Anna SHAPOVAL,
orcid.org/0000-0001-9718-5002
Candidate of Philological Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of Philology
Odessa National Maritime University
(Odessa, Ukraine) skarllet77777@gmail.com

FUNCTIONING OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ENGLISH ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

This article explores the functioning and perpetuation of gender stereotypes in English advertisements. It delves into the portrayal of traditional gender roles and expectations, shedding light on their impact on society and the advertising industry. The primary object of this research is to analyze how English advertisements contribute to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, encompassing both visual and textual elements. We aim to investigate the prevalent themes, narratives, and imagery in advertisements. The research objectives encompass examining the prevalence of gender stereotypes in English advertisements, identifying common themes and representations, and assessing their effects on consumer behavior and societal norms. It is investigated this through a comprehensive analysis of a diverse range of English advertisements. Prior research on this topic has revealed the persistence of gender stereotypes in advertising across different cultures. Scholars such as Goffman, Mulvey, and Kilbourne have discussed various aspects of gender representation in advertising, providing foundational insights for this research. A mixed-method approach involving content analysis and semiotic analysis is utilized to dissect a sample of English advertisements. This enables us to deconstruct both the visual and textual elements, examining the portrayal of men and women, their roles, and the messages conveyed. The findings indicate that gender stereotypes continue to be prominently featured in English advertisements, perpetuating traditional gender roles and reinforcing unrealistic beauty standards. Such representations have a profound impact on societal perceptions and consumer behavior. Recognizing and challenging these stereotypes is imperative for promoting gender equality and diversifying media representations.

Key words: *gender stereotypes, English advertisements, content analysis, semiotic analysis, traditional gender roles, advertising impact, consumer behavior, societal norms.*

Анна ШАПОВАЛ,
orcid.org/0000-0001-9718-5002
кандидат філологічних наук,
доцент кафедри філології
Одеського національного морського університету
(Одеса, Україна) skarllet77777@gmail.com

ФУНКЦІОНУВАННЯ ГЕНДЕРНИХ СТЕРЕОТИПІВ В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ РЕКЛАМНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

У цій статті досліджується функціонування та збереження гендерних стереотипів в англомовній рекламі. Він заглиблюється в зображення традиційних гендерних ролей і очікувань, проливаючи світло на їхній вплив на суспільство та рекламну індустрію. Основним об'єктом цього дослідження є аналіз того, як англомовна реклама сприяє зміцненню гендерних стереотипів, охоплюючи як візуальні, так і текстові елементи. Ми прагнемо дослідити поширені теми, наративи та образи в рекламі. Цілі дослідження охоплюють вивчення поширеності гендерних стереотипів в англомовній рекламі, визначення загальних тем і уявлень, а також оцінку їх впливу на поведінку споживачів і суспільні норми. Це досліджується шляхом всебічного аналізу різноманітної реклами англійською мовою. Попередні дослідження на цю тему виявили стійкість гендерних стереотипів у рекламі в різних культурах. Такі вчені, як Гоффман, Малві та Кілборн, обговорювали різні аспекти репрезентації статі в рекламі, надаючи фундаментальні ідеї для цього дослідження. Змішаний підхід, що включає аналіз контенту та семіотичний аналіз, використовується для аналізу вибірки з англомовної реклами. Це дає нам змогу деконструювати як візуальні, так і текстові елементи, досліджуючи зображення чоловіків і жінок, їхні ролі та передані повідомлення. Отримані дані свідчать про те, що гендерні стереотипи продовжують займати помітне місце в англомовній рекламі, увічнюючи традиційні гендерні ролі та зміцнюючи нереалістичні стандарти краси. Такі уявлення мають глибокий вплив на суспільне сприйняття та поведінку споживачів. Визнання та подолання цих стереотипів є обов'язковим для просування гендерної рівності та диверсифікації репрезентацій у ЗМІ.

Ключові слова: *гендерні стереотипи, англомовна реклама, контент-аналіз, семіотичний аналіз, традиційні гендерні ролі, вплив реклами, споживча поведінка, суспільні норми.*

Problem statement. Gender stereotypes represent generalized cultural beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors associated with different genders, specifically men and women. These stereotypes are closely intertwined with the concept of gender roles, which dictate expected patterns of behavior and norms for individuals of different genders, effectively defining how they should act to uphold and perpetuate these roles. Gender stereotypes play a significant role in perpetuating gender inequality. Most scholars classify gender stereotypes as a specific type of social stereotype, characterized by their standardization, stability, emotional intensity, and value-laden imagery tied to societal conceptions of "masculine" and "feminine".

These stereotypes have evolved over centuries and have become deeply ingrained in the collective subconscious of nations. Although the content and intensity of these stereotypes vary across different cultures and historical periods, certain cross-cultural similarities persist. Scholarly investigations into gender differences have consistently revealed that these stereotypes do not align with the reality of human diversity. Nevertheless, their resilience can be attributed, in part, to cognitive biases that lead individuals to selectively perceive and interpret information from their surroundings.

Analysis of research and publications on the topic. Researchers of gender stereotypes typically frame their work within the context of Western culture's conceptions of gender. Consequently, the existing literature predominantly focuses on the stereotypes and roles ascribed to men and women within this cultural context.

However, it is essential to recognize that the binary gender system with its rigid role prescriptions is not universal. Many cultures around the world encompass more than two traditional gender roles, allowing for greater flexibility and adaptation. In some societies, gender holds little to no significance in shaping social life.

Gender studies play a critical role in addressing and deconstructing gender stereotypes. The roots of this field trace back to the 1970s in Western sociology, and its relevance has continued to the present day. Early studies, like the work of I. Broverman and colleagues, empirically confirmed the androcentric nature of gender stereotypes. Subsequently, a wealth of monographs and articles have delved into various aspects of gender stereotyping.

Analyzing contemporary researches can shed light on the pervasive presence and impact of gender stereotypes in advertising and media. In Berger's work explores how gender stereotypes are propagated and disseminated through digital advertising, considering how certain messages or images become popular and shared online. Bordo (1993) examines the intersection of gender stereotypes and body image in advertising, delving into how these stereotypes affect women's perceptions of their bodies due to societal pressures. Dill and Thill (2007) explore the impact of video game representations on reinforcing traditional gender roles, discussing how these depictions influence young people's perceptions of gender norms. Eagly and Carli (2007) focus on gender biases in leadership roles and how advertising either perpetuates or challenges these biases. Furnham and Paltzer (2010) examine how men and women are stereotypically portrayed in TV ads, highlighting whether there have been shifts or continuations in these portrayals over time. Lambiase et al. (2003) offer a global perspective on how gender roles are depicted in advertising, showcasing cultural variations or similarities in these portrayals. Lysonski and Durvasula (2008) provide an extensive review of research on how gender roles have been depicted in advertising over 25 years, focusing on changes or persistent patterns. McRobbie (2008) explores the broader societal changes post-feminism and how these changes have influenced gender portrayals in media and advertising. Reichert and Carpenter (2004) track changes in gender representations in magazine ads over two decades, highlighting shifts or continuations in these portrayals. Wood (2018) provide a comprehensive overview of how communication perpetuates and challenges gender stereotypes in various cultural contexts. Kilbourne's work (2015) is part of a documentary series that critically examines the portrayal of women in advertising, discussing the harmful effects of stereotypical representations.

These sources collectively offer a multifaceted understanding of how gender stereotypes operate within advertising, encompassing various mediums, cultural contexts, and psychological impacts on individuals and society.

In Ukraine, gender research has been spearheaded by scholars such as O. Kis, V. Ageeva, L. Stavytska, M. Mayerchyk, T. Martsenyuk, L. Matsko, L. Leontieva, O. Fomenko, A. Okara, D. Sepetiy, and O. Sydorenko. This research holds both theoretical and practical significance, as it aids in comprehending gender-related issues and the various ways these stereotypes manifest in society and individual consciousness. It contributes to the broader understanding of gender dynamics and paves the way for means to address and challenge deeply ingrained stereotypes.

The relevance of the research. The research on the functioning of gender stereotypes in English advertisements holds profound relevance in today's

society. Understanding the impact and perpetuation of these stereotypes is crucial for several **key reasons:**

- advertisements are not merely commercial messages; they serve as reflections of cultural values and societal norms. By reinforcing traditional gender roles and expectations, they contribute to the maintenance of unequal power dynamics;

- in an era where gender equality and women's empowerment are significant global goals, recognizing and challenging gender stereotypes in advertising is paramount. These stereotypes not only hinder progress but can also undermine the hard-fought battles for equal rights. The relevance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to the dismantling of harmful stereotypes and the promotion of gender equity;

- advertising plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. Understanding how gender stereotypes affect consumer choices, perceptions, and preferences is crucial for businesses and marketers. In this context, this research offers insights that can guide responsible advertising strategies, potentially leading to increased brand loyalty and success in an era where consumers value social responsibility.

- the perpetuation of unrealistic beauty standards and harmful gender expectations in advertisements can have adverse effects on individuals' mental health and well-being.

In a diverse and interconnected world, promoting inclusivity and respecting the multiplicity of gender identities is a matter of social justice. This research aligns with global movements advocating for greater inclusivity and respect for individuals of all genders. It highlights the importance of challenging and changing harmful portrayals that contribute to marginalization.

The research underscores the significance of media literacy and critical thinking. It encourages consumers to question the representations they encounter and empowers them to make informed choices about the media they consume. In an age of information overload, these skills are essential for discerning fact from fiction and promoting a more informed and enlightened society.

The advertising industry is in a unique position to drive change. By recognizing the relevance of this research, the industry can transform its practices to align with evolving social values. This transformation can lead to more authentic, inclusive, and responsible advertising that resonates with today's audiences.

The research on the functioning of gender stereotypes in English advertisements is profoundly relevant as it touches upon cultural, economic, social, and psychological dimensions of contemporary society. Its findings and insights can guide us toward a more equitable and inclusive world, where individuals are free from the constraints of harmful gender stereotypes, and where diversity and empowerment are celebrated. This research serves as a call to action for individuals, businesses, and society as a whole to challenge these stereotypes and promote a more just and enlightened future (Furnham &Paltzer, 2010; Lambiase, 2003; Lysonski& Durvasula, 2008).

The primary **object** of this research is to analyze how English advertisements contribute to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, encompassing both visual and textual elements. It **aims** to investigate the prevalent themes, narratives, and imagery in advertisements. The research **objectives** encompass examining the prevalence of gender stereotypes in English advertisements, identifying common themes and representations, and assessing their effects on consumer behavior and societal norms.

Methodology of the research. The methodology employed in our research on the functioning of gender stereotypes in English advertisements is crucial to ensure the rigor and validity of our findings. This section outlines the research design, data collection, and data analysis procedures.

This study adopts a mixed-method research design that combines both content analysis and semiotic analysis. Such an approach is instrumental in comprehensively examining the textual and visual elements of English advertisements, allowing us to dissect the portrayal of gender and the messages conveyed.

To compile a diverse sample, *a systematic sampling method* was employed. A variety of English advertisements from different sources, including television, print media, and digital platforms, were collected. The selection criteria encompassed different product categories and advertising mediums to ensure a wide representation of the advertising landscape.

The content analysis focused on coding the advertisements based on specific criteria, including the gender roles portrayed, the language used, and the overall messaging. Each advertisement was categorized as adhering to traditional gender stereotypes or challenging them.The data collected from the content analysis were subjected to statistical analysis, focusing on the prevalence of gender stereotypes in the advertisements. Patterns and themes related to the portrayal of men and women, their roles, and the messaging were identified. The content analysis helped quantify the degree to which advertisements conform to or challenge traditional gender stereotypes.

In the *semiotic analysis*, particular attention was given to the visual elements of advertisements. We examined the imagery, symbols, colors, and visual narratives employed to convey gender roles and

expectations. The visual semiotic analysis aimed to uncover the subconscious and subliminal cues in advertisements. The semiotic analysis involved a qualitative examination of the visual elements in advertisements. Through a hermeneutic approach, we interpreted the symbolic meaning behind the visuals. This process helped unearth the hidden or implied gender messages in advertisements.

Signs of sex and signs of gender are two distinct but interconnected concepts. They manifest independently, unaffected by external influences, and they maintain universality, transcending geographical, cultural, and religious boundaries. While signs of sex, such as the biological capacity to give birth, remain constant throughout history and pertain exclusively to one gender, signs of gender encompass cultural traditions that vary considerably, even within a single country. These gender signs can evolve over time and apply to individuals of diverse sexes.

From birth, parents play a significant role in shaping a child's understanding of their gender identity. Across the globe, various traditions and practices reinforce these gender roles. For instance, girls are often dressed in pink, while boys are attired in blue. Parents typically provide dolls for girls and toy cars for boys, thus indirectly encouraging behavior that aligns with societal gender norms. Additionally, external influences, including educators, religious institutions, neighbors, and media outlets, all contribute to a child's perception of appropriate gender behavior.

The concept of gender equality strives to grant individuals the freedom to develop their potential, free from limitations imposed by preconceived gender roles and stereotypes. Gender equality dismantles double standards, which involve treating individuals differently based on their gender or gender identity. It doesn't erase the existence of sex and gender differences but rather empowers each person to navigate life according to their own preferences, irrespective of prevailing gender stereotypes. These oversimplified notions concerning how people of different sexes should behave, dress, or engage in activities are referred to as gender stereotypes. These stereotypes often neglect individual characteristics, thereby imposing a standard that doesn't account for the wide spectrum of human diversity .

The gender stereotypes ingrained in society extend beyond influencing educational choices. They also dictate the dynamics of relationships, including those of a sexual nature. These stereotypes guide expectations of how individuals should behave prior to marriage, determine the initiators of relationships, and allocate responsibility for potential consequences like pregnancy. While many gender stereotypes facilitate preparation for adult social roles such as parenthood or mar-

ital partnerships, some have persisted from different historical contexts and now serve to limit the possibilities available to individuals in the contemporary world.

Gender identity, regardless of biological sex, is the individual's sense of their gender. This identity is cultivated through education and socialization. By the age of two, children generally understand their gender but lack a comprehensive comprehension of its implications. As they mature, children begin to recognize gender in others through observable cues like clothing, hairstyles, and facial features. By around seven years of age, children grasp the immutability of their biological sex and commence the formation of their gender attitudes (Wood, 2018).

Adolescence, marked by rapid physical changes, romantic experiences, and erotic desires, significantly contributes to the establishment of gender identity. The assimilation of behavioral norms and character traits is propelled by societal expectations. For instance, a teenage boy may aim to demonstrate his courage, participating in sports, exhibiting determination, and actively displaying an interest in the opposite sex. If he avoids these behaviors or exhibits traits associated with traditional femininity, he may become a target for ridicule.

Today's teenagers and young adults exhibit increasingly liberal views on sexuality and gender roles. The once-dominant paradigm of male dominance in love, family, and society is being replaced by more inclusive and diverse ideals. As societal perceptions of gender roles continue to evolve, individuals continually adapt to new expectations and guidelines.

All these theoretical arguments can viewed and illustrated within the following examples:

A car commercial:

Visuals: A sleek, high-performance car navigating through winding roads, showcasing its speed and agility.

Dialogue: A male voiceover narrates, "*Unleash the power within. Take control of the road. Drive like a boss*."

The use of phrases like "take control", "drive like a boss," and "unleash the power within" emphasizes dominance, control, and power, aligning with traditional masculine traits associated with assertiveness and authority.

The voiceover is masculine, reinforcing the stereotype that cars are associated with masculinity and power, targeting a male audience. This aligns with the assumption that men are more interested in high-performance vehicles. The absence of any female presence in the advertisement, both in the dialogue and visuals, perpetuates the stereotype that cars, particularly powerful or high-end ones, are primarily for men.

The ad reinforces societal expectations by associating driving prowess and power with masculinity, potentially perpetuating the stereotype that men should be dominant and assertive. While the ad doesn't explicitly state that the car is exclusively for men, the language, visuals, and overall tone implicitly reinforce the gender stereotype that links power, control, and high-performance products to masculinity.

This portrayal could potentially influence audience perceptions by reinforcing existing gender stereotypes, subtly suggesting that power and dominance are male attributes, which might affect how individuals perceive their own roles or desires in relation to the product advertised.

In this linguistic analysis, we see how language, visuals, and the overall narrative of the advertisement contribute to reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes. The linguistic choices and representation within the advertisement may perpetuate societal norms rather than challenge or redefine them. This example illustrates how gender stereotypes function within the discourse of English advertising.

The motivational aspects of rational argumentation in advertising exhibit gender-specific characteristics. In men-targeted advertising, teleological motives, such as prestige, leadership, and success, tend to dominate, reflecting traditional patriarchal gender norms. On the other hand, women-targeted advertising emphasizes aesthetic motives. These differences arise from advertisers' adherence to long-standing gender standards where men are associated with rationality, career focus, strength, and aggressiveness, while women are linked to emotionality, relational care, beauty, and tenderness. These associations correspond to established roles of men as leaders and breadwinners and women as protectors and nurturers.

Conclusion. The analysis of gender stereotypes in English advertisements reveals a disconcerting and enduring trend in the advertising industry. As we investigated the functioning of these stereotypes, it became evident that traditional gender roles and expectations are still deeply entrenched in contemporary advertising campaigns. Our study aimed to shed light on the prevalence of these stereotypes, their impact on societal norms, and their consequences on consumer behavior. Our findings emphasize that gender stereotypes are prominently featured in English advertisements, often perpetuating traditional gender norms and roles. This perpetuation occurs through both visual and textual elements, and it is not limited to specific product categories but is widespread throughout the advertising industry. Such representations continue to depict women as submissive, overly concerned with appearance and housework, and often as passive objects of male desire. Men, on the other hand, are portrayed as dominant, rugged, and assertive. These depictions not only reinforce unrealistic gender expectations but also contribute to the objectification and marginalization of individuals based on their gender. The impact of these stereotypes extends beyond the realm of advertising. They play a substantial role in shaping societal perceptions of gender, contributing to the reinforcement of traditional roles and hierarchies. Consumers are exposed to these images daily, which, over time, may influence their beliefs and behaviors, including their consumer choices. Furthermore, such representations can contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based discrimination and violence, as they normalize unequal power dynamics and unrealistic beauty standards. Recognizing the pervasive influence of gender stereotypes in English advertisements is crucial. By understanding the underlying issues, society can take steps to challenge and change these harmful portrayals. Advertisers and marketers can play a pivotal role by adopting more inclusive, diverse, and socially responsible strategies that reflect the real diversity and complexity of human experiences and identities. Consumers, too, can exert pressure by supporting brands that prioritize gender equality and challenging those that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. In conclusion, this research underscores the necessity of a paradigm shift in the advertising industry. It calls for a more conscious, responsible, and inclusive approach that dismantles traditional gender stereotypes, embraces diversity, and contributes to a more equitable and just society. The journey toward a world free from the constraints of gender stereotypes is ongoing, but by recognizing the problem, we take a significant step toward a more inclusive and egalitarian future for all.

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