolleyed	Replies:6 Views: 160	Jun 03, 2011 10:53:24 PM Re: Which One? By: Trolleyed
POF....	x-KK88-x	Replies:19 Views: 268	Jun 03, 2011 09:42:43 PM Re: POF.... By: x-KK88-x
Keeping bits and bobs from exes....	forgetmeno...	Replies:2 Views: 112	Jun 03, 2011 09:39:33 PM Re: Keeping bits and bobs from exes.... By: Mary_Sue
Tell me about.....	kimpossibl...	Replies:36 Views: 439	Jun 03, 2011 09:24:23 PM Re: Tell me about.....

Imaginary boyfriend	What_about...	Replies:61 Views: 822	By: Saskia13 Jun 03, 2011 08:23:00 PM Re: Imaginary boyfriend By: _Boosh_
Massive Dilemma	EmmiC	Replies:6 Views: 221	Jun 03, 2011 05:21:06 PM Re: Massive Dilemma By: summer-tea
Does this girl like me?	Christophe...	Replies:6 Views: 149	Jun 03, 2011 05:13:24 PM Re: Does this girl like me? By: Christophe...
My Ideal Best Friend...	AbsintheFa...	Replies:8 Views: 104	Jun 03, 2011 05:08:32 PM Re: My Ideal Best Friend... By: kimpossibl...
Ex wants to meet up	Pink_Sunsh...	Replies:2 Views: 93	Jun 03, 2011 05:05:43 PM Re: Ex wants to meet up By: sexyminx23...
Birthday Pressie Dilema	-JellyBell...	Replies:8 Views: 109	Jun 03, 2011 03:37:53 PM Re: Birthday Pressie Dilema By: jo-ho
Why is everything I do/say/think wrong these days??	jo-ho	Replies:9 Views: 220	Jun 03, 2011 02:27:49 PM Re: Why is everything I do/say/think wrong these days?? By: jo-ho
My new relationship... in the bedroom!	CanYouBeMy...	Replies:5 Views: 249	Jun 03, 2011 01:13:41 PM Re: My new relationship... in the bedroom! By: CanYouBeMy...
best friend??	Blackberry...	Replies:2 Views: 81	Jun 03, 2011 12:50:34 PM Re: best friend?? By: Jo_used_to...
My OH and his girl mate...AGAIN *sigh*	Chica_Gale...	Replies:60 Views: 890	Jun 03, 2011 11:26:55 AM Re: My OH and his girl mate...AGAIN *sigh* By: doyoulikep...
Jealousy	Lady-Jones	Replies:7 Views: 184	Jun 03, 2011 11:25:42 AM Re: Jealousy By: gina__
Boyfriend not in love after 2 years...	troubled2	Replies:15 Views: 454	Jun 03, 2011 10:43:08 AM Re: Boyfriend not in love after 2 years... By: slowdancu...
Bad start to the day..	-JellyBell...	Replies:7 Views: 151	Jun 03, 2011 10:07:46 AM Re: Bad start to the day.. By: -JellyBell...
Helppp! I always over think :(	xtinkerbel...	Replies:9 Views: 357	Jun 03, 2011 09:32:10 AM Re: Helppp! I always over think :( By: xxkirstyd
Exes that need to be slapped....	Sirona_x	Replies:15 Views: 265	Jun 03, 2011 09:08:21 AM Re: Exes that need to be slapped.... By: CyberCandy...
Should I text him?	_Kally_	Replies:5 Views: 219	Jun 02, 2011 10:23:09 PM Re: Should I text him? By: _Kally_
Admittedly, I am crap at this!	clarebear_...	Replies:25 Views: 560	Jun 02, 2011 08:56:13 PM Re: Admittedly, I am crap at this! By: Shini7k
Damn wish I had more confidence..	AngelBabex...	Replies:19 Views: 651	Jun 02, 2011 07:32:34 PM Re: Damn wish I had more confidence.. By: AngelBabex...
Facebook	Yourminieg...	Replies:26 Views: 602	Jun 02, 2011 06:36:40 PM Re: Facebook By: barbie_86
Some sensible ladies please knock some sense in to me..	strawberry...	Replies:25 Views: 410	Jun 02, 2011 05:36:46 PM Re: Some sensible ladies please knock some sense in to me.. By: strawberry...
Relationship doubts	annieapple...	Replies:27 Views: 716	Jun 02, 2011 05:08:51 PM Re: Relationship doubts By: MessalinaL...

Perfect Boyfriend, No mates!	xLindseyxu...	Replies:38 Views: 698	Jun 02, 2011 04:48:48 PM Re: Perfect Boyfriend, No mates! By: fresh_face
My boyfriend the arse has fallen out with me :(	Robyn_US	Replies:25 Views: 430	Jun 02, 2011 03:28:00 PM Re: My boyfriend the arse has fallen out with me :( By: -JellyBell...
Best friend v. Boyfriend	lucyinthea...	Replies:7 Views: 261	Jun 02, 2011 02:43:04 PM Re: Best friend v. Boyfriend By: CorleUK
degree complete! now what? :(	sminkypink...	Replies:16 Views: 303	Jun 02, 2011 01:26:47 PM Re: degree complete! now what? :( By: NickyLou20
PLEASE HELP! -- Flirting or just my imagination?	ConfusedRU...	Replies:12 Views: 354	Jun 02, 2011 12:48:01 PM Re: PLEASE HELP! -- Flirting or just my imagination? By: EmmyXsnowf...
ADVICE NEEDED	lacey105	Replies:4 Views: 163	Jun 01, 2011 11:48:03 PM Re: ADVICE NEEDED By: Bethmate
How do I know if my boyfriend is cheating.....?	sarah24xxx	Replies:1 Views: 128	Jun 01, 2011 11:18:27 PM Re: How do I know if my boyfriend is cheating.....? By: lonelyMerm...
Is anyone else just totally fed up?	emma24uk2	Replies:1 Views: 109	Jun 01, 2011 10:11:12 PM Re: Is anyone else just totally fed up? By: Yourminieg...
Creating the problem myself but can't fix it	Obiwan_Jen...	Replies:14 Views: 278	Jun 01, 2011 08:17:56 PM Re: Creating the problem myself but can't fix it By: Obiwan_Jen...
A twist on the "other woman" situation :s	Mary_Sue	Replies:51 Views: 970	Jun 01, 2011 08:17:55 PM Re: A twist on the By: Kelathyn
What's better?	annieapple...	Replies:22 Views: 376	Jun 01, 2011 07:39:51 PM Re: What's better? By: Scotty-gir...
Rant about the ex - staying friends?	Kelathyn	Replies:8 Views: 155	Jun 01, 2011 07:39:47 PM Re: Rant about the ex - staying friends? By: PixieDust_
Says he loves me, but doesn't show it often.	Clo_1	Replies:12 Views: 316	Jun 01, 2011 04:25:54 PM Re: Says he loves me, but doesn't show it often. By: Clo_1
One Year Anniversary Tips	jellybean-...	Replies:4 Views: 96	Jun 01, 2011 02:31:45 PM Re: One Year Anniversary Tips By: LittleGirl...
Flirting - fight or flight?	Blondie25u...	Replies:8 Views: 172	Jun 01, 2011 11:32:31 AM Re: Flirting - fight or flight? By: ClaireBeeu...
weddings - oh, the horror	jobiuk	Replies:3 Views: 236	Jun 01, 2011 11:14:02 AM Re: weddings - oh, the horror By: TuttiFruit...
Relationships Webchat is Today (June 1)	Webby_webm...	Replies:0 Views: 36	Jun 01, 2011 09:47:37 AM Relationships Webchat is Today (June 1) By: Webby_webm...
how do i know if he is interested?	sexyminx23...	Replies:2 Views: 102	Jun 01, 2011 12:50:45 AM Re: how do i know if he is interested? By: gracie-e
Is he interested? is he playing games? what type of person is he?	ScarlettLN	Replies:12 Views: 248	May 31, 2011 11:41:14 PM Re: Is he interested? is he playing games? what type of person is he? By: blonde_bar...
Nice bf day	sammy1990u...	Replies:15 Views: 186	May 31, 2011 11:25:56 PM Re: Nice bf day By: jo-ho
Scared + Reluctant	xblondiebo...	Replies:7 Views: 255	May 31, 2011 11:24:16 PM Re: Scared + Reluctant By: jo-ho



I don't know where it went wrong...	xparadisep...	Replies:4 Views: 195	May 31, 2011 08:24:12 PM Re: I don't know where it went wrong... By: xparadisep...
Will he cheat on me out in magaluf?	Wanna_Make...	Replies:44 Views: 1063	May 31, 2011 07:38:57 PM Re: Will he cheat on me out in magaluf? By: ooh-la-la
am i being ignored or am i worrying?	strawberry...	Replies:40 Views: 385	May 31, 2011 06:59:58 PM Re: am i being ignored or am i worrying? By: strawberry...
Is your boyfriend in a style rut?	kromeromay	Replies:18 Views: 188	May 31, 2011 06:52:59 PM Re: Is your boyfriend in a style rut? By: Natboosh
Dilemma with mother..	LuckyGaluk	Replies:8 Views: 220	May 31, 2011 06:12:07 PM Re: Dilemma with mother.. By: AngryChees...
Worst way to be dumped?	_sassysass...	Replies:54 Views: 673	May 31, 2011 04:54:03 PM Re: Worst way to be dumped? By: Leah_BabyX
Boyfriend has had strange requests during sex	Nia-p-j-19...	Replies:28 Views: 652	May 31, 2011 04:21:07 PM Re: Boyfriend has had strange requests during sex By: DrTinycat
Am I being unreasonable?	Canyoufeel...	Replies:7 Views: 135	May 31, 2011 04:17:01 PM Re: Am I being unreasonable? By: Scotty-gir...
Don't understand why everything has changed...	pink_nails	Replies:3 Views: 128	May 31, 2011 03:52:58 PM Re: Don't understand why everything has changed... By: Fearless_x
Moving out	laurieee	Replies:21 Views: 422	May 31, 2011 01:53:43 PM Re: Moving out By: MelonFrog
The drunk boyfriend.	fallensymm...	Replies:4 Views: 194	May 31, 2011 01:51:54 PM Re: The drunk boyfriend. By: I-Like-Can...
Boyfriend says he doesn't love me as much as he used to....advice??!	Kate522	Replies:9 Views: 291	May 31, 2011 01:00:00 PM Re: Boyfriend says he doesn't love me as much as he used to....advice??! By: aleesha-lo...
??	Doll_Face_...	Replies:2 Views: 88	May 31, 2011 11:54:43 AM Re: ?? By: Miss_hh31
Happy thread!!	Miss_hh31	Replies:7 Views: 80	May 31, 2011 11:38:00 AM Re: Happy thread!! By: brighteyes...
love changes?	AbbieVA	Replies:10 Views: 247	May 31, 2011 10:13:04 AM Re: love changes? By: AbbieVA
What is a spark and do you need one?	Mulanloves...	Replies:9 Views: 169	May 31, 2011 12:52:13 AM Re: What is a spark and do you need one? By: Zeta-
date with my ex...!!!!	sexyminx23...	Replies:19 Views: 181	May 30, 2011 11:21:24 PM Re: date with my ex...!!!! By: Shini7k
LDR - What to do!	gp_love	Replies:1 Views: 63	May 30, 2011 09:32:56 PM Re: LDR - What to do! By: Wanna_Make...
Me and my mum	brokenwing...	Replies:3 Views: 87	May 30, 2011 09:16:58 PM Re: Me and my mum By: brokenwing...
Difficult Friend Dilemma	I-Like-Can...	Replies:17 Views: 205	May 30, 2011 08:01:33 PM Re: Difficult Friend Dilemma By: summer-tea
Work Colleague/facebook???	fallenstar...	Replies:11 Views: 186	May 30, 2011 07:14:51 PM Re: Work Colleague/facebook??? By: AngryChees...
I was a marry bum	sazzy86	Replies:1	May 30, 2011 06:53:00 PM

I was a marry bum	sazzy86	Views: 92 Replies:0 Views: 27	Re: I was a marry bum By: sazzy86 May 30, 2011 06:50:24 PM I was a marry bum By: sazzy86 May 30, 2011 05:54:48 PM
How do I tell him?	littlemons...	Replies:3 Views: 150	Re: How do I tell him? By: Acorn_Jim May 30, 2011 05:09:17 PM
am i getting over this>	fresh_face	Replies:83 Views: 864	Re: am i getting over this> By: fresh_face May 30, 2011 04:32:05 PM
A little bit of reassurance....	PennyElle	Replies:3 Views: 131	Re: A little bit of reassurance.... By: PennyElle May 30, 2011 04:27:03 PM
Falling for someone new...but my ex refuses to move on =[	x-Jess-x	Replies:19 Views: 1696	Re: Falling for someone new...but my ex refuses to move on =[ By: BK201 May 30, 2011 04:03:07 PM
Which category do you fall into?	Chica_Gale...	Replies:9 Views: 209	Re: Which category do you fall into? By: little_one... May 30, 2011 03:54:21 PM
should i expect to hear from him?	CherriePie...	Replies:38 Views: 462	Re: should i expect to hear from him? By: CherriePie... May 30, 2011 01:09:48 PM
is it a date? nervous, help!	xXAlexuk	Replies:1 Views: 102	Re: is it a date? nervous, help! By: Inner_City... May 30, 2011 12:55:43 PM
A horrible day - bf being an arse	sazzy86	Replies:72 Views: 1423	Re: A horrible day - bf being an arse By: hulahoop84... May 30, 2011 12:50:52 PM
When b*tches and other creeps get involved and cause trouble..	mimi_scorp...	Replies:2 Views: 197	Re: When b*tches and other creeps get involved and cause trouble.. By: Smoooch May 30, 2011 10:30:01 AM
Girlfriend problem - holiday :)	Herzeleid2...	Replies:79 Views: 1464	Re: Girlfriend problem - holiday :) By: little_one... May 30, 2011 12:05:29 AM
Cheating :/	leverano	Replies:9 Views: 303	Re: Cheating :/ By: leverano May 29, 2011 10:59:57 PM
Still not over her?	frogmarche...	Replies:35 Views: 757	Re: Still not over her? By: CheekyVimt... May 29, 2011 10:37:00 PM
Starting to feel like I should apologise for being his friend...	Charlottie...	Replies:10 Views: 307	Re: Starting to feel like I should apologise for being his friend... By: Charlottie... May 29, 2011 10:25:43 PM
I thought it may be easier here.	Wonder_Wal...	Replies:12 Views: 243	Re: I thought it may be easier here. By: -Polly- May 29, 2011 09:59:52 PM
Would you be civil with your ex??	Smartieeee6...	Replies:6 Views: 153	Re: Would you be civil with your ex?? By: ConfusedRU... May 29, 2011 09:32:15 PM
Help for an oldie	Sparklexxx...	Replies:5 Views: 158	Re: Help for an oldie By: Sparklexxx... May 29, 2011 08:19:06 PM
Ladies, i need man help!	raebil	Replies:9 Views: 171	Re: Ladies, i need man help! By: raebil May 29, 2011 07:45:31 PM
Dreaming about other men?	sweetrelea...	Replies:12 Views: 216	Re: Dreaming about other men? By: Smoooch May 29, 2011 05:55:55 PM
Dumping Etiquette 2011	Gummybearu...	Replies:12 Views: 332	Re: Dumping Etiquette 2011 By: jobiuk May 29, 2011 01:05:06 PM
shouldn't have...	pixi127	Replies:3	

		Views: 216	Re: shouldn't have... By: PeachyPeti... May 29, 2011 12:17:00 PM
Think I've may have done something stupid...	caterpiIla...	Replies:7 Views: 405	Re: Think I've may have done something stupid... By: SkyHighHee... May 29, 2011 01:54:31 AM
Romantic Gestures.	chocolatXx	Replies:8 Views: 384	Re: Romantic Gestures. By: chocolatXx May 29, 2011 12:11:50 AM
My Boyfriend doesn't trust me!?!	xxkirstyd	Replies:27 Views: 643	Re: My Boyfriend doesn't trust me!?! By: AngryChees... May 28, 2011 09:54:27 PM
Buying him stuff	Nauticalbu...	Replies:5 Views: 133	Re: Buying him stuff By: Firinne May 28, 2011 09:43:30 PM
Being looked after	The_rits	Replies:42 Views: 735	Re: Being looked after By: CatFacey May 28, 2011 09:02:39 PM
Insecure..	Kylera7	Replies:4 Views: 198	Re: Insecure.. By: Heavy-Wing... May 28, 2011 05:55:19 PM
dont know how i feel :(	misschocoh...	Replies:8 Views: 412	Re: dont know how i feel :( By: Lilah21 May 28, 2011 04:38:00 PM
Rumination	serena4000...	Replies:1 Views: 97	Re: Rumination By: annieapple... May 28, 2011 03:28:25 PM
Gut vs. Friends	Angelusesg...	Replies:7 Views: 162	Re: Gut vs. Friends By: chicauk4 May 28, 2011 02:15:28 PM
Need Advice: 'Sort of LDR' is driving me crazy	Lucyer	Replies:2 Views: 166	Re: Need Advice: 'Sort of LDR' is driving me crazy By: Faustus_ May 28, 2011 02:08:14 PM
almost cried???????	jobiuk	Replies:4 Views: 347	Re: almost cried??????? By: jobiuk May 28, 2011 01:56:52 PM
1st anniversary idea help!	Amber_193	Replies:2 Views: 74	Re: 1st anniversary idea help! By: Jo_used_to... May 28, 2011 01:30:17 PM
I need some advice :(	captaincru...	Replies:11 Views: 154	Re: I need some advice :( By: BabyBonny May 28, 2011 10:42:19 AM
flat mates!?!	starsabrin...	Replies:2 Views: 158	Re: flat mates!?! By: doyoulikep... May 28, 2011 08:17:26 AM
Advice needed please..	Kylera7	Replies:7 Views: 240	Re: Advice needed please.. By: CyberCandy... May 28, 2011 08:10:22 AM
I dont think she loves me anymore.	Jwoolins	Replies:4 Views: 228	Re: I dont think she loves me anymore. By: CyberCandy... May 27, 2011 11:35:20 PM
feeling let down	Saphireuk1	Replies:2 Views: 107	Re: feeling let down By: sammy1990u... May 27, 2011 08:55:37 PM
Having strict boundaries VS being controlling	annieapple...	Replies:48 Views: 736	Re: Having strict boundaries VS being controlling By: clarebear_... May 27, 2011 08:08:08 PM
long distance dilema	jessicalbe...	Replies:8 Views: 161	Re: long distance dilema By: Pink_Flowe... May 27, 2011 06:56:50 PM
I know...	BabyBonny	Replies:10 Views: 213	Re: I know... By: Chica_Gale... May 27, 2011 06:30:05 PM
A woman's role	The_rits	Replies:24 Views: 431	Re: A woman's role By: slowdancu...

Would really like a second opinion on this - best friend stuff	GlitterFre...	Replies:3 Views: 122	May 27, 2011 06:25:09 PM Re: Would really like a second opinion on this - best friend stuff By: kimpossibl...
Would you be bothered if...	Blind_Melo...	Replies:31 Views: 470	May 27, 2011 05:20:06 PM Re: Would you be bothered if... By: Sexy_Sarah...
Please help, really confused.	CiaoBella_...	Replies:15 Views: 231	May 27, 2011 02:21:59 PM Re: Please help, really confused. By: LilMoneyBa...
I fancy this guy but lack the confidence	Amelia1luk	Replies:6 Views: 1033	May 27, 2011 11:05:18 AM Re: I fancy this guy but lack the confidence By: Sparklexxx...
meeting up old friends`	Sparklexxx...	Replies:0 Views: 63	May 27, 2011 09:59:28 AM meeting up old friends` By: Sparklexxx...
do men get butterflies?	nuttymare	Replies:35 Views: 871	May 27, 2011 08:33:13 AM Re: do men get butterflies? By: Fearless_x
Boyfriend Dilemma	Kate522	Replies:5 Views: 236	May 26, 2011 11:45:33 PM Re: Boyfriend Dilemma By: Jo_used_to...
How do I ask him?	decemberhe...	Replies:3 Views: 174	May 26, 2011 11:37:06 PM Re: How do I ask him? By: Jo_used_to...
Feeling sh**e and need advice	lady_super...	Replies:17 Views: 472	May 26, 2011 08:49:14 PM Re: Feeling sh**e and need advice By: Shini7k
...I caught my boyfriend with a prostitute...	hopeday13	Replies:15 Views: 505	May 26, 2011 08:35:08 PM Re: ...I caught my boyfriend with a prostitute... By: Rosie_Posi...
What to say to her...	blonde_bar...	Replies:1 Views: 108	May 26, 2011 08:35:05 PM Re: What to say to her... By: Nauticalbu...
Has his feelings changed?	Nadeel	Replies:3 Views: 135	May 26, 2011 07:15:30 PM Re: Has his feelings changed? By: lauriee
whats the secret?	-louise-	Replies:10 Views: 311	May 26, 2011 05:51:04 PM Re: whats the secret? By: _fairyhand...
Does it Annoy You...	AbsintheFa...	Replies:30 Views: 652	May 26, 2011 04:50:38 PM Re: Does it Annoy You... By: Screamager
hi	Roo_Roo_4_...	Replies:18 Views: 362	May 26, 2011 03:35:49 PM Re: hi By: Roo_Roo_4_...
...I caught my boyfriend with a prostitue...	hopeday13	Replies:23 Views: 469	May 26, 2011 02:09:26 PM Re: ...I caught my boyfriend with a prostitue... By: kool-chick...
When will I stop checking my phone	cannot_thi...	Replies:2 Views: 184	May 26, 2011 11:32:44 AM Re: When will I stop checking my phone By: Miss_Coutu...
Im Desperate please help!!	needhelp8	Replies:14 Views: 190	May 26, 2011 10:57:36 AM Re: Im Desperate please help!! By: sminkypink...
bad habits vs good habits	jo-ho	Replies:23 Views: 315	May 26, 2011 10:21:54 AM Re: bad habits vs good habits By: _sassysass...
Letting him know I'm interested?	clhoust	Replies:10 Views: 322	May 26, 2011 12:39:31 AM Re: Letting him know I'm interested? By: clhoust
Sexual frustration - He doesn't like when I innitiate...	Kari_LONDO...	Replies:15 Views: 329	May 25, 2011 11:49:37 PM Re: Sexual frustration - He doesn't like when I innitiate... By: jo-ho
Am i loosing him?	lovegamesx...	Replies:3	May 25, 2011 11:26:54 PM

		Views: 152	Re: Am i loosing him? By: lovegamesx... May 25, 2011 11:21:37 PM
Openness about money	Mary_Sue	Replies:19 Views: 330	Re: Openness about money By: Tiger_tra... May 25, 2011 11:18:22 PM
Your OH's weird crushes...	blonde_bar...	Replies:42 Views: 539	Re: Your OH's weird crushes... By: Voraciousl... May 25, 2011 10:42:05 PM
Birthday present for boyfriend	Becky_Efc2...	Replies:3 Views: 89	Re: Birthday present for boyfriend By: Amber_193 May 25, 2011 10:28:06 PM
Hmmm...	LittleCupc...	Replies:1 Views: 63	Re: Hmmm... By: crystalbet... May 25, 2011 09:48:23 PM
If you were to discover you were pregnant today...	CorleUK	Replies:237 Views: 2193	Re: If you were to discover you were pregnant today... By: discoshoes May 25, 2011 09:28:25 PM
Mums 50th	ChocolateF...	Replies:9 Views: 119	Re: Mums 50th By: jellybean-... May 25, 2011 09:02:44 PM
What do you class as cheating?	blonde_bar...	Replies:20 Views: 311	Re: What do you class as cheating? By: Ed_In_The_... May 25, 2011 08:16:55 PM
Was I overly harsh or childish?	_Joanna	Replies:26 Views: 458	Re: Was I overly harsh or childish? By: vanilla_sm... May 25, 2011 03:09:02 PM
SHOULD WE END THINGS OR IS THIS STUFF WE CAN WORK THROUGH?	greysanato...	Replies:29 Views: 405	Re: SHOULD WE END THINGS OR IS THIS STUFF WE CAN WORK THROUGH? By: Sweet_Chee... May 25, 2011 02:42:39 PM
I don't want the DRAMA!!	-JellyBell...	Replies:14 Views: 257	Re: I don't want the DRAMA!! By: -JellyBell... May 25, 2011 02:37:39 PM
update	jobiuk	Replies:2 Views: 104	Re: update By: jo-ho May 25, 2011 02:33:47 PM
Holiday/LDR Troubles :(	fallensymm...	Replies:2 Views: 125	Re: Holiday/LDR Troubles :( By: jobiuk May 25, 2011 12:39:37 PM
Is this being fair	Abbibee	Replies:10 Views: 346	Re: Is this being fair By: Abbibee May 25, 2011 12:00:37 PM
Boyfriend worries	s_reidy90	Replies:20 Views: 400	Re: Boyfriend worries By: Maximov May 25, 2011 11:37:06 AM
Cheating	beccaboosh	Replies:45 Views: 583	Re: Cheating By: Vee2 May 25, 2011 07:12:53 AM
Letting someone down gently	sugarbunuk	Replies:6 Views: 151	Re: Letting someone down gently By: sugarbunuk May 25, 2011 04:33:42 AM
she tried it on with my boyfriend	lthurlow	Replies:43 Views: 719	Re: she tried it on with my boyfriend By: GlitterFre... May 25, 2011 01:58:41 AM
Boyfriend Trouble	EmmiC	Replies:7 Views: 209	Re: Boyfriend Trouble By: Maximov May 24, 2011 11:17:38 PM
BIRTHDAY PREZZIE FOR NEW BLOKE	Sparklexxx...	Replies:12 Views: 147	Re: BIRTHDAY PREZZIE FOR NEW BLOKE By: Shini7k May 24, 2011 11:12:48 PM
Can't get over him.	Sirona_x	Replies:5 Views: 128	Re: Can't get over him. By: x_mills_x May 24, 2011 10:33:26 PM
my first love	NeedHimuk	Replies:1 Views: 80	Re: my first love

Is this being fair	Abbibee	Replies:10 Views: 347	By: emma1988xx... May 25, 2011 12:39:37 PM Re: Is this being fair By: Abbibee
Boyfriend worries	s_reidy90	Replies:20 Views: 401	May 25, 2011 12:00:37 PM Re: Boyfriend worries By: Maximov
Cheating	beccaboosh	Replies:45 Views: 586	May 25, 2011 11:37:06 AM Re: Cheating By: Vee2
Letting someone down gently	sugarbunuk	Replies:6 Views: 152	May 25, 2011 07:12:53 AM Re: Letting someone down gently By: sugarbunuk
she tried it on with my boyfriend	lthurlow	Replies:43 Views: 721	May 25, 2011 04:33:42 AM Re: she tried it on with my boyfriend By: GlitterFre...
Boyfriend Trouble	EmmiC	Replies:7 Views: 210	May 25, 2011 01:58:41 AM Re: Boyfriend Trouble By: Maximov
BIRTHDAY PREZZIE FOR NEW BLOKE	Sparklexxx...	Replies:12 Views: 148	May 24, 2011 11:17:38 PM Re: BIRTHDAY PREZZIE FOR NEW BLOKE By: Shini7k
Can't get over him.	Sirona_x	Replies:5 Views: 129	May 24, 2011 11:12:48 PM Re: Can't get over him. By: x_mills_x
my first love	NeedHimuk	Replies:1 Views: 81	May 24, 2011 10:33:26 PM Re: my first love By: emma1988xx...
Love Story straight from Eastenders...	barbieblon...	Replies:5 Views: 237	May 24, 2011 10:01:18 PM Re: Love Story straight from Eastenders... By: Lady-Jones
Mother In Law Nightmare	Sparkles_x	Replies:19 Views: 454	May 24, 2011 09:58:10 PM Re: Mother In Law Nightmare By: vanilla_sm...
how to pick yourself up...	strawberry...	Replies:1 Views: 95	May 24, 2011 09:45:39 PM Re: how to pick yourself up... By: PeachyPeti...
Why is she lying?	Jessia1201	Replies:12 Views: 353	May 24, 2011 08:40:25 PM Re: Why is she lying? By: Jessia1201
Is 24 too old?	thiscouldb...	Replies:0 Views: 220	May 24, 2011 08:09:15 PM Is 24 too old? By: thiscouldb...
Do you know any weirdos?	couchiex3	Replies:11 Views: 421	May 24, 2011 07:57:12 PM Re: Do you know any weirdos? By: _fairyhand...
have acheived 'girlfriend' status!	jobiuk	Replies:15 Views: 434	May 24, 2011 07:32:57 PM Re: have acheived 'girlfriend' status! By: Lady-Jones
Just a general pondering really.	Arlandria_...	Replies:18 Views: 534	May 24, 2011 07:28:10 PM Re: Just a general pondering really. By: slowdanceu...
Talking to his friends about sex	_fairyhand...	Replies:19 Views: 398	May 24, 2011 07:08:13 PM Re: Talking to his friends about sex By: slowdanceu...
Private conversations	annieapple...	Replies:76 Views: 1150	May 24, 2011 06:52:41 PM Re: Private conversations By: Heavy-Wing...
Nicknames	Velouria_	Replies:48 Views: 384	May 24, 2011 06:35:56 PM Re: Nicknames By: b-rabbit
Moving out of the friend zone	Agataaar	Replies:11 Views: 205	May 24, 2011 03:56:22 PM Re: Moving out of the friend zone By: JezebelJin...
Out of line?	I-Like-Can...	Replies:10 Views: 176	May 24, 2011 03:47:59 PM Re: Out of line?

Boyfriend worries	s_reidy90	Replies:0 Views: 57	By: I-Like-Can... May 24, 2011 03:19:51 PM Boyfriend worries By: s_reidy90
what would you do?	jobiuk	Replies:9 Views: 144	May 24, 2011 02:18:43 PM Re: what would you do? By: Sweet_Chee...
Obama and Cameron's 'special relationship'	georgilave...	Replies:2 Views: 68	May 24, 2011 02:15:43 PM Re: Obama and Cameron's 'special relationship' By: lollipop31...
Sexy photos	lollipop31...	Replies:53 Views: 551	May 24, 2011 12:51:47 PM Re: Sexy photos By: lollipop31...
Cliche, but friends with an ex	surf-lover	Replies:5 Views: 159	May 23, 2011 10:49:25 PM Re: Cliche, but friends with an ex By: blonde_bar...
1year :)	SJaCks0192	Replies:2 Views: 117	May 23, 2011 08:36:34 PM Re: 1year :) By: CheekyVimt...
Behaviour in your Relationship...	-JellyBell...	Replies:33 Views: 547	May 23, 2011 08:01:25 PM Re: Behaviour in your Relationship... By: vanilla_sm...
Still got it :)	Robyn_US	Replies:56 Views: 614	May 23, 2011 07:17:53 PM Re: Still got it :) By: Robyn_US
Hopefully got rid of the ex now	Curly_L	Replies:4 Views: 118	May 23, 2011 07:15:21 PM Re: Hopefully got rid of the ex now By: laurieee
being used?	Ashlee_Lou	Replies:10 Views: 319	May 23, 2011 05:26:41 PM Re: being used? By: Drewxx1
A ARRANGED MEET UP?	fresh_face	Replies:8 Views: 255	May 23, 2011 04:14:30 PM Re: A ARRANGED MEET UP? By: fresh_face
Who is the liar?!?!	Candy_xuk	Replies:12 Views: 237	May 23, 2011 03:34:48 PM Re: Who is the liar?!?! By: annieapple...
Jealousy	MP1988	Replies:30 Views: 546	May 23, 2011 03:15:17 PM Re: Jealousy By: AbsintheFa...
Think he's lost interest...but no idea why.	LouiseSW	Replies:13 Views: 328	May 23, 2011 02:01:41 PM Re: Think he's lost interest...but no idea why. By: GEORGIEGIR...
Sexual/Physical Connection Vs Physical attraction - HELP	freehand1	Replies:19 Views: 351	May 23, 2011 01:39:36 PM Re: Sexual/Physical Connection Vs Physical attraction - HELP By: GEORGIEGIR...
Holiday age	Emma46786	Replies:11 Views: 168	May 23, 2011 01:34:03 PM Re: Holiday age By: Emma46786
When should we next meet	carrager	Replies:6 Views: 174	May 23, 2011 12:54:55 PM Re: When should we next meet By: carrager
Right ladies (and gents) I need your help!	GlitterFre...	Replies:12 Views: 243	May 23, 2011 10:29:51 AM Re: Right ladies (and gents) I need your help! By: DrTinycat
Exs that won't take a hint.	Scotty-gir...	Replies:9 Views: 250	May 23, 2011 02:50:50 AM Re: Exs that won't take a hint. By: Scotty-gir...
am i moving too quickly?	XxZxXuk	Replies:7 Views: 138	May 22, 2011 11:45:31 PM Re: am i moving too quickly? By: lilidhx
Never had a bf or had sex	Justme0610	Replies:58 Views: 2105	May 22, 2011 11:18:41 PM Re: Never had a bf or had sex By: Yuuko_
A few thoughts...	BabyBonny	Replies:46	May 22, 2011 10:51:04 PM

		Views: 663	Re: A few thoughts... By: xmelissaxx May 22, 2011 09:02:39 PM
is it time to walk away?	brunettexb...	Replies:30 Views: 846	Re: is it time to walk away? By: doyoulikep... May 22, 2011 08:59:13 PM
Just discovered my ex was cheating on me..how blind was I!	youngunuk	Replies:2 Views: 217	Re: Just discovered my ex was cheating on me..how blind was I! By: Jordylumps... May 22, 2011 07:49:42 PM
ready to dive into the relationship pool..	Molly_X	Replies:3 Views: 140	Re: ready to dive into the relationship pool.. By: MissPink23... May 22, 2011 07:28:04 PM
Plenty of Fish - The 'Meet Me' Section	MISSY2025	Replies:14 Views: 468	Re: Plenty of Fish - The 'Meet Me' Section By: MissPink23... May 22, 2011 05:30:00 PM
Did you find the relationship between you and your siblings improved as you got older?	Infinity89	Replies:26 Views: 274	Re: Did you find the relationship between you and your siblings improved as you got older? By: KellyJay May 22, 2011 04:05:23 PM
BIG help :(	bloominguk...	Replies:14 Views: 310	Re: BIG help :( By: JezebelJin... May 22, 2011 03:08:32 PM
mum having an affair :(	juicylucy	Replies:39 Views: 439	Re: mum having an affair :( By: oicurmt May 22, 2011 02:16:08 PM
My Husband says he doesnt love me !!!!	Elton100	Replies:18 Views: 778	Re: My Husband says he doesnt love me !!!! By: Elton100 May 22, 2011 02:04:38 PM
What do you consider "seeing someone" as?	JaceB	Replies:14 Views: 352	Re: What do you consider By: RedBeans20... May 22, 2011 01:00:26 PM
how to be a good girlfriend	jo-ho	Replies:30 Views: 571	Re: how to be a good girlfriend By: jo-ho May 22, 2011 12:47:19 PM
So hurt and confused	strawberry...	Replies:7 Views: 200	Re: So hurt and confused By: strawberry... May 22, 2011 12:11:24 PM
If you're not naturally faithful, what do you do?	misssee	Replies:45 Views: 782	Re: If you're not naturally faithful, what do you do? By: missluella May 22, 2011 11:52:23 AM
Happy thread	kimpossibl...	Replies:71 Views: 644	Re: Happy thread By: Robyn_US May 22, 2011 11:42:52 AM
Boyfriend going on tour.	Jordylumps...	Replies:1 Views: 80	Re: Boyfriend going on tour. By: LittleRed_... May 21, 2011 10:03:22 PM
really weird behaviour...	hannah92xo	Replies:7 Views: 222	Re: really weird behaviour... By: hannah92xo May 21, 2011 09:29:44 PM
online picture-SMILE	scarlett12...	Replies:2 Views: 95	Re: online picture-SMILE By: Laenri May 21, 2011 08:14:41 PM
would you be annoyed by this?	stormynigh...	Replies:13 Views: 286	Re: would you be annoyed by this? By: stormynigh... May 21, 2011 07:44:35 PM
When can I start slagging him off?	Mary_Sue	Replies:10 Views: 424	Re: When can I start slagging him off? By: daniidooly May 21, 2011 07:34:07 PM
Is he playing mind games with me?	TurquoiseD...	Replies:19 Views: 342	Re: Is he playing mind games with me? By: LittleRed_... May 21, 2011 06:15:59 PM
Looking through each other's stuff.	bedheadswe...	Replies:11 Views: 308	Re: Looking through each other's stuff. By: Volodimir
when does it change from seeing to going-out	flj22	Replies:8	May 21, 2011 03:08:34 PM



		Views: 264	Re: when does it change from seeing to going-out By: smileychic... May 21, 2011 02:54:43 PM
Any1 whose OH is in the Army, Navy, Marines* or RAF?	Oreo_Steph	Replies:2 Views: 69	Re: Any1 whose OH is in the Army, Navy, Marines* or RAF? By: lovelyamil... May 21, 2011 02:46:38 PM
am i being selfish	strawberry...	Replies:2 Views: 127	Re: am i being selfish By: strawberry... May 21, 2011 01:45:10 PM
Am I overreacting?	tokki1	Replies:4 Views: 154	Re: Am I overreacting? By: smileychic... May 21, 2011 12:46:43 PM
Does a drunk mind speak sober thoughts?	CherriePie...	Replies:11 Views: 309	Re: Does a drunk mind speak sober thoughts? By: CherriePie... May 21, 2011 12:07:00 PM
Would you take this seriously?	noonoo24	Replies:114 Views: 1624	Re: Would you take this seriously? By: ellie188 May 21, 2011 11:31:03 AM
Ungreatful or just stating a fact?	-JellyBell...	Replies:16 Views: 153	Re: Ungreatful or just stating a fact? By: annieapple... May 21, 2011 11:21:25 AM
Is it said that	CrazyLikeA...	Replies:21 Views: 532	Re: Is it said that By: Natboosh May 21, 2011 11:20:19 AM
hurt and confused!	-louise-	Replies:13 Views: 231	Re: hurt and confused! By: Vee2 May 21, 2011 08:48:31 AM
How did yours pop the question?	Kant	Replies:2 Views: 120	Re: How did yours pop the question? By: Arlandria_... May 21, 2011 04:56:18 AM
Boyfriend looked at my messages	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:58 Views: 657	Re: Boyfriend looked at my messages By: c__jay May 20, 2011 10:38:40 PM
At a Crossroads, Need Someone to Talk To .....	LoveStoned...	Replies:4 Views: 165	Re: At a Crossroads, Need Someone to Talk To .....
do i have a right to be upset?	sminkypink...	Replies:221 Views: 1910	Re: do i have a right to be upset? By: sweetgirl_... May 20, 2011 08:38:21 PM
date number 2	jobiuk	Replies:11 Views: 173	Re: date number 2 By: -Pamm- May 20, 2011 08:12:51 PM
What to do with this situation?	-Pamm-	Replies:34 Views: 416	Re: What to do with this situation? By: -Pamm- May 20, 2011 06:43:29 PM
getting over somebody	lacey105	Replies:4 Views: 25	Re: getting over somebody By: Ilovecosmo... May 20, 2011 05:24:47 PM
My best friend...	LauraFerg2...	Replies:3 Views: 62	Re: My best friend... By: Shini7k May 20, 2011 05:13:47 PM
I miss him massivley	cannot_thi...	Replies:7 Views: 190	Re: I miss him massivley By: doyoulikep... May 20, 2011 03:09:33 PM
cant enjoy relationship cos im worried i will lose it	Gemz29	Replies:10 Views: 192	Re: cant enjoy relationship cos im worried i will lose it By: Gemz29 May 20, 2011 12:52:32 PM
Am I being selfish?	Robyn_US	Replies:33 Views: 376	Re: Am I being selfish? By: nosipho123 May 20, 2011 12:02:15 PM
We're too familiar :(	jo-ho	Replies:12 Views: 366	Re: We're too familiar :( By: lucyinthea... May 20, 2011 09:06:28 AM
Why lie when he knows I know the truth?	Curly_L	Replies:11 Views: 355	Re: Why lie when he knows I know the truth?

FAO Babygurl	caterpiIla...	Replies:7 Views: 244	By: Sian-Danie... May 20, 2011 08:43:39 AM Re: FAO Babygurl By: doyoulikep...
So confused	XxLauraf90...	Replies:8 Views: 177	May 20, 2011 07:56:01 AM Re: So confused By: doyoulikep...
friends	-louise-	Replies:1 Views: 97	May 20, 2011 01:08:22 AM Re: friends By: Shini7k
Total idiot	girlx	Replies:38 Views: 629	May 19, 2011 11:48:22 PM Re: Total idiot By: spizzy
my boyfriend freaked out.....	xxbarbie-d...	Replies:44 Views: 1146	May 19, 2011 10:04:23 PM Re: my boyfriend freaked out..... By: Chica_Gale...
He's going away for 4 weeks.. to the other side of the world.	Rosie_Posi...	Replies:12 Views: 236	May 19, 2011 08:10:05 PM Re: He's going away for 4 weeks.. to the other side of the world. By: doyoulikep...
The one that got away...	x-alwaysad...	Replies:4 Views: 137	May 19, 2011 08:05:15 PM Re: The one that got away... By: x-alwaysad...
mixed signals from OH... confusing	haunteduk	Replies:1 Views: 135	May 19, 2011 07:48:34 PM Re: mixed signals from OH... confusing By: Sophiee-x
He's a cheat and a liar :(	__katie	Replies:125 Views: 2752	May 19, 2011 07:40:17 PM Re: He's a cheat and a liar :( By: __katie
Is this just paranoia or do I have a right to be worried?	Sophiee-x	Replies:2 Views: 90	May 19, 2011 07:36:19 PM Re: Is this just paranoia or do I have a right to be worried? By: annieapple...
his cocky jokes are no longer funny	r149	Replies:3 Views: 104	May 19, 2011 07:32:37 PM Re: his cocky jokes are no longer funny By: Sophiee-x
Dunno what to do anymore	Hanky-Pank...	Replies:29 Views: 321	May 19, 2011 07:28:34 PM Re: Dunno what to do anymore By: Hanky-Pank...
Confussion, yet again!	katler	Replies:8 Views: 240	May 19, 2011 04:56:18 PM Re: Confussion, yet again! By: -JellyBell...
I'm Scared Of Losing Him :(	Emzy_26	Replies:5 Views: 328	May 19, 2011 04:20:34 PM Re: I'm Scared Of Losing Him :( By: nosiph0123
He asks me out for only drinks	sweetheart...	Replies:10 Views: 289	May 19, 2011 04:06:15 PM Re: He asks me out for only drinks By: LilMoneyBa...
MEN! am i just the other girl??	Prinny20	Replies:19 Views: 427	May 19, 2011 04:05:43 PM Re: MEN! am i just the other girl?? By: nosiph0123
Jealous about boyfriend's past relationship with ex..	kat798alex	Replies:2 Views: 160	May 19, 2011 04:00:08 PM Re: Jealous about boyfriend's past relationship with ex.. By: blonde_bar...
Struggling	cannot_thi...	Replies:3 Views: 132	May 19, 2011 03:42:25 PM Re: Struggling By: Hanky-Pank...
when to give up?	CherriePie...	Replies:11 Views: 322	May 19, 2011 03:37:51 PM Re: when to give up? By: Hanky-Pank...
How long	Sezzy_xo	Replies:27 Views: 283	May 19, 2011 03:16:55 PM Re: How long By: Divine-Int...
Being overly paranoid?	Abbibee	Replies:5 Views: 137	May 19, 2011 12:50:00 PM Re: Being overly paranoid?

How to meet new people?	mizzkt	Replies:4 Views: 79	By: smileychic... May 19, 2011 10:22:42 AM Re: How to meet new people? By: mizzkt
Am I going mad?	Science-An...	Replies:5 Views: 174	May 19, 2011 09:35:06 AM Re: Am I going mad? By: Science-An...
I miss my boyfriend so much	i_love_yog...	Replies:57 Views: 841	May 19, 2011 03:23:04 AM Re: I miss my boyfriend so much By: i_love_yog...
Finding messages on his phone...	Smartieeee6...	Replies:3 Views: 219	May 19, 2011 01:37:50 AM Re: Finding messages on his phone... By: hannah92xo
Does he like me? Could this work? How can I stop overthinking everything?	miss_212	Replies:13 Views: 567	May 19, 2011 01:03:29 AM Re: Does he like me? Could this work? How can I stop overthinking everything? By: miss_212
single pringle!	hannah92xo	Replies:19 Views: 316	May 18, 2011 11:46:22 PM Re: single pringle! By: hannah92xo
partners and pooing	cannot_thi...	Replies:43 Views: 1122	May 18, 2011 11:27:53 PM Re: partners and pooing By: PeachyPeti...
A Guy	bluemoonst...	Replies:2 Views: 133	May 18, 2011 10:40:50 PM Re: A Guy By: doyoulikep...
Your happiness or your partners?	slowdanceu...	Replies:22 Views: 295	May 18, 2011 07:10:10 PM Re: Your happiness or your partners? By: discoshoes
What to do?	Smartieeee6...	Replies:1 Views: 90	May 18, 2011 06:53:02 PM Re: What to do? By: hannah92xo
Why has he got a young woman on his facebook??	xxkirstyd	Replies:106 Views: 1287	May 18, 2011 06:06:14 PM Re: Why has he got a young woman on his facebook?? By: xxkirstyd
What to do?	Smartieeee6...	Replies:1 Views: 91	May 18, 2011 06:53:02 PM Re: What to do? By: hannah92xo
Why has he got a young woman on his facebook??	xxkirstyd	Replies:106 Views: 1288	May 18, 2011 06:06:14 PM Re: Why has he got a young woman on his facebook?? By: xxkirstyd
Need some advice...	CorleUK	Replies:23 Views: 266	May 18, 2011 05:38:02 PM Re: Need some advice... By: Sarsaparil...
Am I over analysing his little white lies?	cakey13	Replies:16 Views: 391	May 18, 2011 05:36:39 PM Re: Am I over analysing his little white lies? By: sweetgirl_...
break up over sex life..	Oblongchee...	Replies:44 Views: 688	May 18, 2011 04:41:33 PM Re: break up over sex life.. By: Maximov
Ask a friend for casual sex	CheekyVimt...	Replies:13 Views: 346	May 18, 2011 04:21:05 PM Re: Ask a friend for casual sex By: Charlottie...
3rd Anniversary	LovedbyJen...	Replies:4 Views: 147	May 18, 2011 03:33:07 PM Re: 3rd Anniversary By: Science-An...
What do you think?	claireloui...	Replies:4 Views: 114	May 18, 2011 02:58:10 PM Re: What do you think? By: Sexy_Sarah...
contact with his ex	loy_jay	Replies:23 Views: 219	May 18, 2011 02:52:03 PM Re: contact with his ex By: Sexy_Sarah...
My new girlfriend is seeing two other people	Babygurlxj...	Replies:36 Views: 671	May 18, 2011 02:03:15 PM Re: My new girlfriend is seeing two other people

Feel so down	13968_uk	Replies:3 Views: 110	By: LilMoneyBa... May 18, 2011 12:19:54 PM Re: Feel so down By: sweetgirl_...
what's worse ?	annieapple...	Replies:12 Views: 263	May 18, 2011 11:04:14 AM Re: what's worse ? By: DrTinycat
Going to uni - do we break up?	HannyFanny...	Replies:6 Views: 217	May 18, 2011 10:25:20 AM Re: Going to uni - do we break up? By: naomi5000
Would you class it as cheating?	Honey_Beee	Replies:53 Views: 1029	May 17, 2011 11:50:11 PM Re: Would you class it as cheating? By: xbarbie-d...
What should I think?	marshamall...	Replies:3 Views: 134	May 17, 2011 10:31:55 PM Re: What should I think? By: doyoulikep...
What to buy/do	JenBoo89	Replies:5 Views: 105	May 17, 2011 10:11:59 PM Re: What to buy/do By: bone_machi...
Help-problem personality	Mmmarmite	Replies:9 Views: 228	May 17, 2011 09:02:18 PM Re: Help-problem personality By: Mmmarmite
Is there a point if you know it won't last?	LaughUntil...	Replies:10 Views: 264	May 17, 2011 09:00:36 PM Re: Is there a point if you know it won't last? By: kimpossibl...
How often does your OH txt you?	stacism107	Replies:45 Views: 506	May 17, 2011 07:45:39 PM Re: How often does your OH txt you? By: Kelathyn
Does it take two?	popgoesmyh...	Replies:16 Views: 363	May 17, 2011 07:29:55 PM Re: Does it take two? By: popgoesmyh...
How did you feel about moving in with your OH? Miss-Bubbl...		Replies:10 Views: 156	May 17, 2011 06:24:51 PM Re: How did you feel about moving in with your OH? By: Crimson_an...
ffeel like %&*\$#	couchiex3	Replies:11 Views: 250	May 17, 2011 05:29:36 PM Re: ffeel like %&*\$# By: couchiex3
My secret relationship... HELP	JBabes1	Replies:16 Views: 346	May 17, 2011 04:58:31 PM Re: My secret relationship... HELP By: RuthSaysTh...
Sacrifice in relationships	Tiger_trai...	Replies:19 Views: 328	May 17, 2011 04:25:46 PM Re: Sacrifice in relationships By: Purplemons...
sort of fallen for my best friend...and now starting to hate his gf, who is also a good friend	lilgirlxxx	Replies:2 Views: 147	May 17, 2011 02:30:49 PM Re: sort of fallen for my best friend...and now starting to hate his gf, who is also a good frien... By: hulahoop84...
Bf and holidays	and_then_c...	Replies:15 Views: 235	May 17, 2011 02:04:15 PM Re: Bf and holidays By: naomi5000
help needed please	rebecca493	Replies:5 Views: 106	May 17, 2011 12:49:41 PM Re: help needed please By: blonde_bar...
cinderella syndrome	Sparklexxx...	Replies:4 Views: 183	May 17, 2011 11:25:28 AM Re: cinderella syndrome By: Inner_City...
another dilemma!	rebecca493	Replies:2 Views: 89	May 17, 2011 11:21:19 AM Re: another dilemma! By: Miss_Coutu...
Dilema	cannot_thi...	Replies:21 Views: 365	May 17, 2011 11:12:00 AM Re: Dilema By: cannot_thi...
What does he want from me? Please Help!	Lucy_Jane8...	Replies:4 Views: 138	May 17, 2011 11:11:52 AM Re: What does he want from me? Please Help! By: Miss_Coutu...

Time to move on? Sorry - this is long!	well_jel	Replies:9 Views: 126	May 17, 2011 10:56:54 AM Re: Time to move on? Sorry - this is long! By: kimpossibl...
I feel like he will never come back to me, should I try move on?	TurquoiseD...	Replies:4 Views: 181	May 17, 2011 10:55:50 AM Re: I feel like he will never come back to me, should I try move on? By: Miss_Coutu...
Homophobia	321lisa	Replies:127 Views: 579	May 17, 2011 09:48:48 AM Re: Homophobia By: Danax2
Moving in together	rach_lilgi...	Replies:15 Views: 252	May 17, 2011 09:44:29 AM Re: Moving in together By: MACcrazy
still not over the ex... three years later.	misssee	Replies:17 Views: 473	May 17, 2011 09:19:16 AM Re: still not over the ex... three years later. By: gina__
2 weeks one day	Marie1990u...	Replies:3 Views: 168	May 17, 2011 12:07:19 AM Re: 2 weeks one day By: Jo_used_to...
FAO Yuuko	GlitterFre...	Replies:0 Views: 36	May 16, 2011 11:30:41 PM FAO Yuuko By: GlitterFre...
Am I being silly?	and_then_c...	Replies:4 Views: 116	May 16, 2011 11:24:08 PM Re: Am I being silly? By: Danax2
I want to eat your face off...	-JellyBell...	Replies:25 Views: 405	May 16, 2011 10:49:05 PM Re: I want to eat your face off... By: blonde_bar...
What to do?	jellybean1...	Replies:5 Views: 133	May 16, 2011 10:19:43 PM Re: What to do? By: Jo_used_to...
that "in love overwhelming feeling"	Sparklexxx...	Replies:20 Views: 577	May 16, 2011 09:39:45 PM Re: that By: Danax2
i feel a bit lame	Fearless_x	Replies:14 Views: 267	May 16, 2011 09:29:26 PM Re: i feel a bit lame By: Danax2
Ex and keeping in touch	and_then_c...	Replies:4 Views: 146	May 16, 2011 08:31:54 PM Re: Ex and keeping in touch By: RedBeans20...
Lying horrible (now ex) bf!	Curly_L	Replies:8 Views: 341	May 16, 2011 05:34:47 PM Re: Lying horrible (now ex) bf! By: Beautiful-...
Should i be annoyed?	gp_love	Replies:7 Views: 135	May 16, 2011 04:08:42 PM Re: Should i be annoyed? By: -JellyBell...
is there an answer...?	fresh_face	Replies:21 Views: 544	May 16, 2011 04:07:33 PM Re: is there an answer...? By: fresh_face
Being put first	Chica_Gale...	Replies:23 Views: 453	May 16, 2011 03:44:42 PM Re: Being put first By: AbsintheFa...
Overwhelmed	Sparkles_L...	Replies:3 Views: 161	May 16, 2011 03:05:31 PM Re: Overwhelmed By: SizequeenR...
Worst case scenario	slowdanceu...	Replies:46 Views: 340	May 16, 2011 02:53:19 PM Re: Worst case scenario By: Cherry-che...
No to spooning	shootingst...	Replies:17 Views: 337	May 16, 2011 02:16:55 PM Re: No to spooning By: JFC91
like him...but not sure of a relationship...	Scarletty	Replies:15 Views: 240	May 16, 2011 12:47:52 PM Re: like him...but not sure of a relationship... By: Scarletty
Love triangle/polygon...	blonde_bar...	Replies:7 Views: 275	May 16, 2011 11:05:39 AM Re: Love triangle/polygon...

stupid mistake	ruskiloz	Replies:15 Views: 413	By: Fearless_x May 16, 2011 11:01:45 AM Re: stupid mistake By: Fearless_x
do i say something or leave the past in the past	brunettexb...	Replies:20 Views: 483	May 16, 2011 10:50:16 AM Re: do i say something or leave the past in the past By: brunettexb...
OMG the ex, help!	tigger1991...	Replies:5 Views: 256	May 16, 2011 09:34:14 AM Re: OMG the ex, help! By: DrTinycat
Is this normal?	WishfulThi...	Replies:6 Views: 302	May 16, 2011 09:20:17 AM Re: Is this normal? By: DrTinycat
What to say?	Guerrilla_...	Replies:6 Views: 334	May 15, 2011 10:31:46 PM Re: What to say? By: _TickledPi...
Eeek!	charlotte1...	Replies:13 Views: 287	May 15, 2011 08:51:58 PM Re: Eeek! By: Dancing_Ze...
Housemate - am i being unreasonable?	lillys_gam...	Replies:23 Views: 454	May 15, 2011 08:36:40 PM Re: Housemate - am i being unreasonable? By: Gabbauk2
Talk some sense in to me..... Please!!!!	FaiiryGiir...	Replies:9 Views: 337	May 15, 2011 08:26:44 PM Re: Talk some sense in to me..... Please!!!! By: FaiiryGiir...
mum cant accept younger boyfriend!	cocopopsuk...	Replies:11 Views: 231	May 15, 2011 07:35:32 PM Re: mum cant accept younger boyfriend! By: Oblongchee...
Which type of love do you have?/Which type of lover are you?	Cherry-che...	Replies:34 Views: 769	May 15, 2011 07:23:28 PM Re: Which type of love do you have?/Which type of lover are you? By: xKate-
I need help!	Hanky-Pank...	Replies:8 Views: 174	May 15, 2011 07:19:09 PM Re: I need help! By: Oblongchee...
Does Love Fade? Long-Term Love vs New Potential ... A Real messy dilemma ... What would u do?	soph_al	Replies:16 Views: 664	May 15, 2011 07:18:06 PM Re: Does Love Fade? Long-Term Love vs New Potential ... A Real messy dilemma ... What would u do? By: soph_al
Birthday Surprise ideas	Dee-liteuk	Replies:8 Views: 12354	May 15, 2011 05:51:53 PM Re: Birthday Surprise ideas By: doyoulikep...
once a cheater always a cheat??	vw-girl	Replies:15 Views: 375	May 15, 2011 05:21:27 PM Re: once a cheater always a cheat?? By: vw-girl
First date disaster??	Candyfluss	Replies:5 Views: 202	May 15, 2011 05:14:22 PM Re: First date disaster?? By: doyoulikep...
Why are men soooo confusing!?	hannah91uk	Replies:8 Views: 301	May 15, 2011 04:45:44 PM Re: Why are men soooo confusing!? By: hannah91uk
More than just a friend	LittleMada...	Replies:6 Views: 190	May 15, 2011 04:36:45 PM Re: More than just a friend By: highsaffro...
missing him	AbbieVA	Replies:7 Views: 164	May 15, 2011 03:29:41 PM Re: missing him By: x_mills_x
last night's date!	jobiuk	Replies:7 Views: 227	May 15, 2011 11:49:10 AM Re: last night's date! By: Bear-Bardo...
Test subject description:	thao3	Replies:12 Views: 237	May 15, 2011 11:34:58 AM Re: Test subject description: By: laurieee
What do I do about my best friends brother?	Lexisp	Replies:3 Views: 170	May 14, 2011 11:06:43 PM Re: What do I do about my best friends brother?

I don't actually have any friends ...	PrincessPe...	Replies:93 Views: 8495	By: _fairyhand... May 14, 2011 10:40:17 PM Re: I don't actually have any friends ... By: Faustus_
First date disaster??	Candyfluss	Replies:5 Views: 203	May 15, 2011 05:14:22 PM Re: First date disaster?? By: doyoulikep...
Why are men soooo confusing!?	hannah91uk	Replies:8 Views: 302	May 15, 2011 04:45:44 PM Re: Why are men soooo confusing!? By: hannah91uk
More than just a friend	LittleMada...	Replies:6 Views: 191	May 15, 2011 04:36:45 PM Re: More than just a friend By: highsaffro...
missing him	AbbieVA	Replies:7 Views: 165	May 15, 2011 03:29:41 PM Re: missing him By: x_mills_x
last night's date!	jobiuk	Replies:7 Views: 228	May 15, 2011 11:49:10 AM Re: last night's date! By: Bear-Bardo...
Test subject description:	thao3	Replies:12 Views: 239	May 15, 2011 11:34:58 AM Re: Test subject description: By: lauriee
What do I do about my best friends brother?	Lexisp	Replies:3 Views: 171	May 14, 2011 11:06:43 PM Re: What do I do about my best friends brother? By: _fairyhand...
I don't actually have any friends ...	PrincessPe...	Replies:93 Views: 8503	May 14, 2011 10:40:17 PM Re: I don't actually have any friends ... By: Faustus_
date tonight! stupidly nervous!	jobiuk	Replies:4 Views: 141	May 14, 2011 08:00:06 PM Re: date tonight! stupidly nervous! By: fresh_face
Facebook-would you be annoyed at this?	shootingst...	Replies:32 Views: 568	May 14, 2011 07:19:17 PM Re: Facebook-would you be annoyed at this? By: CheekyVimt...
Do you just keep quiet to keep the peace?	Mulanloves...	Replies:12 Views: 279	May 14, 2011 06:23:55 PM Re: Do you just keep quiet to keep the peace? By: Faustus_
When your other half talks about attractive women a little too much...	fallensymm...	Replies:9 Views: 259	May 14, 2011 03:14:26 PM Re: When your other half talks about attractive women a little too much... By: couchix3
Boyfriend behaving like an arse, I'm confused	TeenyQueen	Replies:26 Views: 846	May 14, 2011 03:00:22 PM Re: Boyfriend behaving like an arse, I'm confused By: TeenyQueen
Confused	bsleete23	Replies:7 Views: 100	May 14, 2011 02:35:29 PM Re: Confused By: princessl2...
Pictures of his ex on my computer	shootingst...	Replies:10 Views: 190	May 14, 2011 01:52:32 PM Re: Pictures of his ex on my computer By: JezebelJin...
What do you think?	clairelou...	Replies:3 Views: 85	May 14, 2011 01:20:53 PM Re: What do you think? By: clairelou...
Anyone have friends who would make perfect partners if you fancied them?	CherryAcid	Replies:14 Views: 286	May 14, 2011 12:19:56 PM Re: Anyone have friends who would make perfect partners if you fancied them? By: Red_Sorsha
What to do when you start to develop feelings for your "friends with benefits"?	RckerChck0...	Replies:7 Views: 170	May 14, 2011 12:11:55 PM Re: What to do when you start to develop feelings for your By: Fishy-Fish
Lonely	steffiedoo...	Replies:5 Views: 198	May 14, 2011 11:37:54 AM Re: Lonely By: sictransit...
Advice on being clingy!	xxlizamc	Replies:4 Views: 163	May 14, 2011 11:31:33 AM Re: Advice on being clingy!

how did ur relationship start	lacey105	Replies:37 Views: 746	By: doyoulikep... May 14, 2011 10:18:31 AM Re: how did ur relationship start By: Sexy_Sarah... May 14, 2011 07:23:59 AM
Why are men soooooo confused	hannah91uk	Replies:0 Views: 56	Why are men soooooo confused By: hannah91uk
Wish I hadnt seen :(	sweet_madd...	Replies:37 Views: 1338	May 13, 2011 11:44:20 PM Re: Wish I hadnt seen :( By: So_Fee May 13, 2011 10:24:40 PM
Partner still on a dating website?	smartie-ba...	Replies:8 Views: 305	Re: Partner still on a dating website? By: xxlizamc May 13, 2011 09:13:03 PM
Is there a subtle way of asking if you're exclusive?blonde_bar...		Replies:17 Views: 409	Re: Is there a subtle way of asking if you're exclusive? By: Sezzy_xo May 13, 2011 08:14:00 PM
Bi-Polar	livingfors...	Replies:9 Views: 217	Re: Bi-Polar By: Lumpy_Cust...
Always fall too easy :-(	CherriePie...	Replies:7 Views: 231	May 13, 2011 06:49:19 PM Re: Always fall too easy :-( By: MP1988 May 13, 2011 06:12:15 PM
Is all really fair in love and war?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:27 Views: 462	Re: Is all really fair in love and war? By: CheekyVimt...
Am I being silly??	xLilPixiex	Replies:10 Views: 269	May 13, 2011 04:04:49 PM Re: Am I being silly?? By: slowdanceu...
Ive F*cked up...	Lov3Cosmo	Replies:9 Views: 492	May 13, 2011 01:58:33 PM Re: Ive F*cked up... By: kimpossibl...
A small, miniscule, tiny, little rant	BabyBonny	Replies:12 Views: 356	May 13, 2011 11:09:31 AM Re: A small, miniscule, tiny, little rant By: BabyBonny May 13, 2011 09:30:09 AM
Going on holiday with boyfriend! Help please xxxstacism107		Replies:7 Views: 230	Re: Going on holiday with boyfriend! Help please xxx By: x-charli-x May 13, 2011 09:27:37 AM
how does taking drugs affect your relationships	Lozeli	Replies:16 Views: 203	Re: how does taking drugs affect your relationships By: Lozeli May 13, 2011 06:06:52 AM
Any other single girls (or not single) do this..	CrazyCosmo...	Replies:21 Views: 593	Re: Any other single girls (or not single) do this.. By: Sian-Danie... May 13, 2011 02:13:52 AM
I need to sort it out.. but how?	Kylera7	Replies:6 Views: 298	Re: I need to sort it out.. but how? By: Kylera7 May 12, 2011 09:27:07 PM
I really just need to let it all out :(	JoeyyXx	Replies:12 Views: 371	Re: I really just need to let it all out :( By: JoeyyXx May 12, 2011 08:27:13 PM
running in heels in dublin	virgyuk	Replies:1 Views: 164	Re: running in heels in dublin By: smileychic...
Having a dream about the ex	JenBoo89	Replies:1 Views: 55	May 12, 2011 08:23:21 PM Re: Having a dream about the ex By: What_about...
Can't shake him off :(	alice_lond...	Replies:3 Views: 146	May 12, 2011 08:07:14 PM Re: Can't shake him off :( By: alice_lond...
Your Love Story	GeorgeMonk...	Replies:2 Views: 121	May 12, 2011 07:01:36 PM Re: Your Love Story By: RuthSaysTh...
Cheating partners...	naomikent	Replies:7 Views: 155	May 12, 2011 06:07:09 PM Re: Cheating partners...



My Single Friend website	sunbeam144	Replies:4 Views: 212	By: bone_machi... May 12, 2011 05:16:54 PM Re: My Single Friend website By: Inner_City...
Really not sure what to do...	Naughty_87	Replies:10 Views: 460	May 12, 2011 05:07:44 PM Re: Really not sure what to do... By: Naughty_87
Honesty the best policy?	annieapple...	Replies:21 Views: 418	May 12, 2011 04:45:24 PM Re: Honesty the best policy? By: Fearless_x
I'm turning into a jealous cow!	forgetmeno...	Replies:13 Views: 460	May 12, 2011 03:17:36 PM Re: I'm turning into a jealous cow! By: AbsintheFa...
Having a very wealthy boyfriend	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:15 Views: 645	May 12, 2011 02:17:14 PM Re: Having a very wealthy boyfriend By: Dhun-na-nG...
Boyfriend's dad on death bed...dont know what to say :(	Sandra_x	Replies:8 Views: 188	May 12, 2011 11:37:16 AM Re: Boyfriend's dad on death bed...dont know what to say :( By: LilMoneyBa...
the doctors finally came to assist	fresh_face	Replies:3 Views: 247	May 12, 2011 11:29:42 AM Re: the doctors finally came to assist By: LilMoneyBa...
Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women?	SammiBobsx...	Replies:24 Views: 273	May 12, 2011 11:26:59 AM Re: Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women? By: LilMoneyBa...
Workplace awkwardness...	caterpiIa...	Replies:5 Views: 160	May 12, 2011 11:17:55 AM Re: Workplace awkwardness... By: missfunkym...
Clothing on first date?	happyGuy2	Replies:6 Views: 121	May 11, 2011 11:28:34 PM Re: Clothing on first date? By: happyGuy2
what's your boundaries on how much your man can share with his friends?	xxbarbie-d...	Replies:5 Views: 194	May 11, 2011 10:11:57 PM Re: what's your boundaries on how much your man can share with his friends? By: Summer_Sun...
seeing someone....?	CherriePie...	Replies:22 Views: 276	May 11, 2011 10:08:56 PM Re: seeing someone....? By: CherriePie...
Silly arguements	x_mills_x	Replies:19 Views: 294	May 11, 2011 09:45:46 PM Re: Silly arguements By: x_mills_x
Confusing or what?!	Sugar_Bomb	Replies:14 Views: 361	May 11, 2011 09:30:45 PM Re: Confusing or what?! By: Sugar_Bomb
blast from the past	shufflebum	Replies:2 Views: 80	May 11, 2011 08:45:33 PM Re: blast from the past By: shufflebum
stuck..	Molly_X	Replies:4 Views: 162	May 11, 2011 08:01:07 PM Re: stuck.. By: doyoulikep...
Boyfriend sent two messages to my 15 year old cousin on Facebook	kezza223	Replies:77 Views: 1489	May 11, 2011 06:40:15 PM Re: Boyfriend sent two messages to my 15 year old cousin on Facebook By: sweetgirl_...
A pregnancy scare...not good recation!	rainbowsuk...	Replies:130 Views: 1684	May 11, 2011 06:34:50 PM Re: A pregnancy scare...not good recation! By: rainbowsuk...
The 'rules'	Bellarina_...	Replies:11 Views: 548	May 11, 2011 04:53:54 PM Re: The 'rules' By: Bellarina_...
Making an effort...	-JellyBell...	Replies:21 Views: 355	May 11, 2011 04:53:16 PM Re: Making an effort... By: rosa_19
Play fighting!!	sweetgirl_...	Replies:32	May 11, 2011 04:06:15 PM

		Views: 569	Re: Play fighting!! By: Charlottie...
Drunk Texting	CherriePie...	Replies:14 Views: 289	May 11, 2011 03:58:25 PM Re: Drunk Texting By: DrTinycat
Ambition	sweetgirl_...	Replies:18 Views: 254	May 11, 2011 03:37:58 PM Re: Ambition By: Mary_Sue
help!!!!	shurbetsar...	Replies:16 Views: 344	May 11, 2011 01:47:16 PM Re: help!!!! By: stengirluk
Friend rant!!!	annieapple...	Replies:11 Views: 311	May 11, 2011 09:47:51 AM Re: Friend rant!!! By: slowdanceu...
what should i do to make it work??	acatriona	Replies:7 Views: 278	May 10, 2011 10:56:01 PM Re: what should i do to make it work?? By: acatriona
HELP. My laptop thinks I'm gay :(	GlitterFre...	Replies:19 Views: 405	May 10, 2011 09:40:05 PM Re: HELP. My laptop thinks I'm gay :( By: Velouria_
BOYFRIEND.....!!	MyWorldFor...	Replies:1 Views: 178	May 10, 2011 09:28:13 PM Re: BOYFRIEND.....!! By: sminkypink...
SO ANNOYED!!!!!!	LadyCBuk	Replies:58 Views: 1021	May 10, 2011 07:49:29 PM Re: SO ANNOYED!!!!!! By: LadyCBuk
will his family move on too?	browneyedg...	Replies:19 Views: 442	May 10, 2011 04:36:57 PM Re: will his family move on too? By: oxfordblon...
Taken for a fool?	Emzy18	Replies:11 Views: 365	May 10, 2011 02:08:35 PM Re: Taken for a fool? By: DrTinycat
He does not want a relationship	094814821f...	Replies:11 Views: 489	May 10, 2011 11:37:20 AM Re: He does not want a relationship By: 094814821f...
Angry man vs Me, need your help to get over it!	Luk9	Replies:6 Views: 222	May 10, 2011 11:35:55 AM Re: Angry man vs Me, need your help to get over it! By: XGeminiXuk
Some Advice please	BlackRose4...	Replies:17 Views: 128	May 10, 2011 11:31:50 AM Re: Some Advice please By: dutch25
Do I have a right to be a little upset?	blonde_bar...	Replies:28 Views: 771	May 10, 2011 06:46:38 AM Re: Do I have a right to be a little upset? By: missluella
Friend problem	iamKimberl...	Replies:4 Views: 126	May 10, 2011 05:47:45 AM Re: Friend problem By: missluella
Totally out of Practise!	ER13	Replies:3 Views: 146	May 09, 2011 11:31:24 PM Re: Totally out of Practise! By: sweetgirl_...
just getting stuff off my chest!	nuttymare	Replies:5 Views: 224	May 09, 2011 10:42:57 PM Re: just getting stuff off my chest! By: nuttymare
Why do i think like this?!	CrazyCosmo...	Replies:7 Views: 278	May 09, 2011 09:21:46 PM Re: Why do i think like this?! By: CrazyCosmo...
Would you tell your partner if you thought you were pregnant?	blonde_bar...	Replies:96 Views: 734	May 09, 2011 08:59:45 PM Re: Would you tell your partner if you thought you were pregnant? By: Oblongchee...
Hypothetical question	smileychic...	Replies:7 Views: 229	May 09, 2011 06:23:35 PM Re: Hypothetical question By: JFC91
Please help me make sense of my odd friendship. _TickledPi...		Replies:13 Views: 410	May 09, 2011 06:12:44 PM Re: Please help me make sense of my odd

Dealing with my boyfriend's bromance	staringspa...	Replies:14 Views: 614	friendship. By: _TickledPi... May 09, 2011 05:20:26 PM Re: Dealing with my boyfriend's bromance By: EarthBat May 09, 2011 04:46:06 PM
When did you...	-JellyBell...	Replies:7 Views: 298	Re: When did you... By: discoshoes May 09, 2011 04:41:21 PM
How can I get him to go to the doctors?	BeautifulD...	Replies:10 Views: 288	Re: How can I get him to go to the doctors? By: BeautifulD... May 09, 2011 04:29:37 PM
Trust..	-JellyBell...	Replies:9 Views: 220	Re: Trust.. By: blonde_bar... May 09, 2011 03:32:57 PM
Things you just can't compete with!	LittleGirL...	Replies:42 Views: 986	Re: Things you just can't compete with! By: cependant May 09, 2011 03:10:05 PM
Help with decision between bf and ex...:(	Lesliesexy...	Replies:8 Views: 254	Re: Help with decision between bf and ex...:( By: Lesliesexy... May 09, 2011 02:57:24 PM
When to have the 'Talk'	kazmania	Replies:13 Views: 500	Re: When to have the 'Talk' By: Lesliesexy... May 09, 2011 02:48:37 PM
OH totally ignoring what i want.	sminkypink...	Replies:39 Views: 688	Re: OH totally ignoring what i want. By: sminkypink... May 09, 2011 12:04:57 PM
Is he gonna call? Opinions please!	chocaholic...	Replies:12 Views: 270	Re: Is he gonna call? Opinions please! By: smileychic... May 09, 2011 09:39:45 AM
How do you deal with the people who have rejected you?	MP1988	Replies:20 Views: 464	Re: How do you deal with the people who have rejected you? By: MP1988 May 09, 2011 08:13:48 AM
LDR trust issues	gp_love	Replies:14 Views: 255	Re: LDR trust issues By: gp_love May 09, 2011 12:11:31 AM
Forever?	shootingst...	Replies:15 Views: 327	Re: Forever? By: CatFacey May 09, 2011 12:09:49 AM
Have you had your heart broken?	x_mills_x	Replies:43 Views: 715	Re: Have you had your heart broken? By: cezabelle May 08, 2011 10:00:06 PM
Taking one for the team...	HotdogHand...	Replies:1 Views: 133	Re: Taking one for the team... By: ellie_x May 08, 2011 09:17:45 PM
just realised that I probably don't really have any friends	Red_Sorsha	Replies:11 Views: 478	Re: just realised that I probably don't really have any friends By: -Evily- May 08, 2011 09:12:17 PM
CONFUSED HOW TO APPROACH A WORK COLLEAGUE?	distantmem...	Replies:6 Views: 228	Re: CONFUSED HOW TO APPROACH A WORK COLLEAGUE? By: -Evily- May 08, 2011 06:06:10 PM
My Boyfriends addicted! :(	Jadexxuk1	Replies:17 Views: 513	Re: My Boyfriends addicted! :( By: JFC91 May 08, 2011 05:17:08 PM
blast from the past.. what to do?!	x-KK88-x	Replies:4 Views: 173	Re: blast from the past.. what to do?! By: x-KK88-x May 08, 2011 04:26:20 PM
do i have the right to be annoyed???	beautiful_...	Replies:9 Views: 210	Re: do i have the right to be annoyed??? By: beautiful_... May 08, 2011 04:01:31 PM
How do I play it	CR80	Replies:7 Views: 152	Re: How do I play it By: CR80 May 08, 2011 03:42:35 PM
What would you do? Friend in an abusive	Chewyxouk	Replies:13	May 08, 2011 03:42:35 PM

relationship with child.		Views: 221	Re: What would you do? Friend in an abusive relationship with child. By: Chewyxouk May 08, 2011 12:00:38 PM
Getting over insecurities	Mysteries_...	Replies: 1 Views: 87	Re: Getting over insecurities By: Chewyxouk May 08, 2011 11:06:26 AM
I really fancy the Avon lady	Babygurlxj...	Replies: 13 Views: 342	Re: I really fancy the Avon lady By: DairyMilkC... May 08, 2011 08:47:10 AM
Ah for feck sake....friend + money = grrrrrrrr	summer-tea	Replies: 11 Views: 288	Re: Ah for feck sake....friend + money = grrrrrrrr By: oicurmt May 08, 2011 01:14:20 AM
Getting over ridiculous insecurities	Mysteries_...	Replies: 11 Views: 424	Re: Getting over ridiculous insecurities By: Lilly_T89 May 07, 2011 11:00:12 PM
Is he interested?	CheekyVimt...	Replies: 24 Views: 588	Re: Is he interested? By: CheekyVimt... May 07, 2011 10:40:26 PM
How do I know if he likes me back?	Golden_But...	Replies: 2 Views: 144	Re: How do I know if he likes me back? By: kool-chick... May 07, 2011 10:13:53 PM
I'm Worried About Bf's Mental Health	captaincru...	Replies: 20 Views: 284	Re: I'm Worried About Bf's Mental Health By: emma1988xx... May 07, 2011 09:39:19 PM
Am I wrong?	Mulanloves...	Replies: 20 Views: 396	Re: Am I wrong? By: kateplate6... May 07, 2011 07:21:04 PM
Mind games	Tinted_len...	Replies: 4 Views: 170	Re: Mind games By: XxLauraf90... May 07, 2011 07:20:36 PM
Why??	TrixVix	Replies: 2 Views: 117	Re: Why?? By: Rach_McQue... May 07, 2011 06:34:46 PM
today's life lesson	serena4000...	Replies: 1 Views: 125	Re: today's life lesson By: shufflebum May 07, 2011 05:51:59 PM
Please help!	Minxy_Catu...	Replies: 3 Views: 83	Re: Please help! By: Babygurlxj... May 07, 2011 01:33:44 PM
Severe LAPSE in judgement??	benito1987...	Replies: 8 Views: 302	Re: Severe LAPSE in judgement?? By: RuthSaysTh... May 07, 2011 12:33:45 PM
Meeting up with ex	SunshineOf...	Replies: 9 Views: 213	Re: Meeting up with ex By: shoe_gal_x May 07, 2011 08:12:34 AM
His past behaviour is still haunting me	sazzy86	Replies: 3 Views: 192	Re: His past behaviour is still haunting me By: kimpossibl... May 07, 2011 01:04:30 AM
How can we call it a relationship when we hardly see each other?	and_then_c...	Replies: 6 Views: 283	Re: How can we call it a relationship when we hardly see each other? By: sminkypink... May 06, 2011 11:35:49 PM
How do you know when you're ready for a new relationship?	MISSY2025	Replies: 10 Views: 220	Re: How do you know when you're ready for a new relationship? By: Tinted_len... May 06, 2011 11:30:57 PM
The Future	Blondieeuk...	Replies: 28 Views: 419	Re: The Future By: and_then_c... May 06, 2011 10:06:13 PM
help! I don't have friends	ninaa1992	Replies: 1 Views: 146	Re: help! I don't have friends By: Tinted_len... May 06, 2011 09:24:44 PM
boyfriend thinking others are more attractive	Cat_Toos	Replies: 47 Views: 528	Re: boyfriend thinking others are more attractive By: pixie28uk May 06, 2011 07:15:04 PM
"Twinless twins"	-RosieAppl...	Replies: 8	May 06, 2011 07:15:04 PM

		Views: 261	Re:
			By: KellyJay
			May 06, 2011 07:12:21 PM
Have you ever dumped someone you really loved?	slowdanceu...	Replies:13 Views: 344	Re: Have you ever dumped someone you really loved?
			By: slowdanceu...
			May 06, 2011 06:56:12 PM
Are looks important?	Lady-Jones	Replies:25 Views: 396	Re: Are looks important?
			By: c__jay
			May 06, 2011 06:35:38 PM
Who Gets More Jealous...?	Oblongchee...	Replies:20 Views: 243	Re: Who Gets More Jealous...?
			By: annieapple...
			May 06, 2011 06:34:43 PM
is this how it goes for everyone?!	fresh_face	Replies:11 Views: 414	Re: is this how it goes for everyone?!
			By: x-KK88-x
			May 06, 2011 04:52:22 PM
comebacks?	CaitlinJay...	Replies:21 Views: 399	Re: comebacks?
			By: CaitlinJay...
			May 06, 2011 03:29:40 PM
Rational or Irrational?	kimpossibl...	Replies:21 Views: 219	Re: Rational or Irrational?
			By: Sweet_Chee...
			May 06, 2011 02:35:13 PM
Two friends dating	slowdanceu...	Replies:19 Views: 188	Re: Two friends dating
			By: blonde_bar...
			May 06, 2011 01:43:40 PM
He's moving on too fast	0_fallen_1	Replies:3 Views: 141	Re: He's moving on too fast
			By: kimpossibl...
			May 06, 2011 12:59:42 PM
Grr hypocrite!	Sugar_Bomb	Replies:17 Views: 391	Re: Grr hypocrite!
			By: -JellyBell...
			May 06, 2011 12:37:44 PM
boyfriends phone	vashdm	Replies:96 Views: 1614	Re: boyfriends phone
			By: emma1988xx...
			May 06, 2011 12:37:44 PM
boyfriends phone	vashdm	Replies:96 Views: 1614	Re: boyfriends phone
			By: emma1988xx...
			May 06, 2011 11:15:44 AM
is this werid !!	Dani_xx_sa...	Replies:26 Views: 304	Re: is this werid !!
			By: -peachy-
			May 06, 2011 11:08:58 AM
Might be breaking up!	lillypinku...	Replies:2 Views: 154	Re: Might be breaking up!
			By: -JellyBell...
			May 06, 2011 10:48:38 AM
Boyfriend doubts	kayeP2	Replies:2 Views: 154	Re: Boyfriend doubts
			By: -JellyBell...
			May 06, 2011 09:36:33 AM
HOW TO STOP SAYING SORRY!!!!	ryder20	Replies:7 Views: 105	Re: HOW TO STOP SAYING SORRY!!!!
			By: LilMoneyBa...
			May 06, 2011 12:01:09 AM
crying at the boyfriend	emily08080...	Replies:17 Views: 448	Re: crying at the boyfriend
			By: Jo_used_to...
			May 05, 2011 11:25:22 PM
Broken up, but still love him :/ Anybody been through this?	NannonWill...	Replies:6 Views: 138	Re: Broken up, but still love him :/ Anybody been through this?
			By: cezc91
			May 05, 2011 08:16:00 PM
how to seduce the guy next door	amz262	Replies:9 Views: 213	Re: how to seduce the guy next door
			By: amz262
			May 05, 2011 07:03:00 PM
How would you feel if your boyfriend snooped?	annieapple...	Replies:81 Views: 1005	Re: How would you feel if your boyfriend snooped?
			By: pixie28uk
			May 05, 2011 06:54:10 PM
Talking every day...is it a good or a bad thing?	BittenBeau...	Replies:10 Views: 351	Re: Talking every day...is it a good or a bad thing?
			By: Kelathyn
			May 05, 2011 05:08:45 PM
Long Distance?	Promisesuk	Replies:4	

		Views: 104	Re: Long Distance? By: lauriee May 05, 2011 05:03:21 PM
Would this upset/annoy you?	I-Like-Can...	Replies:17 Views: 399	Re: Would this upset/annoy you? By: I-Like-Can... May 05, 2011 04:52:32 PM
What to do?	JoanneLM	Replies:7 Views: 189	Re: What to do? By: Lesliesexy... May 05, 2011 04:24:41 PM
Hard day	Super_Star...	Replies:8 Views: 218	Re: Hard day By: Charlotte... May 05, 2011 03:53:52 PM
Living together - all it's cracked up to be?	GlitterFre...	Replies:7 Views: 153	Re: Living together - all it's cracked up to be? By: fmlwidow May 05, 2011 03:53:52 PM
Living together - all it's cracked up to be?	GlitterFre...	Replies:7 Views: 154	Re: Living together - all it's cracked up to be? By: fmlwidow May 05, 2011 03:52:13 PM
Apparently everythings my fault!	HanniBoo22...	Replies:3 Views: 76	Re: Apparently everythings my fault! By: HanniBoo22... May 05, 2011 01:08:40 PM
Does monogamy come naturally to you?	slowdanceu...	Replies:41 Views: 654	Re: Does monogamy come naturally to you? By: ObscuredBy... May 05, 2011 12:51:54 PM
Dating a recovering alcoholic.	RB_x	Replies:2 Views: 70	Re: Dating a recovering alcoholic. By: annieapple... May 05, 2011 09:54:32 AM
he said his ex's name..	sminkypink...	Replies:25 Views: 662	Re: he said his ex's name.. By: sminkypink... May 05, 2011 03:07:50 AM
facebook poking...	emma1988xx...	Replies:22 Views: 274	Re: facebook poking... By: CrazyLikeA... May 04, 2011 10:12:45 PM
Would you get rid, or give him a chance	RB_x	Replies:15 Views: 345	Re: Would you get rid, or give him a chance By: RB_x May 04, 2011 10:08:44 PM
what does it mean :/	Molly_X	Replies:3 Views: 208	Re: what does it mean :/ By: x-KK88-x May 04, 2011 09:54:52 PM
What do I do?	GlitterFre...	Replies:3 Views: 117	Re: What do I do? By: kimpossibl... May 04, 2011 08:44:39 PM
how do I break up with him, never done this before, usually they have dumped me first lol.	Odds0x	Replies:3 Views: 174	Re: how do I break up with him, never done this before, usually they have dumped me first lol. By: D4ve May 04, 2011 08:13:44 PM
I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all	XxLauraf90...	Replies:32 Views: 714	Re: I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all By: sweetgirl_... May 04, 2011 06:01:08 PM
Our Parents. Advice?	Kelathyn	Replies:6 Views: 205	Re: Our Parents. Advice? By: Jo_used_to... May 04, 2011 05:11:01 PM
Goodbye till August :(	gp_love	Replies:4 Views: 135	Re: Goodbye till August :( By: gp_love May 04, 2011 03:14:31 PM
Mr or Mrs Moody?	fmlwidow	Replies:17 Views: 331	Re: Mr or Mrs Moody? By: SizequeenR... May 04, 2011 03:03:35 PM
How Would You Deal With It...	Hoplessly-...	Replies:6 Views: 205	Re: How Would You Deal With It... By: Charlotte... May 04, 2011 10:12:45 PM
Would you get rid, or give him a chance	RB_x	Replies:15 Views: 346	Re: Would you get rid, or give him a chance By: RB_x May 04, 2011 10:08:44 PM
what does it mean :/	Molly_X	Replies:3 Views: 209	Re: what does it mean :/

What do I do?	GlitterFre...	Replies:3 Views: 118	By: x-KK88-x May 04, 2011 09:54:52 PM Re: What do I do? By: kimpossibL... May 04, 2011 08:44:39 PM
how do I break up with him, never done this before, usually they have dumped me first lol.	Odds0x	Replies:3 Views: 175	Re: how do I break up with him, never done this before, usually they have dumped me first lol. By: D4ve May 04, 2011 08:13:44 PM
I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all	XxLauraf90...	Replies:32 Views: 718	Re: I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all By: sweetgirl_... May 04, 2011 06:01:08 PM
Our Parents. Advice?	Kelathyn	Replies:6 Views: 206	Re: Our Parents. Advice? By: Jo_used_to... May 04, 2011 05:11:01 PM
Goodbye till August :(	gp_love	Replies:4 Views: 136	Re: Goodbye till August :( By: gp_love May 04, 2011 03:14:31 PM
Mr or Mrs Moody?	fmlwidow	Replies:17 Views: 332	Re: Mr or Mrs Moody? By: SizequeenR... May 04, 2011 03:03:35 PM
How Would You Deal With It...	Hoplessly-...	Replies:6 Views: 206	Re: How Would You Deal With It... By: Charlotte... May 04, 2011 03:03:31 PM
Why is this?	MP1988	Replies:1 Views: 151	Re: Why is this? By: JoanneLM May 04, 2011 02:59:50 PM
Single and happy	Chloerwarr	Replies:1 Views: 102	Re: Single and happy By: JoanneLM May 04, 2011 02:57:03 PM
Just Curious	Blondieeuk...	Replies:4 Views: 177	Re: Just Curious By: Charlotte... May 04, 2011 02:51:31 PM
What to do?	JoanneLM	Replies:1 Views: 46	Re: What to do? By: JoanneLM May 04, 2011 02:27:53 PM
Lip Kisses	Laenri	Replies:77 Views: 1202	Re: Lip Kisses By: -JellyBell... May 04, 2011 01:40:44 PM
Do feminine lesbians exist?	flyafly	Replies:22 Views: 358	Re: Do feminine lesbians exist? By: thekinkajo... May 04, 2011 12:34:46 PM
Need help!! Feeling so guilty right now!	Missconfuz...	Replies:4 Views: 177	Re: Need help!! Feeling so guilty right now! By: StatingThe... May 04, 2011 10:36:54 AM
Is my bf stingy or not... what's the verdict?	shieahmari...	Replies:24 Views: 794	Re: Is my bf stingy or not... what's the verdict? By: DrTinycat May 04, 2011 10:32:23 AM
What would you do?	WeeNixuk	Replies:3 Views: 144	Re: What would you do? By: annieapple... May 04, 2011 10:26:36 AM
working with your partner	angelbabe2...	Replies:5 Views: 113	Re: working with your partner By: sminkypink... May 04, 2011 06:30:22 AM
Sacrificing your social life for your OH	Sian-Danie...	Replies:33 Views: 550	Re: Sacrificing your social life for your OH By: Sian-Danie... May 03, 2011 11:58:23 PM
The laughs of dating websites!	evy141	Replies:17 Views: 425	Re: The laughs of dating websites! By: VenV May 03, 2011 11:39:31 PM
Where do I go to meet someone?	VenV	Replies:20 Views: 418	Re: Where do I go to meet someone? By: VenV May 03, 2011 11:20:36 PM
perfume?	kool-chick...	Replies:5 Views: 106	Re: perfume? By: MsRosenrot

I year	buzz_cg	Replies:13 Views: 233	May 03, 2011 10:40:45 PM Re: I year By: lovely-koa...
Joining The Navy	sweet_madd...	Replies:22 Views: 235	May 03, 2011 10:19:02 PM Re: Joining The Navy By: sweet_madd...
10 years - no proposal	pinkpuseu...	Replies:68 Views: 1454	May 03, 2011 08:59:41 PM Re: 10 years - no proposal By: Lilleauk
Break-up time	Bellarina_...	Replies:3 Views: 159	May 03, 2011 06:46:02 PM Re: Break-up time By: doyoulikep...
My new date is my ex date's colleague...please help!	sweetheart...	Replies:2 Views: 80	May 03, 2011 06:14:19 PM Re: My new date is my ex date's colleague...please help! By: doyoulikep...
I cannot get over him.	wishing_x	Replies:14 Views: 339	May 03, 2011 05:26:17 PM Re: I cannot get over him. By: Jo_used_to...
Broken Heart	SimplyMe41	Replies:6 Views: 159	May 03, 2011 05:04:01 PM Re: Broken Heart By: Jo_used_to...
I dont trust him :(	LILYMK1	Replies:3 Views: 167	May 03, 2011 04:58:59 PM Re: I dont trust him :( By: Jo_used_to...
Money struggle with OH	shootingst...	Replies:15 Views: 188	May 03, 2011 04:36:34 PM Re: Money struggle with OH By: Hazy_too
How to be a good step mum?	Blondieeuk...	Replies:8 Views: 130	May 03, 2011 04:30:50 PM Re: How to be a good step mum? By: LucindaFan...
Men and mates girlfriends????	Maizy1	Replies:4 Views: 218	May 03, 2011 02:12:12 PM Re: Men and mates girlfriends???? By: cependant
My dads reaction to my fiances profession..	CookieCake...	Replies:4 Views: 282	May 03, 2011 01:03:13 PM Re: My dads reaction to my fiances profession.. By: CookieCake...
Close knit community or keep yourself to yourself?	discoshoes	Replies:7 Views: 139	May 03, 2011 11:40:02 AM Re: Close knit community or keep yourself to yourself? By: Robyn_US
when do you know a friendship is over?	x-KK88-x	Replies:4 Views: 165	May 03, 2011 10:42:02 AM Re: when do you know a friendship is over? By: -JellyBell...
Playing the Balancing Act - isn't working anymore!	deleted201...	Replies:3 Views: 133	May 03, 2011 04:47:30 AM Re: Playing the Balancing Act - isn't working anymore! By: GlitterFre...
What does a wink mean?	dizzyblond...	Replies:15 Views: 435	May 03, 2011 04:44:43 AM Re: What does a wink mean? By: searchandr...
My Boyfriend is Bisexual...	Gaol_Warde...	Replies:6 Views: 158	May 03, 2011 04:39:46 AM Re: My Boyfriend is Bisexual... By: searchandr...
Boyfriend Advice plz	dawny76	Replies:36 Views: 269	May 02, 2011 10:57:51 PM Re: Boyfriend Advice plz By: dawny76
Am I right to be annoyed?	shootingst...	Replies:8 Views: 184	May 02, 2011 10:57:01 PM Re: Am I right to be annoyed? By: shootingst...
Your opinions on going out with the friend of an ex or person you had a fling with.	Fishy-Fish	Replies:12 Views: 194	May 02, 2011 10:05:08 PM Re: Your opinions on going out with the friend of an ex or person you had a fling with. By: Fishy-Fish
Would you stay?	JFC91	Replies:39 Views: 718	May 02, 2011 09:40:18 PM Re: Would you stay?



completley & utterley fed up!!! :-(	LadyCBuk	Replies:10 Views: 332	By: IMPO May 02, 2011 09:12:18 PM Re: completley & utterley fed up!!! :-( By: kimpossibl...
Speed Dating	MISSY2025	Replies:3 Views: 34	May 02, 2011 09:03:29 PM Re: Speed Dating By: MISSY2025
Boyfriend Trouble	Yourminieg...	Replies:5 Views: 300	May 02, 2011 07:35:26 PM Re: Boyfriend Trouble By: Yourminieg...
Love Square!!! :(	candyfloss...	Replies:33 Views: 463	May 02, 2011 07:09:07 PM Re: Love Square!!! :( By: candyfloss...
Pathetic boyfriend	Teapots_an...	Replies:21 Views: 776	May 02, 2011 06:39:57 PM Re: Pathetic boyfriend By: Teapots_an...
last ditch attempt	fresh_face	Replies:1 Views: 134	May 02, 2011 05:40:14 PM Re: last ditch attempt By: Dancing_Ze...
I'm falling for my friends with benefits.	RckerChck0...	Replies:6 Views: 199	May 02, 2011 04:59:23 PM Re: I'm falling for my friends with benefits. By: Fearless_x
Do you think thats abit harsh?	Chloerwarr	Replies:2 Views: 234	May 02, 2011 04:27:24 PM Re: Do you think thats abit harsh? By: annieapple...
He ended it, no second thought	Bellarina_...	Replies:7 Views: 443	May 02, 2011 04:21:18 PM Re: He ended it, no second thought By: Bellarina_...
What to do after being 'on a break' ?	Charlottie...	Replies:16 Views: 392	May 02, 2011 02:08:55 PM Re: What to do after being 'on a break' ? By: Dancing_Ze...
Stag do	bedheadswe...	Replies:5 Views: 176	May 02, 2011 01:57:47 PM Re: Stag do By: bedheadswe...
Seeing a new guy... but have a very soft spot for ex	SunshineOf...	Replies:11 Views: 305	May 02, 2011 12:33:31 PM Re: Seeing a new guy... but have a very soft spot for ex By: CheekyVimt...
i walked right past him :)	fresh_face	Replies:1 Views: 219	May 02, 2011 12:17:34 PM Re: i walked right past him :) By: Chii_Love
Why do men flirt then ignore you? & does he fancy me? (work colleague)?	dizzyblond...	Replies:11 Views: 528	May 02, 2011 12:07:05 PM Re: Why do men flirt then ignore you? & does he fancy me? (work colleague)? By: colgirl21
Frsit date: Success or disaster?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:2 Views: 154	May 02, 2011 11:16:30 AM Re: Frsit date: Success or disaster? By: CheekyVimt...
he's messing with my mind:/	CaitlinJay...	Replies:5 Views: 256	May 02, 2011 01:45:11 AM Re: he's messing with my mind:/ By: Summer_Sto...
Not comfortable talking to me?!!	Kays82	Replies:1 Views: 143	May 01, 2011 11:02:14 PM Re: Not comfortable talking to me?!! By: annieapple...
Urghhh...Pathetic but I'm annoyed	Chica_Gale...	Replies:13 Views: 339	May 01, 2011 10:02:06 PM Re: Urghhh...Pathetic but I'm annoyed By: Stunt_Girl
53 secrets girls don't want guys to know.....	hulahoop84...	Replies:41 Views: 796	May 01, 2011 09:57:33 PM Re: 53 secrets girls don't want guys to know..... By: HairyBaldr...
Not sure how he feels????	dizzyblond...	Replies:2 Views: 183	May 01, 2011 09:11:10 PM Re: Not sure how he feels???? By: doyoulikep...
stuck in a rut...	x-KK88-x	Replies:3 Views: 101	May 01, 2011 08:34:36 PM Re: stuck in a rut... By: haunteduk

First date dos and donts	CheekyVimt...	Replies:12 Views: 438	May 01, 2011 07:28:35 PM Re: First date dos and donts By: CheekyVimt...
Confused! lol	Minxy_Catu...	Replies:2 Views: 75	May 01, 2011 06:50:43 PM Re: Confused! lol By: Minxy_Catu...
y do i love him :/	girlx	Replies:3 Views: 202	May 01, 2011 06:49:02 PM Re: y do i love him :/ By: Ana_Kuk
Serious advice needed about a friends boyfriend.	ilovegagu...	Replies:14 Views: 436	May 01, 2011 06:04:43 PM Re: Serious advice needed about a friends boyfriend. By: karma240
My boyfriend has gone traveling for 3mths!	clairbear0...	Replies:14 Views: 388	May 01, 2011 06:02:13 PM Re: My boyfriend has gone traveling for 3mths! By: Cherry-che...
I realise this might make me sound like a right b-tch	juicylucyy	Replies:7 Views: 368	May 01, 2011 04:28:01 PM Re: I realise this might make me sound like a right b-tch By: AngryChees...
<3	bloominguk...	Replies:12 Views: 241	May 01, 2011 04:27:33 PM Re: <3 By: Charlotte...
Bestfriend?	CaitlinJay...	Replies:5 Views: 120	May 01, 2011 04:18:23 PM Re: Bestfriend? By: doyoulikep...
Can I trust him?	go79	Replies:2 Views: 111	May 01, 2011 03:58:04 PM Re: Can I trust him? By: Mulanloves...
Lying - do you and, if so, why?	GlitterFre...	Replies:8 Views: 277	May 01, 2011 03:52:49 PM Re: Lying - do you and, if so, why? By: AngryChees...
Leading him on?? :/	Mulanloves...	Replies:5 Views: 219	May 01, 2011 09:26:21 AM Re: Leading him on?? :/ By: sammy1990u...
update...and advice?	fresh_face	Replies:4 Views: 226	May 01, 2011 09:14:59 AM Re: update...and advice? By: Fuzz

## Sex

Topics	Author	Post	Last post
He's stopped going down on me!	lillilac	Replies:5 Views: 290	Jul 31, 2011 11:23:20 PM Re: He's stopped going down on me! By: lillilac
My high sex drive...	pistachio_...	Replies:2 Views: 329	Jul 31, 2011 09:56:10 PM Re: My high sex drive... By: devilsacco...
Is it ok to touch yourself when you hear your parents have sex?	Justin_Bee...	Replies:25 Views: 1055	Jul 31, 2011 08:31:03 PM Re: Is it ok to touch yourself when you hear your parents have sex? By: SouthernBe...
sex toys?	pinkbow_	Replies:6 Views: 149	Jul 31, 2011 08:02:11 PM Re: sex toys? By: -Shooting-...
Outfits etc	HelloKitty...	Replies:6 Views: 286	Jul 31, 2011 07:56:24 PM Re: Outfits etc By: -Shooting-...
first time sex advice	danii1223	Replies:2 Views: 137	Jul 31, 2011 07:08:22 PM Re: first time sex advice By: Sirona_x
Is it true that in the UK sex normally comes before commitment?	jarrture	Replies:13 Views: 597	Jul 31, 2011 05:27:18 PM Re: Is it true that in the UK sex normally comes

			before commitment? By: pinkbow_
painful sex with the injection?	Gemz29	Replies:11 Views: 212	Jul 30, 2011 07:33:56 PM Re: painful sex with the injection? By: jemilou
FILTHY	Oblongchee...	Replies:97 Views: 2790	Jul 30, 2011 05:11:45 PM Re: FILTHY By: bowl-of-or...
Yeah... not too sure about the whole penetration thing...	betty-rubb...	Replies:2 Views: 453	Jul 30, 2011 01:34:41 PM Re: Yeah... not too sure about the whole penetration thing... By: vintagepri...
Boyfriend Troubles :(	vintagepri...	Replies:5 Views: 281	Jul 30, 2011 10:52:41 AM Re: Boyfriend Troubles :( By: vintagepri...
Virgin and the giant vibe experience	spaldingsb...	Replies:1 Views: 400	Jul 29, 2011 05:23:15 PM Re: Virgin and the giant vibe experience By: _tarantulo...
ideas on a sexy special night...	Jessicax9...	Replies:4 Views: 452	Jul 29, 2011 04:17:17 PM Re: ideas on a sexy special night... By: 21O694
CFNM Parties	emma_123uk	Replies:20 Views: 8549	Jul 29, 2011 03:07:18 PM Re: CFNM Parties By: F_Is_4_Fin...
he doesn't want sex?	kay1059209	Replies:5 Views: 355	Jul 29, 2011 03:04:34 PM Re: he doesn't want sex? By: F_Is_4_Fin...
he doesn't want sex?	kay1059209	Replies:5 Views: 357	Jul 29, 2011 03:04:34 PM Re: he doesn't want sex? By: F_Is_4_Fin...
Life after 8 year Relationship (3 married)	F_Is_4_Fin...	Replies:0 Views: 249	Jul 29, 2011 01:06:32 PM Life after 8 year Relationship (3 married) By: F_Is_4_Fin...
Favourite music/song to make love to?	Willows21	Replies:5 Views: 267	Jul 29, 2011 12:25:02 PM Re: Favourite music/song to make love to? By: Glen_uk
would you be annoyed?	Scotty-gir...	Replies:7 Views: 507	Jul 29, 2011 10:52:26 AM Re: would you be annoyed? By: Hell_yeah_...
Little bit of advice please??	kaylou321	Replies:3 Views: 322	Jul 29, 2011 10:07:32 AM Re: Little bit of advice please?? By: Cpt_Awesom...
What do I do?	Trolleyed	Replies:5 Views: 201	Jul 29, 2011 10:02:01 AM Re: What do I do? By: jarrture
Boyfriend says he doesn't have any fantasies?	Sneezeuk1	Replies:38 Views: 1165	Jul 29, 2011 12:41:34 AM Re: Boyfriend says he doesn't have any fantasies? By: c__jay
no libido?	Jessia1201	Replies:0 Views: 74	Jul 29, 2011 12:33:58 AM no libido? By: Jessia1201
Sex toys advice!	Lauren17_x...	Replies:2 Views: 214	Jul 28, 2011 11:26:05 PM Re: Sex toys advice! By: Trolleyed
Female shaving?	Claireybea...	Replies:16 Views: 1113	Jul 28, 2011 11:21:16 PM Re: Female shaving? By: filthygorg...
Phone sex and dirty talk	LouiseSW	Replies:1 Views: 366	Jul 28, 2011 09:34:59 PM Re: Phone sex and dirty talk By: lornie1234
Is there a small chance of being pregnant?	xparadisep...	Replies:5 Views: 325	Jul 28, 2011 07:35:51 PM Re: Is there a small chance of being pregnant? By: pinkbow_
Girls what do you find to be just too small?	Spookz	Replies:7 Views: 614	Jul 27, 2011 11:45:35 PM Re: Girls what do you find to be just too small? By: CarcrashTV

legs	betaboy	Replies:13 Views: 670	Jul 27, 2011 07:55:51 PM Re: legs By: Jelly_Baby...
low self-esteem when it comes to porn :(	sprite65	Replies:27 Views: 865	Jul 27, 2011 02:05:14 PM Re: low self-esteem when it comes to porn :( By: naomi5000
Circumsized.....now he cant keep hard.....	vicki_leeu...	Replies:4 Views: 339	Jul 27, 2011 11:48:54 AM Re: Circumsized.....now he cant keep hard..... By: asian-inva...
Experiences with other girls?	Petalbloss...	Replies:38 Views: 1565	Jul 26, 2011 03:58:02 PM Re: Experiences with other girls? By: GlitterFre...
Handsome Ukrainian students searching a hot %&*\$# in London	blur15	Replies:14 Views: 417	Jul 26, 2011 12:25:16 PM Re: Handsome Ukrainian students searching a hot %&*\$# in London By: Velouria_
Soft Porn...	Deleted User	Replies:16 Views: 22654	Jul 26, 2011 12:14:28 PM Re: Soft Porn... By: SirenX
A different type of burning sensation this time.	Voraciousl...	Replies:3 Views: 178	Jul 26, 2011 09:58:32 AM Re: A different type of burning sensation this time. By: PeachyPeti...
circumcised - sorry help required	MadKat4	Replies:1 Views: 240	Jul 25, 2011 05:09:32 PM Re: circumcised - sorry help required By: Fearless_x
Question for the girls...relief on bad week!!	andyglasgo...	Replies:78 Views: 2308	Jul 25, 2011 03:51:36 PM Re: Question for the girls...relief on bad week!! By: barbie_86
Do I take up his offer?	Trolleyed	Replies:6 Views: 587	Jul 25, 2011 03:17:54 PM Re: Do I take up his offer? By: Trolleyed
only cums through oral	justme27uk	Replies:1 Views: 225	Jul 25, 2011 03:11:13 PM Re: only cums through oral By: justme27uk
I miss sex! :(	Lauren17_x...	Replies:9 Views: 421	Jul 25, 2011 02:46:54 PM Re: I miss sex! :( By: Claireybea...
help with sexy undies please?	Durbeyfiel...	Replies:2 Views: 231	Jul 25, 2011 01:58:23 PM Re: help with sexy undies please? By: Durbeyfiel...
do you think this will look sexy, me wearing this? will my boyfriend like it?	summer01uk	Replies:11 Views: 1266	Jul 25, 2011 08:57:20 AM Re: do you think this will look sexy, me wearing this? will my boyfriend like it? By: smartie-ba...
I have never came!	_itsraygen...	Replies:1 Views: 197	Jul 25, 2011 07:57:35 AM Re: I have never came! By: Naughty_87
Songs To Shag To...	Velouria_	Replies:6 Views: 269	Jul 25, 2011 12:11:42 AM Re: Songs To Shag To... By: IMPO
Experiences with contraceptive implant?	CherieAnni...	Replies:25 Views: 296	Jul 24, 2011 11:52:50 PM Re: Experiences with contraceptive implant? By: EpicDom
Have never orgasmed with a man	bowl-of-or...	Replies:10 Views: 667	Jul 24, 2011 11:29:55 PM Re: Have never orgasmed with a man By: Lauren17_x...
PC Muscles	SP_says_no...	Replies:2 Views: 196	Jul 24, 2011 10:24:18 PM Re: PC Muscles By: queencent
night squirts	Bear-Bardo...	Replies:10 Views: 649	Jul 24, 2011 10:16:51 PM Re: night squirts By: -Polly-
Calling ALL size-queens!!	c__jay	Replies:6 Views: 560	Jul 24, 2011 09:12:28 PM Re: Calling ALL size-queens!! By: Rocketman_...
Best Saturday Ever!	IzzySuk	Replies:7	Jul 24, 2011 08:34:30 PM

		Views: 596	Re: Best Saturday Ever! By: Velouria_
FAO the poorly endowed	clarebear_...	Replies:29 Views: 845	Jul 24, 2011 04:42:09 PM Re: FAO the poorly endowed By: MsRosenrot
Just ordered lube. So excited!	jennie-bee	Replies:7 Views: 522	Jul 24, 2011 01:59:26 PM Re: Just ordered lube. So excited! By: Rocketman_...
Ladies - Do you remove all your pubic hair	sunshine23...	Replies:41 Views: 1973	Jul 24, 2011 01:10:24 PM Re: Ladies - Do you remove all your pubic hair By: mellb00
Why would you cry at this?!	Jaguar_Ski...	Replies:72 Views: 1372	Jul 23, 2011 08:16:43 PM Re: Why would you cry at this?! By: EmmyXsnowf...
Desparate times call for.... someone with internet knowledge	LM2011	Replies:8 Views: 518	Jul 23, 2011 05:00:31 PM Re: Desparate times call for.... someone with internet knowledge By: izzybew
oral sex worries...	lilly3892	Replies:3 Views: 446	Jul 23, 2011 10:30:11 AM Re: oral sex worries... By: Naughty_87
Sex book	sunshine23...	Replies:6 Views: 383	Jul 23, 2011 12:04:17 AM Re: Sex book By: Velouria_
FAO Babygurl & Sz	Richik	Replies:3 Views: 174	Jul 22, 2011 11:56:10 PM Re: FAO Babygurl & Sz By: Naughty_87
Female Masturbation	sunshine23...	Replies:7 Views: 956	Jul 22, 2011 11:54:27 PM Re: Female Masturbation By: Naughty_87
Driving me crazy!	markj_1985	Replies:2 Views: 248	Jul 22, 2011 11:51:03 PM Re: Driving me crazy! By: Naughty_87
I used to love black %&*\$# a few years ago	Babygurlxj...	Replies:13 Views: 1009	Jul 22, 2011 10:56:29 PM Re: I used to love black %&*\$# a few years ago By: Hell_yeah_...
Embarrassing & awkward moments of a sexual nature	Paynebynam...	Replies:10 Views: 983	Jul 22, 2011 08:17:57 PM Re: Embarrassing & awkward moments of a sexual nature By: couchix3
can only orgasm with legs straight!!!	sassyblond...	Replies:6 Views: 430	Jul 22, 2011 06:31:56 PM Re: can only orgasm with legs straight!!! By: mellb00
Help!	NewGirl13	Replies:1 Views: 132	Jul 22, 2011 01:36:38 PM Re: Help! By: SirenX
Magic number	Cherry__Dr...	Replies:95 Views: 2086	Jul 21, 2011 11:22:25 PM Re: Magic number By: hulahoop84...
sexy photos	xPARISxuk	Replies:7 Views: 601	Jul 21, 2011 09:27:06 PM Re: sexy photos By: devilsacco...
No sex preferred to 3 second sex!	cosmoaddic...	Replies:10 Views: 533	Jul 21, 2011 08:33:01 PM Re: No sex preferred to 3 second sex! By: ooh-la-la
I think I put him off?!	kd24	Replies:4 Views: 463	Jul 21, 2011 04:34:22 PM Re: I think I put him off?! By: Blackula_
Will I or Wont I be a mini-slut? Gwan tell me what to do	furrytails	Replies:6 Views: 634	Jul 21, 2011 02:05:12 PM Re: Will I or Wont I be a mini-slut? Gwan tell me what to do By: Sparklexxx...
Can` t enjoy sex	samantha74...	Replies:6 Views: 362	Jul 21, 2011 09:44:12 AM Re: Can` t enjoy sex By: Naughty_87
I am a size queen!	PrettyLitt...	Replies:49	Jul 20, 2011 08:54:16 PM

		Views: 1473	Re: I am a size queen! By: JezebelJin...
sex life is dying	tigz2k11	Replies:21 Views: 571	Jul 20, 2011 08:07:13 PM Re: sex life is dying By: ABanand
blow job bother - advice please!!!	RoseGirl06	Replies:1 Views: 376	Jul 20, 2011 04:47:55 PM Re: blow job bother - advice please!!! By: tigz2k11
The Perfect Vagina	Dolphy_	Replies:10 Views: 610	Jul 20, 2011 04:08:00 PM Re: The Perfect Vagina By: CatFacey
Anal Sex	onetwothre...	Replies:28 Views: 1534	Jul 20, 2011 03:45:49 PM Re: Anal Sex By: Jaguar_Ski...
Help!	NewGirl13	Replies:1 Views: 135	Jul 22, 2011 01:36:38 PM Re: Help! By: SirenX
Magic number	Cherry__Dr...	Replies:95 Views: 2097	Jul 21, 2011 11:22:25 PM Re: Magic number By: hulahoop84...
sexy photos	xPARISxuk	Replies:7 Views: 604	Jul 21, 2011 09:27:06 PM Re: sexy photos By: devilsacco...
No sex preferred to 3 second sex!	cosmoaddic...	Replies:10 Views: 536	Jul 21, 2011 08:33:01 PM Re: No sex preferred to 3 second sex! By: ooh-la-la
I think I put him off?!	kd24	Replies:4 Views: 465	Jul 21, 2011 04:34:22 PM Re: I think I put him off?! By: Blackula_
Will I or Wont I be a mini-slut? Gwan tell me what to do	furrytails	Replies:6 Views: 636	Jul 21, 2011 02:05:12 PM Re: Will I or Wont I be a mini-slut? Gwan tell me what to do By: Sparklexxx...
Can't enjoy sex	samantha74...	Replies:6 Views: 366	Jul 21, 2011 09:44:12 AM Re: Can't enjoy sex By: Naughty_87
I am a size queen!	PrettyLitt...	Replies:49 Views: 1484	Jul 20, 2011 08:54:16 PM Re: I am a size queen! By: JezebelJin...
sex life is dying	tigz2k11	Replies:21 Views: 575	Jul 20, 2011 08:07:13 PM Re: sex life is dying By: ABanand
blow job bother - advice please!!!	RoseGirl06	Replies:1 Views: 378	Jul 20, 2011 04:47:55 PM Re: blow job bother - advice please!!! By: tigz2k11
The Perfect Vagina	Dolphy_	Replies:10 Views: 614	Jul 20, 2011 04:08:00 PM Re: The Perfect Vagina By: CatFacey
Anal Sex	onetwothre...	Replies:28 Views: 1538	Jul 20, 2011 03:45:49 PM Re: Anal Sex By: Jaguar_Ski...
anyone got any fun ideas i could use on the OH	ilovepengu...	Replies:12 Views: 756	Jul 20, 2011 01:16:19 PM Re: anyone got any fun ideas i could use on the OH By: elliehanfr...
No more joyfull sex	DeadAngelL...	Replies:5 Views: 457	Jul 19, 2011 11:01:49 PM Re: No more joyfull sex By: DeadAngelL...
fun sex games!	hs87	Replies:0 Views: 194	Jul 19, 2011 07:40:41 PM fun sex games! By: hs87
Orgasms - Why Must They Be Such a Big Deal?	Issinder	Replies:4 Views: 263	Jul 19, 2011 06:46:51 PM Re: Orgasms - Why Must They Be Such a Big Deal? By: CatFacey
Dressing up as a cavewoman - help	SizequeenR...	Replies:13 Views: 227	Jul 19, 2011 04:20:44 PM Re: Dressing up as a cavewoman - help

Having doubts...	Infinity89	Replies:24 Views: 919	By: SizequeenR... Jul 19, 2011 12:02:12 PM Re: Having doubts... By: tigz2k11
I want to be in control when on top!	bekilm	Replies:2 Views: 350	Jul 19, 2011 11:10:18 AM Re: I want to be in control when on top! By: Leah_BabyX Jul 19, 2011 12:19:14 AM
Where to buy a bullet vibrator battery please help	summer01uk	Replies:9 Views: 264	Re: Where to buy a bullet vibrator battery please help By: PrettyLitt... Jul 19, 2011 12:15:08 AM
Sex better with a brazilian!!	phosphora	Replies:2 Views: 410	Re: Sex better with a brazilian!! By: PrettyLitt... Jul 19, 2011 12:12:27 AM
URGENTwhats the pill called that stops your period?	ilovepengu...	Replies:14 Views: 389	Re: URGENTwhats the pill called that stops your period? By: inmydreamw... Jul 18, 2011 10:13:09 PM
Would love to meet someone.. have a bf	sunshine23...	Replies:5 Views: 328	Re: Would love to meet someone.. have a bf By: missladybi... Jul 18, 2011 08:56:35 PM
First time sex.....help	l_1538	Replies:1 Views: 237	Re: First time sex.....help By: sunshine23... Jul 18, 2011 07:28:18 PM
how many times a week do you think its is ok to have sex ??	megzimoo	Replies:6 Views: 468	Re: how many times a week do you think its is ok to have sex ?? By: Kylera7 Jul 18, 2011 04:19:48 PM
Sex toys for beginners...x	Candy_xuk	Replies:14 Views: 663	Re: Sex toys for beginners...x By: Claireybea... Jul 18, 2011 04:17:36 PM
Best remote control vibrator?	Briar-Rose	Replies:4 Views: 429	Re: Best remote control vibrator? By: Claireybea... Jul 18, 2011 02:45:40 PM
The Tongue Piercing LIE/Myth	jlushh	Replies:12 Views: 497	Re: The Tongue Piercing LIE/Myth By: jlushh Jul 17, 2011 10:30:01 PM
Confused	gills42	Replies:2 Views: 151	Re: Confused By: Kylera7 Jul 17, 2011 09:19:09 PM
Sex tips and techniques Web Chat Tuesday July 19	Webby_webm...	Replies:1 Views: 115	Re: Sex tips and techniques Web Chat Tuesday July 19 By: LilMissJuk... Jul 17, 2011 08:00:18 PM
severe drought help!!	asian-inva...	Replies:9 Views: 459	Re: severe drought help!! By: Inner_City... Jul 17, 2011 07:18:04 PM
Small penis	Athemistia	Replies:60 Views: 1542	Re: Small penis By: Gabz-MacGi... Jul 17, 2011 07:14:51 PM
Confidence in the bedroom.	Kylera7	Replies:2 Views: 177	Re: Confidence in the bedroom. By: Kylera7 Jul 17, 2011 07:02:26 PM
being in control!	tinkerbell...	Replies:1 Views: 111	Re: being in control! By: Naughty_87 Jul 17, 2011 01:34:34 PM
blow job bother - advice please!!!	RoseGirl06	Replies:4 Views: 371	Re: blow job bother - advice please!!! By: Naughty_87 Jul 17, 2011 12:29:19 PM
vibrator	loved2011	Replies:4 Views: 317	Re: vibrator By: loved2011 Jul 17, 2011 12:54:56 AM
initiating sex...?	princesspi...	Replies:7 Views: 433	Re: initiating sex...? By: bowl-of-or... Jul 16, 2011 10:32:12 PM
Sometimes get a pain...	lo2618	Replies:6	

		Views: 215	Re: Sometimes get a pain... By: Honey_Beee
I'm a very lucky girl	LittleRed_...	Replies:4 Views: 917	Jul 16, 2011 10:14:58 PM Re: I'm a very lucky girl By: Hell_yeah_...
Confidence: The lack of	psychedeli...	Replies:4 Views: 283	Jul 16, 2011 05:47:10 PM Re: Confidence: The lack of By: Leah_BabyX
Finish Fast!	crisa91	Replies:2 Views: 283	Jul 16, 2011 03:52:00 PM Re: Finish Fast! By: Naughty_87
Ditching the Condoms.	duwopuk	Replies:5 Views: 616	Jul 16, 2011 11:04:43 AM Re: Ditching the Condoms. By: CarcrashTV
Scared of getting me pregnant?	Elvenpath	Replies:15 Views: 556	Jul 15, 2011 08:43:02 PM Re: Scared of getting me pregnant? By: devilsacco...
awkward	midgetjem1	Replies:9 Views: 637	Jul 15, 2011 07:00:26 PM Re: awkward By: Gabz-MacGi...
Should he have said no?	MISSY2025	Replies:28 Views: 1053	Jul 15, 2011 01:28:05 PM Re: Should he have said no? By: Danax2
Boyfriend hardness blip... Did I react ok?	Obiwan_Jen...	Replies:10 Views: 686	Jul 15, 2011 12:38:36 PM Re: Boyfriend hardness blip... Did I react ok? By: Zeta-
Tempting proposition	gemevian	Replies:5 Views: 752	Jul 14, 2011 08:10:57 PM Re: Tempting proposition By: Blackula_
No orgasms during sex! At all! WHY?? :(	gingerchar...	Replies:17 Views: 907	Jul 14, 2011 07:19:48 PM Re: No orgasms during sex! At all! WHY?? :( By: jo-ho
Girth	doyoulikep...	Replies:10 Views: 533	Jul 14, 2011 06:59:57 PM Re: Girth By: doyoulikep...
Celibacy	Helen_Soot	Replies:1 Views: 154	Jul 14, 2011 06:17:42 PM Re: Celibacy By: LilMissJuk...
Outfits etc	HelloKitty...	Replies:0 Views: 45	Jul 14, 2011 05:50:47 PM Outfits etc By: HelloKitty...
He's just too big..?	leoniemae	Replies:24 Views: 689	Jul 14, 2011 05:45:56 PM Re: He's just too big..? By: Sparklexxx...
Bit of a rant, but feel free to advise and comment... PLEASE!!	DiscoJoeuk	Replies:17 Views: 684	Jul 14, 2011 04:45:18 PM Re: Bit of a rant, but feel free to advise and comment... PLEASE!! By: DiscoJoeuk
Male chastity thingys.....	Naughty_87	Replies:13 Views: 788	Jul 14, 2011 02:55:34 PM Re: Male chastity thingys..... By: CatFacey
Orgasms on the NHS?	Gabz-MacGi...	Replies:11 Views: 671	Jul 14, 2011 12:17:35 PM Re: Orgasms on the NHS? By: CarcrashTV
ouch!	Cherry__Dr...	Replies:3 Views: 400	Jul 13, 2011 10:42:53 PM Re: ouch! By: cuddlytoy
7 day break	loved2011	Replies:4 Views: 256	Jul 13, 2011 10:12:06 PM Re: 7 day break By: clarebear_...
FAO anyone who can masturbate by squeezing their thighs together!	Gemco	Replies:20 Views: 1241	Jul 13, 2011 07:42:07 PM Re: FAO anyone who can masturbate by squeezing their thighs together! By: Blackula_
suprise for the new boyfriend!!	madmaddiem...	Replies:9 Views: 804	Jul 13, 2011 03:29:24 PM Re: suprise for the new boyfriend!!



Do i cum too much??????	naughty_mi...	Replies:11 Views: 820	By: LilMissJuk... Jul 13, 2011 03:23:33 PM Re: Do i cum too much?????? By: LilMissJuk...
The last person you'll have sex with	Paynebynam...	Replies:55 Views: 1047	Jul 13, 2011 12:24:40 PM Re: The last person you'll have sex with By: Paynebynam...
how soon is too soon to have sex with someone	Sparklexxx...	Replies:23 Views: 1002	Jul 13, 2011 11:35:54 AM Re: how soon is too soon to have sex with someone By: Jaguar_Ski...
Why do periods exist? Grr.	CorleUK	Replies:15 Views: 355	Jul 13, 2011 11:29:46 AM Re: Why do periods exist? Grr. By: CorleUK
Random Question.....	asian-inva...	Replies:82 Views: 1794	Jul 13, 2011 10:43:20 AM Re: Random Question..... By: asian-inva...
Skype Sex?	samjeuk	Replies:27 Views: 33869	Jul 12, 2011 09:42:30 PM Re: Skype Sex? By: devilsacco...
Biting...	LoupyLou23	Replies:10 Views: 436	Jul 12, 2011 09:40:21 PM Re: Biting... By: xparadisep...
want to dress up in sexy underwear for boyfriend but bit embarassed and dont know how!!	summer01uk	Replies:12 Views: 469	Jul 12, 2011 09:25:33 PM Re: want to dress up in sexy underwear for boyfriend but bit embarassed and dont know how!! By: devilsacco...
Since..	CookieCake...	Replies:45 Views: 1067	Jul 12, 2011 09:17:33 PM Re: Since.. By: hellotreac...
i never orgasm, i have to fake for boyfriend :( he dont know, i want a bullet but he dont want me...	summer01uk	Replies:8 Views: 309	Jul 12, 2011 08:28:56 PM Re: i never orgasm, i have to fake for boyfriend :( he dont know, i want a bullet but he dont wan... By: Imperialis...
Anniversary	xPARISxuk	Replies:8 Views: 145	Jul 12, 2011 08:16:46 PM Re: Anniversary By: Appletini_...
websex: what's the harm?	currentaff...	Replies:19 Views: 1003	Jul 12, 2011 01:20:59 PM Re: websex: what's the harm? By: SirenX
First time anal	SummerBaby...	Replies:10 Views: 670	Jul 12, 2011 01:26:31 AM Re: First time anal By: clarebear_...
I JUST HAD 16 INCHES!	Babygurlxj...	Replies:42 Views: 1936	Jul 12, 2011 12:34:25 AM Re: I JUST HAD 16 INCHES! By: D4ve
'Follow me home' - Does that always only mean casual sex	Dollface_X...	Replies:3 Views: 167	Jul 11, 2011 10:29:03 PM Re: 'Follow me home' - Does that always only mean casual sex By: Imperialis...
FAO Babygurlxjx	Hanky-Pank...	Replies:6 Views: 374	Jul 11, 2011 06:54:49 PM Re: FAO Babygurlxjx By: Cherry-che...
Help please :( Women and men's advice much appreciated!!	vixy210	Replies:3 Views: 337	Jul 11, 2011 05:29:52 PM Re: Help please :( Women and men's advice much appreciated!! By: Vee2
Fck buddy confusion!!! Does he want more or am i overanalysing?	Rose281	Replies:7 Views: 480	Jul 10, 2011 11:34:33 PM Re: Fck buddy confusion!!! Does he want more or am i overanalysing? By: Velouria_
dont feel sexy	loved2011	Replies:3 Views: 246	Jul 10, 2011 11:27:34 PM Re: dont feel sexy By: Babygurlxj...
Suddenly started queefing constantly?!?!	littleblon...	Replies:5 Views: 427	Jul 10, 2011 10:41:08 PM Re: Suddenly started queefing constantly?!?!

Where do all these men hide?	wantmore07	Replies:51 Views: 1575	By: Naughty_87 Jul 10, 2011 10:33:17 PM Re: Where do all these men hide? By: Velouria_
whats a good food to use in the bedroom ??	megzimoo	Replies:8 Views: 237	Jul 10, 2011 01:04:30 PM Re: whats a good food to use in the bedroom ?? By: DancingInT...
trees?	xkayleighx...	Replies:33 Views: 646	Jul 10, 2011 11:20:46 AM Re: trees? By: CarcrashTV
Threesome... help !:(	Clarissa_X	Replies:7 Views: 908	Jul 09, 2011 08:51:54 PM Re: Threesome... help !:( By: Mary_Sue
Sex friends- to just friends!	BlondeBomb...	Replies:2 Views: 302	Jul 09, 2011 08:50:50 PM Re: Sex friends- to just friends! By: Babygurlxj...
Ending the sex drought?	Infinity89	Replies:14 Views: 709	Jul 08, 2011 06:39:37 PM Re: Ending the sex drought? By: CheekyVimt...
Soooo...I cried after orgasm :	StephanieL...	Replies:19 Views: 1210	Jul 08, 2011 06:13:57 PM Re: Soooo...I cried after orgasm :  By: CheekyVimt...
Hands!	lucyloo7	Replies:5 Views: 524	Jul 08, 2011 03:51:53 PM Re: Hands! By: SirenX
help! dirty dice game?	juicylucyy	Replies:8 Views: 469	Jul 07, 2011 11:20:02 PM Re: help! dirty dice game? By: juicylucyy
Clitoris stimulating = shaking legs	MorganG_Fi...	Replies:10 Views: 2185	Jul 07, 2011 05:59:50 PM Re: Clitoris stimulating = shaking legs By: Rocketman_...
So I'm going on holiday on Saturday...	CupcakeCut...	Replies:12 Views: 815	Jul 07, 2011 05:53:31 PM Re: So I'm going on holiday on Saturday... By: Smoooch
Is this normal?	cosmos156	Replies:5 Views: 477	Jul 07, 2011 03:28:12 PM Re: Is this normal? By: deb04XXX
Unable to orgasm...	09112010	Replies:5 Views: 327	Jul 07, 2011 03:05:49 PM Re: Unable to orgasm... By: 09112010
My rabbit.. LET DOWN	Clarissa_X	Replies:14 Views: 694	Jul 07, 2011 02:31:11 PM Re: My rabbit.. LET DOWN By: Sparklexxx...
Meeting Up Sober.. When You Met Drunk	OnlyGoodTi...	Replies:6 Views: 447	Jul 07, 2011 01:43:15 PM Re: Meeting Up Sober.. When You Met Drunk By: faybelline...
How make her swallow ?	Deleted User	Replies:54 Views: 4911	Jul 07, 2011 12:43:17 PM Re: How make her swallow ? By: LilMoneyBa...
Do you have sex during your period??	sunshine23...	Replies:23 Views: 1000	Jul 06, 2011 03:42:31 PM Re: Do you have sex during your period?? By: Jo_used_to...
Help!	JaySugar	Replies:2 Views: 199	Jul 06, 2011 02:40:42 PM Re: Help! By: JaySugar
Sexperimental	daisy_chai...	Replies:4 Views: 434	Jul 06, 2011 11:56:24 AM Re: Sexperimental By: Rocketman_...
Should I be flattered or insulted	Louiseuk18	Replies:15 Views: 1539	Jul 06, 2011 11:43:12 AM Re: Should I be flattered or insulted By: I-Like-Can...
Anal Question	-Pamm-	Replies:9 Views: 923	Jul 06, 2011 11:37:06 AM Re: Anal Question By: Naughty_87
Routine	Blondieeuk...	Replies:4 Views: 381	Jul 05, 2011 10:29:30 PM Re: Routine

Something has just occurred to me, is this normal?	TurquoiseD...	Replies:18 Views: 1550	By: Kylera7 Jul 05, 2011 10:22:50 PM Re: Something has just occurred to me, is this normal? By: fresh_face
oral sex stage fright	claudiapar...	Replies:1 Views: 319	Jul 05, 2011 09:07:56 PM Re: oral sex stage fright By: devilsacco...
Solo Survey	Gemco	Replies:21 Views: 892	Jul 05, 2011 06:13:41 PM Re: Solo Survey By: jlushh
sexy playlist..	taperjeang...	Replies:13 Views: 472	Jul 05, 2011 03:17:08 PM Re: sexy playlist.. By: DavidsGood...
oral sex stage fright	claudiapar...	Replies:1 Views: 321	Jul 05, 2011 09:07:56 PM Re: oral sex stage fright By: devilsacco...
Solo Survey	Gemco	Replies:21 Views: 895	Jul 05, 2011 06:13:41 PM Re: Solo Survey By: jlushh
sexy playlist..	taperjeang...	Replies:13 Views: 474	Jul 05, 2011 03:17:08 PM Re: sexy playlist.. By: DavidsGood...
How often do you and your OH do oral?	couchiex3	Replies:36 Views: 1782	Jul 05, 2011 12:22:52 PM Re: How often do you and your OH do oral? By: Charlottie...
Circumcision "style"	blue8011	Replies:5 Views: 592	Jul 04, 2011 11:01:25 PM Re: Circumcision By: Okam
cut or uncut?	curious-ge...	Replies:11 Views: 783	Jul 04, 2011 10:57:02 PM Re: cut or uncut? By: hayzyuk
kissing	Sparklexxx...	Replies:11 Views: 613	Jul 04, 2011 10:44:27 PM Re: kissing By: Sparklexxx...
Phimosis	just_shoot	Replies:6 Views: 688	Jul 04, 2011 10:40:00 PM Re: Phimosis By: Okam
G-spot help!	Miss_Roo	Replies:3 Views: 380	Jul 04, 2011 10:29:51 PM Re: G-spot help! By: devilsacco...
That Awkward Moment When...	DairyMilkC...	Replies:9 Views: 1499	Jul 04, 2011 10:10:25 PM Re: That Awkward Moment When... By: SirenX
sex .. wet .. periods	_country_b...	Replies:5 Views: 636	Jul 04, 2011 09:55:06 PM Re: sex .. wet .. periods By: Lai80
Outdoor Sex	xparadisep...	Replies:9 Views: 535	Jul 04, 2011 09:29:55 PM Re: Outdoor Sex By: Okam
I am permanently horny at the moment....help!	the-dc	Replies:5 Views: 514	Jul 04, 2011 09:18:13 PM Re: I am permanently horny at the moment....help! By: Okam
So... I'm confused	_Ripcurl_	Replies:6 Views: 397	Jul 04, 2011 08:55:20 PM Re: So... I'm confused By: PeachyPeti...
Rubbing clitoris during sex.	HelenRUKuk	Replies:34 Views: 1809	Jul 04, 2011 11:11:59 AM Re: Rubbing clitoris during sex. By: so_inappro...
Sex in the sea, anyone?	kiirst123	Replies:6 Views: 499	Jul 03, 2011 05:32:01 PM Re: Sex in the sea, anyone? By: kiirst123
So i keep reading	JessiccaR	Replies:7 Views: 542	Jul 03, 2011 02:26:32 PM Re: So i keep reading By: DairyMilkC...
Condom keeps splitting?	sweetrelea...	Replies:9	Jul 02, 2011 10:25:41 PM

		Views: 399	Re: Condom keeps splitting? By: kool-chick...
Rimming	Wilko80	Replies:67 Views: 2279	Jul 02, 2011 12:31:54 AM Re: Rimming By: cleohorny
Holiday Ideass ;) ?	kiirst123	Replies:1 Views: 319	Jul 02, 2011 12:22:35 AM Re: Holiday Ideass ;) ? By: cleohorny
How to Have a Threesome	SexyCandyP...	Replies:7 Views: 1239	Jul 02, 2011 12:13:41 AM Re: How to Have a Threesome By: cleohorny
Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she's a sl*t	Sweet_Chee...	Replies:47 Views: 640	Jul 01, 2011 09:24:07 PM Re: Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she's a sl*t By: Mary_Sue
'Barely Legal' porn?	JezebelJin...	Replies:13 Views: 1377	Jul 01, 2011 08:34:36 PM Re: 'Barely Legal' porn? By: Andy_most_...
What is your favourite fantasy?	xparadisep...	Replies:1 Views: 381	Jul 01, 2011 06:01:11 PM Re: What is your favourite fantasy? By: EmilyP2000
Yet another thread on anal	punk4rock	Replies:5 Views: 368	Jul 01, 2011 03:46:34 PM Re: Yet another thread on anal By: Sweet_Chee...
was wondering if anyone has or had the coil ??	megzimoo	Replies:1 Views: 128	Jul 01, 2011 12:36:54 PM Re: was wondering if anyone has or had the coil ?? By: LilMissJuk...
Receiving Oral	andy2005	Replies:9 Views: 695	Jul 01, 2011 11:41:50 AM Re: Receiving Oral By: sarahsmith...
Another pointless threade much like that small dick one	Rocketman_...	Replies:8 Views: 290	Jun 30, 2011 10:59:59 PM Re: Another pointless threade much like that small dick one By: Heavy-Wing...
First Toy	xPARISxuk	Replies:8 Views: 298	Jun 30, 2011 10:16:52 PM Re: First Toy By: devilsacco...
Sexy lingerie is important or not?	drutacatal...	Replies:24 Views: 1343	Jun 30, 2011 09:43:17 PM Re: Sexy lingerie is important or not? By: KingBiscui...
Sex for a woman!!	andyglasgo...	Replies:8 Views: 534	Jun 30, 2011 07:16:53 PM Re: Sex for a woman!! By: claireloui...
Doing it at work...	Twinkle_Pi...	Replies:13 Views: 676	Jun 30, 2011 04:09:48 PM Re: Doing it at work... By: c__jay
RATE MY DP	Deepops	Replies:5 Views: 510	Jun 30, 2011 03:02:59 PM Re: RATE MY DP By: Chica_Gale...
Car sex	Chii_Love	Replies:25 Views: 1456	Jun 30, 2011 02:26:02 PM Re: Car sex By: _Shanaynay...
DELETE ACCOUNT	Deepops	Replies:1 Views: 149	Jun 30, 2011 09:38:26 AM Re: DELETE ACCOUNT By: Naughty_87
Jack's Blowjob Lessons?	PeachyPeti...	Replies:11 Views: 2359	Jun 30, 2011 12:53:47 AM Re: Jack's Blowjob Lessons? By: SirenX
Unprotected, Underage Sex is just DISGUSTING.	SkyHighHee...	Replies:267 Views: 1872	Jun 30, 2011 12:51:12 AM Re: Unprotected, Underage Sex is just DISGUSTING. By: S_Williams...
I have a problem... a big chicken! >:(	candyfloss...	Replies:2 Views: 449	Jun 30, 2011 12:44:57 AM Re: I have a problem... a big chicken! >:( By: SirenX
Girls what do you find to be just too small?	Spookz	Replies:139	Jun 29, 2011 10:47:02 PM

		Views: 1825	Re: Girls what do you find to be just too small? By: Rocketman_...
BLOWJOBS!	girlx	Replies:6 Views: 740	Jun 29, 2011 10:08:41 PM Re: BLOWJOBS! By: xparadisep...
Ever found your man's prostate and liked it?	anneofgaun...	Replies:15 Views: 1079	Jun 29, 2011 06:26:42 PM Re: Ever found your man's prostate and liked it? By: Rocketman_...
GIVING HEAD...LADIES, POST ALLLLL YOUR TIPS AND TRICKS!	jannyjayja...	Replies:13 Views: 14551	Jun 29, 2011 05:01:28 PM Re: GIVING HEAD...LADIES, POST ALLLLL YOUR TIPS AND TRICKS! By: stars_n_sp...
Embarassing stories!	LaughUntil...	Replies:34 Views: 1816	Jun 29, 2011 03:57:19 PM Re: Embarassing stories! By: Rocketman_...
How to give AMAZING head?	mariala	Replies:11 Views: 1838	Jun 29, 2011 03:51:35 PM Re: How to give AMAZING head? By: stars_n_sp...
Need serious help - blowjobs	Smoooch	Replies:6 Views: 559	Jun 29, 2011 02:44:57 PM Re: Need serious help - blowjobs By: Rocketman_...
whats the wierdest sex dream you've had?	SirenX	Replies:14 Views: 312	Jun 29, 2011 02:26:06 PM Re: whats the wierdest sex dream you've had? By: punk4rock
what is your favourite vibrator??	SirenX	Replies:7 Views: 205	Jun 29, 2011 02:23:33 PM Re: what is your favourite vibrator?? By: Rocketman_...
How long does your partner last?	Smoooch	Replies:34 Views: 1369	Jun 29, 2011 02:17:17 PM Re: How long does your partner last? By: Sweet_Chee...
My orgasms hurt	Avauk3	Replies:8 Views: 5587	Jun 29, 2011 12:49:56 PM Re: My orgasms hurt By: Lyssat
Advice please?	Kate522	Replies:4 Views: 94	Jun 29, 2011 10:26:22 AM Re: Advice please? By: Kate522
Men's Underwear	Wilko80	Replies:21 Views: 562	Jun 29, 2011 08:32:30 AM Re: Men's Underwear By: SarahJM_Cu...
Naughty dreams	FanOfNaugh...	Replies:16 Views: 618	Jun 29, 2011 01:18:13 AM Re: Naughty dreams By: FanOfNaugh...
Condoms....	Gx_____	Replies:163 Views: 2489	Jun 29, 2011 01:14:46 AM Re: Condoms.... By: Heptet
The weirdest place i've had sex is..	alex_level...	Replies:89 Views: 3766	Jun 28, 2011 10:41:59 PM Re: The weirdest place i've had sex is.. By: -Pamm-
The differences between oral sex for men and women	Paynebynam...	Replies:46 Views: 1741	Jun 28, 2011 08:28:17 PM Re: The differences between oral sex for men and women By: Paynebynam...
dressing up	AbbieVA	Replies:3 Views: 235	Jun 28, 2011 04:47:12 PM Re: dressing up By: Naughty_87
Anal sex...I give up!	andyglasgo...	Replies:19 Views: 1321	Jun 28, 2011 02:22:48 PM Re: Anal sex...I give up! By: Kylera7
Going down on her first thing in the morning	Andy_most_...	Replies:19 Views: 1278	Jun 27, 2011 10:53:48 PM Re: Going down on her first thing in the morning By: c__jay
Persuading OH to be tested with you?	StephanieL...	Replies:17 Views: 246	Jun 27, 2011 07:39:57 PM Re: Persuading OH to be tested with you? By: StatingThe...
keeping up rhythm	oldermenlo...	Replies:10 Views: 571	Jun 27, 2011 04:30:24 PM Re: keeping up rhythm

Advice please?	Kate522	Replies:4 Views: 97	By: Hitting_Th... Jun 29, 2011 10:26:22 AM Re: Advice please? By: Kate522
Men's Underwear	Wilko80	Replies:21 Views: 568	Jun 29, 2011 08:32:30 AM Re: Men's Underwear By: SarahJM_Cu...
Naughty dreams	FanOfNaugh...	Replies:16 Views: 623	Jun 29, 2011 01:18:13 AM Re: Naughty dreams By: FanOfNaugh...
Condoms...	Gx_____	Replies:163 Views: 2506	Jun 29, 2011 01:14:46 AM Re: Condoms.... By: Heptet
The weirdest place i've had sex is..	alex_level...	Replies:89 Views: 3776	Jun 28, 2011 10:41:59 PM Re: The weirdest place i've had sex is.. By: -Pamm-
The differences between oral sex for men and women	Paynebynam...	Replies:46 Views: 1751	Jun 28, 2011 08:28:17 PM Re: The differences between oral sex for men and women By: Paynebynam...
dressing up	AbbieVA	Replies:3 Views: 238	Jun 28, 2011 04:47:12 PM Re: dressing up By: Naughty_87
Anal sex...I give up!	andyglasgo...	Replies:19 Views: 1327	Jun 28, 2011 02:22:48 PM Re: Anal sex...I give up! By: Kylera7
Going down on her first thing in the morning	Andy_most_...	Replies:19 Views: 1283	Jun 27, 2011 10:53:48 PM Re: Going down on her first thing in the morning By: c__jay
Persuading OH to be tested with you?	StephanieL...	Replies:17 Views: 253	Jun 27, 2011 07:39:57 PM Re: Persuading OH to be tested with you? By: StatingThe...
keeping up rhythm	oldermenlo...	Replies:10 Views: 574	Jun 27, 2011 04:30:24 PM Re: keeping up rhythm By: Hitting_Th...
Do you mind them masterbating?	LaughUntil...	Replies:55 Views: 1679	Jun 26, 2011 10:21:28 PM Re: Do you mind them masterbating? By: Jelly_Baby...
Should it hurt?	CheekyVimt...	Replies:3 Views: 298	Jun 26, 2011 09:27:40 PM Re: Should it hurt? By: CheekyVimt...
FAO Thor	Velouria_	Replies:2 Views: 163	Jun 26, 2011 08:55:50 PM Re: FAO Thor By: EmilyP2000
Prospects, positions, and getting caught in the act. (Random)	Trolleyed	Replies:5 Views: 476	Jun 26, 2011 05:56:13 PM Re: Prospects, positions, and getting caught in the act. (Random) By: Trolleyed
Costa Punani	Andy_most_...	Replies:1 Views: 309	Jun 26, 2011 12:54:32 PM Re: Costa Punani By: HotdogHand...
He never wants to anymore.	Evvv	Replies:2 Views: 182	Jun 26, 2011 12:49:06 PM Re: He never wants to anymore. By: Divine-Int...
When getting oral...	andyglasgo...	Replies:14 Views: 1057	Jun 26, 2011 11:27:17 AM Re: When getting oral... By: jlushh
sex tips and advice pleeeaaassee!!!! im stressed!! faye124		Replies:2 Views: 360	Jun 25, 2011 10:11:32 PM Re: sex tips and advice pleeeaaassee!!!! im stressed!! By: tinkerbell...
Pre Cum	Oliive-Oyl	Replies:7 Views: 665	Jun 25, 2011 07:23:51 PM Re: Pre Cum By: Andy_most_...
curious	andyglasgo...	Replies:37 Views:	Jun 25, 2011 06:48:04 PM Re: curious

		1084	By: devilsacco... Jun 25, 2011 05:15:51 PM
yes ladies men can have multiple orgasms :)	Rocketman_...	Replies:11 Views: 351	Re: yes ladies men can have multiple orgasms :) By: Rocketman_...
Male and female opinions on sex tapes :P	ilovepengu...	Replies:13 Views: 431	Jun 25, 2011 01:09:10 PM Re: Male and female opinions on sex tapes :P By: CanYouBeMy...
squirting	bad_bunny1	Replies:6 Views: 791	Jun 25, 2011 01:01:58 PM Re: squirting By: CanYouBeMy...
Does my extreme sex drive have to do with my pcos?	jeniferlog...	Replies:0 Views: 135	Jun 25, 2011 08:33:48 AM Re: Does my extreme sex drive have to do with my pcos? By: jeniferlog...
10mths and he says im still holding back	trisha046	Replies:19 Views: 697	Jun 25, 2011 07:46:54 AM Re: 10mths and he says im still holding back By: jeniferlog...
This may be silly, but I can't stop thinking about it	ChantillyL...	Replies:7 Views: 943	Jun 25, 2011 07:44:00 AM Re: This may be silly, but I can't stop thinking about it By: jeniferlog...
Is it me?	HelloKitty...	Replies:5 Views: 194	Jun 25, 2011 07:34:24 AM Re: Is it me? By: jeniferlog...
Bored of sex!!	andyglasgo...	Replies:7 Views: 184	Jun 25, 2011 07:26:19 AM Re: Bored of sex!! By: jeniferlog...
New Adult games	sugar_pop1	Replies:9 Views: 920	Jun 24, 2011 04:30:10 PM Re: New Adult games By: NewGirl13
Catching your men wearing your panties	Oh_La_Lauk	Replies:46 Views: 16633	Jun 24, 2011 09:34:21 AM Re: Catching your men wearing your panties By: izzybew
Skype Sex ?	gdlookinma...	Replies:4 Views: 208	Jun 24, 2011 08:41:07 AM Re: Skype Sex ? By: xparadisep...
.....	kareemaB	Replies:3 Views: 175	Jun 23, 2011 11:57:34 PM Re: .....
Male and female opinions & help please... :)	Rachythink...	Replies:4 Views: 430	Jun 23, 2011 09:19:01 PM Re: Male and female opinions & help please... :) By: Rocketman_...
What are his intentions?	aloeve	Replies:5 Views: 363	Jun 23, 2011 09:01:17 PM Re: What are his intentions? By: Rocketman_...
contraception advice needed	Urban_Pixi...	Replies:14 Views: 177	Jun 23, 2011 08:26:30 PM Re: contraception advice needed By: _Shanaynay...
does my girlfriend want me to tie her up?	WillB4	Replies:19 Views: 988	Jun 23, 2011 06:15:59 PM Re: does my girlfriend want me to tie her up? By: Rocketman_...
Would sometimes just love a good shag	Miss_hh31	Replies:20 Views: 1633	Jun 23, 2011 05:53:17 PM Re: Would sometimes just love a good shag By: Rocketman_...
Very Beautiful Woman , PleaseEnjoy Free!	windagain	Replies:0 Views: 129	Jun 23, 2011 05:08:02 PM Re: Very Beautiful Woman , PleaseEnjoy Free! By: windagain
Pre-cum	Sirona_x	Replies:13 Views: 527	Jun 23, 2011 10:48:32 AM Re: Pre-cum By: Sirona_x
deepthroat.....	sexyminx23...	Replies:18 Views: 1295	Jun 23, 2011 07:17:46 AM Re: deepthroat..... By: Kelathyn
FAO Tev/Cm/..or whatever your name is now..	-JellyBell...	Replies:13 Views: 319	Jun 23, 2011 12:39:10 AM Re: FAO Tev/Cm/..or whatever your name is now.. By: StarrGirrl

no sex !!! :(	AbbieVA	Replies:3 Views: 244	Jun 22, 2011 11:11:39 PM Re: no sex !!! :( By: Amber_193
Brand new blog about a sexy, secret affair..	kayassecre...	Replies:3 Views: 388	Jun 22, 2011 08:12:36 PM Re: Brand new blog about a sexy, secret affair.. By: kayassecre...
First Orgasm	sunshine23...	Replies:10 Views: 867	Jun 22, 2011 05:36:25 PM Re: First Orgasm By: WalkonWalk...
Bruised lip from giving blow job!	Lina_Lena	Replies:5 Views: 382	Jun 22, 2011 03:22:23 PM Re: Bruised lip from giving blow job! By: c__jay
Naked pictures...	Kiwwwi	Replies:38 Views: 3054	Jun 22, 2011 12:24:29 PM Re: Naked pictures... By: Fishy-Fish
BJs	LoveNspark...	Replies:4 Views: 823	Jun 22, 2011 03:27:50 AM Re: BJs By: LoveNspark...
dirty weekend help!	onlygirl11	Replies:2 Views: 258	Jun 22, 2011 02:03:16 AM Re: dirty weekend help! By: Shini7k
I want some	Velouria_	Replies:4 Views: 315	Jun 22, 2011 01:55:17 AM Re: I want some By: oxfordblon...
guys, gym an sex	kareemaB	Replies:4 Views: 393	Jun 22, 2011 01:45:18 AM Re: guys, gym an sex By: andyglasgo...
Stupid question...	Lady-Jones	Replies:13 Views: 502	Jun 22, 2011 12:30:14 AM Re: Stupid question... By: Lady-Jones
Wear bra & panties in bed like Mariella Frostrup?	Dahlia900	Replies:26 Views: 1004	Jun 21, 2011 10:53:04 PM Re: Wear bra & panties in bed like Mariella Frostrup? By: chicarubia
Not enjoying orgasms?	Lyssat	Replies:3 Views: 251	Jun 21, 2011 10:08:27 PM Re: Not enjoying orgasms? By: Lyssat
How many anal partners and how many dates till you did it??	joakleyuk	Replies:8 Views: 764	Jun 21, 2011 09:57:13 PM Re: How many anal partners and how many dates till you did it?? By: b-rabbit
Bit smug but also need some help.	Maddie2412	Replies:3 Views: 282	Jun 21, 2011 09:24:52 PM Re: Bit smug but also need some help. By: LilMissJuk...
Shameless sex brags :p	Fishy-Fish	Replies:133 Views: 6029	Jun 21, 2011 06:34:03 PM Re: Shameless sex brags :p By: Sirona_x
WHO RIDES WHO?	KayM224	Replies:20 Views: 1156	Jun 21, 2011 06:14:43 PM Re: WHO RIDES WHO? By: Kylera7
sexual compatibility?	just_littl...	Replies:4 Views: 284	Jun 21, 2011 06:09:32 PM Re: sexual compatibility? By: Kylera7
Normal reaction?	HelloKitty...	Replies:5 Views: 405	Jun 21, 2011 05:50:38 PM Re: Normal reaction? By: HelloKitty...
dirty weekend help!	onlygirl11	Replies:2 Views: 260	Jun 22, 2011 02:03:16 AM Re: dirty weekend help! By: Shini7k
I want some	Velouria_	Replies:4 Views: 318	Jun 22, 2011 01:55:17 AM Re: I want some By: oxfordblon...
guys, gym an sex	kareemaB	Replies:4 Views: 396	Jun 22, 2011 01:45:18 AM Re: guys, gym an sex By: andyglasgo...
Stupid question...	Lady-Jones	Replies:13	Jun 22, 2011 12:30:14 AM



		Views: 504	Re: Stupid question...
			By: Lady-Jones
			Jun 21, 2011 10:53:04 PM
Wear bra & panties in bed like Mariella Frostrup?	Dahlia900	Replies:26	Re: Wear bra & panties in bed like Mariella
		Views: 1008	Frostrup?
			By: chicarubia
			Jun 21, 2011 10:08:27 PM
Not enjoying orgasms?	Lyssat	Replies:3	Re: Not enjoying orgasms?
		Views: 254	By: Lyssat
			Jun 21, 2011 09:57:13 PM
How many anal partners and how many dates till you did it??	joakleyuk	Replies:8	Re: How many anal partners and how many dates
		Views: 765	till you did it??
			By: b-rabbit
			Jun 21, 2011 09:24:52 PM
Bit smug but also need some help.	Maddie2412	Replies:3	Re: Bit smug but also need some help.
		Views: 284	By: LilMissJuk...
			Jun 21, 2011 06:34:03 PM
Shameless sex brags :p	Fishy-Fish	Replies:133	Re: Shameless sex brags :p
		Views: 6035	By: Sirona_x
			Jun 21, 2011 06:14:43 PM
WHO RIDES WHO?	KayM224	Replies:20	Re: WHO RIDES WHO?
		Views: 1160	By: Kylera7
			Jun 21, 2011 06:09:32 PM
sexual compatibility?	just_littl...	Replies:4	Re: sexual compatibility?
		Views: 287	By: Kylera7
			Jun 21, 2011 05:50:38 PM
Normal reaction?	HelloKitty...	Replies:5	Re: Normal reaction?
		Views: 407	By: HelloKitty...
			Jun 21, 2011 05:48:44 PM
i slept with his best mate	-just--me-	Replies:9	Re: i slept with his best mate
		Views: 430	By: PeachyPeti...
			Jun 21, 2011 03:58:15 PM
Odd Question, This...	RedHolly	Replies:8	Re: Odd Question, This...
		Views: 567	By: andyglasgo...
			Jun 20, 2011 09:01:41 PM
Contraception from hell?	FireAndTho...	Replies:12	Re: Contraception from hell?
		Views: 466	By: robyn_21
			Jun 20, 2011 08:52:25 PM
The Perfect Pair!!	KayM224	Replies:45	Re: The Perfect Pair!!
		Views: 1133	By: Nic_The_Sp...
			Jun 20, 2011 03:42:40 PM
the pill and dryness..	Beth_C9	Replies:4	Re: the pill and dryness..
		Views: 154	By: Beth_C9
			Jun 20, 2011 03:27:38 PM
Hotel Sex	Twinkletoe...	Replies:8	Re: Hotel Sex
		Views: 698	By: Twinkletoe...
			Jun 20, 2011 12:49:50 PM
What is the longest time you've had sex and the average time with current bf?	jeniferlog...	Replies:3	Re: What is the longest time you've had sex and
		Views: 380	the average time with current bf?
			By: Dahlia900
			Jun 20, 2011 12:40:35 PM
Black Men - Is the stereotype true?	Alexis-x	Replies:35	Re: Black Men - Is the stereotype true?
		Views: 1107	By: Dahlia900
			Jun 20, 2011 11:29:04 AM
Brazilian/hollywood waxing	DollieTops	Replies:19	Re: Brazilian/hollywood waxing
		Views: 656	By: missluella
			Jun 20, 2011 09:09:30 AM
A good ol' strap on..	MissJazzDa...	Replies:29	Re: A good ol' strap on..
		Views: 1375	By: jeniferlog...
			Jun 20, 2011 09:04:52 AM
Pubic Hair Removal!?	dutchess11...	Replies:22	Re: Pubic Hair Removal!?
		Views: 1610	By: jeniferlog...
			Jun 20, 2011 02:56:20 AM
Fathers day frolicks	SheBGB	Replies:0	Fathers day frolicks
		Views: 129	By: SheBGB
			Jun 19, 2011 06:08:10 PM
Oral sex help!	cependant	Replies:6	

		Views: 429	Re: Oral sex help! By: EmilyP2000 Jun 19, 2011 05:54:47 PM
gimp masks	tinkerbell...	Replies:10 Views: 332	Re: gimp masks By: Lyssat Jun 19, 2011 05:04:53 PM
Faking It..	IrishRose3...	Replies:16 Views: 502	Re: Faking It.. By: JFC91 Jun 19, 2011 02:51:41 PM
painful insertions	hannahlott...	Replies:24 Views: 1144	Re: painful insertions By: LoveHimuk Jun 19, 2011 02:40:27 PM
too much info! :D	jobiuk	Replies:8 Views: 789	Re: too much info! :D By: devilsacco... Jun 19, 2011 01:33:18 PM
Is it me or the pil??	xparadisep...	Replies:1 Views: 121	Re: Is it me or the pil?? By: missluella Jun 19, 2011 09:35:58 AM
Feeling really unsexy.	HelloKitty...	Replies:7 Views: 368	Re: Feeling really unsexy. By: Sparklexxx... Jun 18, 2011 10:37:34 PM
How would you describe a orgasm	sunshine23...	Replies:4 Views: 421	Re: How would you describe a orgasm By: KayM224 Jun 18, 2011 07:21:30 PM
Never had the big O	Dreams99	Replies:10 Views: 545	Re: Never had the big O By: devilsacco... Jun 18, 2011 05:29:46 PM
how would you descri	sunshine23...	Replies:0 Views: 81	how would you descri By: sunshine23... Jun 17, 2011 12:08:58 PM
Pleasuring men	-Pamm-	Replies:7 Views: 1149	Re: Pleasuring men By: titchebee Jun 17, 2011 12:44:46 AM
photos/videos	AbbieVA	Replies:8 Views: 632	Re: photos/videos By: clarebear_... Jun 16, 2011 09:24:11 PM
talking on the phone, HELP!!	kareemaB	Replies:5 Views: 356	Re: talking on the phone, HELP!! By: kareemaB Jun 16, 2011 08:48:39 PM
Change of pill from marvelon to cilest worries	gingerchar...	Replies:10 Views: 323	Re: Change of pill from marvelon to cilest worries By: Nic_The_Sp... Jun 16, 2011 08:28:19 PM
Excitment....	Blondieeuk...	Replies:3 Views: 319	Re: Excitment.... By: Lai80 Jun 16, 2011 07:33:17 PM
Im a size 16.. do you still wear sexy underwear??	sunshine23...	Replies:63 Views: 1488	Re: Im a size 16.. do you still wear sexy underwear?? By: sunshine23... Jun 16, 2011 06:07:42 PM
Ann Summers 'Pussy Rub'	StephanieL...	Replies:7 Views: 790	Re: Ann Summers 'Pussy Rub' By: DairyMilkC... Jun 16, 2011 02:10:02 PM
boyfriend not wanting to want	not-perfec...	Replies:5 Views: 574	Re: boyfriend not wanting to want By: Sweet_Chee... Jun 15, 2011 10:58:49 PM
Contraception from hell?	FireAndTho...	Replies:1 Views: 77	Re: Contraception from hell? By: kaosuk Jun 15, 2011 08:46:32 PM
GOT	LuG19	Replies:2 Views: 216	Re: GOT By: sheerinnoc... Jun 15, 2011 07:50:55 PM
Attitudes to sex in relationships	Heptet	Replies:91 Views: 1566	Re: Attitudes to sex in relationships By: Chrisvamp Jun 15, 2011 07:08:53 PM
Ann Summers Parties & Recruitment	Ann-Summer...	Replies:2 Views: 123	Re: Ann Summers Parties & Recruitment By: Ann-Summer...

Orgasm Gel...Yes or No???	KayM224	Replies:4 Views: 339	Jun 15, 2011 07:00:15 PM Re: Orgasm Gel...Yes or No??? By: JenBoo89
anal sex	tinkerbell...	Replies:3 Views: 329	Jun 15, 2011 02:47:00 PM Re: anal sex By: elliefleur
Does you OH watch porn?	superpinkg...	Replies:372 Views: 3227	Jun 15, 2011 11:55:46 AM Re: Does you OH watch porn? By: kylie2011n...
penis plug!	tinkerbell...	Replies:7 Views: 488	Jun 15, 2011 10:55:07 AM Re: penis plug! By: Cpt_Awesome...
Mile High Club...	xkxtx91	Replies:12 Views: 631	Jun 15, 2011 08:57:43 AM Re: Mile High Club... By: slowdancu...
Sex Is A Flop!	KayM224	Replies:2 Views: 228	Jun 15, 2011 06:13:29 AM Re: Sex Is A Flop! By: k2d8
Painful sex every time!	Rennyboook	Replies:6 Views: 174	Jun 15, 2011 01:03:00 AM Re: Painful sex every time! By: Volodimir
Sweet but not so sexy	Saffy11	Replies:5 Views: 630	Jun 15, 2011 12:22:09 AM Re: Sweet but not so sexy By: kittyeatme
feeling guilty...	hannah92xo	Replies:20 Views: 710	Jun 14, 2011 06:54:07 PM Re: feeling guilty... By: Nic_The_Sp...
Sexy underwear	cosmo_clai...	Replies:10 Views: 601	Jun 14, 2011 06:28:57 PM Re: Sexy underwear By: Kateee_wat...
summer romances	lilgirlxxx	Replies:4 Views: 335	Jun 14, 2011 05:58:22 PM Re: summer romances By: BlastinaGL...
Finishing on face	souninspir...	Replies:41 Views: 2144	Jun 14, 2011 03:43:53 PM Re: Finishing on face By: Jaguar_Ski...
new man doesn't like going on top	gemstarr	Replies:10 Views: 614	Jun 14, 2011 03:10:21 PM Re: new man doesn't like going on top By: Charlotte...
How does Anal feel for you?	MissJazzDa...	Replies:40 Views: 1970	Jun 14, 2011 09:50:03 AM Re: How does Anal feel for you? By: MelonFrog
Finishing on face	souninspir...	Replies:41 Views: 2148	Jun 14, 2011 03:43:53 PM Re: Finishing on face By: Jaguar_Ski...
new man doesn't like going on top	gemstarr	Replies:10 Views: 616	Jun 14, 2011 03:10:21 PM Re: new man doesn't like going on top By: Charlotte...
How does Anal feel for you?	MissJazzDa...	Replies:40 Views: 1974	Jun 14, 2011 09:50:03 AM Re: How does Anal feel for you? By: MelonFrog
Female/Solo sex	sunshine23...	Replies:10 Views: 726	Jun 14, 2011 12:00:00 AM Re: Female/Solo sex By: brighteyes...
not always in the mood	heatheruk5	Replies:7 Views: 277	Jun 13, 2011 09:40:02 PM Re: not always in the mood By: Lai80
messed up taking my pill! :S	ah_choo	Replies:7 Views: 100	Jun 13, 2011 09:23:04 PM Re: messed up taking my pill! :S By: MissJazzDa...
%&*\$# Size	Wilko80	Replies:22 Views: 672	Jun 13, 2011 04:02:43 PM Re: %&*\$# Size By: c__jay
He keeps tickling my vagina	Babygurlxj...	Replies:29 Views: 1774	Jun 13, 2011 02:34:58 PM Re: He keeps tickling my vagina By: SirenX

sex toys!?	tinkerbell...	Replies:1 Views: 91	Jun 13, 2011 01:31:59 PM Re: sex toys!? By: LilMissJuk...
My boyfriend is scared of my vagina :(	GlitterFre...	Replies:47 Views: 1307	Jun 13, 2011 01:18:37 PM Re: My boyfriend is scared of my vagina :( By: Voraciousl...
TOYS!!!!!!	MorganG_Fi...	Replies:5 Views: 208	Jun 13, 2011 10:47:13 AM Re: TOYS!!!!!! By: Jaguar_Ski...
How Long...	JessieLx	Replies:11 Views: 440	Jun 12, 2011 11:24:08 PM Re: How Long... By: Kitty_Cat_...
trying to be patient	xxxjxxx	Replies:3 Views: 186	Jun 12, 2011 08:13:20 PM Re: trying to be patient By: LilMissJuk...
feel so unattractive!	babycakesD	Replies:6 Views: 308	Jun 12, 2011 06:10:47 PM Re: feel so unattractive! By: babycakesD
Noisy flatmate!	MeliaB	Replies:7 Views: 369	Jun 12, 2011 05:58:17 PM Re: Noisy flatmate! By: JezebelJin...
Guys & making noises during sex	GrumpyGeek	Replies:24 Views: 1627	Jun 12, 2011 05:32:36 PM Re: Guys & making noises during sex By: SP_says_no...
He doesn't want me.	titchabee	Replies:6 Views: 434	Jun 12, 2011 03:55:47 PM Re: He doesn't want me. By: babycakesD
Find me this porn star!	Chica_Gale...	Replies:13 Views: 714	Jun 12, 2011 01:56:18 PM Re: Find me this porn star! By: CatFacey
Noisy sex lady next door.....	BluerThanM...	Replies:20 Views: 784	Jun 12, 2011 01:56:03 PM Re: Noisy sex lady next door..... By: andyglasgo...
Do you do solo sex a lot.. if you get my drift..	sunshine23...	Replies:30 Views: 1404	Jun 12, 2011 11:45:25 AM Re: Do you do solo sex a lot.. if you get my drift.. By: Voraciousl...
I Want To Be Amazing In Bed...	SoKissMeuk	Replies:23 Views: 9538	Jun 11, 2011 10:51:32 PM Re: I Want To Be Amazing In Bed... By: Tinted_len...
Girth	andyglasgo...	Replies:387 Views: 4409	Jun 11, 2011 10:26:39 PM Re: Girth By: Velouria_
Tearing during sex	Pumpkin_87	Replies:6 Views: 298	Jun 11, 2011 10:07:54 PM Re: Tearing during sex By: Shini7k
hi - blowjob advice.	rhydian1	Replies:34 Views: 830	Jun 11, 2011 11:54:47 AM Re: hi - blowjob advice. By: Cherry-che...
interfering with sex	SamiJouk1	Replies:1 Views: 279	Jun 11, 2011 08:37:48 AM Re: interfering with sex By: Sparklexxx...
Pregnant?	XxmintXx	Replies:12 Views: 222	Jun 11, 2011 01:05:59 AM Re: Pregnant? By: AmeliaJess...
boyfreind with very low sex drive! what to do?	Kari_LONDO...	Replies:3 Views: 257	Jun 10, 2011 09:51:12 PM Re: boyfreind with very low sex drive! what to do? By: MissJazzDa...
Sex Dictionary	sunshine23...	Replies:17 Views: 442	Jun 10, 2011 09:12:32 PM Re: Sex Dictionary By: Shini7k
UK Men vs. US Men	jenf13	Replies:29 Views: 1336	Jun 10, 2011 08:59:42 PM Re: UK Men vs. US Men By: Charlotte...
sex	phanvantha...	Replies:6 Views: 379	Jun 10, 2011 04:35:50 PM Re: sex By: c__jay

Urban dictionary	Shini7k	Replies:1 Views: 174	Jun 10, 2011 12:57:38 PM Re: Urban dictionary By: LilMissJuk...
Female/body fluid	sunshine23...	Replies:15 Views: 666	Jun 09, 2011 11:45:40 PM Re: Female/body fluid By: clarebear_...
Sex	Shopaholic...	Replies:11 Views: 446	Jun 09, 2011 10:52:24 PM Re: Sex By: Naughty_87
guys	BabyMario2...	Replies:8 Views: 339	Jun 09, 2011 10:04:18 PM Re: guys By: beachchick...
Music to strip to...	blonde_bar...	Replies:16 Views: 372	Jun 09, 2011 02:46:23 PM Re: Music to strip to... By: Paynebynam...
Carpet Burns	cosmoradio...	Replies:16 Views: 589	Jun 09, 2011 01:35:35 PM Re: Carpet Burns By: DairyMilkC...
High heels during sex.	king_69_x	Replies:31 Views: 1879	Jun 09, 2011 12:43:17 PM Re: High heels during sex. By: katiewood
why does he want me now?	dizzy_lizz...	Replies:5 Views: 394	Jun 09, 2011 11:16:14 AM Re: why does he want me now? By: SP_says_no...
-uipiu	phanvantha...	Replies:2 Views: 91	Jun 09, 2011 02:54:18 AM Re: -uipiu By: IMPO
Female anatomy question	andyglasgo...	Replies:15 Views: 816	Jun 09, 2011 12:48:10 AM Re: Female anatomy question By: Charlottie...
I can get sex whenever I want...	Paynebynam...	Replies:49 Views: 1331	Jun 09, 2011 12:40:39 AM Re: I can get sex whenever I want... By: Charlottie...
What to do...?	Robyn_US	Replies:47 Views: 979	Jun 09, 2011 12:36:02 AM Re: What to do...? By: Charlottie...
Girl on Girl?	S_Williams...	Replies:18 Views: 769	Jun 08, 2011 03:00:27 AM Re: Girl on Girl? By: Mary_Sue
what excatly is squirting?	Miss_hh31	Replies:23 Views: 4390	Jun 07, 2011 10:46:11 PM Re: what excatly is squirting? By: 0987654312
Birthday Suprises	gingerchar...	Replies:3 Views: 307	Jun 07, 2011 10:35:06 PM Re: Birthday Suprises By: Sparklexxx...
What to do...?	Robyn_US	Replies:47 Views: 982	Jun 09, 2011 12:36:02 AM Re: What to do...? By: Charlottie...
Girl on Girl?	S_Williams...	Replies:18 Views: 773	Jun 08, 2011 03:00:27 AM Re: Girl on Girl? By: Mary_Sue
what excatly is squirting?	Miss_hh31	Replies:23 Views: 4402	Jun 07, 2011 10:46:11 PM Re: what excatly is squirting? By: 0987654312
Birthday Suprises	gingerchar...	Replies:3 Views: 311	Jun 07, 2011 10:35:06 PM Re: Birthday Suprises By: Sparklexxx...
Fantasy or Real	Marie10uk	Replies:7 Views: 604	Jun 07, 2011 09:52:00 PM Update By: Marie10uk
lap dance	jobiuk	Replies:8 Views: 349	Jun 07, 2011 08:07:45 PM Re: lap dance By: sminkypink...
His attitude is really p*ssing me off.	RB_x	Replies:4 Views: 369	Jun 07, 2011 07:49:33 PM Re: His attitude is really p*ssing me off. By: jeeys

Who pulls more?	Sink-Or-Sw...	Replies:5 Views: 220	Jun 07, 2011 07:18:24 PM Re: Who pulls more? By: GlitterFre...
Anyone else suffering ?	chlobo14	Replies:9 Views: 409	Jun 07, 2011 06:06:27 PM Re: Anyone else suffering ? By: chlobo14
Sex & Laughing	DairyMilkC...	Replies:9 Views: 441	Jun 07, 2011 05:32:43 PM Re: Sex & Laughing By: DairyMilkC...
Playboy club sexist or not?	OMGStylish	Replies:6 Views: 140	Jun 07, 2011 05:07:10 PM Re: Playboy club sexist or not? By: kiki2020
Take a dirty picture... or video??	JBabes1	Replies:17 Views: 780	Jun 07, 2011 03:52:49 PM Re: Take a dirty picture... or video?? By: strawberry...
Can I get some disease from backdoor sex?	CatherineS...	Replies:4 Views: 238	Jun 07, 2011 12:27:28 PM Re: Can I get some disease from backdoor sex? By: PixieDust_
Unprotected sex	denise025	Replies:21 Views: 478	Jun 07, 2011 11:11:25 AM Re: Unprotected sex By: Sparklexxx...
girlfriends..	alishaaa45	Replies:2 Views: 244	Jun 07, 2011 03:48:36 AM Re: girlfriends.. By: Scotty-gir...
massage	NewGirl13	Replies:3 Views: 186	Jun 07, 2011 02:13:54 AM Re: massage By: Scotty-gir...
sex in mans footy shirt!	SouthernLa...	Replies:23 Views: 933	Jun 06, 2011 10:17:57 PM Re: sex in mans footy shirt! By: WeeNixuk
a bit painful with condoms??	Glittertea...	Replies:3 Views: 180	Jun 06, 2011 09:48:55 PM Re: a bit painful with condoms?? By: Glittertea...
Have you ever walked in on someone.....	Bear-Bardo...	Replies:38 Views: 1601	Jun 06, 2011 07:06:53 PM Re: Have you ever walked in on someone..... By: Jordylumps...
Worse thing that's happened to you during sex?	I_want_to_...	Replies:91 Views: 6775	Jun 06, 2011 06:55:00 PM Re: Worse thing that's happened to you during sex? By: Glittertea...
Celebrity Fantasy?	S_Williams...	Replies:11 Views: 170	Jun 06, 2011 06:14:48 PM Re: Celebrity Fantasy? By: Strokes_Cr...
Could I be pregnant?	Clo_1	Replies:9 Views: 210	Jun 06, 2011 05:52:59 PM Re: Could I be pregnant? By: Pino_G
Is it wrong to let your partner look at porn?	queencent	Replies:16 Views: 371	Jun 06, 2011 04:40:56 PM Re: Is it wrong to let your partner look at porn? By: PeachyPeti...
Damn you Ross Noble!	Mary_Sue	Replies:10 Views: 348	Jun 06, 2011 04:22:41 PM Re: Damn you Ross Noble! By: Charlottie...
Talking in sex	cassiiekin...	Replies:15 Views: 704	Jun 06, 2011 04:20:46 PM Re: Talking in sex By: Charlottie...
Guys Who Shaves Their Pubes	Wilko80	Replies:18 Views: 659	Jun 06, 2011 03:15:34 PM Re: Guys Who Shaves Their Pubes By: PeachyPeti...
Whats different!? Advice Needed!	Ashlee_Lou	Replies:5 Views: 321	Jun 06, 2011 02:26:26 PM Re: Whats different!? Advice Needed! By: doyoulikep...
Daily Sex-Good or Bad??	shrutisoni...	Replies:16 Views: 656	Jun 06, 2011 01:32:37 PM Re: Daily Sex-Good or Bad?? By: DairyMilkC...
Im scared to have sex again incase the condom breaks	cupcake_sp...	Replies:5 Views: 223	Jun 06, 2011 01:22:37 PM Re: Im scared to have sex again incase the condom breaks

argh! rant!	discoshoes	Replies:6 Views: 276	By: Scotty-gir... Jun 06, 2011 01:21:07 PM Re: argh! rant! By: AbsintheFa...
Can never have seconds....	Orange25uk	Replies:16 Views: 721	Jun 06, 2011 02:52:11 AM Re: Can never have seconds... By: Scotty-gir...
Leather or Lace?	S_Williams...	Replies:10 Views: 217	Jun 05, 2011 10:36:12 PM Re: Leather or Lace? By: _NothernGe...
how to reduce noise during sex	sunshine23...	Replies:5 Views: 275	Jun 05, 2011 08:25:15 PM Re: how to reduce noise during sex By: c__jay
Can't wait till I'm older...	Bear-Bardo...	Replies:14 Views: 827	Jun 05, 2011 06:10:09 PM Re: Can't wait till I'm older... By: devilsacco...
The Passion Propeller	cosmoradio...	Replies:8 Views: 241	Jun 05, 2011 03:07:41 PM Re: The Passion Propeller By: cosmoradio...
"lay back and do nothing?"	cosmoradio...	Replies:42 Views: 1064	Jun 05, 2011 07:57:23 AM Re: By: cosmoradio...
All Vaginas Have The Answer	Crm7	Replies:34 Views: 571	Jun 04, 2011 10:54:48 PM Re: All Vaginas Have The Answer By: GlitterFre...
You have one night in a hotel - what would you do??	blonde_bar...	Replies:12 Views: 949	Jun 04, 2011 10:47:51 PM Re: You have one night in a hotel - what would you do?? By: Mallard8
Why all women are sizequeens	crm6	Replies:19 Views: 472	Jun 04, 2011 10:08:18 PM Re: Why all women are sizequeens By: c__jay
HELP! PARANOIA OF PREGNANCY WORRIES	gingerchar...	Replies:6 Views: 203	Jun 04, 2011 07:52:21 PM Re: HELP! PARANOIA OF PREGNANCY WORRIES By: SP_says_no...
My anus is a different colour from the rest of my body and is itchy	Babygurlxj...	Replies:28 Views: 469	Jun 04, 2011 07:32:38 PM Re: My anus is a different colour from the rest of my body and is itchy By: SirenX
A question for all men...	Crm7	Replies:14 Views: 614	Jun 04, 2011 02:00:19 PM Re: A question for all men... By: Hell_yeah_...
Guys- would you see this as an invitation to have sex?	Mulanloves...	Replies:28 Views: 1047	Jun 04, 2011 01:41:47 PM Re: Guys- would you see this as an invitation to have sex? By: stawberrie...
akward phone sex moment ... advice needed !	Craze_Val	Replies:14 Views: 841	Jun 04, 2011 12:55:20 PM Re: akward phone sex moment ... advice needed ! By: missluella
The Perfect Blowjob...	em_xo	Replies:9 Views: 1053	Jun 04, 2011 07:14:19 AM Re: The Perfect Blowjob... By: gingerchar...
girl on top...	gracie-e	Replies:7 Views: 353	Jun 03, 2011 11:09:34 PM Re: girl on top... By: banquo
Everyone having 'great sex'	Paynebynam...	Replies:32 Views: 575	Jun 03, 2011 10:51:20 PM Re: Everyone having 'great sex' By: Ed_In_The_...
Something New	sugar_pop1	Replies:25 Views: 690	Jun 03, 2011 10:43:42 PM Re: Something New By: sugar_pop1
Noise?	NewGirl13	Replies:6 Views: 344	Jun 03, 2011 09:59:46 PM Re: Noise? By: _NothernGe...
help!	hellennaUK	Replies:11	Jun 03, 2011 09:01:20 PM

		Views: 238	Re: help! By: LaughUntil...
Sex Question, Need Help.	Velouria_	Replies:3 Views: 141	Jun 03, 2011 06:40:40 PM Re: Sex Question, Need Help. By: Sirona_x
Which combined pill?	Acorn_Jim	Replies:30 Views: 234	Jun 03, 2011 03:16:23 PM Re: Which combined pill? By: tiny_t18
sex	phanvantha...	Replies:1 Views: 114	Jun 02, 2011 08:16:56 PM Re: sex By: couchiex3
sex	phanvantha...	Replies:0 Views: 51	Jun 02, 2011 08:11:12 PM sex By: phanvantha...
rimming?	kool-chick...	Replies:7 Views: 265	Jun 02, 2011 08:03:23 PM Re: rimming? By: kool-chick...
Tieing a guy up?	BlondeBomb...	Replies:9 Views: 275	Jun 02, 2011 07:30:52 PM Re: Tieing a guy up? By: MsSLJ
what would u draw the line at?	gymdude	Replies:92 Views: 1769	Jun 02, 2011 04:30:10 PM Re: what would u draw the line at? By: Cattyuk6
Advice needed please	lala-kryst...	Replies:5 Views: 174	Jun 02, 2011 04:16:49 PM Re: Advice needed please By: So_Fee
Buying my first vibrator	SexyBabe55	Replies:3 Views: 252	Jun 01, 2011 08:55:05 PM Re: Buying my first vibrator By: Mango-Sorb...
how do i get him to go down on me?	Factory_Gi...	Replies:12 Views: 462	Jun 01, 2011 06:01:20 PM Re: how do i get him to go down on me? By: andyglasgo...
New rules??	andyglasgo...	Replies:34 Views: 1120	Jun 01, 2011 04:33:28 PM Re: New rules?? By: Scotty-gir...
Annsommers bullet - what's going on!!	xMACBabix	Replies:22 Views: 1749	Jun 01, 2011 03:49:39 PM Re: Annsommers bullet - what's going on!! By: DrTinycat
Soooo embarrassed!!!!	Amber_193	Replies:10 Views: 1142	Jun 01, 2011 01:23:40 PM Re: Soooo embarrassed!!!! By: CatFacey
Waxing?	Pink_Spark...	Replies:10 Views: 806	Jun 01, 2011 01:21:38 PM Re: Waxing? By: Yourminieg...
Perfect oral	Leeds_91	Replies:6 Views: 628	May 31, 2011 10:43:50 PM Re: Perfect oral By: xMissNx
Emily: 26 and virgin due to phobia of men	kromeromay	Replies:4 Views: 497	May 31, 2011 08:13:50 PM Re: Emily: 26 and virgin due to phobia of men By: What_about...
Disgusting or not?	WeeNixuk	Replies:26 Views: 937	May 31, 2011 06:09:11 PM Re: Disgusting or not? By: DomesticWi...
Afraid Im boring in bed!!!!	Weeyin87	Replies:7 Views: 618	May 31, 2011 11:15:01 AM Re: Afraid Im boring in bed!!!! By: PeachyPeti...
Low Sex drive? Bored?	sxmelxs	Replies:1 Views: 128	May 31, 2011 03:48:53 AM Re: Low Sex drive? Bored? By: Cherry-che...
well..thats never happened before :S	xxxjxxx	Replies:11 Views: 1018	May 30, 2011 11:40:38 PM Re: well..thats never happened before :S By: b-rabbit
Toys or not?	SheBGB	Replies:6 Views: 207	May 30, 2011 10:18:57 PM Re: Toys or not? By: Sparklexxx...
Virginity & friends with benefits	sunshine23...	Replies:18	May 30, 2011 10:17:57 PM



		Views: 839	Re: Virginity & friends with benefits By: Infinity89 May 30, 2011 10:15:33 PM
Strip tease	dizzy_up_t...	Replies:2 Views: 147	Re: Strip tease By: dutch25 May 30, 2011 09:51:47 PM
Tips for on top?	littlemiss...	Replies:4 Views: 333	Re: Tips for on top? By: Infinity89 May 30, 2011 09:46:41 PM
"creampie" obsession	Ruth_Willi...	Replies:11 Views: 1111	Re: By: PeachyPeti... May 30, 2011 08:30:18 PM
Squirting (I know sorry)	BellaBells...	Replies:21 Views: 1046	Re: Squirting (I know sorry) By: sexyminx23... May 30, 2011 05:55:41 PM
what turns you on?	fresh_face	Replies:5 Views: 442	Re: what turns you on? By: haz_Banned May 30, 2011 05:26:07 PM
Inappropriate fantasies	RedLibby	Replies:2 Views: 292	Re: Inappropriate fantasies By: RedLibby May 30, 2011 01:56:41 PM
Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex!	brighteyes...	Replies:135 Views: 3640	Re: Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex! By: Cheeky_Mon... May 30, 2011 09:57:00 AM
loss of sex drive	megs_1211	Replies:2 Views: 95	Re: loss of sex drive By: WishyMishy May 29, 2011 11:53:19 PM
lack confidence to introduce different sex positions	_Miss_Vict...	Replies:13 Views: 420	Re: lack confidence to introduce different sex positions By: _Miss_Vict... May 29, 2011 11:43:03 PM
When in the mood	dixo	Replies:3 Views: 286	Re: When in the mood By: brighteyes... May 29, 2011 11:07:06 PM
Favorite Movie Scenes	cosmoradio...	Replies:12 Views: 400	Re: Favorite Movie Scenes By: Robyn_US May 29, 2011 04:44:51 PM
new man makes me numb :/	LilMissMon...	Replies:2 Views: 372	Re: new man makes me numb :/ By: Acorn_Jim May 29, 2011 02:39:39 PM
Comparing OH with ex?	Brr_ItsCol...	Replies:34 Views: 964	Re: Comparing OH with ex? By: pennytzann... May 29, 2011 12:09:53 PM
got my new kama sutra book today :D	jo-ho	Replies:9 Views: 329	Re: got my new kama sutra book today :D By: cosmoradio... May 29, 2011 12:02:25 PM
from behind	Becky_Efc2...	Replies:8 Views: 474	Re: from behind By: cosmoradio... May 29, 2011 11:23:29 AM
lack of experience	RuaridhS	Replies:8 Views: 578	Re: lack of experience By: sunshine23... May 29, 2011 01:15:02 AM
How to feel ok about a guy going down on you	cupcake_sp...	Replies:14 Views: 1535	Re: How to feel ok about a guy going down on you By: captaincru... May 29, 2011 12:54:00 AM
Drunken ONS - or more?	Trolleyed	Replies:2 Views: 194	Re: Drunken ONS - or more? By: Trolleyed May 28, 2011 11:14:06 PM
Dirty Weekend Away	Raz1987	Replies:19 Views: 1258	Re: Dirty Weekend Away By: Nicolaaaxx May 28, 2011 09:58:56 PM
advice on cuts please	tvaddictuk	Replies:6 Views: 341	Re: advice on cuts please By: Zeta- May 28, 2011 09:25:41 PM
Jelly legs - follow on!	elinglesuk	Replies:6 Views: 409	Re: Jelly legs - follow on! By: Nicolaaaxx

Making love VS Sex	cosmoradio...	Replies:36 Views: 1013	May 28, 2011 09:04:55 PM Re: Making love VS Sex By: Abbibee
contraception	serena4000...	Replies:1 Views: 71	May 28, 2011 06:07:22 PM Re: contraception By: serena4000...
Having sex on period	Abbibee	Replies:33 Views: 1453	May 28, 2011 05:23:36 PM Re: Having sex on period By: Lilah21
Sex hurts :(	GlitterFre...	Replies:5 Views: 291	May 27, 2011 08:20:55 PM Re: Sex hurts :( By: blonde_bar...
Durex play o	poppy790	Replies:4 Views: 260	May 27, 2011 07:52:59 PM Re: Durex play o By: Acorn_Jim
EVERY man watches porn!!	andyglasgo...	Replies:132 Views: 1987	May 27, 2011 05:36:30 PM Re: EVERY man watches porn!! By: EmmyXsnowf...
jelly legs	elinglesuk	Replies:11 Views: 656	May 27, 2011 01:23:13 PM Re: jelly legs By: karma240
Cramping leg when I'm on top?	RLHx	Replies:4 Views: 150	May 26, 2011 11:36:52 PM Re: Cramping leg when I'm on top? By: Brr_ItsCol...
Girls - Bloke in need of advice.	scouse3	Replies:38 Views: 707	May 26, 2011 09:36:07 PM Re: Girls - Bloke in need of advice. By: spaced_gir...
Cuming and Orgasming	Lady-Jones	Replies:5 Views: 678	May 26, 2011 11:18:54 AM Re: Cuming and Orgasming By: scouse3
Winking ... Creepy or hot?	JBabes1	Replies:16 Views: 283	May 26, 2011 12:28:41 AM Re: Winking ... Creepy or hot? By: brighteyes...
On the pill and putting on weight	bexyp	Replies:2 Views: 144	May 25, 2011 08:39:10 PM Re: On the pill and putting on weight By: EmmiC
Come home quicker ;)	chlobol4	Replies:5 Views: 586	May 25, 2011 02:26:51 PM Re: Come home quicker ;) By: Abbibee
rose petals :)	jo-ho	Replies:2 Views: 200	May 25, 2011 02:03:08 PM Re: rose petals :) By: jo-ho
Condom problem!!	michellej8...	Replies:8 Views: 569	May 25, 2011 12:05:20 AM Re: Condom problem!! By: Shini7k
massage oil reccomendations	jo-ho	Replies:3 Views: 101	May 24, 2011 11:36:40 PM Re: massage oil reccomendations By: jo-ho
Sex Confidence	Wondering6	Replies:6 Views: 603	May 24, 2011 10:06:13 PM Re: Sex Confidence By: xparadisep...
Chandler from Friends moment...	GlitterFre...	Replies:5 Views: 459	May 24, 2011 09:17:00 PM Re: Chandler from Friends moment... By: _fairyhand...
Hugh Jackman or Johnny Depp	Scotty-gir...	Replies:35 Views: 360	May 24, 2011 03:18:25 PM Re: Hugh Jackman or Johnny Depp By: sparksfly-...
Pornography especially for women	mabel21	Replies:24 Views: 912	May 24, 2011 11:26:10 AM Re: Pornography especially for women By: CatFacey
Adults Games	HotGames	Replies:2 Views: 359	May 24, 2011 06:44:10 AM Re: Adults Games By: HotGames
Rash from hair removal	Abbibee	Replies:4 Views: 335	May 23, 2011 10:33:31 PM Re: Rash from hair removal By: MissFiftie...

SOS first time !!	Craze_Val	Replies:9 Views: 424	May 23, 2011 09:45:14 PM Re: SOS first time !! By: x_Bith
first time sex	serena4000...	Replies:2 Views: 298	May 23, 2011 07:01:16 PM Re: first time sex By: alex_lovel...
views on anal?	lora1_xo	Replies:89 Views: 1886	May 23, 2011 06:28:42 PM Re: views on anal? By: xmelissaxx
%&*\$# ring?	Ruttersuk	Replies:11 Views: 550	May 23, 2011 04:20:31 PM Re: %&*\$# ring? By: cosmoradio...
Missionary is boring me now!	TheFemmeFa...	Replies:15 Views: 539	May 23, 2011 04:06:19 PM Re: Missionary is boring me now! By: cosmoradio...
%&*\$# ring?	Ruttersuk	Replies:11 Views: 551	May 23, 2011 04:20:31 PM Re: %&*\$# ring? By: cosmoradio...
Missionary is boring me now!	TheFemmeFa...	Replies:15 Views: 540	May 23, 2011 04:06:19 PM Re: Missionary is boring me now! By: cosmoradio...
I can't stop having sex with pies	GlitterFre...	Replies:16 Views: 754	May 23, 2011 02:46:42 PM Re: I can't stop having sex with pies By: Velouria_
coming together?	jo-ho	Replies:16 Views: 319	May 23, 2011 02:21:24 PM Re: coming together? By: charliexxx...
PORN.. (question for the boys)	alex_lovel...	Replies:7 Views: 702	May 23, 2011 12:59:46 PM Re: PORN.. (question for the boys) By: kimpossibl...
He started bleeding!? o_o	screamodre...	Replies:6 Views: 488	May 23, 2011 11:42:12 AM Re: He started bleeding!? o_o By: charliexxx...
Sexual guilt?!	MeliaB	Replies:14 Views: 531	May 23, 2011 03:49:24 AM Re: Sexual guilt?! By: TheFemmeFa...
Can't go on top *tmi*	Abbibee	Replies:8 Views: 648	May 22, 2011 11:49:32 PM Re: Can't go on top *tmi* By: SweetPorri...
How to dress sexy, without looking slutty?	cupcake_sp...	Replies:6 Views: 520	May 22, 2011 08:54:29 PM Re: How to dress sexy, without looking slutty? By: doyoulikep...
Really worried, not sure what this means..	x-Calliope...	Replies:5 Views: 596	May 22, 2011 01:16:56 PM Re: Really worried, not sure what this means.. By: Jojoruk
How to have sex two days in a row?	xMACBabyx	Replies:31 Views: 810	May 22, 2011 12:12:24 PM Re: How to have sex two days in a row? By: Purplemons...
he always keeps his eyes tight shut	jo-ho	Replies:16 Views: 735	May 21, 2011 10:19:53 PM Re: he always keeps his eyes tight shut By: Sparklexxx...
Boyfriend seems to have gone off me..?	daniidooly	Replies:17 Views: 737	May 21, 2011 08:49:07 PM Re: Boyfriend seems to have gone off me..? By: Rach_McQue...
I'm back baby! :D	n_e_c	Replies:4 Views: 238	May 21, 2011 06:13:18 PM Re: I'm back baby! :D By: LilMissJuk...
What do you think of one night stands?!	Clarissa_X	Replies:1 Views: 188	May 21, 2011 04:40:45 PM Re: What do you think of one night stands?! By: doyoulikep...
anal	-louise-	Replies:1 Views: 176	May 21, 2011 12:41:26 PM Re: anal By: xbarbiegi...
lube?	jo-ho	Replies:9 Views: 340	May 21, 2011 12:27:01 PM Re: lube? By: jo-ho

Clone-A-Willy Kit...	blonde_bar...	Replies:13 Views: 979	May 21, 2011 11:45:33 AM Re: Clone-A-Willy Kit... By: claire_sex...
Sexytime tonight?	xoxMissgee...	Replies:2 Views: 248	May 21, 2011 11:45:22 AM Re: Sexytime tonight? By: doyoulikep...
fisting	satchmo750	Replies:2 Views: 561	May 21, 2011 03:23:41 AM Re: fisting By: satchmo750
Sexy ideas for holiday?	Jade_21	Replies:8 Views: 88	May 20, 2011 10:26:34 PM Re: Sexy ideas for holiday? By: Yourminieg...
Soreness after sex?	TrixVix	Replies:1 Views: 200	May 20, 2011 08:35:39 PM Re: Soreness after sex? By: -Pamm-
Would you be ok if...	ludo-down	Replies:63 Views: 2218	May 20, 2011 08:30:06 PM Re: Would you be ok if... By: pls1810
Tips Please!	Sophielo	Replies:7 Views: 448	May 20, 2011 08:29:50 PM Re: Tips Please! By: -Pamm-
What Drives your OH wild?	justme27uk	Replies:12 Views: 823	May 20, 2011 08:24:00 PM Re: What Drives your OH wild? By: EvieXx
How many times can you orgasm in a day?	cupcake_sp...	Replies:4 Views: 345	May 20, 2011 08:19:10 PM Re: How many times can you orgasm in a day? By: -Pamm-
What does everyone think of this?	CorleUK	Replies:7 Views: 186	May 20, 2011 03:16:39 PM Re: What does everyone think of this? By: vixenp8
Initiating	AbbieVA	Replies:13 Views: 601	May 19, 2011 11:32:48 PM Re: Initiating By: jo-ho
Nosey Questions..	-JellyBell...	Replies:32 Views: 1336	May 19, 2011 11:20:57 PM Re: Nosey Questions.. By: jo-ho
Are willies attractive?	Rosie_Posi...	Replies:61 Views: 2150	May 19, 2011 09:32:27 PM Re: Are willies attractive? By: -Pamm-
How to tell my boyfriend I can squirt? (Sorry!)	lollipop31...	Replies:31 Views: 1297	May 19, 2011 08:49:28 PM Re: How to tell my boyfriend I can squirt? (Sorry!) By: lollipop31...
The pill and antibiotics	Carinabean	Replies:6 Views: 174	May 19, 2011 08:49:06 PM Re: The pill and antibiotics By: smileychic...
Talking dirty during sex	Rosie_Posi...	Replies:6 Views: 692	May 19, 2011 08:12:08 PM Re: Talking dirty during sex By: -Pamm-
Tips to heighten my sex drive	SammiBobsx...	Replies:15 Views: 961	May 19, 2011 06:34:02 PM Re: Tips to heighten my sex drive By: LarissaSta...
What kind of tattoos and piercings do you have?	Jdubs	Replies:6 Views: 246	May 19, 2011 05:58:27 PM Re: What kind of tattoos and piercings do you have? By: LilMissJuk...
im not judging him i just want to try and understnad	lala-kryst...	Replies:6 Views: 646	May 19, 2011 01:59:00 PM Re: im not judging him i just want to try and understnad By: c__jay
Too too toooo wet!!	kimbo-xo	Replies:15 Views: 1147	May 19, 2011 10:46:37 AM Re: Too too toooo wet!! By: Jaguar_Ski...
Is it me or him??	miss-monro...	Replies:6 Views: 582	May 18, 2011 08:43:39 PM Re: Is it me or him?? By: _fairyhand...
hard to explain	lolly1985	Replies:3	May 18, 2011 04:26:04 PM

		Views: 310	Re: hard to explain By: AbsintheFa... May 18, 2011 03:59:55 PM
Sex drive at 0mph	JennAlla	Replies:8 Views: 158	Re: Sex drive at 0mph By: DrTinycat
Sex with a Transsexual	Mia_Antoni...	Replies:21 Views: 1854	May 18, 2011 11:59:52 AM Re: Sex with a Transsexual By: Ruth_Willi...
tattoos & piercings...	NickyLou20	Replies:16 Views: 405	May 18, 2011 10:55:28 AM Re: tattoos & piercings... By: bone_machi...
oral better than sex?	bouclesdor	Replies:2 Views: 357	May 17, 2011 11:57:06 PM Re: oral better than sex? By: Inner_City...
He doesnt want to kiss!	Bethany91u...	Replies:5 Views: 384	May 17, 2011 11:53:33 PM Re: He doesnt want to kiss! By: xxbarbie-d... May 17, 2011 11:16:28 PM
is something wrong with me or is he doing something wrong?	lala-kryst...	Replies:7 Views: 523	Re: is something wrong with me or is he doing something wrong? By: lollipop31...
Some advice please?	twinkleuk1...	Replies:1 Views: 191	May 17, 2011 09:00:46 PM Re: Some advice please? By: Dare_To_Be...
Orgasm Help!	KellyLouis...	Replies:10 Views: 421	May 17, 2011 08:54:01 PM Re: Orgasm Help! By: Dare_To_Be...
What is your opinion of girls like this?	betaboy	Replies:24 Views: 1762	May 17, 2011 08:10:39 PM Re: What is your opinion of girls like this? By: betaboy
Goes soft in my mouth :/	Miss_S_xo	Replies:16 Views: 1431	May 17, 2011 03:37:02 PM Re: Goes soft in my mouth :/ By: haz_Banned
My boyfriend is getting circumcised?!	Catface23	Replies:10 Views: 590	May 17, 2011 03:04:06 PM Re: My boyfriend is getting circumcised?! By: DrTinycat
guys in thongs...	SirenX	Replies:17 Views: 380	May 17, 2011 02:04:08 PM Re: guys in thongs... By: abaker22
Squirting	kool-chick...	Replies:34 Views: 1007	May 17, 2011 12:55:18 PM Re: Squirting By: lollipop31...
and sexed up but the man is sleeping!!!!	clairebee8...	Replies:2 Views: 314	May 17, 2011 03:11:01 AM Re: and sexed up but the man is sleeping!!!! By: Jo_used_to...
Taking it up the arse!	xXxxXxuk	Replies:151 Views: 62898	May 17, 2011 12:02:53 AM Re: Taking it up the arse! By: sp1978
Dating & Confidence Issues, HELP!	Trolleyed	Replies:5 Views: 256	May 16, 2011 11:41:15 PM Re: Dating & Confidence Issues, HELP! By: Trolleyed
is there something wrong with me? :(	deleted201...	Replies:33 Views: 959	May 16, 2011 09:50:04 PM Re: is there something wrong with me? :( By: sparklespe...
SHAVING????	Deleted User	Replies:33 Views: 2755	May 16, 2011 09:13:46 PM Re: SHAVING???? By: xKate-
new positions	AbbieVA	Replies:4 Views: 350	May 16, 2011 07:56:35 PM Re: new positions By: AbbieVA
BJ Advice plese	justme27uk	Replies:13 Views: 1149	May 16, 2011 04:52:16 PM Re: BJ Advice plese By: Shini7k
How Long	LittleRed_...	Replies:8 Views: 603	May 16, 2011 01:43:48 AM Re: How Long By: PorcelainD...

Dating & Confidence Issues, HELP!	Trolleyed	Replies:5 Views: 257	May 16, 2011 11:41:15 PM Re: Dating & Confidence Issues, HELP! By: Trolleyed
is there something wrong with me? :(	deleted201...	Replies:33 Views: 961	May 16, 2011 09:50:04 PM Re: is there something wrong with me? :( By: sparklespe...
SHAVING????	Deleted User	Replies:33 Views: 2757	May 16, 2011 09:13:46 PM Re: SHAVING???? By: xKate-
new positions	AbbieVA	Replies:4 Views: 351	May 16, 2011 07:56:35 PM Re: new positions By: AbbieVA
BJ Advice please	justme27uk	Replies:13 Views: 1150	May 16, 2011 04:52:16 PM Re: BJ Advice please By: Shini7k
How Long	LittleRed_...	Replies:8 Views: 604	May 16, 2011 01:43:48 AM Re: How Long By: PorcelainD...
Couldn't stop laughing...	karma240	Replies:5 Views: 708	May 15, 2011 08:56:29 PM Re: Couldn't stop laughing... By: PeachyPeti...
Pubes	Mattbuk2	Replies:12 Views: 638	May 15, 2011 07:49:20 PM Re: Pubes By: PeachyPeti...
naked butler/cleaner	lewissmith...	Replies:18 Views: 319	May 15, 2011 05:24:10 PM Re: naked butler/cleaner By: GlitterFre...
deepthroat?	kool-chick...	Replies:17 Views: 1441	May 15, 2011 01:10:39 PM Re: deepthroat? By: LaughUntil...
How do I give head without choking and throwing up ?	AbelK	Replies:14 Views: 1231	May 15, 2011 02:02:37 AM Re: How do I give head without choking and throwing up ? By: c__jay
Favourite Aftershave/Cologne/Perfume on the opposite sex?	starryeyes...	Replies:27 Views: 646	May 14, 2011 10:53:28 PM Re: Favourite Aftershave/Cologne/Perfume on the opposite sex? By: Voraciousl...
Tired of being treated like a sex object	Babygurlxj...	Replies:21 Views: 1438	May 14, 2011 04:16:40 PM Re: Tired of being treated like a sex object By: LilMissJuk...
Foreplay...	claremarie...	Replies:7 Views: 488	May 14, 2011 04:11:48 PM Re: Foreplay... By: LilMissJuk...
Erection problem	bouclesdor	Replies:14 Views: 629	May 14, 2011 01:00:22 AM Re: Erection problem By: andyglasgo...
Watching "gay" porn	Jade_21	Replies:23 Views: 757	May 14, 2011 12:18:41 AM Re: Watching By: Ed_In_The_...
Pull on condoms	Naughty_87	Replies:11 Views: 543	May 13, 2011 08:56:11 PM Re: Pull on condoms By: Naughty_87
New winning time! Cosmo Challenge - How long can YOU last?	anna_kuk1	Replies:95 Views: 6303	May 13, 2011 08:12:28 PM Re: New winning time! Cosmo Challenge - How long can YOU last? By: lollipop31...
How many sexual partners....	Scarletty	Replies:97 Views: 1379	May 13, 2011 08:05:23 PM Re: How many sexual partners.... By: Maximov
No Subject	andyglasgo...	Replies:2 Views: 154	May 13, 2011 04:35:26 PM Re: No Subject By: Naughty_87
Different contraceptive pills?	Abbibee	Replies:16 Views: 311	May 13, 2011 04:11:07 PM Re: Different contraceptive pills? By: Hannnnnahu...

he stays hard for everything but sex :(	Factory_Gi...	Replies:3 Views: 473	May 13, 2011 11:51:41 AM Re: he stays hard for everything but sex :( By: HelpSomeone...
70 - 1	LoveNspark...	Replies:15 Views: 867	May 13, 2011 11:04:47 AM Re: 70 - 1 By: naomi5000
take the implant out, or keep the implant in?!	Emzy18	Replies:3 Views: 189	May 13, 2011 01:04:55 AM Re: take the implant out, or keep the implant in?! By: SummerCamp...
Doctors	Oblongchee...	Replies:4 Views: 238	May 12, 2011 10:44:34 PM Re: Doctors By: Oblongchee...
Advice Please!!	babyblue87...	Replies:6 Views: 455	May 12, 2011 08:04:36 PM Re: Advice Please!! By: Naughty_87
NOT A GOOD EXPERIENCE =]	BELLA0304	Replies:9 Views: 661	May 12, 2011 03:04:04 PM Re: NOT A GOOD EXPERIENCE =] By: Sian-Danie...
bringing porn into our sex life	primarni_p...	Replies:5 Views: 318	May 12, 2011 02:24:51 PM Re: bringing porn into our sex life By: primarni_p...
Argument about porn..	naomi5000	Replies:18 Views: 782	May 11, 2011 11:23:08 PM Re: Argument about porn.. By: EmmyXsnowf...
how to smell good down there	cupcake_sp...	Replies:3 Views: 782	May 11, 2011 11:04:43 PM Re: how to smell good down there By: poppyseedu...
i dont know how to toss someone off with foreskin -just--me-		Replies:14 Views: 1876	May 11, 2011 10:53:09 PM Re: i dont know how to toss someone off with foreskin By: Tinted_len...
Starter sex toys - something to spice it up	Jordylumps...	Replies:2 Views: 201	May 11, 2011 03:08:48 PM Re: Starter sex toys - something to spice it up By: LoveHimuk
Very worried I might be pregnant	_fairyhand...	Replies:7 Views: 471	May 11, 2011 12:11:06 PM Re: Very worried I might be pregnant By: StatingThe...
erotic fiction ?	Sparklexx...	Replies:1 Views: 389	May 11, 2011 11:35:51 AM Re: erotic fiction ? By: LilMissJuk...
what to do when "on top" ?	kimbo-xo	Replies:5 Views: 764	May 11, 2011 10:17:51 AM Re: what to do when By: blonde_bar...
Can't do it standing up!	lollipop31...	Replies:30 Views: 1102	May 11, 2011 12:21:29 AM Re: Can't do it standing up! By: Ed_In_The_...
How to have nice loving sex instead of just porn-ish dirty sex?	xoHelloKit...	Replies:8 Views: 554	May 10, 2011 10:10:06 PM Re: How to have nice loving sex instead of just porn-ish dirty sex? By: paiiigetur...
sex is always painful :(	aussieauss...	Replies:8 Views: 403	May 10, 2011 10:00:21 PM Re: sex is always painful :( By: patricbt25
impotent or nerves?! help :(	Factory_Gi...	Replies:7 Views: 162	May 10, 2011 09:57:18 PM Re: impotent or nerves?! help :( By: naomi5000
One night stand	oohlalaaa	Replies:19 Views: 979	May 10, 2011 09:25:56 PM Re: One night stand By: patricbt25
Self concious about being on top...	xxbarbie-d...	Replies:3 Views: 267	May 10, 2011 07:30:27 PM Re: Self concious about being on top... By: freakydeak...
How to have nice loving sex instead of just firty sex ..?	xoHelloKit...	Replies:1 Views: 110	May 10, 2011 07:18:13 PM Re: How to have nice loving sex instead of just firty sex ..? By: JFC91

Rabbits online...	katekuk3	Replies:3 Views: 148	May 10, 2011 06:08:21 PM Re: Rabbits online... By: katekuk3
The man's out until about 7:30. What to do when he returns?	captaincru...	Replies:6 Views: 578	May 10, 2011 05:36:20 PM Re: The man's out until about 7:30. What to do when he returns? By: sminkypink...
Boyfriend Avoids My Vagina	SecretMe27	Replies:42 Views: 1853	May 10, 2011 05:07:16 PM Re: Boyfriend Avoids My Vagina By: dutch25
He doesn't go down on me for long enough	JoEll3n	Replies:24 Views: 1002	May 10, 2011 03:43:18 PM Re: He doesn't go down on me for long enough By: SkyHighHee...
Masturbation & Relationships	duwopuk	Replies:7 Views: 895	May 10, 2011 03:18:07 PM Re: Masturbation & Relationships By: Charlotte...
So, he's not putting out ...again	SQSLW	Replies:3 Views: 380	May 10, 2011 01:32:12 PM Re: So, he's not putting out ...again By: sminkypink...
Unprotected Sex .. ?!	NemoTK	Replies:6 Views: 316	May 10, 2011 12:23:00 PM Re: Unprotected Sex .. ?! By: Fearless_x
Confession time: Sitting on your foot	anna_kuk1	Replies:17 Views: 983	May 10, 2011 12:19:18 AM Re: Confession time: Sitting on your foot By: GlitterFre...
Great Night!	Mallard8	Replies:4 Views: 326	May 09, 2011 11:48:21 PM Re: Great Night! By: patricbt25
is this weird	ffg1	Replies:5 Views: 467	May 09, 2011 08:02:39 PM Re: is this weird By: hellasensi...
How do u girls like Finnish men?	TheLaw85	Replies:0 Views: 201	May 09, 2011 04:03:14 AM How do u girls like Finnish men? By: TheLaw85
hello	feefee8	Replies:3 Views: 175	May 09, 2011 12:20:39 AM Re: hello By: aprikot5
Fun sex poll for the ladies!	Jdubs	Replies:5 Views: 462	May 08, 2011 09:59:09 PM Re: Fun sex poll for the ladies! By: Cherry-che...
Naked for charity	nickscott1	Replies:7 Views: 420	May 08, 2011 09:43:22 PM Re: Naked for charity By: mrs_totten...
Covert Masturbation - Leg squeezing, seam riding etc!	anna_kuk1	Replies:95 Views: 16085	May 08, 2011 08:44:09 PM Re: Covert Masturbation - Leg squeezing, seam riding etc! By: deb04XXX
Doing things in public - sexy or sleazy?	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:35 Views: 1764	May 08, 2011 07:02:33 PM Re: Doing things in public - sexy or sleazy? By: jadeeldred
Help with extreme dirty talk please!!	emonth58	Replies:3 Views: 817	May 08, 2011 07:00:32 PM Re: Help with extreme dirty talk please!! By: Tinted_len...
To sex or not to sex??	blonde_bar...	Replies:26 Views: 888	May 08, 2011 06:25:46 PM Re: To sex or not to sex?? By: EnglishMee...
Webcams...	lucyinthea...	Replies:5 Views: 423	May 08, 2011 05:05:04 PM Re: Webcams... By: naomi5000
Getting it up?	x-Calliope...	Replies:4 Views: 563	May 08, 2011 02:30:47 PM Re: Getting it up? By: x-Calliope...
Relationship or %&*\$# buddies..	Bethhmxo	Replies:8 Views: 281	May 08, 2011 11:20:43 AM Re: Relationship or %&*\$# buddies.. By: Sneezemuff...
Threesome	bobby-burg...	Replies:7	May 08, 2011 10:23:46 AM



		Views: 715	Re: Threesome By: Andy_most ... May 08, 2011 05:42:29 AM
Can't relax!	bedheadswe...	Replies:9 Views: 357	Re: Can't relax! By: bedheadswe...
too small?	Jaffacakes...	Replies:10 Views: 801	May 07, 2011 12:15:13 AM Re: too small? By: D4ve
on yur own	babygaluk	Replies:4 Views: 1347	May 06, 2011 10:08:30 PM Re: on yur own By: sugar_pop1
New Solo Tips	sugar_pop1	Replies:7 Views: 942	May 06, 2011 09:57:13 PM Re: New Solo Tips By: sugar_pop1
Going solo stories and tips!?!?	PrincessPi...	Replies:1 Views: 685	May 06, 2011 09:54:00 PM Re: Going solo stories and tips!?!? By: sugar_pop1
One man and his... porn	SQSLW	Replies:13 Views: 342	May 06, 2011 09:49:12 PM Re: One man and his... porn By: Dhun-na-nG...
Naughty text messages!	Dhun-na-nG...	Replies:2 Views: 502	May 06, 2011 09:37:44 PM Re: Naughty text messages! By: Dhun-na-nG...
my boyfriend wants me to dominate him... \	jayjay119	Replies:8 Views: 955	May 06, 2011 06:45:54 PM Re: my boyfriend wants me to dominate him... \
having sex before marriage	serena4000...	Replies:18 Views: 894	By: couchix3 May 06, 2011 03:12:52 PM Re: having sex before marriage By: Scarlettty
Staying wet :(	JezebelJin...	Replies:3 Views: 488	May 05, 2011 11:55:22 PM Re: Staying wet :( By: barbie_86
my boyfriend wants me to dominate him... \	jayjay119	Replies:8 Views: 956	May 06, 2011 06:45:54 PM Re: my boyfriend wants me to dominate him... \
having sex before marriage	serena4000...	Replies:18 Views: 895	By: couchix3 May 06, 2011 03:12:52 PM Re: having sex before marriage By: Scarlettty
Staying wet :(	JezebelJin...	Replies:3 Views: 489	May 05, 2011 11:55:22 PM Re: Staying wet :( By: barbie_86
he likes being in control...	kool-chick...	Replies:7 Views: 304	May 05, 2011 11:46:08 PM Re: he likes being in control... By: kool-chick...
Urban myth, or reality? Black v White	Ruth_Willi...	Replies:57 Views: 2182	May 05, 2011 11:36:42 PM Re: Urban myth, or reality? Black v White By: c__jay
He's too selfish!	JenBoo89	Replies:3 Views: 189	May 05, 2011 10:37:20 PM Re: He's too selfish! By: Jo_used_to...
how to give him the best sex ever	Girlygirlu...	Replies:9 Views: 4934	May 05, 2011 09:52:57 PM Re: how to give him the best sex ever By: Boo_Boo_Ga...
Anyone ever had this?	SP_says_no...	Replies:2 Views: 427	May 05, 2011 07:02:50 PM Re: Anyone ever had this? By: Voraciousl...
On top?	Promisesuk	Replies:3 Views: 231	May 05, 2011 05:12:29 PM Re: On top? By: doyoulikep...
Summer Sex Toys	MrsRobinso...	Replies:0 Views: 124	May 05, 2011 04:46:11 PM Summer Sex Toys By: MrsRobinso...
Orgasming	Time_will_...	Replies:3 Views: 450	May 05, 2011 11:53:11 AM Re: Orgasming By: Jaffacakes...
In a rut at 18...	jellybean-...	Replies:4	May 05, 2011 10:04:00 AM

		Views: 650	Re: In a rut at 18... By: SSQLW May 05, 2011 09:45:04 AM
Is there something wrong with me??	Beautiful-...	Replies:9 Views: 740	Re: Is there something wrong with me?? By: Beautiful-... May 05, 2011 07:51:38 AM
Who says I have to swallow?!	preciousec...	Replies:4 Views: 570	Re: Who says I have to swallow?! By: Mia_Antoni... May 04, 2011 08:40:51 PM
Porn DVDS.	couchiex3	Replies:5 Views: 328	Re: Porn DVDS. By: couchiex3 May 04, 2011 03:31:59 PM
How would you describe.	Thomas163	Replies:1 Views: 276	Re: How would you describe. By: LilMissJuk... May 04, 2011 02:41:34 PM
Dick Lick....	scottishsw...	Replies:13 Views: 1052	Re: Dick Lick.... By: blonde_bar... May 04, 2011 01:47:09 PM
Attach-MAN	willynilly...	Replies:1 Views: 207	Re: Attach-MAN By: Fuzz May 04, 2011 12:40:06 PM
regular oral...?	_fairyhand...	Replies:7 Views: 654	Re: regular oral...? By: deb04XXX May 04, 2011 12:31:52 PM
sexy underwear	buzz_cg	Replies:2 Views: 264	Re: sexy underwear By: blonde_bar... May 04, 2011 01:49:28 AM
I really miss a bit of physical intimacy	Red_Sorsha	Replies:26 Views: 875	Re: I really miss a bit of physical intimacy By: Kylera7 May 04, 2011 01:33:47 AM
I really don't enjoy it...	karma240	Replies:6 Views: 734	Re: I really don't enjoy it... By: Kylera7 May 04, 2011 12:36:01 AM
on top?	XXXXX7	Replies:2 Views: 245	Re: on top? By: XXXXX7 May 03, 2011 10:09:19 PM
Pain during sex	x-Cookie	Replies:13 Views: 351	Re: Pain during sex By: womble13 May 03, 2011 10:02:54 PM
No confidence :(	MeliaB	Replies:12 Views: 771	Re: No confidence :( By: MeliaB May 03, 2011 09:39:02 PM
First time sex with a new partner- what do you do? Cherry-che...		Replies:3 Views: 450	Re: First time sex with a new partner- what do you do? By: Cherry-che... May 03, 2011 09:18:43 PM
something I did when I was young and naive. HELP	lalanonymo...	Replies:14 Views: 925	Re: something I did when I was young and naive. HELP By: lalanonymo... May 03, 2011 08:52:53 PM
Painful! :(	Honey_Beee	Replies:7 Views: 183	Re: Painful! :( By: smileychic... May 03, 2011 05:21:05 PM
Are you girls any good?	Scotty-gir...	Replies:37 Views: 2124	Re: Are you girls any good? By: GlitterFre... May 03, 2011 03:21:30 PM
rapid sex drive increase	mattsgirlx...	Replies:1 Views: 169	Re: rapid sex drive increase By: LilMissJuk... May 03, 2011 01:03:46 PM
orgasm ?	XXXXX7	Replies:7 Views: 566	Re: orgasm ? By: Yourminieg... May 03, 2011 11:39:44 AM
Pick a Sex Toy	MrsRobinso...	Replies:0 Views: 91	Pick a Sex Toy By: MrsRobinso...
Hey	Kylera7	Replies:0 Views: 93	Hey

Sex Addiction?	lissauk3	Replies:2 Views: 176	By: Kylera7 May 03, 2011 01:01:41 AM Re: Sex Addiction? By: LILYMK1
Guys who can dance	CrazyCosmo...	Replies:8 Views: 226	May 02, 2011 11:35:38 PM Re: Guys who can dance By: doyoulikep...
Sexy underwear?	Rosie_Posi...	Replies:7 Views: 261	May 02, 2011 10:46:54 PM Re: Sexy underwear? By: Fishy-Fish
I m looking for a slang word	Thomas163	Replies:8 Views: 310	May 02, 2011 10:26:26 PM Re: I m looking for a slang word By: searchandr...
I think I'm going insane!	PeachyPeti...	Replies:6 Views: 473	May 02, 2011 09:01:49 PM Re: I think I'm going insane! By: kimpossibl...
Have you ever...	LittleMiss...	Replies:19 Views: 1174	May 02, 2011 09:00:18 PM Re: Have you ever... By: Yourminieg...
Can't do the "girl on top" position properly	xoHelloKit...	Replies:6 Views: 706	May 02, 2011 08:56:07 PM Re: Can't do the By: Yourminieg...
Threesum	WFC84	Replies:2 Views: 474	May 02, 2011 03:39:37 PM Re: Threesum By: WFC84
Ok I'm messed up	GlitterFre...	Replies:24 Views: 1422	May 02, 2011 10:12:03 AM Re: Ok I'm messed up By: Cherry-che...
phone sex embarrassment	haunteduk	Replies:7 Views: 649	May 01, 2011 10:52:49 PM Re: phone sex embarrassment By: Chii_Love
first time disapointment	dmarleyx	Replies:9 Views: 423	May 01, 2011 05:56:26 PM Re: first time disapointment By: doyoulikep...
trying out new things..	xoxoalice	Replies:15 Views: 763	May 01, 2011 01:39:11 PM Re: trying out new things.. By: missluella
Is this a plausible excuse??	SirenX	Replies:20 Views: 762	May 01, 2011 01:06:43 PM Re: Is this a plausible excuse?? By: missluella
Arghhh :(	Jade_21	Replies:5 Views: 317	May 01, 2011 12:10:38 PM Re: Arghhh :( By: SirenX
Sex Drive :/	AlwaysRain...	Replies:3 Views: 185	May 01, 2011 12:19:57 AM Re: Sex Drive :/ By: Chloe200

## APPENDIX III. Men's Health Forum Structure

# Men's Health



## FORUMS

FORUM RSS 

Forum Home

## Men's Health Forums

Topic	Posts	Last post
<b>General</b>		
<b>Discussion board rules</b> Read this before you start posting!	Topics: 266	Aug 25, 2011 05:05:10 PM <b>Re: why do u not produce womens health in the uk??? Very unfair!!</b> By: tryingbutn...
<b>Talk about the website</b> Whatever your thoughts, we'd like to hear them -- good or bad!	Topics: 515	Aug 26, 2011 12:51:01 AM <b>Re: FAO Webmaster - Fantasy Football threads</b> By: Persia_lal...
<b>Men's Health news and events</b>		
<b>MH Cover Model Competition</b> Training for it, eating for it...entering!	Topics: 789	Aug 17, 2011 07:39:36 PM <b>Re: Old guy with aspirations</b> By: Sporty_Cha...
<b>Challenge yourself or others!</b> Take on other board members in muscle-building or weight-loss challenges.	Topics: 427	Aug 26, 2011 10:52:08 AM <b>Re: My challenge</b> By: alanbourne...
<b>MH Active</b> Take on the same challenges as MH staff and share your fitness, nutrition and gear tips with other competitors and board members here.	Topics: 88	Aug 23, 2011 02:16:56 PM <b>MH Survival of the Fittest 2011</b> By: Web_Master
<b>Training logs</b> Let us know how your training is going by posting your training logs here.	Topics: 953	Aug 26, 2011 05:19:33 PM <b>Re: Push / Pull Split Log</b> By: JP-123
<b>Workout of the month</b> Follow our workouts to improve your body	Topics: 177	Aug 26, 2011 11:10:34 AM <b>Military Press ups to burn fat and maintain muscle mass?</b> By: Johnosurfb...
<b>Success stories</b> Share your body transformation stories and pics here	Topics: 273	Aug 25, 2011 10:52:20 PM <b>Re: 15 stone to 11.4 stone</b> By: Sean-Cotte...

Discussion boards		
<b>Needing motivation</b> Can't be bothered?	Topics: 1188	Aug 26, 2011 03:21:25 PM <b>Re: best advice/ tip ever given to you</b> By: <b>super-hand...</b>
<b>Get superfit</b> Looking for tips or fitness know-how?	Topics: 5259	Aug 25, 2011 02:09:14 PM <b>Re: Is it a fracture?</b> By: <b>Dexter_Mor...</b>
<b>Build bigger muscles</b> Want to get big fast?	Topics: 37781	Aug 26, 2011 04:53:30 PM <b>Re: If only squats can get you big...</b> By: <b>coachdaz</b>
<b>Starting out</b> Want advice from experience gym goers?	Topics: 14573	Aug 26, 2011 11:38:59 AM <b>Re: Just starting out with dumbbells - rest periods</b> By: <b>LiL-Benny</b>
<b>Looking good</b> Need some style or grooming advice?	Topics: 7057	Aug 26, 2011 03:47:49 PM <b>Re: LYNX - does it really work ladies? Womens opinion please</b> By: <b>DauidsGood...</b>
<b>Losing weight</b> Need to lose the lard?	Topics: 15357	Aug 26, 2011 03:28:01 PM <b>Re: Any Advice Would Be Greatly Appreciated</b> By: <b>stuartw198...</b>
<b>Eating right</b> Want to talk about food?	Topics: 11234	Aug 26, 2011 04:17:10 PM <b>Re: Alternative to butter for potatoes</b> By: <b>mikes1990</b>
<b>Exploring sex</b> Got some knowledge to share?	Topics: 7726	Aug 26, 2011 05:21:27 PM <b>Re: How BIG is too BIG?</b> By: <b>Stevo6</b>
<b>Becoming a dad</b> Bricking it or loving it?	Topics: 438	Aug 26, 2011 10:30:58 AM <b>Re: A question for all the dads.</b> By: <b>Geeeeee</b>
<b>Checking out the dating game</b> Need some advice or got some to give?	Topics: 5770	Aug 26, 2011 03:30:12 PM <b>Re: Confidence Issues?</b> By: <b>little2shy</b>
<b>In need of support</b> Need to off-load your problems?	Topics: 2327	Aug 26, 2011 11:38:22 AM <b>Re: Hospital recommend a mc d's a day</b> By: <b>PeckhamTer...</b>
<b>Stressed out</b> Work, relationship or family giving you grief?	Topics: 1095	Aug 26, 2011 04:16:10 PM <b>Re: Struggling With Life</b> By: <b>Angelbadge...</b>
<b>Playing or watching sport</b> Want to discuss the match?	Topics: 2762	Aug 26, 2011 05:18:49 PM <b>Re: Fantasy Football League 2011/2012</b> By: <b>Mohammed_I...</b>

<b>Review films, books &amp; mags</b> Got an opinion to share?	Topics: 1448	Aug 26, 2011 01:32:19 PM <b>Re: The Inbetweeners</b> By: <b>loopy24</b>
<b>Spending and making money</b> How do you do it?	Topics: 1116	Aug 26, 2011 11:34:49 AM <b>Re: Earn extra money???</b> By: <b>PeckhamTer...</b>
<b>Knowing your body</b> Strange goings on down there or inside?	Topics: 7195	Aug 23, 2011 05:51:12 PM <b>Re: Trouble Drinking Whey Protein</b> By: <b>LiL-Benny</b>
<b>Surviving cancer</b> Want to talk about it?	Topics: 89	Aug 20, 2011 01:00:03 PM <b>Re: Gilmore Girls Seasons 1-7 DVD Boxset</b> By: <b>Persia_lal...</b>
<b>Beating your addiction</b> Need support to get you through?	Topics: 266	Aug 26, 2011 11:25:54 AM <b>Re: Fags fags fags</b> By: <b>-TG-</b>
<b>Just talk</b> Not sure which topic to post a thread on? Post it here	Topics: 35412	Aug 26, 2011 05:11:52 PM <b>Re: Fake boobs</b> By: <b>Dexter_Mor...</b>
<b>Your recommendations</b> If you love a product or have discovered a great deal you'd like to share, do it here. *No adverts please	Topics: 731	Aug 25, 2011 08:28:04 PM <b>Best Weight Lifting Gyms in Nuremberg</b> By: <b>timmypecto...</b>

[Forum Home](#)

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## APPENDIX IV. Men's Health Forum Threads

# Men's Health



## FORUMS



Forum Home

## Men's Health Forums

### Checking out the dating game

Topics	Author	Post	Last post
Girl playing hard to get, how do i play it better than her ?	jackwills1	Replies:25 Views: 308	Jul 29, 2011 11:36:08 AM Re: Girl playing hard to get, how do i play it better than her ? By: Danax2
Date Ideas - Edinburgh this Friday	thisbloke	Replies:7 Views: 129	Jul 28, 2011 10:11:39 PM Re: Date Ideas - Edinburgh this Friday By: ferco91
Plenty of Fish	Wardy124	Replies:543 Views: 5791	Jul 28, 2011 11:03:57 AM Re: Plenty of Fish By: chazlevy
Confused about how to read a situation	levis21	Replies:6 Views: 255	Jul 26, 2011 04:57:36 PM Re: Confused about how to read a situation By: allplayand...
One night stand or more...?	Delaney34	Replies:16 Views: 532	Jul 23, 2011 01:04:34 AM Re: One night stand or more...? By: LeanAccoun...
What she thinking ?	JonnySS	Replies:2 Views: 172	Jul 22, 2011 03:44:29 PM Re: What she thinking ? By: moonstruck...
I need a good excuse	oldermenlo...	Replies:21 Views: 296	Jul 22, 2011 12:39:23 PM Re: I need a good excuse By: Blackula_
Moving on	Jaz500	Replies:6 Views: 291	Jul 14, 2011 09:22:40 AM Re: Moving on By: Jaz500
Life after marriage	dbnogreg	Replies:8 Views: 434	Jul 12, 2011 01:18:03 PM Re: Life after marriage By: dbnogreg
Does working out make YOU more shallow?	sharkthin	Replies:16 Views: 606	Jul 08, 2011 11:16:34 PM Re: Does working out make YOU more shallow? By: LeanAccoun...
cosmo forum	oldermenlo...	Replies:77 Views: 862	Jul 08, 2011 07:25:23 PM Re: cosmo forum By: Maximov
uniformdating. com	oldermenlo...	Replies:26 Views: 368	Jul 06, 2011 02:23:54 PM Re: uniformdating. com By: Art-Lover
Mens Health Personal Trainer Offer	rd4015	Replies:1 Views: 176	Jul 04, 2011 12:47:29 PM Re: Mens Health Personal Trainer Offer By: Web_Master
When you know you're wrong	NW55	Replies:10 Views: 315	Jul 02, 2011 01:41:01 AM Re: When you know you're wrong By: Ed_In_The_...
need girl help asap , about to text her ! please	maleadvice	Replies:8	Jun 30, 2011 12:58:01 AM

loooooook		Views: 540	Re: need girl help asap , about to text her ! please loooooook By: Paynebynam... Jun 29, 2011 07:37:13 PM
The ambiguity of texting rears its ugly head...	19NinetyOn...	Replies:66 Views: 538	Re: The ambiguity of texting rears its ugly head... By: _craig_ Jun 29, 2011 05:57:49 PM
Is it naive	Orinoco123	Replies:8 Views: 244	Re: Is it naive By: trickydick... Jun 27, 2011 08:02:07 PM
Do I need to apologise?	Bench4Brit...	Replies:23 Views: 464	Re: Do I need to apologise? By: Ronny87 Jun 22, 2011 11:58:57 AM
this girl im seeing, doesnt want a relationship, she wants a casual relationship with me what is ...	maleadvice	Replies:70 Views: 571	Re: this girl im seeing, doesnt want a relationship, she wants a casual relationship with me what... By: Ninja_KB_B... Jun 21, 2011 02:51:05 AM
The ex dilemma	jodiexx	Replies:8 Views: 377	Re: The ex dilemma By: charlson86 Jun 19, 2011 03:09:08 AM
Does it matter to you what job a girl has?	MP1988	Replies:70 Views: 738	Re: Does it matter to you what job a girl has? By: Joe_2005 Jun 18, 2011 05:50:19 PM
early morning drama	oldermenlo...	Replies:146 Views: 717	Re: early morning drama By: oldermenlo... Jun 18, 2011 07:06:27 AM
Not giving my number out.	stevesmyna...	Replies:25 Views: 383	Re: Not giving my number out. By: beachbum Jun 17, 2011 06:40:48 PM
I'm single and ready to mingle.	Leanne4284	Replies:32 Views: 702	Re: I'm single and ready to mingle. By: Leanne4284 Jun 17, 2011 11:23:10 AM
Can't remember what she looked like	stevesmyna...	Replies:124 Views: 772	Re: Can't remember what she looked like By: The-Prince... Jun 16, 2011 06:39:27 AM
going to this girls house to watch a movie , parents are out :)	jackwills1	Replies:7 Views: 333	Re: going to this girls house to watch a movie , parents are out :) By: beachbum Jun 14, 2011 04:49:59 PM
Bit of a disaster online date experience	Scenesafet...	Replies:53 Views: 658	Re: Bit of a disaster online date experience By: Paulo8 Jun 12, 2011 12:57:52 AM
TWO WOMAN I LIKE :/ WHICH ONE SHOULD I CHOOSE ?	jackwills1	Replies:33 Views: 289	Re: TWO WOMAN I LIKE :/ WHICH ONE SHOULD I CHOOSE ? By: LeanAccoun... Jun 12, 2011 12:38:43 AM
I ASKED THIS GIRL I LIKE TO THE MOVIES :/	jackwills1	Replies:59 Views: 367	Re: I ASKED THIS GIRL I LIKE TO THE MOVIES :/ By: Scenesafet... Jun 10, 2011 05:38:47 PM
How do I stop collecting "Pseudo Sisters" ?	Blue_Thund...	Replies:132 Views: 1019	Re: How do I stop collecting By: Paynebynam... Jun 09, 2011 07:55:33 PM
That first date... Everything you did & didn't want to know	i_am_stu	Replies:39 Views: 12206	Re: That first date... Everything you did & didn't want to know By: Scenesafet... Jun 08, 2011 11:01:57 PM
Approaching women	stevesmyna...	Replies:85 Views: 1767	Re: Approaching women By: davey8369 Jun 07, 2011 10:30:22 PM
What's wrong with me?	Saz2	Replies:48 Views: 562	Re: What's wrong with me? By: Saz2 Jun 07, 2011 07:46:32 PM
Daytime pickups.	irishjoe7	Replies:8 Views: 372	Re: Daytime pickups. By: SuperFunky Jun 07, 2011 02:46:02 PM
Confidence comes and goes	All_Gone_P...	Replies:4 Views: 216	Re: Confidence comes and goes By: Scenesafet... Jun 06, 2011 05:30:14 PM
Advise on girl in relationship	wonderwhy1	Replies:25 Views: 390	Re: Advise on girl in relationship By: Sian-Danie... Jun 06, 2011 12:45:13 PM
Crisis: In Oz, have LDR, amazing girl puts it on a place :(	Wildboys	Replies:14 Views: 258	Re: Crisis: In Oz, have LDR, amazing girl



Romance!	danny231	Replies:11 Views: 174	puts it on a place :( By: Triplash Jun 05, 2011 07:37:55 PM Re: Romance! By: LeanAccoun... Jun 02, 2011 09:15:26 PM
Ex Keeps Contacting me....whats the score?	taffrhys	Replies:13 Views: 303	Re: Ex Keeps Contacting me....whats the score? By: GreenCobra Jun 02, 2011 06:19:16 PM
need advice	oggmonster	Replies:5 Views: 122	Re: need advice By: The-Prince... Jun 01, 2011 09:13:52 PM
IM 17 AND I WANT TO ASK A GIRL I NO VERY WELLL ON A DATE :/ DONT NO HOW !	jackwills1	Replies:18 Views: 362	Re: IM 17 AND I WANT TO ASK A GIRL I NO VERY WELLL ON A DATE :/ DONT NO HOW ! By: irishjoe7 Jun 01, 2011 08:44:51 PM
Need advice	MuseFan1	Replies:19 Views: 187	Re: Need advice By: irishjoe7 May 31, 2011 10:45:21 PM
single and needamale perspective	loopy24	Replies:60 Views: 693	Re: single and needamale perspective By: Gabz-MacGi... May 31, 2011 12:04:04 AM
Your thoughts on this one	MrXXX1	Replies:32 Views: 398	Re: Your thoughts on this one By: LeanAccoun... May 30, 2011 03:01:40 PM
military men cont	oldermenlo...	Replies:8 Views: 141	Re: military men cont By: Acorn_Jim May 30, 2011 01:14:19 PM
Should I say I'm unemployed?	Scenesafet...	Replies:11 Views: 216	Re: Should I say I'm unemployed? By: Tim-Gabz May 27, 2011 10:27:59 AM
Confidence	DavidJ4	Replies:158 Views: 1558	Re: Confidence By: haz_Banned May 26, 2011 02:17:59 PM
age difference. What is too big?	j2468	Replies:44 Views: 800	Re: age difference. What is too big? By: LeanAccoun... May 25, 2011 11:06:31 AM
My Single Friend .com	_SarahLou_	Replies:6 Views: 375	Re: My Single Friend .com By: LeanAccoun... May 23, 2011 09:56:17 AM
military men	oldermenlo...	Replies:74 Views: 528	Re: military men By: oldermenlo... May 22, 2011 09:22:36 PM
Asking a guy at the gym out...	LadyShade	Replies:42 Views: 692	Re: Asking a guy at the gym out... By: LadyShade May 17, 2011 10:19:54 PM
Girl im interested in is moving away	nickowoods	Replies:11 Views: 337	Re: Girl im interested in is moving away By: master_of_... May 17, 2011 04:56:46 PM
Dating older ladies	gooner1976	Replies:5 Views: 160	Re: Dating older ladies By: allplayand... May 17, 2011 12:16:32 AM
Can't pull, won't pull	Anonuk1	Replies:33 Views: 1702	Re: Can't pull, won't pull By: LeanAccoun... May 16, 2011 06:05:13 PM
Single parents.	dmj85	Replies:4 Views: 151	Re: Single parents. By: NW55 May 14, 2011 02:01:53 AM
Male opinion needed, bullying your girlfriend	TeenyQueen	Replies:53 Views: 560	Re: Male opinion needed, bullying your girlfriend By: cartizel May 12, 2011 11:57:57 AM
Another one for you...	stevesmyrna...	Replies:25 Views: 324	Re: Another one for you... By: allplayand... May 09, 2011 11:26:28 PM
Second date	Betzza1	Replies:4 Views: 179	Re: Second date By: dutchie198... May 09, 2011 12:51:57 PM
Where too start!	robin-19	Replies:7 Views: 348	Re: Where too start! By: beachbum May 07, 2011 11:02:38 PM
The dreaded not my type words	dancingboy...	Replies:12 Views: 381	Re: The dreaded not my type words By: dancingboy...

## Exploring sex

Topics	Author	Post	Last post
Naturist Day Spa	Mins21	Replies:17 Views: 1681	Jul 28, 2011 10:50:04 PM Re: Naturist Day Spa By: trickydick...
chlamydia	Bullen60	Replies:4 Views: 169	Jul 28, 2011 05:16:50 PM Re: chlamydia By: Evolve82
autumn day indeed	yuiyuyuiy	Replies:4 Views: 259	Jul 27, 2011 01:48:15 PM Re: autumn day indeed By: Jaguar_Ski...
Discolouration	NorthernKi...	Replies:4 Views: 374	Jul 26, 2011 07:16:34 PM Re: Discolouration By: youdontkno...
Blue Diamond Pills	snakeuk	Replies:12 Views: 1022	Jul 24, 2011 04:56:52 PM Re: Blue Diamond Pills By: Cathuk
Sex after birth of child	Twinkle_Pi...	Replies:6 Views: 610	Jul 20, 2011 03:18:38 PM Re: Sex after birth of child By: austin1100
Free sex dating website	wonderwhy1	Replies:18 Views: 951	Jul 19, 2011 11:43:43 PM Re: Free sex dating website By: Blackula
Safe amature webcam site to go on?	Scotslad69	Replies:45 Views: 1219	Jul 19, 2011 11:54:34 AM Re: Safe amature webcam site to go on? By: DavidsGood...
Cyber sex (again)	IronRush	Replies:58 Views: 791	Jul 19, 2011 11:45:26 AM Re: Cyber sex (again) By: currentaff...
Advantages/disadvantages of being circumcised (during sex)	crawf_91	Replies:76 Views: 17815	Jul 19, 2011 06:55:09 AM Re: Advantages/disadvantages of being circumcised (during sex) By: Okam
MY GIRLFRIENDS DAD SAID HES GOING TO KILL ME, I MADE MY GF LEFT EYE BLIND :(	Fitnesslad	Replies:16 Views: 1346	Jul 18, 2011 07:59:52 PM Re: MY GIRLFRIENDS DAD SAID HES GOING TO KILL ME, I MADE MY GF LEFT EYE BLIND :( By: Strapuk
After a vasectomy.....	saabman	Replies:4 Views: 289	Jul 18, 2011 01:42:24 PM Re: After a vasectomy..... By: boxernejl
Pre-Cum	Wilko80	Replies:36 Views: 1565	Jul 16, 2011 10:07:23 AM Re: Pre-Cum By: Big--E
Masturbation for the tightly circumcised!	barneyboy_...	Replies:12 Views: 647	Jul 15, 2011 04:43:06 PM Re: Masturbation for the tightly circumcised! By: jason dewil...
My Rimming Experience - Feedback	beckyo5	Replies:16 Views: 1003	Jul 15, 2011 12:19:22 PM Re: My Rimming Experience - Feedback By: beckyo5
Hot Friday night surprise. . .	smush	Replies:58 Views: 1264	Jul 12, 2011 06:03:29 PM Re: Hot Friday night surprise. . . By: Ninja_KB_B...
a couple of questions	lalli_d1	Replies:4 Views: 314	Jul 12, 2011 10:39:53 AM Re: a couple of questions By: 007_fit
friday fun?	part_deux	Replies:6 Views: 323	Jul 08, 2011 08:35:03 PM Re: friday fun? By: smush
Jealousy and negative thoughts in Marriage	Ashjones6	Replies:22 Views: 444	Jul 08, 2011 03:19:17 AM Re: Jealousy and negative thoughts in Marriage By: Ashjones6
Soft %&*\$# websites	superscore...	Replies:8 Views: 1073	Jul 07, 2011 05:50:28 PM Re: Soft %&*\$# websites By: part_deux
Why does sex always end up 'UNDER' the duvet after 6 months?	-AJP-	Replies:48 Views: 1419	Jul 07, 2011 11:07:43 AM Re: Why does sex always end up 'UNDER' the duvet after 6 months? By: DM69
guys opinion on piercings down there on women?	kool-chick...	Replies:80 Views: 714	Jul 06, 2011 01:31:52 PM Re: guys opinion on piercings down there on women?

Girls.....Myth or Fact: Women Dont Actually Enjoy A*al Sex?	raconteurm...	Replies:70 Views: 1136	By: Triplash Jul 06, 2011 06:52:55 AM Re: Girls.....Myth or Fact: Women Dont Actually Enjoy A*al Sex? By: Evolve82
Sex with someone taken	clarebear_...	Replies:45 Views: 631	Jul 01, 2011 10:14:39 PM Re: Sex with someone taken By: Big--E
Yes men can have multiple orgasms :)	Rocketman_...	Replies:25 Views: 572	Jul 01, 2011 01:33:16 PM Re: Yes men can have multiple orgasms :) By: BiGnRippeD
Why the fear of being circumcised	Juliegraha...	Replies:61 Views: 2893	Jul 01, 2011 09:30:23 AM Re: Why the fear of being circumcised By: Okam
keeping up rhythm	oldermenlo...	Replies:56 Views: 866	Jun 30, 2011 11:03:12 PM Re: keeping up rhythm By: Get4Fit
*Delayed Ejaculation Question*	BP87	Replies:11 Views: 818	Jun 30, 2011 08:23:00 PM Re: *Delayed Ejaculation Question* By: Rocketman_...
would you/could you date a former %&*\$# actress (and live with it)	BiGnRippeD	Replies:69 Views: 925	Jun 30, 2011 03:59:45 PM Re: would you/could you date a former %&*\$# actress (and live with it) By: Mr-BD
Reintroducing P0rn	Ashjones6	Replies:8 Views: 353	Jun 30, 2011 12:11:11 AM Re: Reintroducing P0rn By: Ashjones6
Rimming...Hygienic or Not?	beckyo5	Replies:32 Views: 1086	Jun 29, 2011 03:36:31 PM Re: Rimming...Hygienic or Not? By: Ashjones6
Premeditated Groping	Chelliah	Replies:30 Views: 587	Jun 29, 2011 03:10:22 PM Re: Premeditated Groping By: beduffrich
%&*\$# music	leeroy99	Replies:4 Views: 159	Jun 27, 2011 04:04:03 PM Re: %&*\$# music By: DavidsGood...
Best you've ever had?	WeeNixuk	Replies:29 Views: 1191	Jun 26, 2011 12:13:02 AM Re: Best you've ever had? By: Aynon_Emus
I can get sex whenever I want...	Paynebynam...	Replies:236 Views: 2245	Jun 22, 2011 09:40:01 AM Re: I can get sex whenever I want... By: love090584
ADVICE ON LICKING YOUR GIRLFRIEND OUT ?	jackwills1	Replies:21 Views: 1221	Jun 20, 2011 12:07:27 AM Re: ADVICE ON LICKING YOUR GIRLFRIEND OUT ? By: Ninja_KB_B...
Sex help?	ThatGuyOve...	Replies:27 Views: 330	Jun 18, 2011 12:24:23 AM Re: Sex help? By: ThatGuyOve...
Your best "that's what she said"..	Rob2388	Replies:42 Views: 656	Jun 17, 2011 01:10:56 PM Re: Your best By: Rob2388
Where to buy condoms in bulk...safely?	onemuaytha...	Replies:31 Views: 2063	Jun 15, 2011 12:37:43 PM Re: Where to buy condoms in bulk...safely? By: blamer1
low sex drive	Moltisanti...	Replies:15 Views: 473	Jun 14, 2011 11:45:03 AM Re: low sex drive By: allplayand...
pulling	oldermenlo...	Replies:24 Views: 584	Jun 13, 2011 09:41:33 PM Re: pulling By: Blackula_
any horny lads up for some email chat	Soupy6	Replies:4 Views: 646	Jun 10, 2011 05:40:28 PM Re: any horny lads up for some email chat By: Not_Arnie
any gay lads in chelmsford?	Soupy6	Replies:13 Views: 373	Jun 10, 2011 01:01:48 PM Re: any gay lads in chelmsford? By: Logan_pres...
17 AND NEED SEX SO BAD !!! IM FRUSTRATED :/	jackwills1	Replies:111 Views: 1256	Jun 09, 2011 04:00:15 PM Re: 17 AND NEED SEX SO BAD !!! IM FRUSTRATED :/ By: don-78
Am I a prude?...one night stands	MrXXX1	Replies:39 Views: 854	Jun 08, 2011 07:37:55 PM Re: Am I a prude?...one night stands By: davey8369
Squirting	tripod2	Replies:54	Jun 07, 2011 12:31:43 AM

		Views: 2872	Re: Squirting By: kool-chick...
Missionary position	tripod2	Replies:49 Views: 1674	Jun 05, 2011 10:51:29 PM Re: Missionary position By: Triplash Jun 04, 2011 10:47:18 PM
Recommend some films that will get my lady 'in the mood'...	KingSausag...	Replies:34 Views: 746	Re: Recommend some films that will get my lady 'in the mood'... By: kool-chick... Jun 04, 2011 04:39:37 PM
BACK	cplsc	Replies:0 Views: 113	BACK By: cplsc Jun 02, 2011 06:52:27 PM
Is your best mate's sister off limits?	Art-Lover	Replies:16 Views: 485	Re: Is your best mate's sister off limits? By: Namor Jun 01, 2011 09:33:25 PM
Grey chest hairs / Increased ejaculation????	mike007007	Replies:1 Views: 195	Re: Grey chest hairs / Increased ejaculation???? By: Art-Lover Jun 01, 2011 04:59:54 PM
Bi Guys - need some advice	dannster	Replies:7 Views: 1303	Re: Bi Guys - need some advice By: -AJP- May 31, 2011 05:24:01 PM
don't ejaculate from sex?	pekz	Replies:1 Views: 176	Re: don't ejaculate from sex? By: allplayand... May 31, 2011 11:01:55 AM
penis size	peter1985u...	Replies:31 Views: 1554	Re: penis size By: Beau_1 May 30, 2011 07:17:32 PM
What turns you on?	PeachyPeti...	Replies:79 Views: 664	Re: What turns you on? By: Acorn_Jim May 30, 2011 09:58:34 AM
Condoms...	jbenito	Replies:9 Views: 380	Re: Condoms... By: Westcar May 29, 2011 03:07:40 PM
New Relationship & Erection Difficulty	Elmzeh	Replies:8 Views: 374	Re: New Relationship & Erection Difficulty By: jbenito May 24, 2011 01:57:38 PM
Viagra addiction	damnhardwr...	Replies:26 Views: 2034	Re: Viagra addiction By: Tim-Gabz May 21, 2011 12:01:31 AM
Older women and talking dirty...	tripod2	Replies:149 Views: 1109	Re: Older women and talking dirty... By: cplsc May 16, 2011 02:09:40 PM
Testogel/Loss of sex drive	25fitguy	Replies:10 Views: 1721	Re: Testogel/Loss of sex drive By: Sc0tty May 16, 2011 11:10:59 AM
Safe Sex Genital Warts - How Can I Practice Safer Sex?	alexfergus...	Replies:0 Views: 46	Safe Sex Genital Warts - How Can I Practice Safer Sex? By: alexfergus... May 16, 2011 01:40:14 AM
WHY DOES MY WILLY , GO BIG AND STIFF :(	jackwills1	Replies:39 Views: 1373	Re: WHY DOES MY WILLY , GO BIG AND STIFF :( By: pat140 May 15, 2011 05:04:04 PM
New Boyfriend Also Like Men! Is There Any Way To Change Him?	beckyo5	Replies:16 Views: 896	Re: New Boyfriend Also Like Men! Is There Any Way To Change Him? By: E_fit May 15, 2011 05:02:48 PM
loose teeth need fixing asap	peter1985u...	Replies:2 Views: 127	Re: loose teeth need fixing asap By: E_fit May 15, 2011 01:07:26 PM
Lost of Libedo - help!!!	zizu9	Replies:12 Views: 232	Re: Lost of Libedo - help!!! By: The-Prince... May 13, 2011 11:42:28 AM
Prematrure ejaculation	Footballma...	Replies:31 Views: 3397	Re: Prematrure ejaculation By: arnoldblac... May 12, 2011 01:57:50 PM
vitaligo skin disorder treatment with Herbs vitaligo oil	healthtrea...	Replies:1 Views: 91	Re: vitaligo skin disorder treatment with Herbs vitaligo oil By: MisterNick May 05, 2011 08:32:50 PM
<a href="http://www.menshealth.co.uk/community/forums/thread/1491988">http://www.menshealth.co.uk/community/forums/thread/1491988</a>	spoiler	Replies:22 Views: 2236	<a href="http://www.menshealth.co.uk/community/forums/thread/1491988?goto=newPost">http://www.menshealth.co.uk/community/forums/thread/1491988?goto=newPost</a> By: Strapuk

Small boobs	MP1988	Replies:68 Views: 3482	May 04, 2011 12:15:50 AM Re: Small boobs By: Dolphy_
Non-desendant Testicle	galacticos...	Replies:3 Views: 370	May 02, 2011 04:52:25 PM Re: Non-desendant Testicle By: Jono06

APPENDIX V. CS and MH Word List

# COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK

1	314128	community
2	254560	cmpid
3	196723	o
4	180214	profile
5	162221	to
6	129884	http
7	127219	fashion
8	119252	uk
9	117780	beauty
10	115303	the
11	114488	lifestyle
12	111293	i
13	107170	and
14	104916	Cosmo
15	103012	a
16	97661	forums
17	95347	co
18	93137	sex
19	85101	hair
20	82239	cosmopolitan
21	79175	forum
22	75708	form
23	75377	you
24	74427	it
25	73140	love
26	69935	of
27	67112	message
28	66672	user
29	65935	Fashion
30	64906	men
31	60340	new
32	58480	directory
33	55727	Beauty
34	55535	c
35	55261	PM
36	55242	video
37	54546	s
38	53512	celebrity
39	49384	www
40	49176	his
41	48160	xhtml
42	46695	in
43	44975	that
44	44684	he
45	44542	Posted
46	41163	other
47	41027	Sex
48	40993	Re
49	40162	t
50	39108	for
51	38455	My
52	38104	blog

53	37376	id
54	37169	on
55	37076	name
56	36854	pm
57	36773	forumSearch
58	35397	with
59	34706	campus
60	34279	com
61	34231	Subject
62	34228	REPLY
63	34227	QUOTE
64	34226	Rank
65	33979	or
66	33860	ur
67	33777	about
68	33388	trends
69	33385	topics
70	33354	Send
71	33332	Joined
72	33332	recipient
73	33331	Posts
74	32684	mind
75	32209	news
76	31932	is
77	31732	this
78	30987	ultimate
79	29842	shopping
80	28204	Awards
81	27781	have
82	27589	Hair
83	27585	thread
84	27534	me
85	27520	fbIndex
86	27077	be
87	26926	your
88	26815	i
89	26692	entertainment
90	26493	him
91	26473	do
92	25960	my
93	25565	but
94	24879	best
95	24758	competitions
96	24560	The
97	24536	AM
98	24530	how
99	24322	x
100	24236	tips
101	24121	offers
102	24107	guide
103	24080	Competitions
104	23273	year

105	22822	women
106	22616	was
107	22141	click
108	22134	out
109	21731	Love
110	21449	dating
111	21356	girl
112	21342	diet
113	20937	Men
114	20921	not
115	20914	just
116	20655	careers
117	20644	Entertainment
118	20640	registration
119	20546	week
120	20279	get
121	20051	at
122	19459	B
123	19338	by
124	19016	if
125	18623	wedding
126	18553	up
127	18449	blogs
128	18201	all
129	17833	like
130	17367	topic
131	17265	May
132	17200	fashionnav
133	17200	hairbeautynav
134	17200	lifestylenav
135	17200	lovesexnav
136	17200	mennav
137	17120	pictures
138	17079	so
139	16935	life
140	16593	relationships
141	16582	what
142	16142	cosmo
143	16068	as
144	15876	ad
145	15858	page
146	15849	think
147	15756	here
148	15690	What
149	15134	You
150	15064	b

\* sex (18-93137), sexism (12515-9), sexist (3496-108), sexual (189-11030), man (370-4558), men (30-64906), woman (995-1210), women (105-22822), love (25-73140), relationship (140-16593), dating (110-21449), chauvinist (14427-6), chauvinistic (22747-2)<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> The first number indicates its position in the corpus and the second its frequency

# Men's Health

1	25254	community
2	14451	the
3	14340	o
4	13642	a
5	13245	profile
6	11803	to
7	10776	i
8	9018	of
9	8703	and
10	8671	forums
11	7601	message
12	7158	you
13	7079	forum
14	6824	Posted
15	6741	http
16	6496	Re
17	6246	s
18	6217	sex
19	5905	other
20	5756	form
21	5676	in
22	5654	if
23	5373	My
24	5304	user
25	5277	your
26	5123	PM
27	5099	muscle
28	5066	Subject
29	4946	style
30	4917	or
31	4882	QUOTE
32	4881	Rank
33	4881	REPLY
34	4868	Send
35	4864	topics
36	4857	Joined
37	4857	Posts
38	4656	Member
39	4546	healthy
40	4529	that
41	4502	uk
42	4428	www
43	4324	is
44	4111	fitness
45	4076	out
46	3928	about
47	3878	thread
48	3788	MH
49	3738	weight
50	3696	living
51	3508	food
52	3493	co

53	3462	page
54	3457	for
55	3386	t
56	3299	building
57	3284	new
58	3276	nutrition
59	3212	more
60	3098	Quoted
61	3090	id
62	3062	forumSearch
63	3054	on
64	3020	Jun
65	3002	com
66	2938	by
67	2926	this
68	2915	not
69	2874	video
70	2862	pm
71	2719	name
72	2686	ur
73	2649	recipient
74	2636	tips
75	2605	Elite
76	2523	be
77	2518	lose
78	2516	with
79	2440	get
80	2425	have
81	2332	TO
82	2279	training
83	2277	here
84	2224	MODERATOR
85	2223	REPORT
86	2219	Men
87	2144	Aug
88	2142	c
89	2091	her
90	2061	health
91	2057	my
92	2039	May
93	2037	AM
94	1994	Forum
95	1992	The
96	1986	Health
97	1984	are
98	1976	Grooming
99	1967	but
100	1944	me
101	1934	Challenge
102	1885	was
103	1882	m
104	1863	i

105	1833	grooming
106	1785	You
107	1736	like
108	1733	up
109	1731	dating
110	1703	what
111	1664	can
112	1664	if
113	1637	as
114	1632	just
115	1628	subscribe
116	1621	bigger
117	1613	model
118	1572	at
119	1564	ZigTech
120	1523	she
121	1497	Power
122	1480	This
123	1466	do
124	1459	care
125	1442	mhsurvival
126	1441	best
127	1438	fast
128	1427	Click
129	1421	diet
130	1413	loss
131	1400	Adventure
132	1400	newsletter
133	1381	Cover
134	1379	View
135	1378	one
136	1361	so
137	1337	Discussion
138	1328	all
139	1313	need
140	1301	fat
141	1295	County
142	1294	Your
143	1267	find
144	1264	topic
145	1248	free
146	1222	sports
147	1207	eating
148	1205	Get
149	1203	books
150	1200	they

\* sex (18-6217), sexism (9556-2), sexist (1528-67), sexual (1529-67), man (280-650), men (86-2219), woman (216-832), women (202-902), love (880-189), relationship (579-380) or dating (109-1731).

## APPENDIX VI. Mini-Corpus CS and Mini-Corpus MH

# COSMOPOLITAN.CO.UK

- 1) CS\_REL\_`I don't belive in love\_THREAD
- 2) CS\_REL\_5 things you love about being single\_THREAD
- 3) CS\_REL\_53 secrets girls girls don't want guys to know\_THREAD
- 4) CS\_REL\_A mans right to porn\_THREAD
- 5) CS\_REL\_A pregnnancy scare\_THREAD
- 6) CS\_REL\_A twist on the other woman situation\_THREAD
- 7) CS\_REL\_A womans role\_THREAD
- 8) CS\_REL\_Being called baby\_THREAD
- 9) CS\_REL\_Being looked after\_THREAD
- 10) CS\_REL\_Boy banter\_THREAD
- 11) CS\_REL\_Boyfriend thinking others are more attractive\_THREAD
- 12) CS\_REL\_Boyfriend tries to have sex with me while im asleep\_THREAD
- 13) CS\_REL\_Bromance again\_THREAD
- 14) CS\_REL\_Break uo over sex life\_THREAD
- 15) CS\_REL\_Close friends of opposite sex\_THREAD
- 16) CS\_REL\_Close knit community or keep yourself to yourself\_THREAD
- 17) CS\_REL\_Controlling boyfriend\_THREAD
- 18) CS\_REL\_Depressed about being a virgin\_THREAD
- 19) CS\_REL\_Did he just want me for sex or does he eant more\_THREAD
- 20) CS\_REL\_Do feminie lesbian exist\_THREAD
- 21) CS\_REL\_Do men get butterflies2\_THREAD
- 22) CS\_REL\_Do you belive in love at first sight\_THREAD
- 23) CS\_REL\_Does monogamy come naturally to you\_THREAD
- 24) CS\_REL\_Eternally single any insight please\_THREAD
- 25) CS\_REL\_Finding it hard\_THREAD
- 26) CS\_REL\_For guys only- cheating\_THREAD
- 27) CS\_REL\_Getting over your first love\_THREAD
- 28) CS\_REL\_Happy thread III\_THREAD
- 29) CS\_REL\_Have i now no idea about men\_THREAD
- 30) CS\_REL\_Have you had your heart broken\_THREAD
- 31) CS\_REL\_He cheated on me and I still love him\_THREAD
- 32) CS\_REL\_He has gf but he loves me and I love him\_THREAD
- 33) CS\_REL\_Homophobia\_THREAD
- 34) CS\_REL\_Honesty the best policy\_THREAD
- 35) CS\_REL\_How do you know when you love someone\_THREAD
- 36) CS\_REL\_How did your relationship started\_THREAD
- 37) CS\_REL\_How long before you\_THREAD
- 38) CS\_REL\_How to meet new people\_THREAD
- 39) CS\_REL\_How to suggest openish relationship\_THREAD
- 40) CS\_REL\_How would you react\_THREAD
- 41) CS\_REL\_How would you read this\_THREAD
- 42) CS\_REL\_I don't actually have any friends\_THREAD
- 43) CS\_REL\_I don't think she loves me anymore\_THREAD
- 44) CS\_REL\_I don't trust him\_THREAD
- 45) CS\_REL\_I find it so hardr to express emotions\_THREAD
- 46) CS\_REL\_I lost my virginity to someone who doesn't care about me at all2\_THREAD
- 47) CS\_REL\_I really like you but I don't want a relationship\_THREAD
- 48) CS\_REL\_If you are not naturally faithful\_THREAD
- 49) CS\_REL\_Is all relally fair in love and war\_THREAD
- 50) CS\_REL\_Is this acceptable behaviour in a relationship\_THREAD
- 51) CS\_REL\_Its a mess\_THREAD
- 52) CS\_REL\_Lessons in love\_THREAD
- 53) CS\_REL\_Love changes\_THREAD
- 54) CS\_REL\_Love Square!!!\_THREAD
- 55) CS\_REL\_Loving someone and being in love\_THREAD
- 56) CS\_REL\_Making the first move online\_THREAD
- 57) CS\_REL\_Marriage\_THREAD
- 58) CS\_REL\_Masterbating\_THREAD
- 59) CS\_REL\_Money struggle with OH1\_THREAD
- 60) CS\_REL\_Moving out\_THREAD
- 61) CS\_REL\_My boyfriend freaked out\_THREAD
- 62) CS\_REL\_My friend said disabled people are disgusting\_THREAD
- 63) CS\_REL\_Never had a boyfriend or had sex\_THREAD
- 64) CS\_REL\_Saying I love you\_THREAD
- 65) CS\_REL\_Should I stay or should I go\_THREAD
- 66) CS\_REL\_Should the love of your life really be your best friend\_THREAD



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- 67) CS\_REL\_Single or taken? \_THREAD
  - 68) CS\_REL\_Sex with someone in a relationship \_THREAD
  - 69) CS\_REL\_Sexless relationship help \_THREAD
  - 70) CS\_REL\_Sexual frustration he doesn't like when I initiate \_THREAD
  - 71) CS\_REL\_Should you apologize when you are not at fault \_THREAD
  - 72) CS\_REL\_Things you just cant compete with \_THREAD
  - 73) CS\_REL\_Told boyfriend im bi \_THREAD
  - 74) CS\_REL\_Total idiot \_THREAD
  - 75) CS\_REL\_What do you class as cheating \_THREAD
  - 76) CS\_REL\_What do you do when \_THREAD
  - 77) CS\_REL\_What does your man do that make you smile \_THREAD
  - 78) CS\_REL\_What to do with this situation \_THREAD
  - 79) CS\_REL\_What would you choose \_THREAD
  - 80) CS\_REL\_Which type of love do you have \_THREAD
  - 81) CS\_REL\_When things get sexist \_THREAD
  - 82) CS\_REL\_Who made the first move \_THREAD
  - 83) CS\_REL\_Why do men do not feel the need to be as communicative as women \_THREAD
  - 84) CS\_REL\_Why is it that I only attract the attention of men who just want sex \_THREAD
  - 85) CS\_REL\_Why would a guy cheat a week before his weeding \_THREAD
  - 86) CS\_REL\_Why you're not married \_THREAD
  - 87) CS\_REL\_Would you be a little offended or annoyed \_THREAD
  - 88) CS\_REL\_Would you take this seriously \_THREAD
  - 89) CS\_REL\_You have to love yourself before someone else can love you \_THREAD
  - 90) CS\_SEX\_10 mths and he says im still holding back \_THREAD
  - 91) CS\_SEX\_Advice on cuts please \_THREAD
  - 92) CS\_SEX\_Afraid im boring in bed \_THREAD
  - 93) CS\_SEX\_Argument about porn \_THREAD
  - 94) CS\_SEX\_Attitudes to sex in relationship \_THREAD
  - 95) CS\_SEX\_Biggest physical turn-ons in opposite sex \_THREAD
  - 96) CS\_SEX\_Bit of a rant but feel free to comment \_THREAD
  - 97) CS\_SEX\_Bored of sex \_THREAD
  - 98) CS\_SEX\_Boyfriend with very low sex drive \_THREAD
  - 99) CS\_SEX\_Boyfriend not wanting to want \_THREAD
  - 100) CS\_SEX\_Boyfriend says he doesn't have any \_THREAD fantasies \_THREAD
  - 101) CS\_SEX\_Cant enjoy sex \_THREAD
  - 102) CS\_SEX\_Comparinh OH with ex \_THREAD
  - 103) CS\_SEX\_Confidence on the bedroom \_THREAD
  - 104) CS\_SEX\_Curious \_THREAD
  - 105) CS\_SEX\_Do you solo sex a lot \_THREAD
  - 106) CS\_SEX\_Do you mind them masturbating \_THREAD
  - 107) CS\_SEX\_Does love fade long term love vs new potential \_THREAD
  - 108) CS\_SEX\_Does you oh watch porn \_THREAD
  - 109) CS\_SEX\_Dont feel sexy \_THREAD
  - 110) CS\_SEX\_Embarrassing stories \_THREAD
  - 111) CS\_SEX\_Every man watches porn \_THREAD
  - 112) CS\_SEX\_Favoirute movie scenes \_THREAD
  - 113) CS\_SEX\_Female solo sex \_THREAD
  - 114) CS\_SEX\_Foreplay \_THREAD
  - 115) CS\_SEX\_Girls, bloke in need of advice \_THREAD
  - 116) CS\_SEX\_Guys would you see this as an invitation to have sex \_THREAD
  - 117) CS\_SEX\_Having sex before marriage \_THREAD
  - 118) CS\_SEX\_He doesn't want sex \_THREAD
  - 119) CS\_SEX\_How many sexual partners \_THREAD
  - 120) CS\_SEX\_How soon is too soon to have sex \_THREAD
  - 121) CS\_SEX\_How to give him the best sex ever \_THREAD
  - 122) CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of just firty sex \_THREAD
  - 123) CS\_SEX\_How to have nice loving sex instead of porn-ish dirty sex \_THREAD
  - 124) CS\_SEX\_I am a size queen! \_THREAD
  - 125) CS\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want \_THREAD
  - 126) CS\_SEX\_Is there something wrong with me \_THREAD
  - 127) CS\_SEX\_Jack's Blowjob Lessons \_THREAD
  - 128) CS\_SEX\_Lay back and do nothing \_THREAD
  - 129) CS\_SEX\_Magic number \_THREAD
  - 130) CS\_SEX\_Making love vs sex \_THREAD
  - 131) CS\_SEX\_Male and female opinions on sex tapes \_THREAD
  - 132) CS\_Sex\_New man doesn't like going on top \_THREAD
  - 133) CS\_SEX\_New rules \_THREAD
  - 134) CS\_SEX\_No conficence \_THREAD
  - 135) CS\_SEX\_No libido \_THREAD
  - 136) CS\_SEX\_One man and his porn \_THREAD
  - 137) CS\_SEX\_One night stand \_THREAD
  - 138) CS\_SEX\_Oral better than sex \_THREAD
  - 139) CS\_SEX\_Playbost club sexist or not \_THREAD
  - 140) CS\_SEX\_Pornography especially for women \_THREAD
  - 141) CS\_SEX\_Question for the girls relief on bad week \_THREAD
  - 142) CS\_SEX\_Really worried, not sure what this means \_THREAD

- 143) CS\_REL\_Relationship or \$%-\$\$% buddies\_THREAD
- 144) CS\_SEX\_Routine\_THREAD
- 145) CS\_SEX\_Scared of getting me preganant\_THREAD
- 146) CS\_SEX\_Sex disctionary\_THREAD
- 147) CS\_SEX\_Sex for a woman\_THREAD
- 148) CS\_SEX\_Sex with a transsexual\_THREAD
- 149) CS\_SEX\_Shameless sex brags\_THREAD
- 150) CS\_SEX\_Should he have said no\_THREAD
- 151) CS\_SEX\_The differences between oral sex for men and women\_THREAD
- 152) CS\_SEX\_The perfect pair\_THREAD
- 153) CS\_SEX\_The last person you'll have sex with\_THREAD
- 154) CS\_SEX\_To sex or not to sex\_THREAD
- 155) CS\_SEX\_Unprotected sex\_THREAD
- 156) CS\_SEX\_Unprotected, Underage Sex is just Disgusting\_THREAD
- 157) CS\_SEX\_Virginity and friend with benefits\_THREAD
- 158) CS\_SEX\_When can i start slugging him off\_THREAD
- 159) CS\_SEX\_Where do all these men hide\_THREAD
- 160) CS\_SEX\_Who rides who\_THREAD
- 161) CS\_SEX\_Why is it ok for a guy to sleep around but if a girl does it she is a slut\_THREAD
- 162) CS\_SEX\_Worst thing that has happened\_THREAD
- 163) CS\_SEX\_Would sometimes just love a good shag\_THREAD
- 164) CS\_SEX\_Your happiness or your partners\_THREAD

# Men'sHealth

- 1) MH\_REL\_Advise on girl in relationship\_THREAD
- 2) MH\_REL\_Am single and ready to mingle\_THREAD
- 3) MH\_REL\_Approaching women\_THREAD
- 4) MH\_REL\_Asking a guy at the gym out\_THREAD
- 5) MH\_REL\_Cant pull, wont pull\_THREAD
- 6) MH\_REL\_Confidence\_THREAD
- 7) MH\_REL\_Cosmo forum\_THREAD
- 8) MH\_REL\_Daytime pick ups\_THREAD
- 9) MH\_REL\_Do I need to apologise\_THREAD
- 10) MH\_REL\_Does it matter to you what job a girl does\_THREAD
- 11) MH\_REL\_Early morning drama\_THREAD
- 12) MH\_REL\_girl playing hard to get, how do I play it better than her\_THREAD
- 13) MH\_REL\_How do I stop collecting pseudo sisters\_THREAD
- 14) MH\_REL\_Male opinion needed bullying your girlfriend\_THREAD
- 15) MH\_REL\_Military men\_THREAD
- 16) MH\_REL\_Need advice\_THREAD
- 17) MH\_REL\_Plenty of fish\_THREAD
- 18) MH\_REL\_Single and need amale perspective\_THREAD
- 19) MH\_REL\_That first date ... everything you did and didn't want to know\_THREAD
- 20) MH\_REL\_The ex dilemma\_THREAD
- 21) MH\_REL\_This girls im seeing doesnt want a relationship she wants a casual\_THREAD
- 22) MH\_REL\_Whats wrong with me\_THREAD
- 23) MH\_REL\_Where to start!!\_THREAD
- 24) MH\_REL\_Your thoughts on this one\_THREAD
- 25) MH\_SEX\_17 and need sex so bad!!! Im...\_THREAD
- 26) MH\_SEX\_A couple of questions\_THREAD
- 27) MH\_SEX\_Advantages-disadvantages of being circumcised (during sex)\_THREAD
- 28) MH\_SEX\_Advice on licking your girlfriend out\_THREAD
- 29) MH\_SEX\_After a vasectomy\_THREAD
- 30) MH\_SEX\_Am I prude, one night stands\_THREAD
- 31) MH\_SEX\_Bi guys need some advice\_THREAD
- 32) MH\_SEX\_Cyber sex (again)\_THREAD
- 33) MH\_SEX\_Delayed ejaculation question\_THREAD
- 34) MH\_SEX\_Don't ejaculate from sex\_THREAD
- 35) MH\_SEX\_Girls myth or fact women don't actually enjoy aal sex\_THREAD
- 36) MH\_SEX\_Guys opinions on piercings down there on women\_THREAD
- 37) MH\_SEX\_Hot Friday night surprise\_THREAD
- 38) MH\_SEX\_I can get sex whenever I want\_THREAD
- 39) MH\_SEX\_Jealousy and negative thoughts in marriage\_THREAD
- 40) MH\_SEX\_Keeping up rhythm\_THREAD

- 41) MH\_SEX\_Lost libido\_THREAD
- 42) MH\_SEX\_Low sex drive\_THREAD
- 43) MH\_SEX\_Masturbation for the tightly  
circumcised\_THREAD
- 44) MH\_SEX\_New boyfriend also like men! Is  
there any way to change him\_THREAD
- 45) MH\_SEX\_Penis size\_THREAD
- 46) MH\_SEX\_Premature  
ejaculation\_THREAD
- 47) MH\_SEX\_Recommend some films that  
will get my lady in the mood\_THREAD
- 48) MH\_SEX\_Small boobs\_THREAD
- 49) MH\_SEX\_Testogel-loss of sex  
drive\_THREAD
- 50) MH\_SEX\_Viagra addiction\_THREAD
- 51) Why does my willy go big and  
stiff\_THREAD
- 52) MH\_SEX\_Why does sex always end up  
under the duvet after 6 months\_THREAD
- 53) MH\_SEX\_Why the fear of being  
circumcised\_THREAD
- 54) MH\_SEX\_Would-could you date a formwe  
\*\*\*\*\* actress\_THREAD
- 55) MH\_SEX\_Yes men can have multiple  
orgasms\_THREAD
- 56) MH\_Your best that's what she  
sad\_THREAD

APPENDIX VII. CS and MH KW and Collocations List

**COSMOPOLITAN**<sup>CO.UK</sup>

**Men'sHealth**

Sex

	F. L	F. R	T. F	Stat.	Word
1	7451	19	15	-3.54113	sex
2	3582	73	0	-1.35900	SEX
3	2645	2628	17	3.74143	CS
4	1381	2	79	0.22358	Sex
5	1297	28	1269	3.77945	with
6	1272	1270	2	3.64912	have
7	993	0	993	2.00190	THREAD
8	888	11	877	3.29622	is
9	863	859	4	4.10319	MH
10	776	775	1	3.84637	get
11	752	0	752	4.20896	whenever
12	736	736	0	4.22802	Underage
13	645	0	645	1.47637	I
14	507	503	4	4.18872	during
15	486	24	462	3.61174	Unprotected
16	467	303	164	4.85213	Shameless
17	463	442	21	1.56276	to
18	382	382	0	4.21674	opposite
19	373	0	373	4.05338	life
20	342	341	1	3.24500	had
21	319	20	299	2.26466	in
22	305	0	305	4.22802	brags
23	262	87	175	2.75365	for
24	256	169	87	4.82714	Cyber
25	247	247	0	3.90027	having
26	224	223	1	3.96929	over
27	215	5	210	2.39690	or
28	214	18	196	1.35754	and
29	212	6	206	3.28352	The
30	208	131	77	4.60653	To
31	204	2	202	4.20696	drive
32	194	0	194	3.41854	Biggest
33	165	0	165	4.06296	again
34	163	0	163	3.58240	Attitudes
35	160	155	5	1.14481	of
36	140	138	2	4.02639	oral
37	134	2	132	1.60062	Quoted
38	132	0	132	3.42067	Worse
39	132	0	132	3.55132	How
40	130	46	84	0.21353	a
41	121	121	0	4.22802	VS
42	119	0	119	4.22802	Advantages
43	115	115	0	1.44963	want
44	107	0	107	4.02697	Does
45	99	0	99	4.19917	Girls
46	92	76	16	0.12132	the
47	92	12	80	3.50366	before
48	84	1	83	4.12849	Question
49	83	83	0	4.17680	solo
50	83	44	39	4.87514	Having
51	81	81	0	4.22802	Aal
52	80	80	0	4.05810	al
53	79	0	79	4.13949	instead
54	78	0	78	3.48000	Making
55	77	45	32	1.43682	on
56	77	77	0	4.15496	loving
57	75	0	75	3.26702	Why
58	69	0	69	3.66412	Guys
59	69	0	69	3.38235	Do
60	68	68	0	4.08667	dirty
61	63	61	2	4.01548	low
62	54	3	51	0.26695	when
63	54	51	3	3.83316	underage
64	54	27	27	5.22802	Low
65	52	52	0	-0.92094	Re
66	51	0	51	3.15898	Forum
67	49	44	5	2.15623	your
68	49	49	0	3.46769	enjoy
69	49	6	43	0.88273	but
70	48	48	0	3.56506	our
71	48	44	4	2.37836	does
72	48	46	2	3.68370	best
73	47	12	35	1.05469	as
74	42	20	22	-0.24848	that
75	42	0	42	4.19407	Dictionary
76	42	0	42	2.90609	always
77	41	0	41	0.44858	i
78	40	1	39	1.48386	so
79	40	0	40	2.48386	ever
80	40	0	40	3.96499	Bit
81	39	0	39	4.02157	Am
82	37	1	36	2.00285	then
83	35	26	9	2.45041	from
84	34	0	34	4.22802	tapes
85	33	33	0	2.35355	need
86	33	0	33	4.18495	appeal
87	32	26	6	4.27383	anal
88	31	1	30	0.21643	if
89	31	6	25	1.33047	at
90	30	0	30	3.96499	One
91	29	17	12	2.16714	after
92	28	26	2	-1.03474	my
93	28	15	13	1.41333	has
94	27	0	27	2.36820	He
95	26	0	26	1.55342	It
96	25	25	0	-3.30989	txt
97	25	19	6	2.05170	than
98	25	25	0	-1.81550	Subject
99	25	0	25	4.06452	New
100	25	24	1	0.26455	about

Love

	F. L	F. R	T. F	Stat.	Word
1	2765	13	11	2.71760	love
2	646	632	14	8.97712	in
3	553	220	333	7.76339	you
4	452	425	27	7.72225	I
5	346	0	2	2.12686	Love
6	249	4	245	8.83013	him
7	210	151	59	7.33959	to
8	207	202	5	8.56713	i
9	189	0	189	8.98094	at
10	184	149	35	7.84546	of
11	183	0	183	6.17628	THREAD
12	130	20	110	7.74260	do
13	117	5	112	7.60012	with
14	107	0	107	9.32881	yourself
15	106	103	3	8.13639	can
16	104	24	80	6.36939	and
17	97	97	0	9.33286	Making
18	90	0	90	9.53718	VS
19	85	37	48	6.72650	the
20	83	4	79	8.21392	about
21	83	2	81	6.52515	a
22	76	0	0	-1	LOVE
23	75	0	75	7.46001	someone
24	70	0	70	9.55312	Square
25	69	69	0	6.45220	t
26	69	4	65	7.21457	is
27	67	67	0	7.43434	just
28	62	6	56	6.25229	it
29	60	60	0	4.99445	REL
30	60	4	56	7.00058	my
31	52	52	0	6.39558	Re
32	48	39	9	9.43765	making
33	45	16	29	6.49808	that
34	42	5	37	6.82650	your
35	39	2	37	6.96201	for
36	39	38	1	6.71959	first
37	36	36	0	7.85268	d
38	36	0	36	9.55312	changes
39	35	0	35	9.47295	YOU
40	33	13	20	6.94647	or
41	31	0	31	9.55312	YOURSELF
42	31	31	0	8.25939	still
43	30	30	0	9.50582	WILL
44	29	1	28	7.82614	them
45	29	29	0	9.36671	Chii
46	28	28	0	7.27302	would
47	26	2	24	6.03924	sex
48	26	14	12	6.28778	not
49	24	4	20	5.57584	me
50	23	14	9	6.78207	was
51	22	2	20	6.96816	Quoted
52	22	4	18	7.72715	her

53	21	21	0	6.70704	really
54	21	0	21	6.68805	community
55	16	16	0	9.09369	romantic
56	16	6	10	5.03349	but
57	15	5	10	6.33073	You
58	14	13	1	6.77552	they
59	14	0	14	5.70227	being
60	13	0	13	8.55312	Send
61	13	0	13	7.89601	each
62	12	0	12	7.81616	without
63	12	8	4	4.88542	s
64	11	11	0	2.12001	txt
65	11	11	0	9.55312	pretending
66	11	2	9	8.01256	No
67	11	11	0	7.28464	dont
68	10	0	10	9.55312	vs
69	10	2	8	5.84163	this
70	10	10	0	9.55312	Term
71	10	4	6	5.57127	Sex
72	10	0	10	9.55312	Fade
73	10	10	0	7.04216	Does
74	10	0	10	2.10935	CS
75	9	4	5	6.74577	no
76	9	0	9	6.89016	how
77	9	5	4	6.67865	his
78	8	0	8	7.46566	Forum
79	8	1	7	7.19557	even
80	8	6	2	6.04533	because
81	7	6	1	7.07508	will
82	7	5	2	5.24154	we
83	7	6	1	8.77552	real
84	7	4	3	7.77552	our
85	7	7	0	6.90105	make
86	7	7	0	9.36048	Loves
87	7	4	3	7.55312	both
88	7	5	2	5.05670	as
89	7	1	6	8.36048	Also
90	7	7	0	7.83692	also
91	6	4	2	9.55312	Sometimes
92	6	6	0	9.13809	parents
93	6	0	6	5.59893	If
94	6	2	4	4.87130	if
95	6	6	0	8.13809	haha
96	6	0	6	7.09369	feeling
97	6	0	6	7.09369	didn
98	6	0	6	8.33073	Did
99	6	0	6	7.13809	again
100	5	0	5	6.58965	though

Relationships

	F.L.	F.R.	T.F	Stat	Word
1	407	0	0	-1	relationships
2	224	218	6	4.04945	in
3	94	0	94	2.75630	THREAD
4	50	0	50	4.33631	Quoted
5	28	0	28	1.44490	I
6	27	4	23	2.42268	and
7	15	0	0	-1	Relationships
8	15	0	15	2.93376	are
9	13	3	10	1.89332	have

10	12	12	0	4.22851	term
11	12	10	2	1.40748	of
12	8	8	0	0.66779	the
13	8	8	0	4.55043	Gynae
14	7	5	2	4.35779	where
15	7	7	0	4.35779	previous
16	7	0	7	3.77283	did
17	7	1	6	2.03586	but
18	7	6	1	2.45090	all
19	6	2	4	1.13540	with

20	6	6	0	3.96547	serious
21	6	6	0	3.43496	open
22	5	0	5	3.17192	work
23	5	0	5	2.22851	so
24	5	1	4	1.34880	or
25	5	5	0	3.28740	into
26	5	0	5	2.06501	because
27	5	0	5	4.55043	aren
28	4	4	0	2.64354	their
29	4	3	1	0.74308	that
30	4	0	4	4.55043	section
31	4	4	0	3.74308	past
32	4	4	0	0.71754	my
33	4	0	4	3.22851	It
34	4	4	0	3.55043	gay
35	4	4	0	4.55043	future
36	4	1	3	1.19288	as
37	3	1	2	-2.23092	to
38	3	0	3	1.22851	they
39	3	0	3	2.32804	The
40	3	0	3	3.13540	should
41	3	0	3	3.55043	My
42	3	3	0	3.55043	maybe
43	3	0	3	3.55043	matter
44	3	3	0	2.96547	many
45	3	3	0	1.13540	long
46	3	0	3	-0.11253	it
47	3	3	0	4.55043	homosexual
48	3	3	0	2.55043	happy
49	3	3	0	3.13540	friends
50	3	0	3	0.67597	for
51	3	3	0	4.55043	durable
52	3	3	0	4.55043	damn
53	3	2	1	3.55043	All
54	2	0	2	-1.94941	you
55	2	2	0	3.55043	year
56	2	0	2	4.55043	ya
57	2	2	0	3.22851	within
58	2	0	2	2.09100	will
59	2	0	2	1.85000	when
60	2	1	1	2.38051	were
61	2	0	2	2.96547	though

62	2	0	2	2.38051	than
63	2	0	2	4.55043	tend
64	2	1	1	3.22851	started
65	2	0	2	2.96547	start
66	2	0	2	3.55043	Probably
67	2	1	1	4.55043	plus
68	2	2	0	1.46297	other
69	2	1	1	0.19288	on
70	2	0	2	3.22851	nothing
71	2	0	2	1.74308	never
72	2	2	0	1.64354	more
73	2	2	0	3.55043	modern
74	2	2	0	3.96547	loving
75	2	0	2	0.55043	if
76	2	0	2	1.02687	i
77	2	2	0	4.55043	hetosexual
78	2	2	0	3.22851	healthy
79	2	0	2	2.38051	He
80	2	1	1	0.19288	had
81	2	1	1	1.96547	from
82	2	0	2	3.22851	etc
83	2	2	0	4.55043	enter
84	2	2	0	4.55043	ending
85	2	2	0	4.55043	committed
86	2	0	2	1.96547	come
87	2	2	0	2.96547	best
88	2	2	0	2.55043	bad
89	2	0	2	4.55043	arent
90	2	0	2	2.55043	And
91	2	0	2	2.22851	also
92	2	0	2	2.74308	again
93	1	1	0	-0.30755	your
94	1	0	1	4.55043	Yes
95	1	0	1	2.22851	Yeah
96	1	0	1	0.02687	would
97	1	0	1	2.96547	without
98	1	0	1	0.85000	Why
99	1	1	0	4.55043	whose
100	1	0	1	2.96547	which

## Dating

	F.L	F.R.	T. F	Stat.	Word
1	169	0	0	-1	dating
2	33	33	0	4.29042	online
3	20	13	7	2.38575	a
4	19	19	0	4.94647	internet
5	15	0	15	4.76589	site
6	13	0	13	4.83955	sites
7	11	11	0	4.82093	started
8	8	6	2	1.83794	the
9	8	0	8	2.94647	is
10	7	0	7	0.78804	I
11	7	2	5	3.10996	as
12	6	0	6	3.94647	someone
13	6	6	0	2.03957	on
14	6	1	5	2.67345	for
15	5	3	2	0.72923	you
16	5	0	5	4.09847	Met
17	5	0	0	-1	Dating
18	5	5	0	3.80896	been
19	4	0	4	2.62454	so
20	4	0	4	3.24603	profile
21	4	4	0	3.77654	into
22	4	0	4	3.62454	him
23	4	0	4	2.55415	but

24	4	0	4	0.73701	and
25	4	4	0	3.77654	after
26	3	0	3	4.53143	where
27	3	3	0	2.00787	was
28	3	0	3	0.67345	that
29	3	0	3	2.36150	just
30	3	0	3	4.94647	geek
31	3	0	3	1.62454	are
32	3	0	3	2.94647	advice
33	2	2	0	0.66106	with
34	2	2	0	3.36150	were
35	2	0	2	4.94647	website
36	2	2	0	2.77654	up
37	2	0	2	4.94647	uk
38	2	2	0	-0.71175	to
39	2	2	0	3.13911	time
40	2	0	2	4.36150	thing
41	2	0	2	2.03957	there
42	2	2	0	2.62454	then
43	2	2	0	3.94647	their
44	2	2	0	4.94647	Speed
45	2	2	0	4.94647	speed
46	2	2	0	4.94647	shallow
47	2	0	2	2.94647	right

48	2	2	0	4.36150	reading
49	2	0	2	4.94647	potential
50	2	2	0	-0.68289	of
51	2	0	2	2.77654	met
52	2	2	0	1.69854	m
53	2	0	2	4.36150	isn
54	2	1	1	1.08848	in
55	2	2	0	4.36150	http
56	2	0	2	3.62454	girls
57	2	2	0	4.94647	considering
58	2	2	0	3.94647	because
59	2	0	2	4.36150	Became
60	1	1	0	1.03957	your
61	1	0	1	4.94647	Yes
62	1	0	1	4.94647	wise
63	1	1	0	3.36150	whole
64	1	0	1	3.36150	which
65	1	1	0	0.94647	when
66	1	0	1	4.94647	websites
67	1	1	0	0.55415	we
68	1	0	1	2.62454	wasn
69	1	0	1	4.94647	tips
70	1	0	1	3.94647	Thought
71	1	0	1	4.94647	Think
72	1	0	1	4.94647	technique
73	1	1	0	1.48703	stop
74	1	1	0	4.94647	Started

75	1	0	1	4.94647	skills
76	1	0	1	4.94647	since
77	1	0	1	3.36150	should
78	1	0	1	4.94647	Sex
79	1	0	1	2.94647	seeing
80	1	0	1	4.94647	sagas
81	1	0	1	4.94647	rubbish
82	1	1	0	3.36150	recently
83	1	1	0	1.24603	re
84	1	1	0	4.94647	random
85	1	1	0	2.62454	Quoted
86	1	1	0	1.62454	people
87	1	0	1	4.94647	People
88	1	1	0	4.94647	paid
89	1	0	1	0.77654	or
90	1	1	0	4.94647	Online
91	1	0	1	4.94647	ones
92	1	0	1	3.36150	now
93	1	0	1	-0.14100	not
94	1	1	0	2.94647	normal
95	1	1	0	1.24603	my
96	1	1	0	2.62454	most
97	1	1	0	0.94647	me
98	1	1	0	0.77654	like
99	1	1	0	4.94647	licious
100	1	0	1	3.94647	joined

Man

	F.L	F.R.	T.F	Stat.	Word
1	1329	0	0	-1	man
2	329	0	329	4.47405	watches
3	241	236	5	2.75077	a
4	180	180	0	4.47915	Every
5	147	147	0	4.47736	EVERY
6	89	0	89	2.95725	with
7	87	87	0	3.66330	your
8	80	80	0	3.34964	me
9	79	75	4	1.69816	the
10	78	0	78	4.36315	once
11	78	0	78	3.07906	do
12	78	78	0	4.48714	chinese
13	60	4	56	1.57385	and
14	56	0	56	1.97257	is
15	50	0	50	3.56114	who
16	48	7	41	0.95836	to
17	41	0	0	-1	Man
18	33	32	1	2.55426	my
19	28	28	0	4.34030	One
20	27	0	27	0.88009	it
21	27	0	27	3.26475	doesn
22	26	26	0	3.83003	every
23	25	0	25	1.14231	s
24	22	21	1	3.42301	The
25	20	8	12	0.55168	of
26	19	0	19	2.41314	up
27	19	0	19	-0.16580	I
28	19	19	0	4.41314	For
29	19	1	18	1.61613	but
30	17	17	0	3.08275	any
31	16	1	15	-0.32984	you
32	15	0	15	3.10863	will
33	15	4	11	1.90218	or
34	13	0	13	1.35469	i
35	12	5	7	0.06088	that
36	12	0	12	2.90218	should
37	12	3	9	0.84329	on
38	12	12	0	3.82418	New

39	12	12	0	4.26475	new
40	11	5	6	2.36161	out
41	11	0	11	0.74690	for
42	11	0	11	1.23233	does
43	10	0	10	2.16521	has
44	9	2	7	2.75018	thing
45	9	9	0	3.84971	perfect
46	9	6	3	2.16521	no
47	9	0	9	0.05715	in
48	8	8	0	1.55640	good
49	8	7	1	2.96358	best
50	8	0	8	1.01141	at
51	8	8	0	2.78670	another
52	7	0	7	3.97257	wh
53	7	6	1	0.91946	this
54	7	7	0	0.31722	one
55	7	3	4	-0.16494	not
56	6	0	6	4.48714	whore
57	6	6	0	4.48714	resident
58	5	0	5	0.61924	would
59	5	0	5	0.41675	was
60	5	3	2	2.34964	they
61	5	5	0	2.72161	their
62	5	0	5	4.48714	syndrome
63	5	5	0	2.90218	single
64	5	0	5	1.13664	she
65	5	5	0	-1.04891	Re
66	5	5	0	4.48714	pencil
67	5	4	1	2.34964	My
68	5	0	5	2.80907	http
69	5	0	5	0.31722	can
70	5	5	0	3.80907	Any
71	5	5	0	-0.17962	A
72	4	0	4	3.90218	works
73	4	0	4	-0.33304	woman
74	4	4	0	4.16521	real
75	4	4	0	1.53295	other
76	4	0	0	-1	MAN
77	4	1	3	-0.05202	like

78	4	3	1	0.02771	just
79	4	4	0	0.78670	her
80	4	4	0	4.48714	grown
81	4	0	4	4.48714	flu
82	3	3	0	3.48714	young
83	3	2	1	0.82418	You
84	3	0	3	2.48714	won
85	3	3	0	4.48714	wired
86	3	0	3	0.18946	when
87	3	3	0	3.07210	typical
88	3	2	1	1.54854	This
89	3	0	3	1.90218	That

90	3	0	3	1.11791	than
91	3	3	0	3.48714	straight
92	3	3	0	0.94282	some
93	3	0	3	0.07210	so
94	3	3	0	-0.19468	Quoted
95	3	0	3	4.48714	pop
96	3	3	0	4.48714	ONE
97	3	3	0	-0.32021	old
98	3	3	0	3.26475	normal
99	3	1	2	0.98464	more
100	3	1	2	4.48714	loving

Men

	F.L	F.R.	T.F.	Stat.	Word
1	1797	2	1	-4.64990	men
2	196	12	184	2.77942	and
3	192	0	1	-3.00333	Men
4	164	161	3	3.40417	for
5	141	0	141	1.21480	THREAD
6	135	86	49	2.91620	do
7	134	134	0	4.38280	these
8	128	0	128	4.54068	hide
9	119	115	4	2.52934	of
10	107	0	107	3.94053	who
11	102	0	102	3.10187	can
12	101	3	98	2.75253	s
13	101	2	99	3.00831	get
14	101	101	0	3.33144	about
15	93	5	88	3.06341	are
16	89	89	0	4.57410	Military
17	80	76	4	2.69146	all
18	78	78	0	4.50195	Yes
19	77	77	0	4.53710	military
20	68	33	35	1.94732	that
21	56	16	40	2.81921	Quoted
22	54	0	54	0.49768	I
23	48	46	2	4.20486	Do
24	43	13	30	0.63842	to
25	41	32	9	2.01279	with
26	39	38	1	3.75098	most
27	37	0	37	1.16517	have
28	34	31	3	2.94732	some
29	31	4	27	2.64565	or
30	26	0	26	2.05537	watch
31	26	23	3	3.63068	many
32	26	10	16	2.06509	like
33	25	22	3	-0.02522	the
34	24	7	17	0.70373	in
35	23	12	11	1.33611	as
36	22	10	12	0.17244	you
37	22	0	22	2.44857	don
38	20	20	0	3.37246	other
39	20	8	12	1.01951	on
40	19	16	3	1.68247	think
41	19	15	4	2.75594	than
42	17	17	0	4.26924	wantâ
43	17	17	0	4.57410	Older
44	17	2	15	0.39478	is
45	17	0	17	4.57410	declare
46	17	17	0	4.20213	ALL
47	15	6	9	1.76674	so
48	15	4	11	0.91113	just
49	14	10	4	-0.40318	women
50	14	1	13	1.95519	need
51	14	9	5	-0.61007	it
52	13	0	13	2.14526	will

53	13	4	9	3.23014	So
54	13	13	0	2.32034	from
55	13	10	3	2.65983	because
56	12	8	4	1.94961	when
57	12	12	0	3.57410	us
58	12	12	0	-1.00585	sex
59	12	5	7	1.22832	if
60	12	2	10	0.82814	but
61	12	4	8	1.96924	at
62	11	0	11	2.22618	would
63	11	9	2	0.27864	be
64	10	0	10	0.23069	want
65	10	9	1	0.90734	my
66	10	0	10	2.80856	Is
67	10	3	7	-1.41231	a
68	9	7	2	2.25217	say
69	9	6	3	1.35171	only
70	9	9	0	2.93667	gay
71	9	9	0	3.74402	FRUSTRATE
72	9	2	7	1.86138	feel
73	9	4	5	3.93667	cheat
74	8	8	0	4.25217	uk
75	8	8	0	4.57410	prize
76	8	0	8	4.11467	pay
77	8	0	8	1.52970	out
78	8	8	0	3.57410	meet
79	8	8	0	4.11467	Like
80	8	8	0	3.57410	heard
81	8	8	0	3.40417	few
82	8	4	4	4.57410	confuse
83	8	5	3	1.98914	But
84	8	6	2	2.76674	attractive
85	7	3	4	1.62657	we
86	7	0	7	3.68101	tend
87	7	2	5	-0.56106	not
88	7	0	7	4.57410	masterbate
89	7	0	7	-0.30505	i
90	7	2	5	1.88960	find
91	7	5	2	0.52347	between
92	7	1	6	0.81160	being
93	6	0	6	3.98914	treat
94	6	6	0	3.98914	Some
95	6	6	0	2.57410	single
96	6	2	4	2.40417	should
97	6	6	0	3.83713	Most
98	6	3	3	0.31357	more
99	6	0	6	2.25217	He
100	6	5	1	3.98914	cut



Woman

	F.L	F.R.	T.F.	Stat	Word
1	721	6	6	-1.25580	woman
2	287	282	5	3.44285	a
3	122	0	122	3.61711	s
4	102	101	1	3.90043	A
5	57	56	1	2.12638	the
6	35	35	0	3.97681	other
7	30	0	30	3.65313	who
8	28	0	28	1.62246	is
9	25	0	25	0.62888	I
10	24	0	24	4.45896	situation
11	22	6	16	1.25543	and
12	18	18	0	4.27525	another
13	17	0	17	3.01591	should
14	14	0	14	-0.73118	THREAD
15	12	1	11	1.13703	with
16	12	1	11	0.71400	that
17	11	0	11	-0.44696	to
18	11	0	11	1.03303	in
19	11	0	11	1.54916	he
20	10	5	5	2.04392	or
21	10	2	8	1.16945	on
22	10	0	10	0.81126	for
23	10	9	1	3.19592	any
24	9	1	8	-0.21242	you
25	9	0	9	1.69028	as
26	7	6	1	4.43624	older
27	7	2	5	2.73580	because
28	6	5	1	-0.37861	of
29	6	6	0	0.72199	man
30	6	0	6	1.48593	just
31	6	0	6	2.16945	If
32	6	0	6	1.78758	has
33	6	6	0	4.62888	ft
34	6	0	6	0.82153	but
35	6	4	2	3.04392	attractive
36	5	0	5	0.97353	would
37	5	2	3	4.14346	No
38	5	5	0	4.36585	ideal
39	5	5	0	3.04392	every
40	5	0	5	0.76099	can
41	4	0	4	2.10532	then
42	4	0	4	1.98503	than
43	4	4	0	4.62888	tank
44	4	0	4	1.72199	Posted
45	4	4	0	2.30696	only
46	4	4	0	1.67469	one
47	4	2	2	3.62888	Not
48	4	0	4	3.04392	makes
49	4	2	2	3.04392	looking
50	4	0	4	4.62888	Jeez
51	4	2	2	0.28903	if
52	4	0	4	2.92844	http

53	4	0	4	1.82153	does
54	4	0	4	0.69815	being
55	3	3	0	3.89192	young
56	3	0	3	1.82153	You
57	3	0	3	3.89192	Yes
58	3	0	0	-1	Woman
59	3	2	1	1.30696	up
60	3	0	3	4.62888	travel
61	3	3	0	0.06410	this
62	3	0	3	1.08456	they
63	3	0	3	1.21385	so
64	3	0	3	4.62888	sleeps
65	3	3	0	0.78758	size
66	3	0	3	3.89192	serious
67	3	3	0	1.96592	say
68	3	3	0	4.62888	sake
69	3	3	0	4.62888	Russian
70	3	3	0	1.30696	right
71	3	3	0	1.40649	relationship
72	3	3	0	4.62888	real
73	3	0	3	0.40649	Quoted
74	3	3	0	3.89192	old
75	3	2	1	0.25965	my
76	3	3	0	2.21385	most
77	3	2	1	1.96592	married
78	3	0	3	2.75441	looks
79	3	0	3	3.62888	Join
80	3	0	3	3.89192	involved
81	3	0	3	-0.24559	have
82	3	0	3	1.96592	had
83	3	3	0	4.21385	grown
84	3	0	3	3.21385	enjoy
85	3	3	0	2.62888	each
86	3	0	3	4.62888	Doing
87	3	3	0	4.62888	crazy
88	3	0	3	3.40649	bit
89	3	3	0	3.89192	beautiful
90	2	2	0	3.04392	year
91	2	0	2	1.54142	When
92	2	2	0	4.62888	Western
93	2	0	2	2.45896	thing
94	2	0	2	2.45896	There
95	2	1	1	0.87400	The
96	2	0	2	4.62888	thank
97	2	0	2	3.62888	tells
98	2	0	2	4.62888	Swimming
99	2	2	0	4.04392	stupid
100	2	2	0	3.30696	straight

Women

	F.L	F.R.	T.F.	Stat.	Word
1	1993	2	2	-4.18214	women
2	390	0	0	-1	Women
3	358	0	358	2.43375	THREAD
4	238	216	22	3.30856	on
5	234	189	45	2.91643	and
6	229	229	0	4.77569	Approaching
7	162	2	160	4.40818	only
8	161	161	0	4.77569	Fact
9	161	0	161	4.77569	Dont

10	148	132	16	2.99930	for
11	138	12	126	3.41254	are
12	113	8	105	3.47175	Quoted
13	92	75	17	2.96386	as
14	81	76	5	1.76239	of
15	72	68	4	1.11273	the
16	66	49	17	2.17263	that
17	64	0	64	0.83025	I
18	60	40	20	0.67696	to
19	50	0	50	3.39718	who

20	48	1	47	1.39487	in
21	47	47	0	3.58881	their
22	43	13	30	1.61324	do
23	39	28	11	1.72124	with
24	39	2	37	1.19691	have
25	36	36	0	2.08143	other
26	36	36	0	3.87953	most
27	35	30	5	3.29026	some
28	34	6	28	2.65370	like
29	32	28	4	2.27585	all
30	27	17	10	3.26379	because
31	27	24	3	-0.15942	a
32	26	4	22	1.70795	get
33	26	0	26	1.59961	can
34	25	10	15	1.79750	but
35	24	24	0	2.21091	what
36	23	0	23	0.83165	s
37	21	1	20	1.56068	want
38	21	17	4	3.14564	these
39	21	0	21	4.46757	seem
40	21	20	1	3.61342	attractive
41	20	6	14	-0.20388	you
42	20	15	5	0.98909	when
43	19	19	0	3.40891	many
44	19	16	3	1.46138	about
45	18	0	18	2.55330	It
46	18	18	0	3.08763	from
47	17	15	2	4.33959	Most
48	17	13	4	-0.21900	it
49	17	2	15	1.98051	at
50	16	9	7	0.50890	or
51	16	0	16	4.38337	Forum
52	16	0	16	1.83318	don
53	15	0	15	2.75184	will
54	15	7	8	1.38796	think
55	15	3	12	1.35166	just
56	14	1	13	2.22549	out
57	13	0	13	2.19073	would
58	12	0	12	3.23137	should
59	11	11	0	-0.23655	Re
60	11	0	11	2.25784	Men
61	11	4	7	0.96834	if
62	11	0	11	1.24644	i
63	10	0	10	3.29026	were
64	10	1	9	3.29026	This
65	10	8	2	2.34273	than
66	10	1	9	4.01016	prefer
67	10	4	6	-0.27742	not
68	9	0	9	4.24518	tend
69	9	5	4	2.51935	say
70	9	9	0	0.33091	PM
71	9	0	9	2.90122	My
72	9	9	0	1.25912	know
73	9	0	9	3.77569	aren
74	9	9	0	3.69769	All
75	8	0	8	3.52776	risk
76	8	0	8	4.45376	Join
77	8	8	0	1.89305	how
78	7	1	6	0.24320	The
79	7	4	3	1.43330	no
80	7	6	1	0.37359	me
81	7	4	3	1.96834	love
82	7	6	1	4.77569	liking
83	7	7	0	3.77569	happy
84	7	7	0	3.33512	gay
85	7	0	7	2.88261	comes
86	7	7	0	3.77569	ask
87	7	7	0	3.77569	approach
88	6	0	6	1.60577	You
89	6	0	6	3.27319	without
90	6	1	5	2.11273	which
91	6	3	3	3.90122	whereas
92	6	0	6	-0.94769	they
93	6	2	4	2.03873	then
94	6	0	6	2.40646	That
95	6	6	0	3.45376	Some
96	6	0	6	2.90122	REPORT
97	6	3	3	2.36065	looking
98	6	0	6	-0.95676	is
99	6	1	5	2.00310	If
100	6	3	3	1.63273	find

