

## **The Contrastive Analysis of Gender Factor Manifestation in the language of Advertisement in Iran in 1980's and 2000's**

**Ferdows Agha Golzadeh**

Associate professor  
Tarbiat Modares University  
Tehran Iran

**Arsalan Golfam**

Assistant professor  
Tarbiat Modares University  
Tehran, Iran

**Mohammad Asadi (M.A.)**

M.A. in linguistics  
Islamic Azad University (Science and Research Campus)

**Mehdi Bagheri Hariry (M.A.)**

M.A. in Translation Studies from  
Islamic Azad University (Science and Research Campus)

### **Abstract**

*Gender position in advertisements is one of the main and probably the most important parts of studies that are often considered to be a subdiscipline of discussions in advertisement sociology. The main concern of the present study is comparing and contrasting gender factor manifestation in advertisement language in 1980 and 2000 decades. To achieve that end, from among newspapers and magazines the propaganda containing gender traces were selected and for the researcher those advertisements that comprise gender factors have such gender traces. The gender factors were outlined in two separate tables and it was finally observed that the majority of advertisements about women were in the field of home facilities , sanitary materials and cleaning because it was thought that women were more impressionable in the field; however, some of the advertisements did not include gender traces. All of the data were divided into twelve domains such as education domain and each domain was investigated with its corresponding domain in each decade and the research data were studied through content analysis and the research findings verified the following two hypotheses: The linguistic manifestation of female gender in the written advertisements was remarkably less than that of male gender and the women were in the margin in the 1980's. The linguistic manifestation of female gender in the language of advertisement was very conspicuous and was reflected more than that of male gender in the advertisement language of the 1980's.*

**Key terms:** Advertisements, gender, manifestation, gender advertisements.

### **Introduction**

The linguists consider language as a means of communication between people in society. So it can be regarded as the most important social foundation. But besides communication as its main role, language has another function as well that are considered to be secondary. Today commercial ads and propaganda constitute one of the bases of economic development of societies and is a turning point of such sciences as economics, graphics, music and linguistics through which we can catch a glimpse of these advertisements. It is probable that embellishments of an advertising, draw your attention more than its written language, but the effect of the advertiser's desired goal on your mind using a suitable language is undeniable. What s/he inspires you with a short commercial or advertising slogan if designed skillfully, sticks unconsciously in your mind and that's why it's so impressive. If the advertiser himself/ herself stands in front of you and persuades you to buy his/her product by stating its benefits, s/he would possibly meet with your resistance or you may question the faithfulness of his/her claims and finally refuse to purchase the product. However, when s/he makes use of music, innovative imagery and specially an indirect speech in the form of pun, metaphor etc. to promote his/her merchandise in a matter of seconds, you would definitely make another decision.

This is exactly similar to a situation where someone advises you about doing something for hours while someone else makes you one of his followers simply by chanting stanzas of a popular poet. The other main point about language in advertising is that except for those who are deaf or hearing-impaired, it can be applied for all the people. Meanwhile our country has experienced some developments in advertising in recent years and there have been considerable investments in the issue. However, it is not just the matter of investment but it is the goals that should be best achieved. The printed ads are often more comprehensive and there is a rich diversity of them compared to audio-visual ads. The printed advertisements are emphasized in the present study because of the fact that they go with the aforementioned sciences and is widespread in all societies.

### **Theoretical concepts:**

1. Advertisements: advertisement is usually defined as promoting the commercial goods through media (Cook, 1992).
2. Advertising Tool : A) Newspaper: It is one of the main advertising devices, because it plays an important role in creating the public opinion. B) Magazine: It is the other kind of advertising devices that is mostly used by producers for commercials and propagating ideas.
3. Gender: It is one of the main parts that is employed by marketers in general and by advertisers in particular. Nonetheless, these marketers and commercial advertisers seek to understand how men and women individually behave (S. Putrevu, 2001: 1).

Masculinity and femininity are distinct from each other and it is worth mentioning that some people are bisexual (Bem, 1997: 84), so how gender can be considered as a unique constituent in advertising and consumption (Freed, 1996: 69).

According to sociolinguistics to grasp a better attitude toward the market, consumption and consumer, other factors such as race and culture should be taken into account in gender studies (Freed: 1996)

It seems that women are more precisely able to decode the linguistic signs and more vision-oriented, motivated naturally and more emotional when compared to men; however, male readers are separate and try to see the story from outside (Bleich, 1988) unlike women who tend to analyze the problems from inside (Flynn, 1988).

Actually, for a variety of reasons including social life, cultural, political and economical, gender has influenced the societies in one way or another. The study of such effects and consequences was attractive and in many cases indispensable for a large number of researchers. In fact, using sexual attraction through containing gender factor in advertisement industry is one of the most important strategies to earn more money or gain more profit.

### 1. Biological Explanations:

Sexual differences often result from biological differences such as sex chromosomes and sex hormones; meanwhile, in socialization literature, sex-role concept is a main factor of sexual differences.

Based on this school of thought, children are primarily identified according to their sex and then by conforming their personal inclinations by those motivations and emotions that are suitable for their sex, seek to verify it. The social role theory indicates that the differences between men and women in their talent and character traits often reflect the traditional sex role in society, that is to say men search for courage, self-sufficiency and lordship and most of the time their own individual desires, however, women focus on interpersonal relationships, so they are sensitive not only to themselves but also others. Therefore, both social and biological differences are responsible for their distinction (S. Putrevu, 2001:1). Welin (2003) has presented another categorization of researches in the field of gender in advertisement that seems to be more appropriate.

Based on his classification, the researches can be divided into five groups:

A) Researches related to stereotyping sex roles, B) researches based upon selection hypothesis, C) researches related to gender influence of the advertising spokesperson, D) researches about the ways men and women respond to the advertisements and E) researches that centre round subject finding of gender-based brands.

### 5. Gender role in advertisements:

Gender is one of the main criteria to divide any market, therefore, there is a need to arrange and codify combined marketing elements such as advertisements, regarding the existing differences between men and women for each part of the market. There have been considerable amount of researches in western countries to ascertain the sex role and gender differences in propaganda that need summation and integration. Meanwhile, there is a general consensus among researchers that men and women information have different processing ways.

Women process information more carefully and compared to men they are more likely to be encouraged by an advertisement repetition to sell a product or changing an attitude.

In fact women are more receptive to advertisements or brands that are really arranged or directed towards men, while men are less inclined to pay attention to those designed for women. In some cases there is conflict between the findings, though that requires more intensive studies.

#### 6. Research Methodology:

Regarding the research type and the subject under study, it seems that analyzing the quantitative and qualitative content, is a way to access how gender was manifested in the advertisements of 1980's and 2000's.

From among some newspapers and magazines for instance Adineh, Payame Enghelab, Khorasan, Resalat, Marzadaran, Keyhan, Ettelaat, Kelk monthly, Azadegan, Keyhan Farhangi and Arash, one hundred advertisements were carefully selected (fifty ads from each decade). Then those containing gender traces were separated and analyzed based on the definition provided by the researcher about advertisements that have gender factors. It is worth mentioning that the factors were divided into two categories, namely open and secret. Open factors are those that obviously display the gender being addressed by using such words as man, power, etc. However, secret factors do not have this characteristic, for example beauty which can be attributed to both men and women. Finally, these factors were investigated by applying the T- tests.

The gender factors of the said advertisements (in 80's and 2000's) were studied in the word level by the researcher and considering the main hypothesis of the research were divided into two groups of open and secret factors with respect to gender inclination. Open gender tendency is employed directly via male or female linguistic devices in the advertisements, while secret gender tendency is indirectly used via masculine and feminine implicit meanings.

The following table illustrates these factors:

**Table 4-1 Gender factors in female advertisements**

Gender Tendency	Word	Gender Tendency	Word
Secret	Polish	Open	Make- up
Secret	Shapeliness	Secret	Decorated
Secret	Polish	Secret	Wish
Secret	Cheerful and intimate atmosphere	Open	Lady
Secret	Lovely face	Secret	Attractive
Secret	Amiable	Secret	Young
Open	Feminine nature	Secret	Home (n.)
Secret	Childish dream	Secret	Family
Secret	Simplicity and Stylishness	Secret	Home (adj.)
Secret	Skin health	Secret	Design
Secret	Magnificence	Open	Lipstick
Secret	Cooking	Open	Beauty
Secret	A different and exhilarating environment	Secret	Happiness
Secret	A soft and expensive clothes	Secret	Delight
		Open	Shiniyoun
		Secret	Romantic
		Secret	Mystic
		Open	Enchanting
		Secret	Luxurious
		Open	Mezon
		Secret	Mild
		Secret	Art

**Table 4-2 Gender factors in male advertisements**

Gender Tendency	word	Gender Tendency	Word
Secret	The best of the world	Secret	secure
Secret	Antiperspirant	Open	After shave
Secret	Penetration Force	Open	Make-up
Secret	To attract	Open	Bridegroom
Open	Police force	Secret	Dominant
		Open	Power/ strength
		Open	Powerful/strong
		Open	Man
		Open	Masculine
		Open	Power

**Qualitative Categorization of Advertisements:**

In order to have a more precise investigation of the collected samples, they were divided into various areas based on their subject and quality and gender influence was studied separately in each of these areas.

In the end, the degree of these effects in each field was compared with respected to two time- spans that are studied in the present article. It is important to remember that the combination of the fields is based on the volume of the data in each area and there is just one advertisement expressed from each area in order to avoid unreasonable increase of the data.

1) sanitary products, 2) automobile , 3) services, 4) carpet , 5) educational , 6) make – up ,7) sport, 8) medical services , 9) home facilities, 10) clothing , 11) foods , 12) cleansers and washing products.

**The Advertisements of 2000's:**

2.1 The area of sanitary products; *wishing for spirituality of " Mid summer " is designed for spiritual and powerful men whose*

*View- points give you ideas. Their strong character is admirable and their penetration force attracts you. Twenty – four hour antiperspirant deodorant (for men): It contains "Midsummer" scent and easily absorbed formula that is not whitened.*

*"Midsummer" aftershave cream : An invigorating cream with Midsummer mild scent that lessons dermatitis and keeps your skin soft after shaving (hamshahri, 20002).*

2.2 Automobile field: *Another achievement by creative designers of the land. Equipping all the vehicles with ABS brake , pass the most difficult international tests and to record the required scores in accident experiment , receiving the certificate of national standards for all Iran khodro vehicles , the pioneer of the state's motor vehicle industry. The road calls you (machine , 20005).*

Analysis: The vehicles or motor vehicles suit men because they are outside activities the are more masculine than feminine.

2.3 The area of home facilities: *" Negin Khazar "the first producer of boiled rice maker with pirex lid in Iran, boiled rice maker, all automatic slow cooking device, "Negin Khazar" a jewel in the crown in home facility industry; technology and innovation in "Negin Khazar" products a product for a life- time simplicity, " Negin Khazar" at your home; the decoration of your kitchen (khanevadeh Sabz, 20006).*

Analysis: boiled rice maker is used in kitchen i.e .the place of women; on the other hand, there are such words as kitchen used in the advertisement. So the advertisement has something to do with female.

2.4 The area of make – up : *Rajen make- up room ( for men) special services for all lucky grooms in the most equipped and the most modern make – up salon for men.*

Analysis: Using the word "man" in the advertisement indicates that it addresses all men (movafaghiyat, 20004).

*Aban Beauty Salon: It's time to get more beautiful! Aban beauty salon with an experienced and specialist cadre and familiar with the newest make- up methods is your host. You will face a very high quality in addition to a suitable price to be our satisfied customer. Don't lose the opportunity to take a look at our bride album!(Roozhaye Zendegi, 20007).*

2.5 The area of medical services.

*Specialized for ladies and gentlemen: eliminating red spots, pimples or freckles and the electrolysis of hairy faces without any pain under the supervision of beauty expert and teaching electrolysis (Rahe Zendegi, 2009).*

2.6 The area of foods: *How it stretches it's not only the smell or taste of pizza cheese that makes its quality, but also its stretchiness! motahari pizza cheese, with many years of experience in restaurants, now in packages in your home (keyhan , 20003).*

Analysis: cooking is an activity particular to women in our culture so it refers to female gender.

2.7 The field of sport: *For ladies, Anoush Gym club; do you care about your fitness, physical and mental health? So join us today in a different and bracing environment (soroush, 2006).*

2.8 Clothing and mezon field :*Designing and sewing bride dress, engagement and night dress, Lapis mezon ; for a new idea , a beautiful design , a good sewing a chic clothes , nowhere , is not faraway (khanevedeh sabz , 20008).*

2.9 Educational field: *Cooking school; our cooking course with a very low cost turns your boring and tedious life into a happy one granting you health as well as an exciting and enthusiastic mood. We present you the cheapest course with the most possibilities in the country.*

*Each amateur has her own first ingredients and oven for cooking who can take the food home to test (zane rooz, 2004)*

Analysis: cooking is special more to women so this advertisement addresses women.

2.10 The field of cleansers and washing products:

*The child: this is my home, a silver one; my mom says a home should always shine like silver; she tells the truth cause when its clean it looks like the moon; similar to a childish dream, but it is not just a dream it's a choice; the silver dream of your home..... by choosing Spiff washing products (Boresh, 2009)*

Analysis: cleansers that are used for cleaning who uses them? Usually women; so the commercial addresses women.

2.11 The area of carpet: *century carpet ; like hand made silk carpet, different from what you have ever seen! Century carpet is a unique masterpiece from Belgium carpet industry that is manufactured in big and robotic factories. It has such a unique capacity that can be washed with water and all washing -powders or cleansers without change in colour.*

*It does not absorb hair , nap or any other wastage .Century carpet is very durable compared to handmade silk carpets and its softness equals to more than fifty layers of carpets (movafaghiyat , 2009)....*

Analysis: The commercial suggests the carpet specifications while washing that is particular to women. Because of the fact that women look for softness and tenderness so this advertisement talks to women.

2.12 The field of services: *Providing spare parts, service guarantee; Isaco, we are at your service (Hamshahri, 2007)*

*Iran bascule industrial and manufacturing gronp: the most appropriate bascules for gym clubs; extra seller of bascule specific for weight and length (Etelaat Haftegi, 2007).*

### **The advertisements of 1980's:**

3.1 The area of sanitary products: (just for ladies); The natural oil of wheat germ rich in A,E vitamins for massaging your face and body skin and eliminating red spots and pimpies (Zane rooz , 1986's)

3.2 The area of medical services: *Ladies and gentlemen; if you are used to braiding your hair or wearing your hair in plaits or you use gluey hats you can make it lasting at a very low cost. We assure you that this method can't be found anywhere ever in Europe The method is a result of hair specialist's endeavour in the U.S. where hundreds to thousands of hairs are implanted into yours scalp without any surgical operation .Iran hair home.*

Analysis: Using both lady and gentlemen the ad address es both genders (Result, 1985).

*"Banooyeman" institute of slenderness: In this institute you will achieve your desired weight with the latest weigh losing methods please call us between ,a.m. to 6 p.m for consulting (by appointment only). (Azadegan, 1986)*

3.3 Educational field : *A complete cooking complex ; the best gift for newlyweds and ladies ; cooking in 8 volumes in beautiful packages ; full series of cooking ; a valuable and nice present for all Iranian ladies and newly- weds (Adineh, 1988)*

Analysis: Using the words "newlywed" and "lady" the commercial is women specific.

*The first institute of make – up and hair health in Iran:*

*Holder of official permission from the ministry of occupation and social affairs; masculine (Javanan. 1982) .*

3.4 The area of home facilities; *A nice gift for you, a six – litter automatic electrical Kettle (Aminiyan fard), it does not burn out without water (Zane rooz, 1989).*

Analysis : In our culture kettle is used in kitchen i.e. the place of women, so the ad is for women.

*Always remember "Saniyo "home facilities.in different models and designs;*

- *Saniyo juice extractor*
- *Saniyo vacuum cleaner in different models and powers (engine power up to 1000 watt).*
- *Saniyo multipurpose tool comprised of miner, blender, juice extractor and vegetable grater.*
- *.Saniyo boiled rice maker that makes your favorite boiled rice.*
- *Saniyo rechargeable lights that is recharged by home electricity and remains turned on between 70 minutes to 3 hours after the lights are gone off. (Marzadaran , 1981).*

Analysis: women use such home facilities, so the commercial draws their attention more than men.

3.5 The area of sports : *just for ladies ; body building for women under the supervision of a high- qualified M.A. coach from the college of physical education with ten years of experience (keyhan farhangi, 1365) Body – building for men in "shahid chamran" sports complex (khorasan , 1987).*

3.6 Clothing and Mezon area : *Shirts for men;*

*Maxim (Anahid ) (Arash, 1988).*

*Ladies and Gentlemen; All kinds of leathers in the newest world fashions for men and women , former " lederli " (Resalat , 1983).*

3.7 Foods area: *we entertain, you judge, Omid entertainment; we try to entertain you with the best facilities in a pleasant and nice environment by traditional foods for lunch and delicious pizzas for dinner (Etel aat, 1989).*

*Sina mushrooms: Dear lady please try mushroom instead of meat in your Gheyne An Iranian traditional food (kelk, 1987).*

3.8 The area of make- up: *"Golchehrha "beauty room (for women ); make up the bride using lace , garland and western flowers ; cure, health and beauty of your face (zane rooz, 1982)*

Analysis: "beauty", " bride ", "make up "are all the words that indicate the commercial is for women.

*Bridegroom ceremony, memory of life; groom make- up by a new method and a memorable change in " Mokhtar" beauty salon (zane rooz , 1983).*

3.9 The area of services : *Don't worry about your face ; now the first razor sharpening unit is operating ; only 20 Tomans to sharpen each razor (Zane rooz , 1985)*

*"Kavosh" photo mill; (For ladies and maidens): kavosh photo Center with over ten years of experience in film and photography by lady experts and portraitists is entirely at your service for your weddings in the sweet moments of your life (zane rooz, 1986).*

3.10 The area of Automobile:

*Aparat antideflatory , adjustment ,cooler and tire resistance; it's a liquid that prevents the deflation of vehicles and have special chemical components. The product is a result of perseverance and diligence of Iranian innovators and researchers (Keyhan 1984).*

*The commercial is for people who have cars like benz , B.M.W , Patrol, Chevrolet etc. Navid stereo is honoured to give customers a series of the newest carriable radio cassette players for selling and installation in a really short time (Etelat, 1987)*

3.11 The field of carpet : *Golbarane Farsh; carpet exceptional auction; a real auction for different tastes and pockets changes your money into a traditional Iranian product (khorasan , 1986)*

3.12 The area of cleansers and washing products: *The consumers cooperatives, department stores;" Mahsa" wahing – up liquid; a hand cleaner and dishwasher (Adineh, 1982)*

## **Conclusion**

The first hypothesis: the linguistic manifestation of female gender in written ads was dramatically lower than that of male gender and women were in the margin in the 1980's.

T- test table

Standard Deviation	Mean	The year 1360
2.6	4.09	Women
1.03	1.25	Men

Test table : *Linguistic manifestation of women compared to that of men in the year 1980's*

p.V	Mean	Degree of Freedom	T	F	
0.003	2.84	17	2.88	12.219	Variance equal

The value equals 2.88 and regarding the calculated degree of t and f (12.219) the degree of freedom (17) is larger than the value in the critical table and because, it is meaningfully smaller than 0.05 , (=0.003) , we can say that women were in the margin in the linguistic ads of the 1980's . Therefore, the first hypothesis is verified .

The second hypothesis: the linguistic manifestation of female gender in the language of advertisement was very obvious and was rejected more than that of male gender in the 2000's.

T- test table

Standard Deviation	Mean	The year 2000
2.77	3.54	Women
1.69	1.87	Men

Test table : linguistic manifestation of women compared to that of men in the year 2000

P.V	Mean	Degree of freedom	T	F	
0.238	1.67	17	1.51	1.49	Variance equal

The value equals 1.51 and regarding the calculated degree of T and F(1.49) the degree of freedom (17) is lower than the value in the critical table and because it is meaningfully larger than 0.05 (=0.238) , we can say that women were not in the margin in the linguistic ads of the 2000's . Thus, the second hypothesis is also accepted and verified.

Taking into consideration the findings of each research question in the study we can reach some conclusions about advertising mechanisms in Iran. It seems that advertisers do not pay enough attention to gender linguistic factors in ads advertisement are otherwise important and gender is not an issue in propaganda. It should be added that if advertising managers want to draw the attention of male and female addresses to a particular ad, they more prefer to make use of non- linguistic distinguishing components.

Women were not previously in a position to make decision in society; that was probably because their major role was as housewives. Today that women fulfill and perform the same functions as men or even they sometimes excel in some educational and social fields their role cannot be ignored and excluded any more. The advertising managers are all so aware of the subject and make necessary provisions for draw the attention of the people in society including women as well. That s why they use some feminine qualities in the ads that are more likely to be masculine.

*The findings related to the quality and quantity of written cultural and commercial advertisements in the three decades:* There have been a rapid development process and also gradual changes in recent two and half decades after the Islamic revolution in Iran alongside the global developments. Nowadays meetings on written ads have a wide variety of propaganda including stands, posters, bill- boards in television and cinemas as well as international informational highways. If we want to determine the percentage of cultural and commercial ads in the three decades we should assign a high percentage of ads in the first decade to cultural ads and in the third decade to commercial ads; however, the second decade or the decade between the two experienced both cultural and commercial ads . There are obviously some changes in different aspects of culture in our society, meanwhile advertisements play a decisive role in directing any society and to improve the cultural aspects , the advertising managers should , needless to say, care about both cultural and commercial advertisements.

After investigating these quantitative classifications, the governing atmosphere in society and also artistic taste and their interaction can be revealed by looking at the governing mood of written ads in the three decades.

A) The atmosphere of the society in the first decade (60-70) specially after the imposed war was that of a deep inclination and tendency to Islamic culture and ethics. What persuaded and encouraged the youth to participate in defense of their country was the popular propaganda in that period.

B) The mode of the society in the second decade (70-80) that coincided with the cease – fire was that of luxury and indulgence and deprivation was no longer a merit or virtue. At the same time the cities were full of ads which motivated purchasing opulent and imported products.

All the consumer goods had written ads and the youth and teenagers wore pictorial clothes not only these ads had a negative cultural – moral concepts , bus also were artistically worthless , but carried dramatic interest for some exploiters and profiteers.

C) Lastly, the atmosphere of the society in the third decade (80-90) with the precipitous an increasing rate of technology and broad casting media, was influenced by the global movement and resulted in instability and uncertainty.

By reviewing the quality and quantity of the written ads the first decade turns out to be more traditional or conventional.

The second decade experienced both art and subject matter (though there were some imitative looks to foreign samples.(While the government tried to take the global mass media under control but it was proved to be substantially unmanageable in the third decade. Such a torrent of advertisements came in a considerable dimension, but the urban ads were still controllable).

Finally in the third decade the aspects of culture and subject matter were overshadowed by formal features of advertisements; meanwhile, it is worth mentioning that advertisements are successful when they humanize with at least one of the addresses desires. In short it should be stated that although there are many researches conducted about advertisements those that are based on gender have not received enough attention and they still require more research (Hooper, 2008:1)

## **References**

- 1-Cook,Guy,2001. The Discourse of Advertising.London:Routledge
- 2-Putrevu Sanjay(2001). Exploring the origins and information Processing Defferences between Men and Women. Implication for Advertiser, Academy of Marketing Science Review, Volume 2001(10) available: [http://www.amsreview.Org/articles/putrevu 10-2001pdf](http://www.amsreview.Org/articles/putrevu%2010-2001pdf).
- 3-Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology.
- 4-Freed, A. (1996) 'Language and Gender in an Experimental Setting', in V. Bergvall, J. Bing and A.
- 5-Bleich,D.1988.Gender Interests in Reading and Language. "In Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers,Text,and Context.Editors:E.A. Flynn and P.P.Schweickart.Baltimore,MD:Johns Hopkins University Press
- 6-Flynn, E.A. 1988. "Gender and Reading." In Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts. Editors: E.A. Flynn and P.P. Schweickart. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press