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## DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ÚSTAV JAZYKŮ

## GENDER STEREOTYPES IN TECHNICAL PRODUCTS ADVERTISEMENTS

GENDEROVÉ STEREOTYPY V REKLAMĚ NA TECHNICKÉ PRODUKTY

### BACHELOR'S THESIS

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## NÁZEV TÉMATU:

### Genderové stereotypy v reklamě na technické produkty

#### POKYNY PRO VYPRACOVÁNÍ:

Analyzujte genderové stereotypy, jež se objevují v soudobé reklamě na různé druhy technických produktů. Zaměřte se zejména na kombinaci jazykových a vizuálních aspektů, které jsou v této souvislosti v reklamních textech použity.

#### DOPORUČENÁ LITERATURA:

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Práce se zabývá mediální reprezentací genderových stereotypů v reklamních sděleních. Jsou diskutovány pojmy reklamy, genderu a stereotypů a uvedeny závěry výzkumů na téma výskytu genderových stereotypů v reklamě. Rovněž jsou analyzovány genderové stereotypy, jež se objevují v soudobé reklamě na různé druhy produktů.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

Reklama, gender, genderové stereotypy, média

## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis is focused on media representations of gender stereotypes in advertising. The definition of advertising, gender and stereotypes is discussed, the conclusions of studies of gender stereotypes in advertising are presented. Gender stereotypes which appear in present-day advertising of different kinds of products are analysed.

## **KEY WORDS**

Advertising, gender, gender stereotypes, media

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that I have worked on this project independently, using the resources listed in the bibliography.

## Prohlášení

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V Brně dne .....

.....

(podpis autora)

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# Introduction

This bachelor thesis deals with themes of gender stereotypes in technical products advertisements. The aim of this work is to analyze gender stereotypes, which today appear in different technical advertisements.

Every day a consumer meets up to 600 advertisements on average. We should be careful, because the reality now depends on all kinds of media. While new information and communication are heavily prevalent in our everyday life, we should, we should separate useful messages from fictional, deceptive or profoundly influenced by gender stereotypes (Clow and Baack, 2008).

The issues of gender stereotyping and defined gender roles have spread widely in the media which led to the increased awareness of the differences in the treatment of different sexes in media. However, given the focus on gender stereotypes, unisex gender will not be considered.

The aim of the work is to reveal the current tendency of persuasive communication using semiotic analysis. The focus of the work are printed and video advertisements, which are among the most effective forms of marketing communication and their functions. I will present gender elements, namely on how and with which gender stereotypes they operates. I believe that advertising offers a narrow concept of gender identity. I wonder whether there are gender norms presented as dichotomic category or if we can find an innovative approach to the presentation of male and female roles.

The first part deals with the concepts of gender, advertising and stereotypes.

The second part presents research's intent and methodology. Based on qualitative content analysis, I working with classical terms of semiotics – character, denotation, and connotation – I will carry out the analysis of technical advertisements. In the analysis, the main focus will be on how gender stereotypes are used to promote products, identification elements that interfere with traditional gender norms and stereotypes. At the end of the work, will be summarization of the results.

# 1 Advertising

The structure of this chapter is as follows: the first sub-chapter explains the term advertising, the second part is devoted to its basic concepts and classifications, the third part explains the language in advertising, and the last sub-chapter discusses the elements, which promote the effectiveness of advertising.

## 1.1 The definition of term

Today we all have strong ideas about what advertising is, and thus we end to have very strong opinions and prejudices about it. Advertising may be defined as a communication process, a marketing process, an economic process, and a social process, depending on the point of view. According to Bovée and Arens (1992, p. 12). “Advertising is the nonpersonal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods and services) or ideas by identified sponsors through various media.”

Advertising is directed to groups of people, rather than to individuals, and is therefore nonpersonal. The groups, for example, might be teenagers, who enjoy rock concerts, or older adults, who attend cultural events. In either case, advertising to these groups is not personal or face-to-face communication.

The Advertising Association defines advertising his way:

*Advertisements are messages, paid for by those who send them, intended to inform or influence people who receive them. (Mann, 1993)*

This definition makes several points about advertisements. Firstly, they contain a message – that is, there is an idea of what they need to accomplish. This message can be expressed in words – “Nothing moves you like Citroën” – or in pictures or music. Secondly, advertisements have the purpose of informing and influencing the people they are intended for - their target audience.

## 1.2 Classification and concept of advertising

The word “advertising” is often preceded by an adjective, which indicates the type of advertisement, classified by four main criteria: target audience, geographic area, medium, and purpose.

### By target audience

Advertising is usually intended for a particular target audience. When you see an advertisement that does not appeal to you, it may be because the advertisement is not aimed at any of the groups of people you belong to. There are many kinds of target audiences. The two major types of audience are consumers (people who buy the product for their own, or someone else's personal use) and businesses (tend to be in specialized business publications or professional journals).

### By geographic area

Shops would most likely advertise in the local area near the store. On the other hand, many U.S. and Canadian products are advertised in foreign countries from Africa to Asia. The four classifications of advertising based on geography are:

- *International advertising* is advertising directed towards foreign markets. This type of advertising has grown very fast and become very important. Due to the interconnectedness of markets.
- *National advertising* is advertising aimed at customers in several regions of a country, and its sponsors are called national advertisers. The majority of advertising we see on prime-time network television is national advertising.
- Many products are sold in one area or region but not the whole country and hence there is the need for *regional advertising*.
- Advertisers such as department stores, automobile dealers, and restaurants use *local advertising* because the majority of their customers come from one city or local trading area.

### By medium

Advertising can also be classified based on its medium, which in turn can be defined as any paid means used to transmit an advertisement to its target audience. It does not, therefore, include "word-of-mouth" advertising. The most common media used in advertising are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, direct mail, and out-of-home media such as outdoor signs, the internet, billboards, and transit advertisements (on busses or trucks).

### By purpose

Another way of classifying advertising is on the basis of the sponsor's objectives. Some advertising, for example, is designed to promote a particular product or service. Other

advertising promote ideas. Some advertising is meant to generate profits for the advertiser, while other advertising are sponsored by nonprofit groups. A number of advertisements are meant to call the target audience to certain action; other advertisements are only intended for promoting the awareness and understanding of the advertiser's product or service.

### **1.3 Advertising and language**

Language is a part of every advertising message, but its role and importance vary greatly. In some ads, the language is its main component, the central element used to get its message across, while in the other part of advertisements the language is used occasionally, e.g. only in the form of the name of the promoted product (service) or the company that manufactures it (the service provides).

In addition to linguistic means, non-verbal means are also used in advertising. Together, they shape the content and meaning of advertisements. Verbal and non-verbal means complement each other, and in many cases they are interdependable – it would be impossible to preserve the effectiveness and message of an advertisement if one mean is omitted, separated, or removed. In general, it is impossible to determine which verbal or non-verbal means were used because in individual advertisements are subject to different creative practices, and hence the different “building blocks” are the most important for an advertisement. Dominance or complementarity of “building blocks” is decided primarily by the author's intent and the medium by which the advertisement is disseminated.

Advertising gives the language space for its diverse use. Advertising play with words, creating new, amusing connections. The language we speak affects our perception of the world, shaping our thinking, values, and attitudes, and informing us about the state of our society and our place in it. It will be as effective as properly selected words in its text will be sorted into sentences. Advertising text must be such as accurate observed that the idea of advertising and that the advertising has achieved its goal, i.e. the addressed customer.

One of the important factors in the implementation of advertisement is the team of copywriters, which role is to develop the text of advertisement. Their work is primarily tied to the requirements of companies: sponsors and subscribers, who communicate with copywriters the essential details of their future advertisements. However, the work of copywriters is also a completely creative process, where they are free to experiment with their language skills. As a result, copywriters have the ability to shape and control the national language, where the size of the vocabulary is of great importance. Some words have multiple meanings, shades, may

be used only in a certain context, therefore, is also every text reflects the distinctive capabilities of its creator.

People of different cultures speak different languages and have different cultural values. The perception of the same language can also be different, which should be taken into account by the copywriters when translating foreign-language ads and creating new ones. “In addition to the cultural linguistic background, it is also necessary to respect individual forms of the language, such as general or literary language, slang, dialect, jargon, argot, because each of them corresponds not only to the vocabulary, but also to the lifestyle of the individual groups that use them.” (Vysekalová, 2004, p. 81).

Specific cultural connotations used in ads provoke the target audience's interest in the product or service offered and convincing him of the benefits of this offer. “Advertising has invaded our lives with our own world, which has its own laws, categories, speech acts.” (Čmejrková, 2000, p. 14).

The most effective advertisements – those which are remembered for long – tend to be shocking, disturbing, and sometimes strange. “An interesting text will not be the one that goes through our hearing smoothly, or that we will fly quickly through sight, but the one who will surprise us or even catch it, and best - provoke.” (Čmejrková, 2000, p. 11). On the other hand, it is necessary to understand the inner logic of advertising in order to be able to interpret its underlying message, avoiding possible hasty misinterpretations. Advertising creates idyllic worlds full of beauty, well-being, freshness, strength and success. The choice of language resources, as well as the other components used in the advertising, depends on the target audience. For example, ads targeted at younger audience are likely to use colloquial language and slang expressions, avoiding complex syntactic structures and technical terms. Depending on what target audience has advertising to reach out, to advertiser should choose linguistic means and use values which are loved by the target group. “Advertising does not appeal to us as we are, but what we would like to be. It offers the boxes we can slip into, for example by showing us the characters, characters, heroes with whom we can identify, in which we want to project.” (Čmejrková, 2000, p. 14).

## **1.4 Elements promoting the effectiveness of advertising**

### **1.4.1 Image**

The images are perceived first in advertisements. They are faster processed and perceived. Images are also better and longer retained in our memory than words due to the ways in

which our brain processes and stores information. “Images more affect behavior, their the effect on the recipient is usually less “transparent”.” (Vysekalová, Mikeš, 2007, p.60).

Images can convey more information in a shorter time and capture multiple meaningful elements simultaneously. In addition, pleasant images promote positive attitudes to advertising. You can use images that are related to the product. The images that contain the information about product serves only to create certain mood and are important for its effect on the audience (Vysekalová, 2007).

#### **1.4.2 Music**

Music has been used in advertising for a long time. The musical background, also known as coloring with music, is the most common way of using music in advertisements. Its aim is to increase the viewer's attention and strengthen the attractiveness of the product by creating alluring brand personality, communicating important cultural values, and indicating an appealing living style (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2003).

#### **1.4.3 Acoustic images**

Acoustic images improve visualization and efficiency: people often recall advertising melodies much better than the verbal quotes from advertising spots. Some tunes are strongly associated with a particular product or service – the musical accompaniments in the advertisements of savings and loan association Wüstenrot or soups Knorr are some of the brightest examples (Vysekalová, 2007).

#### **1.4.4 Colors**

“Colors convey a visual message, allow easier perception and understanding communicated communication. Each color has in it a certain psychological content dependent on personality of a person, on his qualities, experiences and current emotional states. ... be it is necessary to analyse their action in a specific “context” with a given product or service in connection with the characteristics of the target group.” (Vysekalová, Mikeš, 2007, p. 64–65).

Colors affect not only our feelings, but also the physiological states of our body. There is an indication how the primary colors affect the perception and emotions of a person.

*Black* - dark, compact color which is a symbol of doubt and death. It also conveys a sense of grandeur, dignity and elegance. In advertising, it is used for sophisticated expensive goods of high quality.

*White* - expresses purity, peace, innocence, and unattainability. It acts quietly. In combination with blue, white gives a refreshing feeling.



*Green* - the calmest color. It is a symbol of hope, but it also symbolizes peace, freshness, nature, water, and coldness.

*Red* - means strength, vivacity, energy, dynamics, excitement, and heat. But it also means fire, danger, blood, and anger. It gives the impression of dignity, but also favor and charm. It attracts attention.

*Blue* - a deep, basic color that symbolizes a calm, relaxed atmosphere. It is a popular color that is used in advertising to express quality and beauty.

*Yellow* – it is the brightest, dazzling, and warmest of all colors. It means sunlight and vitality, shine, splendor, warmth (Vysekalová, Mikeš, 2007).

#### **1.4.5 Frequency of presentation**

Frequency of presentation is particularly important to consider our objective in regards to promotional communication. It all depends on what result we pursue: memorizing or remembering the brand, change some dimensions of the image, getting to know the product, induce purchasing intention, etc. Some research shows that repetition of advertising affects memory performance, but does not affect the attitudes to the product and purchasing intentions. Can repetition of advertising create its oversaturation or wear and tear? However, repetition effect is not empirically supported (Vysekalová, 2007).

#### **1.4.6 Credibility**

“The seller should act credibly, gain sympathy, arouse the appearance that he is “the right one” for the customer” (Vybíral, 2003, p. 81). The source, which is perceived as little credible, also acts on the perception of the information it publishes.

#### **1.4.7 Emotion**

Oatley and Jenkins (1996) state that emotions are usually consciously or unconsciously caused by a person evaluating an event that relates to an interest that is important to him or her. If the interest of an individual goes in right direction, he or she perceives emotion as positive, and if in the wrong direction, then he or she perceives it as negative.

The first task of advertising is to make sure that people notice it. Since emotions play a key role in managing our attention, the task of advertising is to evoke our emotions. The second task of advertising is to make sure we remember it, which is closely related to how often we encounter it. Emotions not only shape our subconscious reactions to advertising, but

also create and guide our conscious thinking about the brand, products, and services (Du Plessis, 2007).

Emotionally tuned advertisements contain many non-verbal elements, stimuli provoking imagination and feelings. The primary goal of emotional appeals is to evoke feelings in all people, but they do not always manage with their purpose (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2003).

“The emotional content of the advertising message is aimed at arousing the appropriate feelings and emotions, to activate the members of the target group, to reach their desires and motives. He wants to impress those needs that lead to negotiations, to arouse interest in the product or at the final stage of its purchase“ (Vysekalová, Mikeš, 2007, p. 74). Even Ogilvy (2001) agrees that emotions have a great influence on our decision-making, but he also points out that people need to justify their emotional decision with rational excuses, we should not forget about that when creating advertisements.

Vysekalová and Mikeš (2007) state that among the most emotionally effective motives are motives erotic, humor and fear.

### **1. Erotica in advertising**

Erotic advertising attracts attention. An advertisement can be considered erotic if it contains any of these elements: partial or full nudity, physical contact between adults, sexy or provocatively dressed people, alluring or sultry expression on his face, suggestive language, or sexually-themed music (Geuens, 1997, cit. by De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van day Bergh, 2003). Ogilvy (2001) agrees that erotica can be used as a banner of attention, but it must have some connection with the promoted product period. Otherwise, people will remember only a sex scene, but they will not be able to assign it to the product.

### **2. Humor in advertising**

“Humor is the most commonly used emotional technique on a world scale. There is no doubt that many people appreciate a good joke, but can one “humorously“ convey a message about the brand? Humor was the subject of many studies, but there was only one aspect on which they all agree: humor attracts attention.” (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2003, p. 219). Crha and Křížek (1998) see the power of humor in its ability to create a pleasant atmosphere, drawing people's attention and making them feel good about it. The researchers also compared the humor in advertisements to spices – spices enhance dishes with a distinctive taste and flavor, but they do not constitute the dish itself. In other words, the

humor should not prevail over the central message of any advertisement, but it rather should help to convey its message more effectively. Therefore, according to the authors, we should treat it as a spice. Spices give the dish you are preparing, a distinctive taste, aroma and color; but do not forget that people want to eat first of all. But no one eats the spices themselves. In other words: humor must not prevail over your own advertising information and argument.

### **3. Motive of fear in advertising**

Advertisers may appeal to fear or concern of their customers, informing them about the possible risks and the effectiveness of their product to address these concerns. Risks are physical, social, temporal, reduced performance, financial risks, risk losing an opportunity (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van den Bergh, 2003). Vysekalová (2007) believes that the motive of fear can only be used in advertisement when the solution is offered, the way of getting out of the unpleasant situation established in the ad. Otherwise, advertisements would leave their viewers with unpleasant emotions and result into a negative associations.

## **2 Gender**

The structure of the chapter is as follows: the first sub-chapter explains the term gender, the next sub-chapter is devoted to the role of gender and the features associated with male and female genders, the third sub-chapter is about the role of gender in media, and the last chapter discusses gender and consumer behavior.

### **2.1 The definition of term**

According to Oates-Indruch, “Gender is a social and cultural definition of human behavior, values, properties and the relationship as feminine and masculine. This definition of human behavior is constructed by society.” (Oakleyová, 2000) .

Ann Oakleyova says that gender is a concept that expresses the properties and behaviors associated with the image of man and woman. The perceptions of gender are shaped by our society, and thus this term should be differentiated from the notion of sex, which, unlike gender, is a universal category not contingent on time and place. The gender impact shows that the determination of roles, behaviors, and norms relating to women and men is different for different groups in different timelines. Thus, gender development is not seen as an immutable state, but as a temporary stage in the development of social relations between men and women (Oakleyová, 2000).

It is important to highlight the fact that people generally accept gender distinction valid and properly only on the basis of what gender actually is. On this basis, they use different and sometimes contradictory approaches to persons of the opposite sex (Renzetti and Curran, 2003). Such behavior occurs not only in the communication between men and women, but also on the structural level of the society in which they live (Renzetti and Curran, 2003). Different conceptions of female and male personality, in different societies, are related to how differently the female and male roles are defined.

### **2.2 The role of gender**

The notions of male and female gender greatly varies across the globe and can be seen in numerous human activities. Specialists in gender studies claim that in the vast majority of human societies, a men and women have well-defined roles, rights, and obligations (Janošová, 2008). Janošová (2008) also states that these gender roles are formed by education and socialization. Renzetti and Curran (2003, p. 93) define socialization as: “The process through which people transmit and absorb human values and norms, including those which are

relating to the gender.” Gender affiliation is formed from an early age and depends on the influence of different reference groups - for example, in the earliest period of life it is a family, later friends, and also media.

For example, boys are encouraged to play with their cars since their childhood, while girls are supposed to play with dolls in order to understand their mission to become a mother from early age. The game prepares children for their future roles. This way, children get to adapt to the gender roles and standards of the society about how an ideal woman or man should look like, and which they will most likely accept when growing up (Renzetti and Curran, 2003).

The following table by Judith Worell (2001, p. 563) summarizes the gender stereotypic characteristics associated with men and women.

Gender Stereotypic Characteristics Associated with Women and Men				
	Traits	Roles	Physical characteristics	Cognitive abilities
Associated with men	Active Can make decisions easily Competitive Feels superior Independent Never gives up easily Self-confident Stands up well under pressure	Assumes financial obligations Head of household Financial provider Leader Responsible for household repairs Takes initiative in sexual relations Watches sports on television	Athletic Brawny Broad-shouldered Burly Muscular Physically strong Physically vigorous Rugged Tall	Analytical Exact Good at abstractions Good at numbers Good at problem solving Good with reasoning Mathematical Quantitatively skilled
Associated with women	Able to devote self to others Aware of others feelings Emotional Helpful to others Gentle Kind Understanding Warm	Cooks the meals Does the household shopping Does laundry Is fashion conscious Source of emotional support Takes care of children Tends the house	Beautiful Cute Dainty Gorgeous Graceful Petite Pretty Sexy Soft voice	Artistic Creative Expressive Imaginative Intuitive Perceptive Tasteful Verbally skilled

Table 1: Role and features associated with individual genders

Worell (2001), in her publication, analyzes female and male subtypes which are characterized by a certain type of behavior, based primarily on Susan Fiske’s research. For women, they are:

- housewife: submissive, self-contained, shy, take care of children and family, without self-confidence and self-belief.
- career woman: dominant, independent, ambitious, clever, hardworking and confident.
- sexy woman (sex object): young, beautiful, attractive, provocative, but dependent on the men’s attention .
- feminist: dominant, independent, accepting male characteristics (Worell, 2001).

Men's classification is more difficult to identify. Men are typically depicted in these roles: athlete, worker, businessman, macho, father, and loser.

- athlete (athletic man): sporty, active, cheerful, often without family.
- worker (a blue collar working man): hard work to provide a family, often with a high working morality, with a typical appearance.
- businessman: an educated man, living in his work, always elegant, materialist.
- macho (macho man): sociable, self-centered, is fond of women's society, enjoys sex.
- family man: is more or less the same as the female role of the housewife, so its main job is to take care of the family, house, garden.
- loser: he does not report to manhood, passive, unbalanced, at first sight without interests to the neighborhood, which is only a mask (Worell, 2001).

## 2.3 Gender and media

On the question of how media characterizes men and women, we could say that media reflects the behavior and relationships, values and standards that prevail in the society. On the other hand, we can say that the media also actively reinforces and alters the existing perceptions of gender.

Media in present world determines what you need to pay attention to. In addition to media sources, they are also a part of the leisure time for people. Many media consumers, especially avid viewers, tend to take media content as a reality.

According to Jhally (1990; in Renzetti and Curran, 2003), advertising exploits the themes of gender and sexuality because these themes are easily recognizable and address recipients on a personal level. Katz (1995, p. 133) notes that the use of gender in advertisements implicitly emphasizes the differences between the two sexes presenting these distinctions as the inherent qualities of the two genders, and thereby advancing the ability of the advertising industry to target selected groups and gain higher profits. This confirmed difference helps the advertising industry in much better way target the selected group.

The most common category of gender stereotypes is the display of occupations (Renzetti and Curran, 2003). Advertisements contain stereotypes in words and images, which strengthens stereotyped thinking about social groups (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, 2005).

## **2.4 Gender and consumer behavior**

The advertising industry exploits and reinforces the existing notions of gender norms, offering and instilling the desired model of consumeristic behavior. These processes are driven through the consumers' pursuit of better and ideal life, informed by his or her cultural values and partly shaped by the advertising itself.

Brown (in Bosnicova 2008) describes the differences between shopping habits of men and women. The author states that women buy product and services more often than men, and their shopping style is characterized by slow and careful selection of products, comparison of the offers, and inspection of the products' origins and quality. Women, therefore, buy emotionally - for pleasure. By contrast, men tend to be reluctant to buy, so they choose products quickly and efficiently leaving with the products for which they initially came for; their purchasing decisions can be characterized as rational.

In connection with this subchapter, it is necessary to mention the concept of gender marketing. Vysekalová (in Bosničová 2007) defines this term as the marketing which uses different roles of women and men and their consumer behaviors. It focuses on gender differences in the spheres relating to the family and personal life.

### **3 Stereotype**

The structure of the chapter is as follows: the first sub-chapter explains the term stereotype, the next sub-chapter is about gender stereotypes, the third sub-chapter is devoted to the gender stereotypes in media, and at the last one demonstrates the examples of gender stereotypes in advertising.

#### **3.1 The definition of the term**

Nowadays, the term stereotype (as well as its main features) is well-known to the general public. This chapter provides a more nuanced approach to this familiar phenomenon. Lusting and Koester (1999) characterize stereotyping as the process of simplification, in which people or things are categorized and classified into groups based on their shared properties. This simplification occurs when individuals desire to understand the general extent of the problem or discover completely unknown things. Lusting and Koester argue that stereotypes are shared by the entire society and passed on from generation to generation without evolving over time.

Guirdham (2005) describes this concept as a cognitive process, by which people categorize other people and entities in order to avoid the overflow of information. Edward Hall (in Holliday, Hyde and Kullman, 2004) gives one of the most accurate and detailed explanations and defines stereotype as a simple, memorable, and well-known feature, which, due to its simplifying nature, limits people's consciousness. The stereotype cannot be used and accepted without further thought, due to their simplifying nature.

Many authors point out that stereotypes are not accurate and thus fail to account for vast differences between different groups of people. They also warn that stereotypes are often not based on the people's personal experience, but rather passively accepted. Stereotypes are also characterized by a high degree of polarization and the subsequent formation of rigid, antithetical categories – good vs. bad, masculine vs. feminine, straight vs. gay, – void of any diversity and complexity (Lusting and Koester, 1999). As a result, stereotypes tend to inhibit inclusivity and promote xenophobia, sexism, and other oppressive behaviors (Holliday, Hyde, and Kullman, 2004).

In summary, it is necessary to emphasize that stereotypes can be beneficial, but only as a basic point of view on any problem. They must be constantly challenged since they do not reflect reality, but only its simplification.



### 3.2 Gender stereotypes

According to Valdrova and co. (2004, p. 20), gender stereotypes are “preliminary concepts about men and women, whom there should be and how to behave.” Gender stereotypes confine men and women within clearly defined gender boundaries, the roles establishing acceptable and unacceptable kinds of behavior for each of the genders. For some, these gender roles are satisfactory, but for many, they are limiting their ability to live to the fullest. In this chapter, I will first expand on the notion of gender stereotype and then apply it to the world of media and advertising.

Gender stereotypes are also related to the concept of gender contract. Gender contract is a set of different rules (expressed directly or indirectly), which define a different hierarchy of values, and responsibilities for women and men. Valdrová (in Janebová 2008) shows that this contract manifests on three levels: the first consists of principles created by society, the second form institutions in the system of education and profession, and the last one is the family. Overall, the gender roles, which are acquired in childhood, are shaped by family and environment in the process of socializing, directly or indirectly influencing individuals and forming their contracts.

Křížková (2004) argues that gender stereotypes establish the traditional division of domestic activities. While a man does not expect help with routine housework, such as cleaning or shopping that belongs to a woman, his place is either in a workshop or in a garden where he has the opportunity to express himself creatively. However, as some authors have said, stereotypes can make life even more difficult for people. For women, it is usually more challenging to receive job offers and get promoted in male-dominated industries, partly due to the the negative attitudes to maternity leave. Since gender stereotypes are firmly entrenched in our society, people tend to perceive themselves and each other through the prism of these ideas, leading to the enormous pressure of living up to the unrealistic expectations they pose (Karsten, 2006).

Valdrova and co. (2004, p. 26) summarizes: “People who see the world sharply divided into men and women, then lightly overlook situations that do not fit into their established scheme. They do not notice, for example, that men are sensitive, empathetic and capable of listening to others, and women are strong, brave and able to break through their professional lives, while such behavior does not deny anything to women on their femininity and men on their masculinity”. Therefore, marketing specialists, but also all people, should be careful if they make excessive use of stereotypical templates, as they can be very misleading and can not be applied to each individual.

### **3.3 Gender stereotypes in media**

As has been mentioned, gender is today one of the most important segmentation bases, leading to increased stereotyping in advertising. Women are often portrayed as sex symbols or housewives, while men are portrayed as careerists with great authority. This depiction subsequently transforms and consolidates the views and beliefs of the society about sexuality and how the ideal life of the ideal man and woman should look. Authors Renzetti and Curran (2003) argue that it is most often possible to meet gender stereotypes in the media. And it is just the media that is considered to be the source and channel that presents and translates the values and practices of human society (Renzetti and Curran, 2003). It creates and transforms social identity, including gender roles, and directly participates in the formation of reality.

Wood (1994) mentions three gender issues that the media produce and transmit to society. Firstly, men are represented more often than women in the media, which implies that women are not so important, often invisible. Secondly, both sexes are depicted using numerous stereotypes that only further strengthen the distorted view of both genders. And third, a stereotypical representation of the relationship between a man and a woman as a common and normal problem.

As the author analyzes, three times more men appear in television than women, what generally confirms as a kind of cultural standard. As for stereotypes, Wood describes them equally by other authors. These stereotypes limit the perception of the complexity of human qualities and possibilities. Typically, men are described as active, adventurous, strong and sexually aggressive in their commercials. On the contrary, women tend to be totally opposed to them: passive, dependent, incompetent. They also have to be physically beautiful, which they are trying to do with their products, only then they are appealing to men and serve as the adornment of a male ego.

While women are associated with childcare or other family members, they take care of their home, men are rarely seen in these activities. Women in advertisements are waiting for men to notice and pay their attention, which is related to the fact that they have less authority in the media than men. Therefore, up to 90% of commercials for women, where they perform, use a male voice that explains the benefits of the product because women are not competent enough and the consumer would not believe them (Wood, 1994). Women then watch them closely, when the men explain something to them if they look out of the advertisement to a potential viewer and try to capture his attention, while the man only deals with the product and the viewer rarely dazzles because he does not need to impose it (Williamson, 1995). This trend is still mirroring the inferiority of female gender.

### **3.4 Examples of gender stereotypes in advertising**

Valdrova (2001) analyzed the stereotypical and unequal representation of men and women in Czech advertisements. In most of the cases, she noted that women in Czech advertisements are depicted as dependant on men, serving the roles of mothers, mistresses, wives, and caregivers, who are also very physically attractive. The role of Czech men is, in turn, limited to being the head of their families, who ensures the family's financial well-being and determines its performance and satisfaction. Often times, a Czech man is depicted as the only possible way of achieving success for his woman, offering her support and rationality she lacks. According to Valdrova, the man in advertisements commercials often makes fun of everything she does (Valdrová, 2001). That is why Czech advertisements are not an exception, and gender is polarized.

#### The central themes in the representation of women in advertising:

On the topic of women in advertising, Valdrova (2006) states that the main element of female advertising is her beauty, which is a necessary condition for her success. The women's beauty translates into a happy, meaningful life with an ideal man by her side. Some research adds that women in advertising, unlike their male counterparts, are often placed in front of the picture to make women's look more beautiful. The so-called fragmentation of the body is used, when the woman is never captured by the camera - the face and the whole figure, but only the individual fragments of her body, especially those that have some connection with the product offered (Goffman, 1987).

In addition, Goffman (1987), in his analysis of gender advertising, explains that when a man and a woman are depicted together, the man usually occupies a larger proportion of space, this way expressing his implied superiority over her. It also gives examples of how a man ignores woman and leaves from her serve. Valdrova (2006, p. 84) adds that advertisements usually portray women as "anonymous, without individuality, names (...)," the opposite of usually unique and detailed portrayals of men, which can signify her rather decorative and complementary role. Renzetti and Curran (2003) agree that women are typically presented in advertisements being at home, where they promote cosmetic, hygienic, or cleaning products, while their men are busy at work. In the cases when women are shown at their workplace, they typically do a traditionally female job (for example nurse or assistant), often subordinate to men in higher positions.

### The central themes in the representation of men in advertising:

The men in advertising are often depicted as rational thinkers with a logical, almost emotionless approach to solving problems, the experts in their field, who usually advise their ignorant and often lost female counterparts about the advertised product.

In addition, men in advertising more often play influential roles with greater decision-making power, marked by ambition, passion, and confidence. (Valdrová, 2006). Other authors follow Valdrova's findings and argue that it is more likely to encounter a male voice in the background of women commercials since the viewers find male voice more trustworthy (Renzetti and Curran, 2003), which proves its perceived superiority and the men's ability to overcome every problem (Goffman, 1987) absent in female advertising narratives.

It is worth highlighting the rather interesting fact that the image depicting a man puts much lesser consumer demands (Renzetti and Curran, 2003). The man does not have to be attractive and young, but contrary to that, his older age speaks of his authority, elegance, and wisdom. Women, on the other hand, must be young, beautiful and slim, and after reaching a certain age limit, they are no longer interesting to the marketers (except for the promotion of age-related products).

Gender stereotypes are therefore a distorted and simplified idea of how to behave and look like as a typical woman and a typical man that are often outdated and based on irrelevant or biased experiences of one or the other sex. Unfortunately, the consumers of this illusion easily succumb and let them easily manipulate these ideas and hope for a perfect life, that is guaranteed by purchase of the promoted product, they will not resist and fall into the marketing trap. Marketers will do what is expected - attract the attention of the product and do not abandon the success of stereotypes - on the contrary, it deepens them further.

## **4 Practical part**

### **4.1 Research purpose**

The aim of this research is to identify and analyze the use of gender stereotypes in the advertisements of technical products, with a special emphasis on the current tendency of television persuasive communication. I will try to find out whether the advertisements today adopt and follow the general patterns of gender relations (Burton and Jiráček, 2003) or whether such stereotypes are in decline. In the end, I will draw on the results of my research to address the larger question-implication: Can we find an innovative approach for the representation of male and female gender roles in addition to our defined gender identities?

### **4.2 Methods used**

Shield (2002, cit. according to Pavlík, 2005) distinguishes two main currents in advertising analysis:

1. The tradition of content analysis, mainly used in the study of gender roles displayed in advertising.
2. Tradition of semiological analysis, exploring how the advertisements are designed importance. “In the interest of this tradition are questions of symbolism and significance; that is, what to us commercials say about our gender regime” (Shields, 2002, cit. according to Pavlík, 2005, p. 55).

In my work I will look at the meaning, obvious but mostly concealed, so I chose the branch of the second tradition – semiotic analysis. The use of semiological analysis opens up the possibility of revealing more of the sub-superficial significance of the text as a whole. Has the advantage that it is applicable to the “texts” that include more than one sign system, and the characters, for which there is no established no grammar nor dictionary, therefore on the visual display and sounds. Interconnection and relationships between the characters of the text are particularly important. It is necessary to recognise and understand the specific discourse in which the text is encrypted. The distinction between “communication” and “meaning” is important here as the physical text of the communication in printed, audio or video form we can directly examine and in this sense it is therefore “hard”, while the meanings into the texts inserted or perceived, are more or less ephemeral and volatile, are diverse and often ambiguous (McQuail, 2002). Here I see possible restrictions on the use of this method. The communication and its recipient may not share the same basic system of meanings, as well as

the feature will not mean exactly the same thing, in fact, in the content of the communication, for the audience or for me as a researcher.

### **4.3 Method of semiotic analysis**

Semiotic analysis is based on semiotics – the science of sign systems, which deals with every sign system that has language requirements. Semiology is related to labelling (assigning meaning by means of language).

Character: the basic physical bearer of meaning in language – a sound or image that we hear or we see, and which usually refers to some object or aspect of reality about which we wish to communicate – is called the referent. We use the phenomenon of human communication to communicate meanings about objects to others. They interpret the characters we use, by sharing the same language or by using our sign system (for example, non-verbal communication). According to Ferdinand de Saussure, Swiss linguist and semiotician, this process is carried out by means of two elements of the character. The physical element (word, picture, sound) was called identifying and used the term referred to for the mental concept developed by the physical character. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is determined by the rules of culture and people need to learn it.

Semiology is trying to uncover the nature of sign systems.

Denotation is described as the “first voucher of the character”, describes the relationship between the denotation and the denotation. They show characteristics of universality and objectivity.

The connotation refers to the second voucher of a character referring to an Associated meaning which may be “conjured” by the designated object. They contain different meanings according to the recipient’s culture, but also the evaluation element (McQuail, 2002).

Semiotic analysis therefore examines sign systems. They are trying to uncover both denotative and connotative meanings. However, greater attention is paid to the connotative meanings. Semiotic research was dealt with by Erving Goffman and Judith Williamson.

#### **4.3.1 Image, language, sound, analysis procedure**

##### **4.3.1.1 Image**

“In fact, there are more meanings in every painting than we have seen at first sight.” (Burton and Jiráček, 2003, p. 36)

Burton and Jiráček (2003) also present three elements that are important in image analysis:

1. **The perspective** to which the recipient of the communication is situated. The outlook offered automatically puts the Observer in some particular position to depict. That is how we interpret the picture. How the shot is taken, from the top view, the ceiling or directly. The point of view of advertisers.
2. **The means** used for the final form of the image used for its processing. It is about focusing, illumination, cutting and color.
3. The actual content of the painting, the objects whose representations are captured in the painting, their composition, and their use. Representation of characters, their compositions.

#### **4.3.1.2 Language**

When analysing the language page of advertisements, we focus mainly on text, intonation and the pace of speech.

We distinguish between spoken, written and sung. For each species, I shall specifically focus on intonation and the rate of speech.

Voice intonation, that is, a change of height and power of voice during spoken speech or singing speech. We focus mainly on height, strength and color of the voice. The height of the voice shows us whether it is a sentence of the notification, interrogative or imperative, whether the speech is finished or whether it will continue, the higher tones are associated with information which is to arouse excitement and interest, the deeper tones are used in the serious notices, requiring dignity. The strength of the voice along with the pace of speech can help us discern the urgency of the communication and changing the color of the voice catch attention (Buchtová, 2006).

The pace of speech, that is, the distribution of speech in time. We say things that we consider familiar and do not attach importance to them faster than the things that we want to emphasise. On the contrary, slow pace without sentence emphasis leads to monotony and disinterest of listeners.

#### **4.3.1.3 Sound**

When analyzing the sound page of the advertisement, we focus on the sound and music component. I include all sounds used to present the product in the audio folder – for example, sound when the car starts.

I will divide the musical component into primary and secondary:

1. The primary music I understand that kind of music, on which is built a considerable portion of the advertisement where is the music composed only for advertisement purpose and associated only with the promoted product.
2. By secondary music, I understand all the other music that is not primary. For example, music in the background that only serves to illustrate the atmosphere.

## 4.4 Personal analysis of advertisements

I place the advertisements analysed in alphabetical order. Both video advertisements and advertising posters will be presented. The videos will be available for viewing on the CD.

### 4.4.1 Audi



*Figure 1: The picture is from a promotional video for Audi*

Promotional video of a German automobile manufacturer Audi. This video was broadcast in China as advertising on television channels and also in the Internet. Video advertising lasts 30 seconds, the bride and bridegroom stand at the altar and want to marry, when they are suddenly interrupted by the bridegroom's mother. She ran towards her future daughter-in-law to examine her nose, ears and teeth to ensure she has not gone through any plastic surgery. Finally, the bridegroom's mother approves of the bride, and everyone looks relieved. Then the image of Audi's online platform for second-hand cars appears, and a voice-over says, "An important decision must be made carefully. Assured by official certificate."

The video went viral, as shocked users couldn't withhold their anger. As for me the bride was treated in a humiliating manner. More were angry about the analogy between women and used cars, which implied women are merely a product in a marriage and those who had plastic surgeries are fake or damaged goods. Some questioned if Audi applies double standards to the China market — such an ad is unimaginable in Europe. Here is a strong gender stereotype that characterizes a woman as some thing that has no voice.



As for the slogan that we see at the end of this video: “An important decision must be made carefully”. It is an imperative statement of advice for future car buyers. Here also used monosyllabic (be, must, made).

#### 4.4.2 BMW



*Figure 2: Promotional poster for BMW*

This is a printed promotional poster of the company BMW (*Bavarian Motor Works*). BMW is a German multinational company, which currently produces automobiles and motorcycles, and also produced aircraft engines until 1945.

*Key signifiers:* In this poster, an attractive white woman with blonde wavy hair, full lips and blue eyes is depicted. Her facial features are clearly flirtatious - her blue, open eyes establish a direct contact with the viewer (who is most likely a man), while her slightly open smile adds to the notion of flirt.

*Possible signifiers:* Looking at the photo, we can assume that the woman in the picture is naked.

*Connotations:* Signifiers work present a stereotypical image of a sexy woman. The advertiser shows here a strange comparison between a half-naked woman and a car.

*Naturalised meaning:* If we look away from the picture and pay attention to the slogan. “You know you’re not the first. But do you really care?”. Slogan is a declarative statement, here used monosyllabic words (first, do, know) and polysyllabic (care). There is a connection between the image and the slogan because of a direct comparison of not virgin girls / women with used cars.

At the first meeting, men are not interested in whether a woman has intimate relations with a man before she meet him or not. A man will get to know her first and only after he may be interested in intimacy issues. On the other hand, we can assume that the woman claims that this is not the first car from BMW that she acquired. When someone sees her car he or she will not be interested is it first BMW she has or not.

#### **4.4.3 Citroën**

This is a promotional video of Citroën, a French car company. This advertisement, like all of the advertisements discussed in this essay, has a strong representation of the female gender that attracts attention. It is not evident who the commercial is intended for, which is revolutionary for a car commercial.

In this advertisement, two women are the only characters. The static camera captures the car at the center of the screen. The two women are standing next to the car on the right. Another important element is the tag with the price of the car is placed on the left above the bonnet of the car, and its value is visibly decreasing. This is the most dynamic elements of the advertisement, which draws the attention of the viewer. The colors used in the commercial are not flashy; they are grayscale, which conveys the idea of luxury of the advertised product..

The plot of the advertisement is very simple, and is lopsided by gender stereotypes. The two women, dressed elegantly, open the trunk of the car and gradually pull out the shopping bags. As soon as the women took their bags out of the car, the price drops from the original 16,000 € to 9,900 €, which means that women had 6,100 € in their bags. Since the bags were neither large nor voluminous, we can assume that the women purchased

particularly luxurious and expensive items. Since the women carried the paper bags, the viewer can guess that their purchases were mainly pieces of clothing. This is a typical stereotype of women spending outrageous amounts of money on their purchases.

We can also identify the stereotype of the particular importance of women's beauty. The fact that women perform themselves in a car commercial - a disruption of the stereotype. However, the way the women are depicted in the advertisement suggests the use of stereotyping - two women come back from shopping, try on their clothes, they are consumers and maybe they have dependance on shopping.

#### 4.4.4 Daihatsu



*Figure 3: Promotional poster for Daihatsu*

This is a printed promotional poster of a Japanese car company Daihatsu, which is one of the oldest Japanese manufacturers of internal combustion engines, also known for its

smaller kei models (kei car is the category of Japanese highway-legal passenger cars) and off-road vehicles.

*Key signifiers:* The image of a large, white car is a key subject in the photo. We can see three side windows, through which five smiling and well-dressed women and a man, sitting on the driver's seat, can be seen. The man looks out of the window, winking to the audience and showing his thumb-up, as if approving something.

*Possible signifiers:* Under the picture shows a brief description of the car and its characteristics.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that men are very sexually active, wanting to get as many girls as they can. In the description below, we can see phrases such as “guaranteed staying power”, “when things get hot” and “little babe-magnet”. The phrases are also great in suggesting the sexual stereotype involved.

*Naturalised meaning:* Advertising is targeted on the male audience. It is important for men to make a good first impression on women, and very often, as men believe, this is possible with the availability of cash. At first glance, the car at hand is ordinary and inconspicuous, but in order to impress the typical buyer, the brand resorted to the comparison of this car with the luxurious one (Lamborghini), creating the feeling of a good and prestigious purchase. It seems that this ad does not consider the interest of women, as they are depicted as mere passengers, frivolous and giggling, attractive addition to the car lacking any important function or purpose. The woman only extras in this proposal, it is the opinion of the advertiser flippant and frivolous woman sitting in the car and giggle.

The slogan reads: “Picks up five times more women than a Lamborghini”. It is a declarative statement with a finite verb phrase that use monosyllabic (pick, than) and polysyllabic (five, more, women) words.

#### 4.4.5 Dodge



Figure 4: Promotional poster for Dodge

This is a printed promotional poster of Dodge, an American brand of automobile manufacturers by FCA US LLC (formerly known as Chrysler Group LLC).

*Key signifiers:* The poster has a vintage, color photo, which shows an attractive girl standing in front of the car. The girl is dressed in a white, lace dress, and there is a flirtatious look on her face. Under the photo, there is a short advertising description.

*Possible signifiers:* The woman in this advertisement is presented as a sexual object, which is a stereotype. A woman lifts her dress a little because of what we can expect advertisers to try to make her look sexy.

*Connotations:* The key signifiers in this poster connote the gender stereotype of women being attracted to men solely because of their material wealth; in this case, it is a Dodge car.

*Naturalised meaning:* As I mentioned above, the photo shows an attractive girl. In the description under the photo, there is a monologue of this girl, which is addressed to the man and which talks about the characteristics of the car. The description of the car as “long, low,



tough machine” clearly emphasizes the sexual motive of this advertisement. The slogan “Mother warned me ...” is a declarative statement with a finite verb phrase. Here also used monosyllabic word (warned) and personal pronoun “me” here used as well.

#### 4.4.6 General Electric



**WE'LL CHIP IN TO HELP BAIL MOM OUT**

**BUY AND TRY THIS GENERAL ELECTRIC PORTABLE DISHWASHER FOR 30 DAYS... KEEP IT AND GET \$25.00** (Models SP60V, SP50V Only)

Come now, fellows, don't you suffer pangs of conscience when you see the little lady swamped by a pile of dishes?

All right, before the feeling dies down, let's do something about it. Let's get Momma a General Electric Mobile Maid this Mother's Day. Give her 30 days to get used to her freedom. Then, when she refuses to part with it, go back to your General Electric dealer (see dealer listing and certificate on opposite page) and he will give you \$25.

No ordinary dishwasher Mobile Maid. We daresay it can outwash a mother. But never let on we said so.

Mobile Maid with Power Shower washes two ways—from the bottom up, from the top down. If it doesn't come off in

a Mobile Maid,\* it's part of the design of the dish. And Flashway Drain means no hand rinsing.

Mobile Maid is portable, so you don't have to rip your kitchen apart or pay costly installation charges.

Go then, you emancipators, to any of the General Electric dealers listed opposite. And take him up on his \$25 offer.

*Progress Is Our Most Important Product*

**GENERAL ELECTRIC**



Figure 5: Promotional poster for General Electric Company

This is a printed promotional poster of General Electric Company (GE). General Electric Company is an American multinational conglomerate incorporated in New York and headquartered in Boston. As of 2018, the company operates through the following segments:

aviation, healthcare, power, renewable energy, digital industry, additive manufacturing, venture capital and finance, lighting, and oil and gas.

*Key signifiers:* Color photo which shows a woman sitting in a boat in the middle of a huge number of dishes. The woman does not look very cheerful.

*Possible signifiers:* She looks tired most likely from the fact that washed all the dishes that are shown in the photo.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that women are housewife.

*Naturalised meaning:* As I mentioned above in the photo shows a woman who is tired of washing dishes. The advertiser picked up the perfect image of a woman sitting in a boat, because it seems to be doomed. Until she washes all these dishes she can not devote time to the cause that brings her pleasure. Also in the photo we see the slogan: “We’ll chip in to help bail mom out”. It is a declarative statement with a phrasal verbs “chip in” and “bail sb out”. Here were used monosyllabic words (help, bail, mom).

#### 4.4.7 Kenwood Limited

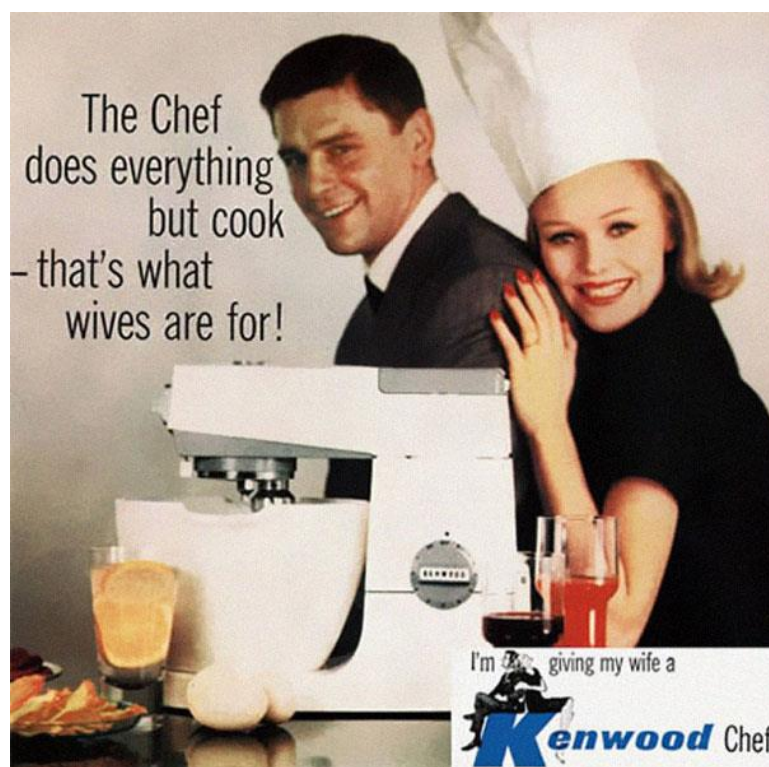


Figure 6: Promotional poster for Kenwood Limited

This is a printed promotional poster of a kitchen appliances manufacturer Kenwood Limited. Kenwood is a kitchen appliances manufacturer, operating in 44 countries. It is owned by the De'Longhi Group. Kenwood designs, produces and sells kitchen appliances including stand mixers, blenders, food processors, kettles and toasters.

*Key signifiers:* Large color picture, dominated by white, the key figures are a man, a woman and a food processor in the foreground. The man is dressed in a suit, most likely he is going to work. To his right is a woman - his wife. She looks nice and has a chef's hat on her head.

*Possible signifiers:* Women are made for the kitchen.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that women are housewives. In order for the wife to look happy, as on this poster, she needs only a food processor. A man, in turn, in a beautiful suit will go to work and will most likely sit in the office and earn money as a top manager or a boss, but wives are not paid for their work. As for the slogan: "The Chef does everything but cook – that's what wives are for!". It is a declarative statement with monosyllabic words (does, but, what, are) and polysyllabic one (everything).



#### 4.4.8 Mini



Figure 7: Promotional poster for Mini

This is a printed promotional poster of the Mini. The Mini is a small economy car produced by the English-based British Motor Corporation (BMC) and its successors from 1959 until 2000. The original is considered an icon of 1960s British popular culture.

*Key signifiers:* The photo shows a cute girl with a stupid face. The girl is well-dressed and has a lot of jewelry on her fingers. A woman with beautiful hair styling, makeup, in a chic

dress with a beautiful manicure. The woman is well-groomed and takes care of herself and how she looks without even losing details like jewelery.

*Possible signifiers:* In the description below the picture the phrase is used: “When you're driving fast you keep both hands at the wheel at the time ...”, “You can't grind into the wrong gear because you don't change gear”. It seems that the photo used by the advertiser clearly indicates for whom this advertisement is intended.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that women only think about their appearance and they are not interested in the properties of the car, the main thing is that she could take her to a beauty salon.

*Naturalised meaning:* As for the slogan: “The Mini Automatic. For simple driving.” It is a declarative statement with a finite verb phrase. Here were used polysyllabic words (simple, automatic).

#### 4.4.9 Panasonic



**Introducing the Flip 'N Style hair dryer. Even if you can't use it it's fun to have.**

Of course, it dries your hair. If you happen to think that hair is fashionable. But it's also a nice replacement for your teddy bear. It comes in three terrific colors to go with any bedspread. And it doesn't just sit around like your old teddy.

Because the Flip 'N Style™ flips for you. Open. And closed. So when you're through drying (your fingernails, if your hair hasn't grown in), slip it into its attractive case. Then slip it into your attractive purse. So if you run into a cloudburst or fall into a swimming pool, you're prepared.

The Flip 'N Style™ has what you need to style your hair. 350 watts of hot-air power. And a switch to turn on cool air when your hair is dry, but not completely styled.

So give your hair a chance. Let it have as much fun as the rest of you. With a Panasonic Flip 'N Style™.

**Panasonic.**  
just slightly ahead of our time.

200 Park Ave., N.Y. 10017. For your nearest Panasonic dealer, call toll free 800 243-6000. In Conn., 1-800 882-6500.



Figure 8: Promotional poster for Panasonic

This is a printed promotional poster of Panasonic Corporation. The brand is formerly known as Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. It is a Japanese multinational electronics corporation headquartered in Kadoma, Osaka, Japan.

*Key signifiers:* The photo shows a cheerful girl without hair holding a hair dryer brand Panasonic.

*Possible signifiers:* The girl depicted in the photo is bald. The concept of advertising is very strange because the girl can be sick and in consequence of prolonged treatment, she could go bald. But at the same time the advertiser draws attention to the product. You need this hair dryer even if you are bald because it looks very funny.



*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers do not connote here gender stereotype.

*Naturalised meaning:* As for the slogan: “Introducing the Flip’N Style hair dryer. Even if you can’t use it it’s fun to have.” It is a declarative statement. Here also were used monosyllabic words (can, use, fun).

#### 4.4.10 Samsung



*Figure 9: Promotional poster for Samsung*

This is a printed promotional poster of Samsung. Samsung is a South Korean multinational conglomerate headquartered in Samsung Town, Seoul.

*Key signifiers:* The photo shows three attractive women in towels. Two of them are sitting on the edge of the bath, and one woman stands with a vacuum cleaner and cleans the room.

*Possible signifiers:* The advertiser decided to portray the faces of the girls a pleasant smile that finds pleasure in what they do.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that women are housewife. And whatever they want to do, they're going to clean up anyway.

*Naturalised meaning:* Slogan in this advertisement is “Whatever you do, you clean your floor”. It is a declarative statement with a finite verb phrase. Here we also see monosyllabic (do, clean) and polysyllabic (whatever).

#### 4.4.11 Volkswagen 1



*Figure 10: Promotional poster for Volkswagen*

This is a printed promotional poster of Volkswagen shortened to VW. Volkswagen is a German automaker founded on 28 May 1937 by the German Labour Front, and headquartered in Wolfsburg. It is the flagship marque of the Volkswagen Group, the largest automaker by worldwide sales in 2016 and 2017. The group’s main market is in China, which delivers 40% of its sales and profits.

*Key signifiers:* Vintage black and white photo shows a Volkswagen car. On the right it is a little crushed and she has a broken headlight.

*Possible signifiers:* It can be assumed that the car after a collision with another car or with a stationary object.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that women break cars more often than men.

*Naturalised meaning:* Advertising does not affect any particular gender, but it is obviously intended for men. The tagline perfectly complements advertisement: “Sooner or later, your wife will drive home one of the best reasons for owning a Volkswagen”. It is a declarative statement with a finite verbal phrase. Will is used here to form Future Simple, to describe something that takes place in the future (crashing auto by your wife).

#### 4.4.12 Volkswagen 2



Figure 11: Promotional poster for Volkswagen

*Key signifiers:* The photo shows a woman trying to park her car. But she does it in an unusual way. In the photo, her steering wheel is located in the back of the car, thus it greatly simplifies the process of parking the car.

*Connotations:* The picture on the poster and the key signifiers connote the gender stereotype that man park cars better than women. Therefore, this auto is also intended for women because it has park distance control.

*Naturalised meaning:* As for the slogan in the photo, it sounds like this: “Parking made easy”. It is a declarative statement with a finite verbal phrase.

## **4.5 Results and comparison of analyses**

With the help of semantic analysis, I conducted an analysis of 10 printed and 2 video advertisements. The main focus was on the category of technical products like car, vacuum cleaner, dishwasher, food processor.

We compare the analysis according to the following key:

1. By gender they address
2. The most stereotypical advertisement
3. The least stereotypical advertisement

### **3.6.1 By gender they address**

From the sample analyzed, ten advertisements were intended for women – Audi, BMW, Citroën, Dodge, General Electric, Kenwood Limited, Mini, Panasonic, Samsung, Volkswagen

2. For all these advertisements, we can say that this is a stereotypical classification. Car categories, household electronics are represented here.

The advert, typically intended for men, appeared only twice –Volkswagen 1 and Daihatsu. Although is here represented the female element, advertising mainly addresses men.

### **3.6.2 The most stereotypical advertisement**

As the most stereotypical advertising, I rate advertisement on Audi. Other most stereotypical advertisements are General Electric and Mini.

### **3.6.3 The least stereotypical advertisement**

As the least stereotypical advertisement turned out advertising on Citroën. The only stereotype here was the light predominance of the female element (in the form of two women in the video).

## Conclusion

Media, including television, are a major part of the lives of today's consumers. Not only they are being influenced by this type of promotion to buy the product, they perceive what is encoded in the content of the message. Many advertisements are currently using stereotyping as it brings a certain simplification of the gender complexity in a traditional woman template - a sensitive mother in the home, a man - a fearless hero providing financial support.

The fact that these roles are in fact no longer valid has been proved by many studies - not all women today act as perfect and always tidy housewives, just as men are not heartless creatures that exist only to secure a family. The problem, as has already been suggested, is that it is relatively easy to influence the customer by advertising. It presents to him certain patterns of behavior and thinking that the consumer can later accept for himself, as the figure in the message represents an ideal and perfect pattern. Therefore, if a woman presents herself in a subordinate position, she can take this role by herself, and the man can also expect a woman to behave submissively. In a simple way, it can be said that advertising can easily convey images of life around us.

What is more, sexism, which is often connected with gender issues, especially feminine, puts a person in the role of a sexual object, even though the product promoted has a sexist depiction which has nothing in common with an object. Additionally, these advertisements generate dissatisfaction with their own body and can cause many problems in society.

The aim of this thesis was to analyze the issue of gender roles and stereotypes in advertising. In the practical part, with the help of semiotic analysis, I examined printed and video advertising. The main focus was on advertising cars, but I also analyzed the advertising of household products.

The result of the analysis was the finding that gender stereotypes are still strongly represented in advertising, but we also find innovative approaches to product or service presentation, especially for spots that are not intended for specific recipients - men or women. The most frequently observed gender stereotype was to emphasize the importance of female appearance. feminine laughter, which has also been frequently observed, is closely related to self-presentation, inevitably also to the first, most frequently observed gender stereotype. Another numerous element was the stereotypical inclusion of women in the domestic sphere.



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## **List of attachments**

Attachment 1 - CD with advertising commercials

## **Attachment 1 - CD with advertising commercials**

CD playlist

1. Audi
2. Citroën