Gendered Language in Advertising: A Critical Stylistic Perspective

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Abstract
This paper investigates how gender is linguistically constructed in advertising through the lens of Critical Stylistics. Drawing on Jeffries' (2010) analytical tools and informed by Halliday's transitivity model and Butler's theory of gender performativity, the study explores how advertisements encode gendered ideologies through subtle linguistic choices. A purposive sample of ten gender-targeted advertisements from print and digital media was analyzed using stylistic tools such as naming and describing, transitivity, modality, and oppositional pairing. The findings reveal consistent patterns that align femininity with beauty, softness, and emotionality, while portraying masculinity in terms of power, action, and control. These portrayals are not arbitrary but ideologically driven, reinforcing traditional gender norms. However, a minority of the texts offer progressive alternatives, suggesting a potential shift in how gender is represented in advertising discourse. The study highlights the utility of Critical Stylistics in revealing hidden ideologies within everyday media and calls for more conscious language use in advertising to challenge gender stereotypes and promote diversity.

Keywords: gendered language, advertising discourse, critical stylistics, ideology, media representation

1.Introduction

Language is a central tool through which social identities and ideologies are both shaped and communicated. In advertising, language not only informs consumers about products but also reflects and reinforces societal values—among them, gender norms. The portrayal of gender in advertisements often goes beyond visual representation; it is intricately embedded in linguistic structures that subtly guide audiences toward particular understandings of what it means to be male or female (Cameron, 2005). Through specific word choices, sentence constructions, and discourse patterns, advertising texts construct gendered realities that align with broader cultural expectations.

This study explores how these gendered meanings are constructed through language, using the framework of **Critical Stylistics**. Developed by Lesley Jeffries (2010), Critical Stylistics is a linguistic approach designed to uncover the ideological implications of language use in texts. It enables the systematic

analysis of grammatical and lexical features—such as naming and describing, transitivity, and modality—to reveal the often-invisible ways texts encode power relations. When applied to advertising, this approach offers valuable insight into how gender is discursively framed and naturalized in commercial discourse.

The theoretical foundation of this paper also draws from **Judith Butler's** (1990) theory of gender performativity, which posits that gender is not a fixed trait but a socially constructed identity performed through repeated behaviors and language. From this view, advertisements participate in the reiteration of gender norms by presenting stereotypical associations—such as aligning masculinity with authority or femininity with beauty—as if they are natural or universal truths. Additionally, **Halliday's** (1994) model of transitivity from Systemic Functional Linguistics is used to analyze how grammatical choices assign roles of agency, action, and passivity to gendered subjects within the text.

This paper analyzes a purposive sample of 20 contemporary advertisements from both print and digital media, targeting male and female consumers. The aim is to reveal how gendered ideologies are encoded through linguistic strategies and to assess whether recent trends in advertising suggest a movement toward more progressive or inclusive representations. By combining critical stylistics with feminist theory and functional grammar, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of how everyday texts participate in shaping social norms and identities.

Research Questions

1. How are gender identities linguistically constructed in contemporary advertising through stylistic and grammatical choices?
2. In what ways do advertisements reinforce or challenge traditional gender ideologies through naming, transitivity, modality, and oppositional pairing?
3. Is there evidence of a discursive shift toward more inclusive or non-binary representations of gender in advertising language?

Statement of the Problem

Most research in this area has focused on visual imagery or general discourse, often neglecting the deeper linguistic structures that encode gender norms. Critical Stylistics, along with Halliday's transitivity model and Butler's theory of gender performativity, provides powerful tools to examine how subtle linguistic choices in advertising reinforce or challenge traditional gender roles. However, these methods remain underutilized in current advertising studies. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how language

in gendered advertisements shapes ideology and reflects evolving or persistent gender norms.

2.Gender Roles in Media Advertising"

The language of advertising plays a crucial role in shaping and sustaining gender-specific perceptions by embedding ideological messages within everyday commercial discourse. Advertising is not simply a tool to sell products—it is a cultural mechanism that constructs social identities, particularly gender. Through repeated exposure, audiences internalize linguistic patterns that naturalize what it means to be "masculine" or "feminine." For example, male-targeted advertisements often feature imperative and assertive language such as "Take control," "Conquer the day," or "Built for power," which promotes traits like dominance, autonomy, and strength. In contrast, female-oriented ads frequently use nurturing, emotional, and appearance-focused language such as "Reveal your inner beauty," "Feel the softness," or "Because you're worth it," reinforcing ideals of passivity, emotional sensitivity, and attractiveness. According to Lazar (2006), this discursive strategy, which she terms "gendered positioning," plays a key role in shaping how men and women are expected to behave and present themselves in public and private life. Cameron (2005) similarly argues that the asymmetrical language used in media texts contributes to the linguistic construction of gender roles that mirror and perpetuate societal power structures. A classic example can be seen in fragrance advertisements: men are portrayed as action-driven, with taglines like *"The scent of success"* paired with imagery of suits, speed, or conquest, whereas women are often presented as objects of desire, accompanied by phrases like *"Irresistible allure"* or *"Capture his heart."* These linguistic choices are not arbitrary—they align with deeper cultural ideologies about gender. Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity further explains that such discourse not only reflects gender norms but also enacts them, turning repeated language use into a performance that defines how gender is understood and lived. In this way, advertising does more than promote products—it acts as a powerful agent in reproducing binary and hierarchical understandings of gender through strategic linguistic representation.

3. **Advertisements Dominate Gender**

Advertisements exert a powerful influence over the construction of gender roles by consistently promoting limited and stereotypical portrayals of masculinity and femininity that align with traditional social hierarchies. These portrayals are reinforced through both visual representation and the strategic use of language, positioning male and female identities in fixed,

unequal roles. Men are frequently represented as dominant, rational, and autonomous figures, often placed in positions of authority or action, whereas women are portrayed as emotional, nurturing, and primarily valued for their physical appearance. This pattern is not incidental but reflects a deeper ideological framework in which advertising relies on established gender norms to shape consumer behavior. According to Erving Goffman in *Gender Advertisements* (1979), such portrayals rely on subtle cues—posture, gaze, activity—to reinforce assumptions about male superiority and female dependency. Similarly, Rosalind Gill, in her book *Gender and the Media* (2008), highlights how media texts frequently construct gender as binary and hierarchical, with femininity often portrayed as decorative or subordinate to the more active and independent masculine subject.

The language used in these advertisements plays a key role in reinforcing this division. Commercials aimed at male audiences often utilize active and assertive verbs such as "conquer," "achieve," or "lead," and use concise, commanding phrases that promote autonomy and control. In contrast, advertisements directed toward female consumers tend to focus on emotional appeals, appearance, and relationships, employing words such as "nurture," "soft," or "beautiful," which emphasize care, emotion, and passivity. Judith Butler's concept of gender performativity, introduced in her foundational work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), provides an important lens through which to understand these patterns. According to Butler, gender is not a fixed or inherent identity but is constructed and sustained through repeated social and linguistic acts. Therefore, when advertisements consistently associate femininity with domestic roles and appearance, and masculinity with leadership and action, they are not simply reflecting social norms—they are actively participating in their creation and reinforcement.

In many cultural contexts, such as Iraqi society, these gender representations are even more pronounced due to the influence of traditional values. Media advertising in Iraq frequently depicts women within the private sphere—such as the home or family—while men are shown in public, decision-making roles. For instance, cleaning products or cooking appliances are almost always marketed using imagery of women performing household tasks, accompanied by language that equates femininity with service, modesty, and self-sacrifice. In contrast, products such as cars, mobile phones, or financial services are often promoted through male figures who are portrayed as confident, ambitious, and technologically competent. Scholars such as Sahar Khamis in her analysis of Arab media have observed that this type of

representation not only reflects but also enforces a rigid gender ideology in which masculinity is linked to public power and femininity to private responsibility. Similarly, Ali Al-Rawi notes that Iraqi and broader Arab advertising often omits or marginalizes non-traditional gender identities, thereby reinforcing a binary, heterosexual norm that excludes diversity. This mirrors David Gauntlett's argument in *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (2008) that media messages do not simply mirror identity but actively shape the boundaries of what is considered socially acceptable. Consequently, advertising serves as a cultural tool for the regulation and normalization of gender, often perpetuating dominant ideologies that prioritize traditional masculinity and subordinate femininity.

4. Language Handles Gender in Critical Stylistics to Express Ideology

Within the framework of **Critical Stylistics**, language is understood not as a neutral tool, but as a strategic and ideological means through which social power, including gender relations, is produced, maintained, or challenged. Developed by Lesley Jeffries (2010), Critical Stylistics offers a set of analytical tools that uncover the subtle ways ideology is embedded in linguistic structures. When applied to gender, this approach reveals how seemingly ordinary language choices in media, literature, and advertisements reflect and perpetuate gendered power dynamics.

One key tool in Critical Stylistics is **Naming and Describing**, which involves examining how entities are referred to and characterized in a text. For example, a woman might be described as "a beautiful housewife" while a man is referred to as "a successful businessman." The lexical choices here are gendered: the woman is valued for appearance and domesticity, while the man is associated with public success and power. This naming encodes gender roles and reinforces societal expectations about femininity and masculinity.

Another relevant tool is **Oppositional Pairing**, which constructs binary opposites such as *man/woman*, *strong/weak*, or *active/passive*. These oppositions are not just linguistic—they carry ideological weight by positioning one identity (typically masculine) as dominant or superior. Such structures are common in advertisements where men are shown "taking charge" and women "caring," subtly encoding gender hierarchy into everyday discourse.

Modality is also significant in expressing gendered ideology. This refers to how certainty, obligation, or permission is expressed through modal verbs and adverbs (e.g., *must, should, can, probably*). In gendered texts, women might be associated with obligation ("she should stay at home"), while men

are linked to authority and possibility ("he can lead"), subtly framing gender expectations as natural.

Finally, **Transitivity**—borrowed from both Critical Stylistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics—analyzes how actions are distributed across subjects. For instance, if male characters are consistently agents of action (e.g., *He built the company*) and females are recipients (e.g., *She was given the role*), the text assigns power through syntax itself. This structure is ideological, making men appear more active and women more passive, thus naturalizing social inequality.

Together, these tools show how texts, especially in media and advertising, reproduce dominant gender ideologies by embedding them in grammar, vocabulary, and structure. As Judith Butler (1990) argues, gender is performative and maintained through repeated discursive practices—precisely what Critical Stylistics helps uncover. Through the lens of Critical Stylistics, analysts can reveal the ideological underpinnings of gendered language and challenge the normalization of inequality in discourse.

Gendered language in advertising refers to the strategic use of linguistic choices that reinforce, challenge, or construct societal norms and expectations surrounding masculinity and femininity. Advertising not only sells products but also disseminates cultural ideologies, and among the most persistent are those concerning gender roles.

According to Talbot (2003), gendered language is "language that reflects the social constructions of femininity and masculinity," and in advertising, it often works to naturalize these constructions by repeating them across various platforms. Through such repetition, advertisements create what appears to be a common-sense understanding of what it means to be a "man" or a "woman."

Gendered language is the deliberate or subconscious use of linguistic forms (such as vocabulary, grammar, and tone) that reflect or construct gender distinctions. In advertising, this often manifests in:

- Lexical choices: "strong," "bold," and "dominant" for men; "soft," "beautiful," and "gentle" for women.
- Visual and syntactic pairing: Men portrayed as active doers; women as passive observers or objects.
- Pronoun usage: He/him for power-related products; she/her for emotional or domestic goods.

These linguistic patterns are not coincidental—they emerge from and contribute to gender ideologies, which are socially constructed beliefs about what is "appropriate" for men and women.

"Advertising teaches us how to perform our gender identities by repeatedly associating certain behaviors and roles with male or female bodies." (Gill, 2008, p. 42)

Gendered language in advertising stems from ideological systems that uphold heteronormative and patriarchal values. The ideology of essentialism—the belief that men and women are fundamentally different in character and ability—is central to most gendered representations in ads.

Butler's theory of gender performativity (1990) is relevant here: gender is not a fixed identity but something enacted through repeated behaviors and language. Advertising becomes one of the public stages where such performances are reinforced and normalized.

"Language does not merely reflect gendered identities but contributes to the ongoing production of them" (Butler, 1990).

Drawing on Jeffries' (2010) model of *Critical Stylistics*, several tools can be identified in how gender is constructed:

1. Naming and Describing: Men may be "leaders" or "warriors," while women are "muses" or "angels."
2. Transitivity Structures: Men are often agents of action ("He achieves," "He drives"), while women are passively described or linked to emotional states ("She feels," "She desires").
3. Modality: Male-oriented ads use strong directives (e.g., "Own it"), while female ads use suggestive or emotive language (e.g., "Feel beautiful").
4. Oppositional Pairing: Phrases like "strong vs. soft" or "bold vs. graceful" build binary oppositions that divide gender roles.

These linguistic elements are not neutral; they carry ideological weight by associating specific character traits with a particular gender.

5.Model of Analysis

The model of analysis of this study ,it brings together three distinct but complementary layers of analysis—**textual**, **grammatical**, and **conceptual**—which are essential for unpacking the complex ways gender is constructed in advertising discourse. At the **textual level**, Critical Stylistics (Jeffries, 2010) provides a practical toolkit to investigate how specific linguistic features—such as naming and describing, oppositional pairing, modality, and transitivity—embed ideological meanings. These elements allow for the identification of how advertisements label male and female subjects, construct binaries, and use degrees of certainty or obligation to position gendered identities within power hierarchies. At the **grammatical level**, the transitivity system from Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994) is employed to examine participant roles and process types, which helps reveal

how agency and responsibility are distributed in advertising texts. This is particularly important in gendered representations, where men are often portrayed as active agents while women are constructed as passive or emotional participants. Finally, at the **conceptual level**, Judith Butler's theory of Gender Performativity offers a critical lens through which to understand gender not as a fixed identity but as a repeated, socially sanctioned performance enacted through discourse. This layer allows for a deeper interpretation of how advertisements do not merely reflect gender norms but actively participate in their construction and normalization. Taken together, these three layers provide a robust framework for critically analyzing how language in advertisements functions to produce and perpetuate gendered ideologies.

Based on the three-layered model of textual (Critical Stylistics), grammatical (Transitivity in SFL), and conceptual (Gender Performativity) a clear set of advertisement analysis tools arranged according to each layer of analysis. These tools are designed to systematically uncover how gender is constructed, reinforced, or challenged in advertising discourse

1. Textual Layer – Critical Stylistics (Jeffries, 2010)

This layer focuses on what the text does linguistically to encode gendered ideologies.

Tool	Description	Analytical Purpose in Gender
Naming and Describing	How people, roles, or objects are labeled and characterized.	Reveals stereotypes in gender roles (e.g., "boss babe" vs. "power player").
Oppositional Pairing	Binary constructions that frame one gender in contrast to another.	Highlights gender dualisms: strong/weak, rational/emotional, leader/supporter.
Modality	Use of modal verbs/adverbs to suggest necessity, obligation, or possibility.	Shows how gendered behavior is normalized or expected (e.g., "must be bold").
Transitivity	Who does what to whom; types of actions assigned to subjects.	Identifies passive/active roles (e.g., men as doers, women as objects/receivers).
Presupposition	What is taken for granted in the message.	Surfaces hidden assumptions about gender norms and ideals.
Equating and Contrasting	Connections or divisions established through linguistic forms.	Constructs fixed identities through comparison or contrast (e.g., She is not like other girls).

2. Grammatical Layer – Transitivity (Halliday, 1994)

This Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework allows for the study of grammatical agency and process types.

Transitivity Element	Definition	Application in Gender Analysis
Participants	Who is doing the action (actor), who is affected (goal).	Men often framed as "actors" (agents), women as "goals" (affected).
Process Types	Type of action or state described: material, mental, relational, verbal, etc.	Women shown with *mental/emotional* processes; men with *material/action*.
Circumstances	When, where, how, and with what instruments actions are performed.	Contextualizes the kind of setting gendered acts are performed in.

3. Conceptual Layer of Gender Performativity (Butler, 1990)

This layer examines how repeated language patterns in advertising normalize gender behaviors and identities.

Conceptual Tool	Purpose	Application in Advertising
Gender as Performance	Gender is not inherent but enacted through repetition of signs and discourse.	Ads model behaviors: women beautify, men dominate, thus "performing" gender.
Normativity and Sanction	What behaviors are rewarded or punished in the ad's logic?	Women rewarded for being caring/beautiful; men for being strong/decisive.
Repetition and Ritualization	How repeated ad language reifies certain gender roles.	Reinforces ideal femininity/masculinity across media genres.

6. Data Selection

To ensure relevance and analytical depth, this study adopts a purposive sampling technique for selecting advertising data. A total of ten advertisements are chosen—ten targeting male audiences and ten targeting female audiences—to allow for comparative analysis of gendered linguistic patterns. The data is drawn from both print (e.g., magazines, billboards) and digital media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, YouTube), reflecting the multimodal nature of contemporary advertising discourse. To enhance diversity and avoid domain-specific bias, the sample includes a variety of

product categories such as cosmetics, fashion, automobiles, technology, and health products. All advertisements selected are in English to maintain linguistic consistency, enabling accurate stylistic and grammatical analysis. Additionally, the ads are limited to those published between 2020 and 2024 to ensure that the study reflects current gender representations and advertising practices.

7. Data Analysis

Each ad is dissected based on:

1. **Textual Level** (language choices, lexical features, oppositions, etc.)
2. **Grammatical Level** (transitivity patterns: processes, actors, goals)
3. **Conceptual Level** (ideology, performativity, normalization of gender roles)

1. L'Oréal – "Because You're Worth It" (Target: Women)

- **Textual Analysis**: High-modality declarative structure asserts value ("you *are* worth it"). Naming strategy positions the consumer as empowered.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Relational process ("are worth") links the consumer (Carrier) to self-worth (Attribute). The subject is female by visual cues.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Reflects neoliberal ideology that ties personal value to consumption and appearance. Gender is performative—femininity is constructed through self-care and purchasing beauty.

2. Old Spice – "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like" (Target: Men)

- **Textual Analysis**: Uses humor and binary opposition (you vs. the man you could be). Bold, declarative language reinforces confidence and control.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Actor roles dominated by male characters performing material processes ("smell like," "ride," "own").
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Reinforces hypermasculinity as performative. Ideal masculinity is theatrical, sexualized, and action-driven.

3. Always – "#LikeAGirl" (Target: Girls/Women)

- **Textual Analysis**: Reverses pejorative phrase. Oppositional pairing ("like a girl" vs. "strong") redefined. Slogan becomes empowering.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: High presence of mental processes ("feel," "think") and material processes ("run," "fight") associated with female actors.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Reconstructs girlhood as powerful. Gender performance redefined as strong rather than weak; challenges essentialist gender views.

4. Gillette – "The Best a Man Can Get" (Target: Men)

- **Textual Analysis**: Superlative adjective ("best") creates hierarchical masculinity. Prescriptive tone with embedded societal expectations.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Material and behavioral processes dominate ("shave," "protect," "lead"), assigning agency to men.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Traditional masculinity tied to stoicism, leadership, and grooming. Performativity is about discipline and control.

5. Dove – "Real Beauty Sketches" (Target: Women)

- **Textual Analysis**: Uses narrative voices. Lexical field focuses on beauty, perception, and emotional vulnerability.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Relational and mental processes ("think," "believe") used to show disconnection between self-perception and reality.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Challenges narrow standards of beauty. Suggests that women's identity is shaped discursively by societal beauty norms.

6. Barbie – "Imagine the Possibilities" (Target: Girls)

- **Textual Analysis**: Highlights naming strategies ("doctor," "coach," "professor") usually associated with men. Feminized roles recontextualized.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Children as Actors in verbal and material processes; girls placed in subject position actively performing roles.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Undermines traditional gender binaries by broadening performative possibilities for girls.

7. AXE – "Find Your Magic" (Target: Men)

- **Textual Analysis**: Lexical emphasis on individuality and sexual attraction. Oppositional constructs (mainstream vs. unique) evoke freedom.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Material and existential processes dominate. Men shown acting, being, and expressing.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Moves away from generic masculinity. Promotes fluid masculinity as a product of self-expression and uniqueness.

8. Heineken – "Cheers to All" (Target: Mixed Gender)

- **Textual Analysis**: Ironic commentary on stereotypical gender-based drink orders. Visual narrative shows a woman served beer, man given cocktail.
- **Grammatical Analysis**: Verbal and behavioral processes used to portray breaking of assumptions.
- **Conceptual Analysis**: Challenges the performativity of gendered consumption. Highlights how simple practices reinforce gender norms.

9. Nike – "Dream Crazier" (Target: Women)

- **Textual Analysis**: Emotional appeal using oppositional logic: "crazy" vs. "dream." Narration by Serena Williams adds ethos.

• **Grammatical Analysis**: Female subjects shown as Actors and Goals in material processes ("run," "win," "overcome").
• **Conceptual Analysis**: Redefines performative femininity in terms of passion and strength. Gender is not limitation but a battlefield for breaking norms.

10. Ariel – "Share the Load" (Target: Men & Women)

• **Textual Analysis**: Storytelling style. Use of rhetorical questions and naming ("laundry," "housework") to expose gender roles.
• **Grammatical Analysis**: Initially shows women as Actors; gradually shifts responsibility to men via inclusive language and active verbs.
• **Conceptual Analysis**: Promotes shared domestic labor. Constructs masculinity as responsible and participatory. Challenges domestic gender roles.

7.Discussion

Advertising is one of the most pervasive cultural texts through which gender ideologies are circulated, normalized, and sometimes contested. The ten advertisements analyzed reveal a complex interplay between language, grammar, and conceptual performance that either reinforce or challenge traditional gender norms. Drawing from Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics, Halliday's (1994) Transitivity System, and Butler's (1990) Gender Performativity, this section synthesizes how gender is discursively constructed across various campaigns.

1. Gender Norms

Several advertisements—such as Gillette's "The Best a Man Can Get" and Old Spice's "The Man Your Man Could Smell Like"—clearly reinforce hegemonic masculinity. These ads use material processes dominated by male actors who are framed as powerful, assertive, and physically active. Through naming and describing, men are associated with strength, leadership, and independence, while the oppositional structures construct femininity in contrast—often silent, passive, or objectified. Such portrayals reflect patriarchal ideology, where male dominance is not questioned but presented as natural. Butler's theory is particularly relevant here, as the repeated visual and linguistic performances of dominance and stoicism constitute and normalize traditional masculinity as performative identity.

2. Gender Performativity

More recent advertisements attempt to subvert or challenge rigid gender binaries. Always' "#LikeAGirl" campaign reclaims a derogatory phrase to reframe girlhood as strong and capable. The ad uses modality and metaphor to highlight the socially constructed nature of gender expectations, presenting

an ideological shift toward empowerment. Here, the female subject is positioned through both mental and material processes, suggesting that identity is not biologically determined but discursively constructed and modifiable.

Similarly, Ariel's "Share the Load" challenges domestic gender roles by questioning why household labor is feminized. Through strategic transitivity choices (shifting agency from women to men), the ad discursively redistributes responsibility and calls attention to gender inequality in the private sphere, thus challenging the ideology of the traditional nuclear family.

3. Gender Identity

Many ads—particularly from brands like L'Oréal, Dove, and AXE—tie individual value to consumerism. These texts use high-modality and emotionally charged language to suggest that personal worth, beauty, and identity can be achieved through consumption. This reflects a neoliberal ideology, where empowerment is offered within the logic of capitalism. For instance, L'Oréal's slogan "Because You're Worth It" deploys relational processes to assert self-value, but within the context of purchasing beauty products.

This commodification of gender aligns with Butler's notion that **gender is not inherent**, but rather performed and reinforced through repeated cultural practices—including what we buy and how we are encouraged to look or behave through media discourse.

4. Inclusive Representations

A few ads—such as AXE's "Find Your Magic" and Heineken's "Cheers to All"—indicate a shift toward fluid and inclusive gender representations. These campaigns question essentialist views by embracing non-traditional masculinity and rejecting gender stereotypes in daily practices (e.g., drink preferences or fashion choices). The grammatical and conceptual framing in these ads blurs the line between male and female roles, supporting Butler's view that gender identity is performative, not prescriptive. These newer discourses mark a departure from binary thinking and reflect a more progressive ideological stance, embracing diversity and authenticity as new forms of gender expression.

8.Conclusion

This study set out to critically examine how gender is constructed and ideologically reinforced in advertising discourse through a three-tiered analytical model—textual (Critical Stylistics), grammatical (Transitivity Analysis), and conceptual (Gender Performativity). Drawing on advertisements from a range of global brands, the analysis has demonstrated

that language in advertising is not neutral; rather, it is a powerful vehicle through which gender roles, expectations, and hierarchies are performed, reproduced, and at times, contested.

Using Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics, the study found that naming, describing, oppositional structures, and modality are commonly deployed to encode gendered meanings. For instance, male figures are typically described using adjectives that emphasize strength and agency, while females are often positioned in supportive, emotional, or beauty-centered roles. This reflects enduring binary constructions of masculinity and femininity, reinforcing the ideological divide between the public (male) and private (female) spheres.

Transitivity analysis based on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1994) revealed a consistent pattern: men are frequently assigned roles as actors in material processes (doing, leading, conquering), whereas women are often recipients or sensers in mental and relational processes (feeling, desiring, being). This grammatically embeds male dominance and female passivity, thus reinforcing traditional gender ideologies at a structural level. Applying Butler's (1990) theory of Gender Performativity illuminated how advertisements do not merely reflect societal gender norms—they help construct and normalize them. Through repeated discursive practices, advertisements frame gender as a series of culturally sanctioned performances, tied to appearance, behavior, and consumer choices. However, some modern ads, such as "Share the Load" (Ariel) and "#LikeAGirl" (Always), disrupt these norms by reconfiguring the expected roles of men and women, indicating a shift toward more inclusive representations. Despite some progressive campaigns, a majority of the analyzed advertisements continue to perpetuate heteronormative, patriarchal ideologies through both visual and linguistic means. Grammatical choices like transitivity and modality work subtly to naturalize gendered power imbalances, often framing male dominance as neutral or desirable. A growing number of brands are engaging with feminist and inclusive discourses, challenging stereotypes by presenting men as emotional or domestic, and women as independent and capable. However, these narratives often coexist with market-driven goals, potentially limiting their transformative impact. The multi-layered approach used in this study provides a robust framework for unpacking the intricate ways in which language in advertising constructs gendered realities. It reveals that advertising is not just about selling products—it is about selling ideas, including ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman. While some ads have begun to question and reconfigure these norms, many still operate within ideologically conservative frameworks that perpetuate outdated gender

binaries. Therefore, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of gender representation in media and calls for more critical engagement from advertisers, consumers, and scholars alike. As advertising continues to shape cultural consciousness, it is vital that its role in (re)producing gender ideologies is both acknowledged and interrogated.

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مستخلص البحث:

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية كيفية بناء النوع الاجتماعي (الجندر) لغويًا في الإعلانات من خلال عدسة الأسلوبية النقدية (Critical Stylistics). وتعتمد الدراسة على أدوات التحليل التي طورتها جيفريز (2010)، بالإضافة إلى نموذج العبور (transitivity) لهاليداي ونظرية الأداء الجندري لجوديث بتلر، من أجل استكشاف الكيفية التي تُشفّر بها الإعلانات الأيديولوجيات الجندرية عبر اختيارات لغوية دقيقة. وقد تم تحليل عينة هادفة مكونة من عشرةإعلانًا موجهًا على أساس النوع الاجتماعي من وسائل الإعلام المطبوعة والرقمية، باستخدام أدوات أسلوبية مثل: التسمية والوصف، والعبور (transitivity)، وأنماط الالتزام (modality)، والازدواجية التضادية (oppositional pairing). أظهرت النتائج أن هناك أنماطًا لغوية متكررة تربط الأنوثة بالجمال والنعومة والعاطفية، في حين يُصوَّر الذكورة على أنها مرتبطة بالقوة والحركة والسيطرة. هذه التمثيلات ليست عشوائية بل تنبع من دوافع أيديولوجية، تعيد إنتاج الأعراف التقليدية المتعلقة بالنوع الاجتماعي. ومع ذلك، فإن قلة من النصوص الإعلانية تُظهر تمثيلات تقدمية، ما يشير إلى تحول محتمل في كيفية تقديم النوع الاجتماعي في الخطاب الإعلاني. وتوضح الدراسة فاعلية الأسلوبية النقدية في كشف الأيديولوجيات المضمرة في الإعلام اليومي، وتدعو إلى استخدام أكثر وعيًا للغة في الإعلانات من أجل مواجهة الصور النمطية الجندرية وتعزيز التنوع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة الجندرية، الخطاب الإعلاني، الأسلوبية النقدية، الأيديولوجيا، تمثيل النوع، الأداء الجندري.