Abstract

This thesis is a study of the discourse on the male gender in 1930s Linglong Women’s Magazine. In texts and illustrations, Linglong set out its attack on men in texts and illustrations and displayed a strong contempt for men. In this paper, it is argued that Linglong’s attacks on men stemmed primarily from commercial considerations. Linglong positioned itself as a mouthpiece of women to gain the attention of the female readers and it was largely successful due to a lack of competitors adopting the same aggressive stance towards men. To realize its claim as the mouthpiece of women, Linglong employed the use of certain editorial strategies.

Although commercial concern played an important role in determining the tone of the magazine, feminist ideas were also at play behind the gender discourse. It is demonstrated in the paper how the feminist discourse on the male gender in Linglong congregated around 3 areas, namely men’s views on love and marriage, men’s occupation and men’s family role and how they can be seen as retaliations to the gender problems existing in the 1930s Chinese society. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the feminist discourse in Linglong sometimes deviated from societal realities, possibly due to its obligation to serve as the mouthpiece of the women.
This thesis also examined the problems that resulted from the feminist discourse in Linglong and how it tried to resolve the dilemmas that arose. One problem faced was the ambiguity in gender relationships. Although Linglong painted a very negative image of men, it admitted that women cannot do without men in the society. To resolve this dilemma, Linglong provided advice to women on how to deal with men. Another problem faced was the reaction of the male readers. When the male readers expressed their unhappiness at the biased discourse on men in Linglong, the magazine cleverly made use of this opportunity to promote another magazine catered to the males. There were also very minimal efforts to depict men in a more positive manner to provide a more balanced tone.