

**Representation of Women Empowerment
in Arab TV Commercials: A Multimodal
Discourse Analysis**

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Abstract

Representation of gender has a long history of stereotyped portrayal where the female gender is traditionally confined to a limited set of gender roles and is often excluded from the male world. Meanwhile, as female roles have changed worldwide, women representation is similarly evolving towards a more positive one. As far as the Middle East is concerned, the gender-inclusion policies are also applied where Arab women are included as equally powerful members in the society. Hence, it is important to trace this new trend of positive Arab female representation in the media. Since the genre of TV commercials is a significant source of popular culture, this study aims at investigating the features of feminist advertising in Arab television commercials. The researcher applies Kress and van Leeuwen's approach of Multimodality on the visual elements in the selected commercials. The study concludes that women empowerment has become a significant trend in Arab commercials as increasing numbers of females are recently portrayed in powerful positions. Advertisers employ several techniques to depict the phenomenon of women empowerment. The three metafunctions of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model of Visual Grammar reveal the role of each technique and how they all collaborate to deliver a comprehensive message to the viewers.

Keywords: social change, positive female portrayal, TV commercials, multimodality.

المستخلص

اتسم تمثيل النوع الاجتماعي في الاعلام العربي بتاريخ طويل من النمطية لأدوار النساء والرجال على حد سواء. في هذا الإطار ركزت أغلبية الدراسات السابقة على التمثيل النمطي للمرأة كسلعة أو أداة للإغراء أو ربة منزل تقتصر كل اهتماماتها فقط على الجمال الخارجي أو شؤون البيت. ولكن مع الاتجاهات العصرية التي تهدف الى تمكين المرأة في مختلف المجالات، تطورت اساليب تمثيل المرأة في الإعلام نحو تمثيل أكثر إيجابية ومساواة بين الجنسين حيث تستطيع المرأة الخروج عن الدور المألوف الذي رسمه لها المجتمع. ويقوم الإعلام العربي بدور ملحوظ في هذا الاتجاه. لذلك يهدف الباحث من خلال هذه الدراسة الى رصد التغيير في طريقة تمثيل هوية المرأة العربية في إعلانات التلفزيون بما لها من تأثير كبير على ثقافة وقيم المجتمع من خلال توجيه رسائل تؤثر ضمنا على سلوك وتفكير المشاهد. ولهذا يستخدم الباحث منهج تحليل الخطاب متعدد الوسائط، من خلال تطبيق نظرية كريس وفان لوفين لتحليل الأدوات البصرية، على عدد من الإعلانات التي ينطبق عليها المعايير التي اختارها الباحث للدراسة. وأخيرا تساهم الدراسة في الكشف عن أهم الوسائل التي تستخدمها وكالات الإعلان العربية في التمثيل الحديث للمرأة بما يتماشى مع اتجاهات تمكين المرأة العربية وتطوير دورها الاجتماعي كمواطن أكثر إيجابية وتفاعل مع المجتمع الخارجي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التطور المجتمعي، التمثيل الإيجابي للمرأة العربية، إعلانات التلفزيون، التحليل متعدد الوسائط.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the study

The relation between media, society and culture is one of the most intricate dynamics in the contemporary world where media are a powerful site for the production and circulation of ideas. In this respect, Fairclough (1995) describes the role of media as a reflection of sociocultural change. This means that media practices are changing along with the continuous change in society and culture. Hence, as female roles have changed

worldwide, especially in the light of the current fourth wave of Feminism, portrayals of females in the media have similarly changed. Concerning the Arab culture, the societal and political transformations taking place across the Middle East region have played an instrumental role in challenging stereotypes about Arab women as oppressed and subservient. In this respect, the Arab Social Media Report (2011) points out the role of the social media in serving Arab women's empowerment, especially in the MENA (Middle East North Africa) region where women have launched several campaigns calling for substantive gender equality. All these transformations have their reflection on the media. As a result, Arab women representation is evolving towards a more positive one by presenting the real status and role of women along with the evolution of gender roles in the Arab society.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

The aim of the present study is to trace the impact of the contemporary fourth wave of Feminism on gender representation in the Arab media by focusing on the genre of commercials. Although the portrayals of females exercising power in the Arab TV commercials have been increasing, few studies have paid attention to such portrayals. Most of the previous studies on gender roles in commercials have focused on the stereotypical portrayals of females as decorative sexual objects, non-career oriented, inferior to males, and mainly associated with domestic products. Furthermore, most of these studies have used either content analysis methods or quantitative surveys for the investigation of gender roles. Few studies have examined the

representation of women in TV commercials from a linguistic approach. In this respect, the current study contributes to filling the previously mentioned gaps. First, it explores the features of the evolution in Arab gender representation through the campaigns recently launched by several advertising agencies in the Middle East. Therefore, the materials presented in the study are recent and have not been examined before. Furthermore, the materials selected are approached from a linguistic perspective by analyzing the synthesis of the visual techniques employed into an integrative message conveyed to the viewer.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How far do the visual elements contribute to showing the positive portrayal of women in the selected commercials?
 - a. How can the Representational meta-function reveal the new social roles of Arab women?
 - b. How can the Interactive semiotic resources reveal the types of relationships between the female represented participants and the viewers?
 - c. How can the Compositional layout of the shots including both genders reveal the new identity of Arab women?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study of the relation between gender and media represents a rich domain for interdisciplinary academic research. This study extends the body of research investigating the change in gender representation as a new trend especially in the Arab culture. First, it sheds light on the importance of advertising and

the power of TV commercials, in particular, due to their outstanding impact on the beliefs and behaviors of the viewers as well as the cultural and moral standards of the society. In addition, it highlights the influential role of commercials in shaping people's perceptions. Second, the study provides an in-depth analysis of visual female portrayal in contemporary TV commercials, which would help uncover the hidden messages conveyed about the Arab female identity. Therefore, the findings of the study can be beneficial for future researchers interested in the area of gender representation. They can also guide the viewers to better understand the meanings created and the gender roles constructed inside the commercials. Furthermore, the study can be a useful guide for professionals in the field of advertising to present more positive gender portrayals that mirror reality.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Discourse of Advertising

Both Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (1995) highlight the role of media as a powerful ideological apparatus, through the different ways of representing the world and representing realities. Here, van Dijk (1995) talks about the symbolic power of media discourse in the sense that it can do ideological, social and cultural changes through mind control. Among the different genres of media discourse, advertisements represent a particularly important domain of study as complex cultural artifacts which can serve ideological agendas. Williamson (1978) highlights the importance of advertisements, in general, stating that they play a significant cultural role in reflecting as well as shaping people's life. On the one hand, they are the mirror that reflects the cultures of different

countries; on the other hand, the embedded message also affects the society's socio-cultural values. In this regard, Williamson (1978) notes that advertisements carry both overt and covert messages which can perpetuate certain ideas and beliefs. Similarly, McQuarrie and Mick (1999) argue that visual and verbal messages in advertisements constitute culturally embedded forms or signs that combine in a specific manner to communicate specific meanings. In this respect, advertising is considered a powerful means of conveying values and behavioral patterns.

When referring to the genre of commercials in specific, Fairclough (1995) describes it as an archetype of the capabilities of the television medium as a dominant cultural form. Here, Fairclough's opinion of TV commercials is in agreement with that of Ellis (1982, p.118) who describes TV as "a profoundly domestic phenomenon" where commercials, in specific, are the quintessence of the television experience, representing "the shiny surface wrapping of a domestically oriented consumerist society". In the light of Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, Chan and Cheng (2012) argue that television commercials are capable of influencing or shaping viewers' perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, these commercials are an important socializing agent in the modern society as viewers may acquire certain social values by observation and imitation. For example, some of these values relate to gender roles as viewers observe members of their own sex and copy their behavior.

2.2 Stereotyping Gender Roles in Advertising

Akestam (2017) defines a stereotype as a cognitive structure that forms beliefs and attitudes towards a group of people. Meanwhile, stereotypes are often correlated with negative associations rather than positive ones. Akestam (2017) further suggests that some stereotypes that appear in advertisements tend to reinforce the stigma that exists in society in general. In this respect, one of the most common stereotypes in advertising is the portrayal of gender, specifically women. Abdelmogeth and Mossad (2018) define gender stereotypes as overgeneralization of characteristics, differences and attributes of a certain group based on their gender. Gender stereotypes are widely accepted judgments or biases about certain characteristics or traits that apply to each gender. With these stereotypes, children regularly learn to adopt gender roles which are not always fair to both sexes. If a man or a woman act differently from how their gender is assumed to behave, they are misjudged.

According to Baran, Davis and Striby (2014), the media continue to present both women and men in stereotyped ways that limit peoples' perceptions of human possibilities. Therefore, media, reinforce long-standing cultural ideals of masculinity where men are presented as tough, independent, unafraid, and totally in control of all emotions. Meanwhile, media's images of women also reflect cultural stereotypes that depart markedly from reality where girls and women are dramatically underrepresented as being housewives, inferior to men, and fond of beauty products. According to Desmond (2005) and Suggett (2009), one of the negative effects of advertisements in any society is the

embodiment of stereotyped images of men and women where ads' producers portray gender stereotypes in their advertisements according to the culture they are presenting their ad within. In this regard, Baran et al (2014) argue that the constrained and disparaging representation of females in the media show that they are sub-par compared to men.

Chin (1995) posits that advertising supports four cultural stereotypes. First, a woman's place is in the home. Second, women do not make important decisions or do important things. Third, women are dependent and need men's protection. Finally, men regard women primarily as sexual objects. That is why women are portrayed as unemployed, as low-income earners, in decorative roles and idle situations, and as having limited purchasing power. Chan and Cheng (2012) confirm that these gender stereotypes have not changed as even recent gender representation in media is still characterized by the following patterns. Males are frequently shown as the authoritative central figures whereas females are confined to dependent roles. Females are more often portrayed at home while males are more often portrayed in outdoor settings. Finally, males are shown selling automobiles and sports products while females are always related with home and personal care products. Pandey, Garg, Kataria and Dhasmana (2016) similarly aver that the comparison between past advertisements with more recent ones suggests that some of the prevalent stereotypes about gender roles have remained the same. Therefore, these ideas are still deeply rooted and hinder people's behavioral changes.

2.3 Feminist Advertising

According to Merriam Webster (n.d., p.2/14), Feminism is defined as "the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities ". Along with the digital revolution, Feminism is becoming modern again, and the internet is now used by feminists for both discussions and activism. Hence, there is a general agreement among linguists that a fourth wave of Feminism has been firmly established and the question of gender equality has begun to spread through different social media platforms. According to Phillips and Cree (2014), the fourth wave is the most swiftly moving wave of Feminism since 2008, which is the era of online social media, mainly focusing on global social justice. Similarly, Leupold (2010) and Solomon (2009) agree that the existence of a feminist ‘fourth wave’ is associated with Online Feminism as the number of women using digital spaces is increasing. Hence, social media is considered the birthplace of the fourth wave Feminism by opening up significant spaces for feminist debates and resistance. Both Baumgardner (2011) and Kowalska (2018) agree that the starting point of this wave is 2008 with the popularization of social media. The main activists of the fourth wave are the late Millennials and Generation-Z: a new generation of “digital natives” who have grown up with the Internet and are strongly shaped by social media.

In this sense, a new trend about gender portrayal has emerged in advertising to mirror what is happening in the real world. According to Zeisler (2016), the current wave influences feminist marketing and pop culture. Similarly, Kowalska (2018) notes that since this generation of feminists regard feminism as

part of their identity, corporations are using new and different techniques to market their products accordingly. These corporations know that women will not buy products that do not represent them or match with their political views. Therefore, these corporations use the cause-branding technique by branding the cause of Feminism in order to attract and engage the feminist consumers. According to Syaharani (2021), the Cause-Related Marketing strategy is used to achieve consumer-campaign identification by creating a sense of emotional connection and proximity between the consumer and the company or brand. Such identification leads to more positive attitudes towards the product advertised for.

Therefore, in response to rising concerns regarding the misrepresentation of gender, especially in advertising, and the discrepancy between the depictions of women and the way many women view themselves, a new form of female-centric advertising has emerged. This movement is called “Femvertising”: a movement in advertising that empowers women and adequately represents them. The term “Femvertising” was officially coined by Samantha Skey, defining it as “advertising that employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women and girls” (She Knows, 2014). Femvertising is a confirmation of the Social Role Theory by Diekmann and Eagly (2002), showing that gender stereotypes and depictions of women change with society as it evolves.

Similarly, the fourth wave of Feminism is reflected on the Arab world where contemporary Arab women's activism against patriarchy can be seen through different campaigns on the social

media demanding social change and reform. In this regard, social media is considered an important tool for women's empowerment in the Arab region. According to Basch-Harod (2019), the online viral #MeToo campaign stormed the MENA region in October 2017, calling for political, civil and economic rights for women. After #MeToo, several social media campaigns in the MENA region are launched to challenge the societal values which prevent women from talking about their rights without fear and to call for a cultural shift toward substantive gender equality. For instance, some of these campaigns include, as Egypt Today (2020) notes, #InternationalWomensDay, #SheInspiresMe and #EveryWoman. These hashtags are mainly to celebrate the achievements of women in the region. According to EHDR (2010), the issue of woman's empowerment has been dealt with as a priority during the past decade through institutional arrangements and legislative changes. Accordingly, the aim of the current study is to examine how far the trend of Femvertising is traceable in the Arab media.

3. Methodology

3.1 Description of Data

The trend of feminist advertising can be noticed in several campaigns recently launched by several advertising agencies in the Middle East. These campaigns which use the cause-branding strategy, branding for the cause of Feminism, are the focus of the present study. The data selected cover a wide variety of products to provide an exhaustive analysis of the representation of gender roles in different situations. Hence, the data of the study are derived from campaigns of various advertisers including manufacturers of consumer goods, financial organizations, and

even the government itself. Some commercials target only the female audience while others target a general audience of both genders. The commercials that advertise for female products are five including the campaigns of Always, Sunsilk, Gillette Venus and Eva in addition to the governmental campaign of Women's Health Initiative. The commercials that advertise for products for both female and male consumers are five including the campaigns of Colgate, Nike and Panadol as well as campaigns that advertise for institutions like Bank Misr and Misr Insurance Company. The ten commercials are downloaded from the YouTube website. Wondershare Filmora 9 software program is used to divide each commercial into key frames in order to facilitate the process of analysis. The following table provides full illustration for the data of the study describing the main plot of each and the number of shots chosen for analysis.

Table 1*Description of Data*

Commercial	Main plot	No. of shots analyzed
Sunsilk	It calls upon the audience to rethink of females in a different way by presenting different women doing uncommon outdoor activities.	14
Always	It presents different situations that reflect the bravery of girls.	7

Eva	It is a thank-you message to female doctors for their significant contributions in the medical sector.	11
Gillette Venus	It stresses on women's physical fitness by displaying them doing various muscular sports.	7
Women's Health Initiative	It focuses on women's capability of maintaining balance between family life and career success.	15
Colgate	It displays different stories for participants who manage to get over the challenges they face.	7
Nike	It shows how Arab women challenge the societal norms by doing various athletic activities.	14
Panadol Extra	It narrates the story of a group of Arab female cyclists in Saudi Arabia.	4
Bank Misr	It displays different scenes about people of both genders facing and overcoming obstacles.	11
Misr Insurance	It highlights the importance of pursuing ambition even by breaking the societal stereotypes.	9

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) note that the twentieth century has witnessed a strong tendency to move out of the

dominance of monomodality after realizing that meaning can be communicated through other semiotic modes other than language. Hence, multimodality becomes the spirit of the age where semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of representation and communication. Kress (2010) argues that multimodality has become particularly significant due to the importance of the visual mode in contemporary communication. Hence, in an increasingly visual age, the contribution of imagistic signs, particularly in the context of audio-visual media like advertising, becomes an important concern of Semiotics. According to Machin and Myer (2012), visual communication plays its part in shaping a society's ideology and also maintaining, creating and legitimizing certain kinds of social practices. In this sense, Social Semiotics becomes concerned with how certain visual features are used to communicate wider ideas, values, attitudes and identities.

Such importance of multimodal semiotics has inspired the desire to develop a theoretical framework applicable to all semiotic modes. Believing that some of the principles of Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory can be equally applied to visual communication, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) have built on Halliday's framework and extended it to account for other semiotic modes as well. They call their framework "Systemic-Functional Grammar of Visual Design" or "Visual Grammar". According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.2), Visual Grammar describes how depicted elements combine in visual structures that "point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction". According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), visual

design fulfils three major functions. Here, they draw upon Halliday’s approach by adopting the theoretical notion of "Metafunctions" but with using different terminology. While Halliday distinguish between Ideational, Interpersonal and Intertextual functions, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) distinguish between Representational, Interactive and Compositional functions. Below is an illustration for Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model.

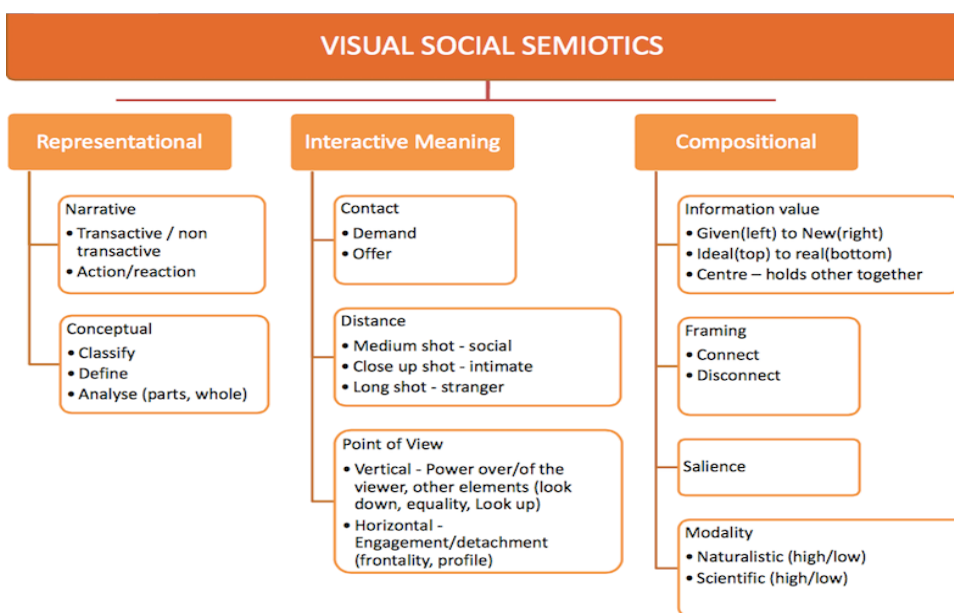


Figure 1: Visual Social Semiotics (adapted from Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the first meta-function is the Representational which refers to the different aspects of the world as experienced by humans. It includes both the Narrative and Conceptual structures. The Narrative representation relates to the dynamic processes of narration in

terms of doings, happenings or processes of change. Meanwhile, the Conceptual representation represents the participants in terms of their general, stable and timeless essences. It refers to the static structures like Classifications, Analyses and Symbolisms.

The second meta-function is the Interactive which is concerned with the interaction between both represented and interactive participants. It describes the relation between them in regard to the elements of Contact, Social Distance and Angle. The eye-contact maintained with the viewer decides whether the image is a Demand or Offer; the former establishes a relation of involvement where the latter detaches the viewer by looking impersonally at the participants as specimens for display or objects for their dispassionate scrutiny. Similarly, the Frame Size of the shot decides the kind of relation with the viewer; the closer the shot, the more intimate the relation is whereas a long shot makes the participants appear as strangers or types rather than individuals. Concerning the Angling technique, it works horizontally as well as vertically. Horizontally, different degrees of involvement or detachment depend on whether the angle is Frontal, Oblique or Back. Vertically, a symbolic power-inferiority relation depends on whether the angle is High, Low or Eye-level.

The third meta-function is the Compositional which looks at the overall layout where all the elements combine together into a whole construction. It is the overarching dimension that works through three interrelated systems. First, the Information Value looks at the placement of the participants in the image. The Left-Right placement suggests the Given-New structure; the Top-Bottom placement suggest the Ideal-Real structure; the Central-

Marginal placement suggests Important-Subservient structure. Second, through the element of Framing, participants are represented as either connected (stressing group identity) or separated (stressing individuality and communication gap). Third, the element of Saliency can create a hierarchy of importance where certain elements are selected as more significant and worthy of attention. Maximum saliency can be created through different resources like size, color contrasts, sharpness of focus and position.

4. Analysis

This section presents the analysis of the visual elements in the selected TV commercials by applying Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996/2006) model of Visual Grammar. In this respect, the selected commercials are analyzed horizontally, rather than vertically, to avoid redundancy in the visual interpretation of similar shots. Thus, the shots that display similar features, from different commercials, are presented together followed by the interpretation.

4.1 Representational Function

This section presents the Representational meta-function in the selected commercials by showing the types of experiences that the represented female participants go through. The analysis shows that the positive gender representation is represented both Narratively and Conceptually.

4.1.1 Narrative Representation

The Narrative Processes reflect the new social roles associated with the female participants. First, the most common

kind of Narrative in the selected commercials of the study is playing different types of sports that used to be considered masculine and played only by males. These sports present women with certain traits that used to be attributed to men, like physical strength, muscular fitness and even aggression. The first type of these sports appears in the shots below: Figure 2 – Figure 6.



Figure 2: Sunsilks (2020)



Figure 3: Always (2020)



Figure 4: Colgate (2020)



Figure 5: Nike (2020)



Figure 6: Bank Misr (2021)

In the shots above, taken from different commercials for various products, the female participants are presented as playing football – a sport that is commonly known as a male sport, especially in the Arab communities. In most of these shots, the women are both Actors and Reacters, with two types of vectors:

their eye-line directed at the ball, in the act of looking, and their feet, in the act of shooting it, and so the ball is both Goal and Phenomenon. From the setting and the other participants, in the background, it appears that the location is either in a stadium or a playground, and the event itself is a football match. Most importantly, in Figure 3 (Always, 2020), both boys and girls are playing the match together as two separate teams where the main actor in the shot is the girl shooting the ball (the Goal) with her foot (the Vector). Hence, girls here are depicted as physically capable as the male gender and can even be more competent.

The second most common type of sports practiced by Arab females appears in the shots below: Figure 7 – Figure 13.



Figure 7: Always (2020)



Figure 8: Gillette Venus (2020)



Figure 9: Gillette Venus (2020)



Figure 10: Gillette Venus (2020)



Figure 11: Misr Insurance (2020)



Figure 12: Nike (2020)



Figure 13: Nike (2020)



Figure 14: Nike (2020)

The above shots picture different females playing various aggressive sports like kickboxing, martial arts, weightlifting and fencing. Kickboxing in particular is the second most common sports recently associated with the female gender in a variety of commercials. Associating the female gender with these muscular sports is particularly quiet untraditional since they require special muscular potentials commonly associated with the male world and so used to be part of the male gender representation. In some shots, the Action is non-transactional with no specific Goal. This appears in Figure 7 (Always, 2020), as the participant is directing her fist at the viewers. Similarly, a non-transactional Action-Reaction process appears in Figure 9 (Gillette Venus, 2020) and Figure 12 (Nike, 2020) where each participant is directing both her arm and eye-gaze at an unknown entity. In other shots, the Action is Transactional. This appears in Figure 8 (Gillette Venus, 2020) and Figure 11 (Nike, 2020), where the Goal is a punch bag that each female is kicking, as well as Figure 10 (Gillette Venus, 2020) where the Goal is the barbell that the participant is lifting. In other shots, the Action – Reaction processes are Bidirectional. This appears in Figures 13 and 14 (Nike, 2020) where both female participants are directing two Vectors at one another simultaneously. The first Vector is the eye-gaze exchanged between them as both Reacters and Phenomena. The second Vector is their fists, in Figure 13, and swords, in Figure 14, that they direct at each other. Most significantly, the two shots from Nike and Misr Insurance commercials (Figures 12 & 13), the female Actors are presented as training under the water, which reflects women's high capability of endurance as similar to men.

The third type of sports recently associated with Arab female participants is displayed in the shots below: Figure 15 – Figure 18.



Figure 15: Nike (2020)



Figure 16: Nike (2020)



Figure 17: Women's Health Initiative (2021)



Figure 18: Bank Misr (2021)

The shots above present the third example for sports practiced by Arab women as part of the new portrayal of the unsterotypical female gender roles, which is the sport of running, especially when practiced in the streets. This reflects both dimensions of women empowerment simultaneously: the physical dimension, as being fit and strong, and the moral dimension as challenging and breaking the common norms and traditions of the Arab society and not caring about being looked at or criticized. The first two shots in Figures 15 and 16 (Nike, 2020) reflect not only physical fitness but also courage by doing an exotic activity as jumping from one roof to another. Her stretched arm directed forwards, acts as a Vector in a non-transactional Action. The ability to challenge oneself as well as the society appears again in

Figure 18 (Bank Misr, 2020) where the female participant appears as racing with male competitors. Here, the only Actor is the female participant whose body is the Vector that breaks the finishing line (Goal). By winning the race, she is depicted as the main participant initiating the Action where the other male participants appear as Circumstances in the background.

Another sport practiced by represented Arab females appears in the shots below: Figure 19 – Figure 21.



Figure 19: SunsilK (2020)



Figure 20: Nike (2020)



Figure 21 Misr Insurance (2021)

The three shots above depict Arab females playing the sport of skate rolling. Figure 19 (SunsilK, 2020) is a bidirectional transactional Action-Reaction process as both female participants hold one another's arm while looking at each other. Most importantly, practicing this sport in the streets in front of males passing by reflects women's daring and courageous attitude, and so it is considered a challenge to the old Arab traditions common

in most Arab societies. Hence, it also reflects a kind of strength inside women who are determined to break old rules and customs. This appears in Figures 20 (Nike, 2020) and 21 (Misr Insurance, 2021) where the female participant, in each shot, is looking ahead of her in a non-transactional Reaction process. A similar kind of sport appears in the two shots below: Figure 22 – Figure 23.



Figure 22: Bank Misr (2021)



Figure 23: Panadol Extra (2019)

Both shots above present Arab female practicing the sport of riding bicycles. Figure 22 (Bank Misr, 2021) includes two Transactional Actions for the mother holding the bicycle and the little girl holding on to the rope attached to that bicycle to do skate rolling. It also includes a Bidirectional Reaction process through the exchangeable eye look between these two participants doing both sports of riding bicycles and skate rolling in the streets. The idea of breaking the norms of the society is strongly presented in Figure 23 where a group of Arab women are riding bicycles together. The analysis of their Possessive Attributes, like their black gowns and helmets together, reveals the idea of challenging the traditions of a very strict society as the Gulf region, where their symmetric Classification shows that this is a collective attitude among Arab women.

Finally, the last type of sport associated with Arab female in TV commercials is presented in the two shots below: Figure 24 – Figure 25.



Figure 24: Nike (2020)



Figure 25: Sunsilk (2020)

The two shots above, Figure 24 (Nike, 2020) and Figure 25 (Sunsilk, 2020), present Arab women, as Actors, doing the sports of horse riding in the deserts. Both shots contain a non-transactional Reaction as well as each participant is looking ahead of her.

The second kind of Narrative presents females doing some exotic actions and daring adventures that require courage. Such representation adds a significant dimension to the way Arab females experience the outer world by stressing more their inner strength and capability of experiencing any adventures, getting through any hardships and overcoming any obstacles, no matter how tough they are. Such Narrative representation, which also targets the Arab women's desire and ability to challenge and change the stereotypical perspective about the female gender, appears in the different shots below (Figure 26 – Figure 31).



Figure 26: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 27: Bank Misr (2021)

Riding motor cycles is one of the activities that many women practice nowadays and so can be seen as part of the female representation in different commercials as in the shots above (Figures 26 & 27). The scene of an Arab woman riding a motor cycle is generally an uncommon act in the Arab society which is used to criticizing women's exotic behavior. Each shot contains a transactional Action, where the female is the Actor holding on to the motorcycle (the Goal). Yet, in both, the Reaction process is non-transactional where their eye-look is directed at the road ahead of them. Most significantly, the shot in Figure 27 (Bank Misr, 2021) portrays such an activity as a job done by the female participant who appears to be a delivery person. Working such a job is quiet uncommon in the Arab society. The message delivered here is that women are no longer shy or intimidated by either societal criticisms or probable threats.



Figure 28: Sunsilk (2020)

Most importantly, the above shot in Figure 28 (Sunsilk, 2020) reflects much courage by presenting a woman doing a more dangerous activity as driving airplanes. It presents a transactional Action where the plane is the Goal as well as a transactional Reaction process where the sky is the Phenomenon as the female participant is only looking ahead of her. This is another example that reflects a kind of strength inside women who are determined to break old rules and customs.

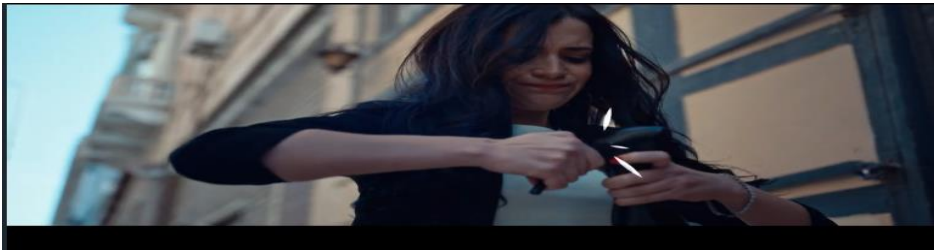


Figure 29: Bank Misr (2021)

The shot above in Figure 29 (Bank Misr, 2021) reflects another important dimension in the new Arab female identity as independent and capable of handling challenges of any kind on their own. It presents a woman as Actor and Reactor looking at and breaking her shoe heel (Goal and Phenomenon) to be able to move on and walk comfortably. This contradicts the traditional view about women's keenness on their outside appearance as first and foremost. This broken heel can also be a symbol for the too many obstacles that working women face every day and which they can overcome even at the expense of their outlooks. Here, the act of breaking it symbolizes their determination to achieve success even at the expense of their outside appearance.

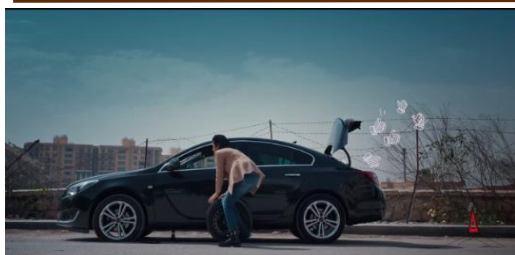


Figure 30: Bank Misr (2021)



Figure 31: Bank Misr (2021)

The two subsequent shots in Figures 30 and 31 (Bank Misr, 2021) picture a woman as capable of changing the car wheels by herself in the street. Again, in a Reaction-Action process, she is both a Reacter, looking at the wheel (the phenomenon) and an Actor, holding, dragging and fixing that wheel (the Goal) with her hands (the vector). Here, the extra photo shop arms given to her, in Figure 31, symbolize women's inner strength and the too many potentials they have.

In the third kind of Narrative representation, another unsterotypical role is attributed to the Arab women, where Arab females are presented at work place as professional women with successful careers. This Narrative also empowers the Arab woman's identity but in a different way by envisaging her as a career woman. This is different from the traditional way of being presented in a domestic setting as just housewives indulged in house chores. The different careers held by Arab women are presented in the shots below: Figure 32 – Figure 44.



Figure 32: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 33: Always (2020)



Figure 34: Eva (2021)



Figure 35: Eva (2021)



Figure 36: Eva (2021)



Figure 37: Women's Health Initiative (2021)

The first kind of job largely associated with Arab women in the new trend of feminist advertising is the medical field. The shots above from different commercials (Figures 32 – 37) depict different female participants as either nurses, doctors, laboratory physicians or surgeons. In this regard, the setting, apparently in a hospital, and the outfits of the participants clarify their identities. In order to present the different categories of the medical field, the Narrative representation presents women doing different tasks. For example, the transactional Action and non-transactional Reaction processes in Figure 32 (Sunsilk, 2020) present two females as both a doctor and a nurse pushing the patient on a transfer trolley and looking ahead of them in a hurry to save the

patient. In Figure 33 (Always, 2020), the non-transactional Action-Reaction process presents a group of female and male nurses led by a female doctor running in the hospital corridor. This shot, in particular, has an important significance that females can take the lead. The bidirectional Reaction-Action process in Figure 34 (Eva, 2021) presents the female participant (Reacter and Actor) as a physician looking at and examining a patient (Phenomenon and Goal). Similarly, the Reaction-Action processes in Figures 35 and 36 (Eva, 2021) present the female participants (Reacters and Actors) as laboratory physicians working on different machines: a microscope and a monitor respectively (Phenomena and Goals). Most significantly, the Action-Reaction processes in Figure 37 (Women's Health Initiative, 2021) present the female participant as the main surgeon performing a surgery with a group of male and female assistants. Working as a surgeon is not one of the common jobs for females, especially in the Arab culture where competence and efficiency are usually considered male attributes.

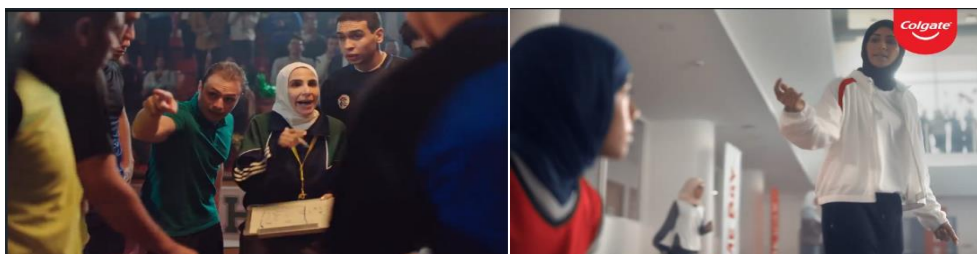


Figure 38: Women's Health Initiative (2021) Figure 39: Colgate (2020)

Another job recently attributed to women as part of the new portrayal of gender roles in the Arab society is the job of team coaching. This appears in the two shots above (Figures 38 & 39) depicting the female participant in each as a team coach. In Figure 39 (Colgate, 2020), the main participant, initiating the Reaction

process, appears as a female coach for a female futsal team where her eye gaze is directed at another female player. Most importantly, the shot in Figure 38 (Women's Health Initiative, 2021) presents the main participant, initiating the Action and Reaction processes, as a female coach for a male team. Her left hand, the first vector holding the plan of the match, and her right hand, the second vector directed at the team players, present her as the main Actor in this shot. Also, the bidirectional Reaction exchanged between her and the male players present her as the most important participant placed in the center of the shot where everyone else is looking at her and listening to her instructions attentively. These two shots picture the Arab woman in an unsterotypical image by attributing to her unsterotypical roles parallel to the male roles. These roles envisage the Arab woman as physically and morally powerful with all the physical potentials and decision-making skills that used to be associated with the male gender.



Figure 40: Colgate (2020)

The shot above in Figure 40 (Colgate, 2020) presents an Arab female in an extraordinary career where the setting helps explain the location of the shot which appears to be taken inside a corporate. The bidirectional Reaction process is exchanged between the female participant at the head of the table, which

presents her as the chairperson of the meeting, and the male attendees. Being depicted as a leader reflects the Arab woman's inner strength and capability of taking important decisions. This also empowers the Arab woman's identity by envisaging her as a thriving career woman. Being depicted as a leader reflects the Arab woman's inner strength and capability of taking important decisions.

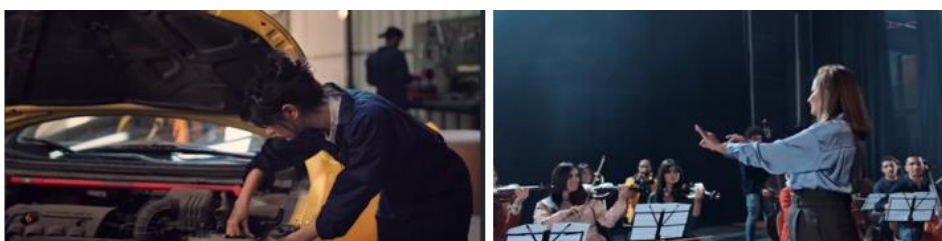


Figure 41: Women's Health Initiative (2021) Figure 42: Women's Health Initiative (2021)

Another more extraordinary portrayal for Arab women appears in the shots above. In Figure 41 (Women's Health Initiative, 2021), the female participant is presented as a car mechanic where holding the fixing tools and fixing the car (Goal and Phenomenon) of her transactional Action-Reaction processes. As a job commonly known as a male one, such portrayal largely contributes to the new trend of breaking gender stereotypes, especially that the man in this shot is represented in the background as Circumstance. The same message of presenting the unorthodox gender roles is reconfirmed in the other shot from the same commercial (Figure 42) depicting the female participant as an orchestra leader. In this shot, her hands and eye-look, directed

at the orchestra musicians, depict her as both Actor and Reacter directing and leading the orchestra (Goal and Phenomenon).



Figure 43: *Misr|Insurance* (2021)

Figure 44: *Women's Health Initiative* (2021)

The two shots above picture another aspect of the female's career life which is the educational dimension. Figures 43 (*Misr Insurance*, 2021) and 44 (*Women's Health Initiative*, 2021) present the female participants as students. In both shots, the female represented participant is an Actor and Reacter in a Transactional Action-Reaction process. In Figure 43, the female participant is presented in an educational setting where her hand is the Vector and the board she is looking at and writing on is the Goal. Despite giving her back to the audience, she is the most salient participant in this shot as the one initiating the action and the focus of attention of all the other participants looking at her. In Figure 44, the participant is presented in the narrative of studying where her eyes and hands are Vectors and the books are the Goal. Most significantly, the overall that she is wearing as well as the details of the car workshop setting send an important message that women can be multitaskers; they can maintain balance between their work and their studies and achieve success in both.

4.1.2 Conceptual Representation

The Conceptual Representation adds more aspects to the new empowered identity attributed to the Arab females. In this sense, the most significant structure is the Classificational. It serves a major function in the shots that exhibit a group of females together. Here, the Classification delivers the message that this identity does not only apply to one female figure but rather to the majority of women in the Arab society. That is to say, women empowerment has become a societal phenomenon. This technique appears in the shots below: Figure 45 – Figure 50.



Figure 45: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 46: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 47: Bank Misr (2021)



Figure 48: Colgate (2020)



Figure 49: Panadol Extra (2019)



Figure 50: Panadol Extra (2019)

In each shot, a group of women are doing the same action, with the same posture, and the same outfits and colors. The structure of the classification is a covert taxonomy where the superordinate is the female gender: the overarching category to which all these females belong. Here, the Analytical function helps identify the setting where these women are presented as well as their Possessive Attributes. Figure 45 (Sunsilk, 2020) presents a group of females wearing cheerful colors walking down the steps of a huge building with enthusiasm. Figure 46 (Sunsilk, 2020) presents a group of female skate-rollers wearing helmets and protective knees and training energetically. Figure 47 (Bank Misr, 2021) presents a group of female football players gathering around in their football uniforms and all looking at the viewers in happiness and pride. Figure 48 (Colgate, 2020) presents two groups of female participants. The first is a group of female futsal players standing with equal distances, wearing similar training suits and led by another female player in the same outfit and posture. Being presented with their hijab indicates that the image of the veiled women is also positively evolving as open-minded and capable of maintaining balance between social values and pursuing their passions. The second group of females represent the mothers in the background standing with equal distances and similar clothes and posture. Their act of cheering the players has an important significance about the Arab society's view towards girls whose contributions and achievements are now appreciated and supported. Figures 49 and 50 (Panadol Extra, 2019) presents a group of female cyclists. The black gowns they are wearing indicate that they are in the Gulf region where such sport is uncommon for women to practice. This implies that the challenge

that these women are facing is even bigger and requires much strength and perseverance. All this helps interpret the kind of identity attributed to the represented female participants as outgoing, confident, energetic, happy and proud of their own achievements.

4.2 Interactive Function

As for the second level of analysis, the Interactive meaning, it is the visual aspect that reflects the kind of relationship between the represented and interactive participants. These relations are exemplified through three main elements: Contact, Frame-size and Point of view. Together these three elements add further dimensions to the identity associated with those represented participants.

4.2.1 Contact

First, the eye-contact with the viewer decides whether the shot is a Demand or an Offer. Both types serve separate purposes in the selected commercials. First, the examples for the Offer shots are presented above in the section of the Representational meta-function (section 4.1). In the Offer shots, the viewers' emotional detachment enable them to observe all the details of the experiences presented and the participants who are offered as items for the viewers' scrutiny.

Second, the Demand shots appear in the examples below. These shots serve another important function by creating maximum degrees of involvement and interaction with the viewers and demanding something from them. Most importantly, the nature of the Demand is decoded through the facial expressions of

the participants. In this regard, the analysis shows that there are two major demands requested by the represented participants. The first type of Demand is exemplified in the shots below: Figure 51 – Figure 56.



Figure 51: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 52: Eva (2021)



Figure 53: Nike (2020)



Figure 54: Nike (2020)



Figure 55 : Gillette Venus (2020)



Figure 56 : Misr Insurance (2021)

The shots above (Figures 51-56) present the first kind of Demand requested by the female participants which is to show them respect. Here, the firm facial reactions and, sometimes, the fierce look in their eyes color the nature of this demand by reflecting these women's determination and inner strength. In this case, the eye-contact demands the viewers to respect their empowered identity and to appreciate their achievements.

Meanwhile, the second type of Demand appears in the shots below: Figure 57 – Figure 62.



Figure 57: Eva (2021)

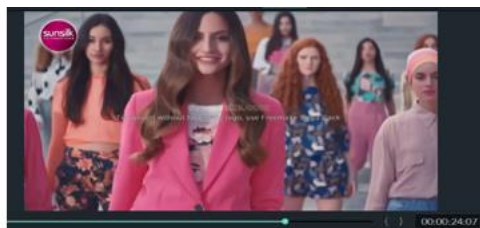


Figure 58: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 59: Women's Health Initiative (2021)



Figure 60: Women's Health Initiative (2021)



Figure 61: Misr Insurance (2021)



Figure 62: Colgate (2020)

The second kind of Demand appears in the shots above (Figures 57-62). Here, the represented female participants demand the viewers to admire their success and to share with them their moments of happiness and their sense of pride. The nature of this demand is clarified by the smiles drawn on their faces and their happy facial reactions after the achievement fulfilled by each throughout the narrative of each commercial.

4.2.2 Frame Size

As for the element of Social Distance, the commercials exhibit different frame sizes that vary between close, medium and long. Each serves a specific function. On the one hand, the medium long shots, covering most of the body till the knees, and the long shots, including the whole figure, serve an important purpose. They help provide a fuller picture of the setting and the details of the background of the shot so that the viewer can better understand where the action is taking place, and so better interpret the visual representation of the participants involved and the roles attributed to each. Hence, this technique can be seen in the shots presented in the section of the Representational meta-function (section 4.1) since the medium and long shots help better envisage the kind of experience represented whether narrative or conceptual.

On the other hand, the close shots, including only the face till the shoulders, and the medium shots, covering half the body till the waist, play another more important role by narrowing the social distance between the represented participants and the viewer who can carefully observe their facial features and reactions. This technique reduces the social distance and generates an emotional intimacy between them. This technique appears in the different shots below (Figures 63-68).



Figure 63: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 64: Eva (2021)



Figure 65: Nike (2020)



Figure 66: Panadol Extra (2019)



Figure 67: Colgate (2020)



Figure 68: Women's Health Initiative (2021)

In Figure 63 (Sunsilk, 2020), the focus is on the eyes of the female participant whose helmet covers a big part of the head and face so that the viewer can notice the sense of determination that emanates from her eye-look. This technique is even more obvious in Figure 64 (Eva, 2021) where the extreme close-up shot zooms the angle on one eye for the represented participant. In Figure 65 (Nike, 2020), the shot is zoomed enough so that the viewer can see the sweat on the participant's face during her training. This is how the Frame Size technique is employed to reflect how far the female participants do their work with passion and take their jobs

seriously. This objective is likewise achieved through the close shot in Figure 66 (Panadol Extra, 2019) as well as the medium shot in Figure 67 (Colgate, 2020). In Figure 68 (Women's Health Initiative, 2021), the medium shot reduces the distance between the viewers and the represented participant quiet enough so that they can notice the car grease on her hand, which totally contradicts the common view of women as giving their beauty the highest priority.

4.2.3 Point of View

Finally, the last Interactive element is the Angle technique which includes the horizontal as well as the vertical axes. Obviously, this technique in particular is one of the most effective ones in reflecting female power. Both horizontally and vertically, the viewer is not only intrigued to engage with the female participants but also to respect their power. As far as the horizontal dimension is concerned, using the Frontal angle, which presents the represented females in the center of the shot, helps create maximum degrees of involvement. This technique appears in all the examples presented above.

As for the vertical dimension, it plays an exceptionally significant role in relation to female positive presentation. In this respect, picturing the represented female participants from a Low angle reflects their power and superiority. This strategy can be noticed in the shots below (Figures 69-78) where the Low angle depicts the participants as victorious and confirms their pride of their own achievements as well as their triumph over the old traditions of the society by overcoming them.



Figure 69: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 70: Sunsilk (2020)

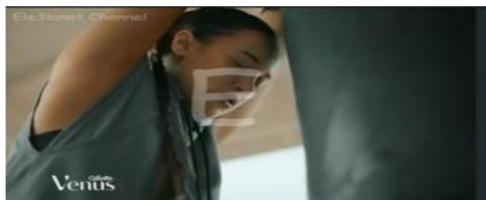


Figure 71 : Gillette Venus (2020)



Figure 72 : Gillette Venus (2020)



Figure 73: Always (2020)



Figure 74: Colgate (2020)



Figure 75: Nike (2020)



Figure 76: Nike (2020)



Figure 77: Bank Misr (2021)



Figure 78: Nike (2020)

4.3 Compositional Function

Finally, the last level of visual analysis is the Compositional structure which targets the overall layout of the image to see how all the elements are integrated together and connects the two other meta-functions together. The Compositional structure in the shots including both genders render significant interpretation in relation to the theme of breaking gender stereotypes. In this respect, the two elements of Information Value and Saliency are especially significant.

4.3.1 Information Value

The first aspect of this level is the Information Value. It determines which elements in the image are presented as new (on the right), as ideal (on the top) and as important (in the center). In this regard, the element of Centrality is specifically significant because it relates to the concept of empowerment. The participants presented in the center are construed as more important, since they hold all the other visual elements together, and hence as more powerful. Here, it is noticed that when both genders are presented, women are put in the center, which indicates that they are the focus of attention, the center of events and the tool that holds the society together. This Centre-Margin type of placement appears in the shots below: Figure 79 – Figure 84.



Figure 79: Sunsilk (2020)



Figure 80: Colgate (2020)



Figure 81: Women's Health Initiative (2021) Figure 82: Bank Misr (2021)



Figure 83: Women's Health Initiative (2021) Figure 84: Women's Health Initiative (2021)

In Figure 79 (Sunsilk, 2020), the male participants are classified as the same by wearing the same clothes, a suit, with almost the same shades of the grey color, and standing with almost equal distances. Meanwhile, the female participant stands out as she is made unique and different by wearing clothes with a different color. This indicates that she is more distinguished. In Figure 80 (Colgate, 2020), the female participant, who presides over the meeting, is depicted in the center of the shot, and so is represented as the most important element who is given the focus of attention holding all the other elements together. Meanwhile, the male participants are represented as subservient to her. Similarly, in Figure 82 (Bank Misr, 2021) the female participant is represented as the most salient by being placed in the middle of

the male racers. This indicates that the act of competing with men represents the new phenomenon of equally participating in the society which the commercial focuses on. In this respect, the two shots in Women's Health Initiative (2021), (Figures 83 & 84), also draw the attention to the equally new phenomenon that women can even excel over men in the field of athletics. That is why all the shots representing the female coach with her male football players team present her in the center in order to be the focus of the viewers' attention.

4.3.2 Saliency

The second most significant Compositional element that relates to the theme of female empowerment is the element of Saliency. Apparently, in the shots that contain female and male participants, the females are made more salient due to different attention-grabbing factors. In this respect, Saliency is achieved through three main elements: Centrality, Foregrounding and Initiation of Action.

The first element, Centrality, appears in the above shots in the Information Value section while discussing the Centre – Margin placement (section 4.3.1). Meanwhile, the element of Foregrounding appears in the shots below (Figures 85 – 91) where the male participant appears in the background and the female in the foreground in order to put all the focus on the female participant. This indicates that the male's role is marginalized while the role of the female participant is presented as more significant and worthy of being the focus of the viewer's attention. Hence, this technique is used to grab the viewer's attention towards

the new portrayal of the Arab woman which breaks the gender stereotypes, as in the following shots.



Figure 85: Always (2020)



Figure 86: Eva (2021)



Figure 87: Women's Health Initiative (2021) Figure 88: Always (2020)



Figure 89: Always (2020)



Figure 90: Women's Health Initiative (2021)



Figure 91: Misr Insurance (2021)

The third element for achieving Saliency is the Initiation of the main Action. This technique is applied in several shots in a variety of commercials presenting two participants of both genders together where the female participant is the one who acts the role of the Doer of the Action, and so grabs the viewer's attention. Meanwhile, the male participant is the receiver of the action, the matter that marginalizes his role in the shot. This pattern appears in the shots below: Figure 92 - Figure 95.



Figure 92: Eva (2021)



Figure 93: Eva (2021)



Figure 94: Women's Health Initiative (2021)



Figure 95: Misr Insurance (2021)

In the first two shots in Figures 92 and 93 (Eva, 2021), the female participant is more salient as the one initiating the action of examining and checking on the male patient, using her hand as a Vector to start the action, while the male participant is the passive receiver of that action. Also, the Frontal Angle picturing the female doctor adds to her saliency in opposition to the male patient pictured from an Oblique Angle, which marginalizes his role further in this shot. The same thing applies to the other shot where the old man is the Goal (the passive receiver) of the action done

by the female participant pushing him on a wheel chair. In Figure 94 (Women's Health Initiative, 2021) several elements add to the Salience of the female coach. Besides being centralized and foregrounded, holding the cup with both her hands makes her the only Actor in this shot and, at the same time, the Phenomenon at whom all the other male participants are looking, as the focus of attention. Finally, in Figure 95 (Misr Insurance, 2021), the female participant is the only one making an action by stretching out her hand in an invitation to the man in front of her to take turn in the rap dancing contest, and so she is the one who grabs the viewers' attention.

Meanwhile, some commercials display some shots where both genders are equally salient. Both genders are presented as equally significant, standing side by side and doing the same task. This technique appears in the shots below: Figure 96 – Figure 100.



Figure 96: Eva (2021)



Figure 97: Eva (2021)

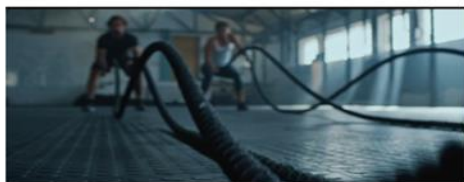


Figure 98: Bank Misr (2021)



Figure 99: Misr Insurance (2021)



Figure 100: Misr Insurance (2021)

In Figure 96 (Eva, 2021), both female and male participants wear the same uniform, which indicates that both have the same job as physicians, do the exact same Transactional Action and Reaction processes by holding and looking at the prescription in their hands. In Figure 97 (Eva, 2021), both female and male participants wear the same nursing uniform and do the same Transactional Action process by pushing the trolley. In Figure 98 (Bank Misr, 2021), both the male and female athletes are represented side by side as equally strong, fit and competitive. The same thing applies to Figure 99 (Misr Insurance, 2021) where both father and daughter are exactly wearing the same and doing the exact same movements. Similarly, in Figure 100 (Misr Insurance, 2021) both genders receive the exact same visual representation: same colorful clothes, same posture, same angle, and same action. Such visual equality helps break gender stereotypes by stressing on the equality of gender roles as part of the positive gender representation through the egalitarian representation.

5. Discussion of Results

The present study investigates the Arab female image in different commercials that merchandise for a variety of products. It demonstrates that a new female image is presented other than the stereotypical one. New aspects are attributed to Arab women other than being seductive, decorative and home-oriented. Hence, the study shows that a new trend has started to appear in the Arab TV commercials which introduces to the Arab audience the concept of women empowerment by putting the represented female participants in a new mold different from the traditional and stereotyped one. This new mold has been analyzed according

to the three meta-functions stated in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model of Visual Grammar.

First, the analysis of the Narrative Representation reveals the various experiences led nowadays by the Arab women, which matches the current evolution in gender roles. These narratives visualize women in three main scenarios. First, women are presented playing different masculine sports like football, kickboxing, weightlifting, fencing, roller skating, running, roof jumping and horse riding. Second, they are presented doing different exotic activities that challenge the norms of the society like riding motorcycles, driving airplanes and changing car wheels. Third, they are portrayed as successful career women who can hold leading positions, as doctors, coaches, and managers, and do certain jobs that used to belong to the male world, as car mechanics and orchestra leaders. By looking at the goals of their actions, it is clear that there are new concerns and issues that women's lives are focused on, other than the domestic ones or their beauty. These concerns can be different types of sports to practice, or different outdoor activities and adventures to experience, or different professions to excel at. Hence, a new identity is attributed to the Arab women as physically powerful athletes, courageous and daring adventurers and professional women with promising and thriving careers. The analysis of the Conceptual representation complements this new identity mainly through the Classificational and Analytical processes. The Classificational structure delivers an important message that women empowerment is not an individualistic feature confined to certain individuals, but it has rather become phenomenal and common among whole groups of

women. In this respect, the Analytical process helps analyze the Possessive Attributes of the represented participants like the sportswear or helmets they are wearing.

Second, the analysis of the Interactive function helps understand the various techniques through which the female participants interact with the viewers. For instance, the bond between the female participants and the viewer is strengthened through the Contact technique. The eye gaze directed at the viewers not only require maximum degrees of involvement but also arouse feelings of respect and admiration through the facial expressions which color the nature of the Demand that the represented female participants are requesting from the viewers. First, the Demand of respect is exemplified through the firm and, sometimes, fierce expressions drawn on the female participants' faces. Second, the Demand of admiration is exemplified through the smiles drawn on their faces which invite the audience to admire their achievements and share their moments of happiness and success. The engagement with the viewers is further enhanced through the Close-up and Medium Shots which create an imaginary social relation and emotional affinity with the audience who can closely observe all the facial details of the participants. The Angle technique also has a significant role on two aspects. First, the Frontal Angle increases the degree of the viewers' involvement. Second, the Low Angle reflects the female participants' sense of power and superiority by positioning these women in a high place, which encourages the audience to show them further respect.

Finally, the Compositional analysis, in the shots including both genders, reveals the main elements used to present the female gender as more salient and significant. For example, the analysis of the Information Value shows that the female participants are placed in the important zones in the shot by using the Centre-Margin placement. In these shots, they are placed in the center of the shot to act the role of the nucleus that holds the other male elements together. This technique adds to the Saliency of the female participants. Meanwhile, such Saliency is also achieved by the Foregrounding element where the females are placed in the foreground and the male gender appears in the background as Circumstances. This technique helps draw the viewers' maximum attention to the leading role of the female participants. Hence, it can be concluded that the different visual elements combine together to convey a new empowered image about Arab women that is characterized by a significant identity and has an unstereotyped social role.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Research

Women have increasingly assumed powerful roles in the Arab society which seems to be moving toward a more gender-balanced power distribution. Along with the social change in the Arab culture, the Arab advertising industry has changed the way it speaks to Arab female consumers. As a result, it is important to study portrayals of female empowerment in the media. The present study has focused on commercials because they can reach a wide scope of audience and can significantly impact the society's beliefs and behaviors and promote social norms that influence what is regarded as acceptable. The study has revealed the aspects

of power associated with the new Arab female image. It has shown that there are mainly three types of power: athletic power, expert power and agentive power. First, athletic power is demonstrated through the commercials that present Arab women as physically strong and able to practice different types of sports which used to be associated with men. Second, expert power is demonstrated through the commercials that present female figures as knowledgeable and qualified with the required expertise that enables them to contribute to their society in various ways. Third, agentive power is demonstrated through the commercials that present Arab women as determined, self-motivated, in control of their choices, responsible for their decisions and capable of breaking the social norms of the Arab culture through different self-enhancement activities. While athletic power belongs to the dimension of physical empowerment, expert and agentive powers belong to the dimension of personal empowerment. Both dimensions complement each other in conveying a complete female portrayal that reflects the new Arab female identity and social role in the society. Finally, it can be concluded that all the visual elements complement each other to provide an integrative message about Arab female empowerment which invites the viewers to construe Arab women as physically and morally invincible and unstoppable.

Meanwhile, since the scope of the study is limited to the visual elements, there are some suggestions for future research. For example, other linguistic approaches can be applied for the analysis of the verbal elements as well. Besides, the slogans of these campaigns can also be materials for analysis, in relation to

gender identity, by applying cognitive approaches that target the metaphors in them like the Conceptual Metaphor or Conceptual Blending theories. Furthermore, contrastive and comparative studies can be conducted between old and recent commercials, of the same brands, or Eastern and Western ones to highlight either different or similar techniques employed in relation to the same theme. Finally, other genres that also exhibit features of women empowerment in the Arab media can be investigated like movies and drama.

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