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Gender Construction and Human Rights in the Language of Kenyan Advertisements

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Abstract

There is a strong commitment to gender equality between women and men in international human rights law. Mass media should be committed to advance gender equality yet, millions of women around the world continue to experience discrimination. This paper evaluates the gender perspectives in the language of advertisements in print and electronic media in Kenya. A content analysis of the cultural gender roles and attributes is done focusing on adverts from three media genres: Television, Newspaper and one FM radio station. The Social Semiotic Theory of language is used to analyze and present data. Twenty adverts are purposively sampled for analysis. Descriptive statistics in form of frequency tables are used to analyze the data. The study reveals that there is a cultural gender bias against women in the language of advertising. It is found that in media advertisements, men are regarded higher in terms of roles and attributes than women. This paper should act as a guide to policy makers and advertising agencies for gender responsive planning, operations and practices in the Kenyan mass media. This will give women an opportunity to compete equally with men in education, social, professional, political, and economic sectors in order to achieve vision 2030 for sustainable development

Key Words: *Gender attributes, Gender bias, Gender equality, Gender perspectives, Gender roles, Human rights, Semiotic analysis.*

1. Introduction: Sociolinguistics, the study of language in relation to society, is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. This area of linguistics has close connections with gender relations in society. Society perceives the concept of gender differently and that is why the United Nations (U.N) took up a gender perspective in all its programmes in 2002. This is observed in the third Millennium Development Goal which strategized to make women's, as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. This would be applied in all political, economic and societal spheres. The ultimate goal was to achieve gender equality and equity. In this view, the purpose of this

study is to determine the gender representation in the language of advertising and to identify how masculinity and femininity are marked in the language of advertising

Society automatically and mistakenly thinks about women when the term gender is used. Gender has also been mistakenly confused with the term sex in the Kenyan context (Kabira 2001). In the current study, gender refers to roles, relations and responsibilities ascribed to both females and males by society. Individuals learn “feminine” or “masculine” behaviour depending on their prior categorization as biologically male or female with the social elaborating on the biological. In social sciences, sex is the anatomical difference(s) between men and women. It forms one of the bases, in most societies, on which gender related behaviour is built (Coates 1992). In this paper, therefore, the term gender is used NOT to refer to grammatical categories of words into feminine and masculine, but to refer to social distinctions made between the sexes in the language of advertisements. This paper defines masculinity and femininity in terms of different roles and behaviours assigned to males and females by the advertising agencies.

Gender roles are assigned to individuals by society and are one of the primary ways that social life is classified (Imam 1997). In most ethnic groups in Kenya, females are still regarded as care takers in the family set up whereas males are regarded as the primary breadwinners for their families. This is irrespective of whether wives provide more than the husbands. It is assumed that men compete and succeed in prestigious roles like decision making and controlling family finances. This observation brings in the concept of gender bias because feminine roles like domestic chores are regarded to have a low prestige (Wodak 1997). Crawford (1995) argues that language is an important part of the socialization process; therefore, children are socialized into culturally approved gender roles largely through language. Wodak (1997), Coates (1986), Lakoff (1975) and Mbilinyi (1994) point out that language is one of the areas that reflect gender discrimination. Society has been constructed with a bias that favours males: a bias that can be located in the language. This is contrary to the international human rights law.

The language of advertising in the mass media has been studied in different contexts. Goffman (1990), for example, discusses the influence of advertisements on societal behaviour and the gender issue. In their portrayal of gender relationships, women are seen to be subordinate and submissive to men. Such studies have focused on specific linguistic items. It has emerged from such studies that there is a gender bias against women in the language of advertisements. Feminists take the view that the media as an industry is patriarchal in structure and ideology. Patriarchy is a system in which men have power over women in social, economic and political institutions (Burton 2002). They argue that there is gender discrimination in the mass media targeting women who are made to appear subordinate to men.

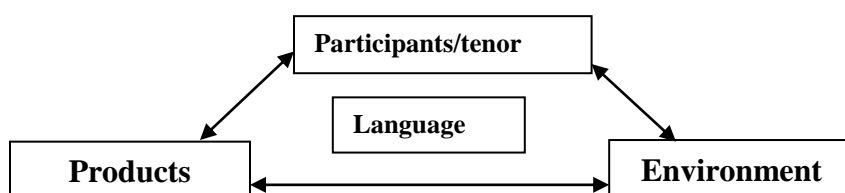
2. Theoretical Orientation: The Social Semiotic Theory of Language which was first developed by Malinowski (1923) and later advanced by Burton (2002) discusses semiotics as a theory for the production and interpretation of meaning. It has three main tenets: that

language is an ordered system of signs and symbols; these signs and symbols are arbitrary and can be in the form of images and that the sign system is as a result of our culture which carries cultural meanings and conventions. These tenets relate to this study's raw data in that the aspect of language employed through gender roles, and attributes are all creations of society. Ferdinand de Saussure saw the division of the linguistic sign into the signified and the signifier/significant. The *signifier* is that part of the sign that signals something. It may be a handshake, a wink, a word and so on. The *signified* is that part of the sign that is its possible meaning, for example, a handshake in itself signifies agreement, greeting or comradeship (Burton 2002). In the Social Semiotic Theory, objects are seen, words and meanings are attached to those objects. Cultural meanings of signs are derived from the way that society uses and values the signifier and the signified. This gives the social semiotic theory of language a social dimension.

According to de Saussure's analysis of signs, there are three messages in an advertisement text. The linguistic information which consists of words, phrases and sentences to realize the product name and description; the denotation information which details the product name and the linguistic commentary that is agreed upon by convention and, lastly, the connotation information that is in form of words, pictures, photographs and sounds. The product being advertised represents the signifier and the properties of the items advertised the signified. For example, a photograph of a cow in the Kenyan cultural traditional context certainly refers to the signified cow in the real world although it can also connote power and wealth. However, such connotations cannot be independent of the culture we live in and within which our sign systems operate. The sign of a cow becomes the signifier of the cultural values it represents in the photograph.

Texts yield cultural meanings when the audience interacts with them. The audience constructs meanings in their heads through interaction with the text (Burton 2002). This study deals with spoken, written and visual (photographs and pictures) texts from adverts. These texts have a cultural meaning embedded in them by the viewers and listeners (audience) who are part of society. In the social semiotic theory, the study of verbal, visual and gestural elements is done by use of three features of the context of situation. Context of situation is the totality of extra linguistic features having relevance to a communicative act. It involves the social and psychological world of the language users. It includes such user's beliefs and assumptions about social settings. This can be illustrated diagrammatically:

Fig-1: Context of the social semiotic theory



Source: Burton (2002)

3. Methodology: This paper took a cross sectional survey design. It entailed written, spoken and visual text excerpts drawn from print and electronic media. In print media, data was drawn from two Kenyan newspapers: The East African Standard (EAS) and The Daily Nation (DN). In electronic media, data was drawn from two television stations: KTN and KBC. As an additional form of media, data was drawn from Citizen radio.

Purposive sampling, which involves a researcher's identification of the sample in advance, was used to randomly select eight categories of adverts. Stratified sampling was later used to select fourty adverts (n=40) from which a sample of twenty adverts (n=20) was randomly drawn. There are various categories of adverts that occur in the print and electronic media in Kenya. However, out of the many categories, only eight categories were sampled from the given media genres as illustrated below:

Table-1: Product categories and types of adverts from specific genres

Product category	Type of advert	Media category	No.
1.Cleaning agents	i. The Omo challenge	KTN/KBC	1
	ii. Dettol soap	KTN/KBC	1
	iii. Gentle blue detergent	Radio citizen	1
2.Foodstuffs	i. Roiko cubes	KTN/KBC	1
	ii. Cooking oil	KTN/KBC	1
	iii. Tea leaves	Radio citizen	1
3.Health/medicines	i. Supanet	KTN/KBC	1
	ii. Eno	KTN/KBC	1
4.Personal hygiene products	i. Diapers	KTN/KBC	1
	ii. Nice and lovely	KTN/KBC	1
5.Electronics	i. Motorola hand held phone	EAS/DN	1
	ii. Sony radio	EAS/DN	1
	iii. Money maker pump	Radio citizen	1
6.Building/construction	i. Bamburi cement	EAS/DN	1
	ii. Mabati samba (Iron sheets)	EAS/DN	1
7. Money/Banking	i. EAP insurance	Radio citizen	1
	ii. One mil. Prize-kiss FM	EAS/DN	1
	iii. Treasure account	EAS/DN	1
8.Education	i. VCT	EAS/DN	1
	ii. RBA	EAS/DN	1
Total			20

Source: Field data

This study adopted three methods of data collection: Content Analysis, audio- recording and observation methods. This analysis brought in qualitative and quantitative data. The data was coded into different gender roles and attributes and the number of each role and attribute was counted and described. A survey through observation entailed viewing images

and reactions of participants to the product advertised and other picture elements that were described literally and symbolically. Spoken, written and visual data was collected.

The eight sampled adverts from the two TV stations were obtained through observation and videotaping the programme in the evening. The best time for television advertisers in Kenya to access the public market is before and after news hours (7 o'clock and 9 o'clock). Keeping with this pattern, one taping block for each channel took place on Monday evening and the other on Friday evening. A Compact Disc (CD) was obtained from the video tape with eight numbered skits and transformed into still pictures by use of a digital camera for analysis. The assumption was that a video-tape was able to capture both sound and the image. The four adverts from Citizen Radio were taken for an in-depth analysis of spoken data. This was because radio adverts compensate for their lack of images by use of an elaborate speech and prosodic features such as stress and intonation. Non-participant observation was used to obtain the images in television and newspaper adverts. In print media, the purposively sampled advertisement sections were cut out, scanned, coded and photographs used for data analysis. The images were viewed and captions that accompany them were read and transcribed for analysis. Notes were made during the observation. The observation done was characterized by a careful definition of units to be observed and analyzed such as the products being advertised; target audience; sex of participants in the advertisements ; role-played by participants and indicators of femininity and masculinity. These data was collected for three months, collated, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics followed by an in depth discussion.

Descriptive statistics in form of frequencies and percentages were used to present data. The approach used in Image Analysis was that of denotation and connotation. *Denotation* implies picture elements that are described factually and objectively. These are meanings about things that are referred to from a material world. For example, this is an image of a male kicking a leather ball around. *Connotation* has to do with meanings from those elements and from a world of ideas. For instance, the above image creates a meaning of aggression because the ball and the foot seem to be kicking into the face of the viewer. The meaning of linguistic items and picture elements was arrived at by categorizing data into different types, and the frequencies of each type was counted up in form of percentages. The percentages generated from tables and figures helped to draw conclusions about gender perspectives in adverts.

4. Results and Discussion: The results are discussed and presented according to the eight categories of advertisements.

4.1 Cleaning Agents: Under this category, the language used in the adverts of *Omo Detergent*, *Gentle Blue Detergent* and *Dettol Liquid* is discussed. In the *Omo Detergent* advert, a man says:

...Take the omo challenge, nothing washes better, nothing washes more. That is a money back guarantee...

In the above *Omo* advert, a man uses commanding language to coerce women into taking up the *Omo* challenge. In this advert, the social gender roles of a man as a decision maker, financial controller and an instructor have been revealed.

The fact that men are financial controllers and final decision makers has also been depicted in two voiceovers of the *Dettol liquid* advert.

Voice over 1: *A family that uses Dettol falls ill less often.*

Voice over 2: *Dettol, be 100% sure.*

It is evident from the above voiceover that it is a father who is responsible for and concerned about taking care of the medical expenses of the family. He knows how often the family falls ill. The second voiceover is a final remark by a man which seems to suggest that men are the final decision makers in a family.

The man admits in the *Gentle blue detergent* advert that:

“Aaa! You’ve heard yourselves. Gentle has stainless enzymes, is powdered and it goes at an affordable price. Buy it today.”

The above utterance implies that the man is the financial controller, authoritative and a decision maker in the family. The man depicted in the advert knows how much the detergent costs and also understands its chemical content. He also explains why the detergent is worth being used. In an African context like Kenya’s, men are believed to be right in most cases and normally make family decisions. Most likely, the language designers of this advert considered this societal role.

In the language of *Omo Detergent*, *Gentle Blue Detergent* and *Dettol Liquid* adverts, the masculine attributes of men are also revealed. Men are considered to be authoritative, powerful, dominant, interested in business and more skilled. The domestic gender roles of cleaning, washing and care-giving are assigned to women. For example, since she is the one who takes up the responsibility of cleaning and washing, she is instructed by a man on how *Omo* ‘does’ it better than other washing detergents. *“Nothing washes better, nothing washes more.....you buy this pack, you get this small sachet free...”*

A woman admits in the *Dettol* advert that she is in charge of the above mentioned chores.

“I use dettol every day. Dettol for washing clothes and cleaning floors, and with dettol, my whole family is protected...”

Mrs. Njoroge on the other hand in the *Gentle blue detergent* advert explains how she uses the detergent to wash all kinds of dirt:

Eee, believe me or not, since I started using it, I’ve not been defeated by difficult dirt, tomato source, mud, engine oil and there isn’t any that washes like gentle.

Apart from gender roles, women in these adverts are depicted negatively in terms of attributes. They are considered to be dependent upon men, submissive and intellectually weak. The domestic gender roles of cleaning, washing and care-giving assigned to women are more demeaning and less challenging than those given to men like decision making and controlling finances.

4.2 Foodstuff: From this category, adverts on *Royco cubes*, *Freshfry* and *Tea leaves* are discussed. In the *Roiko* advert, a bride says:

My grandmother always said you should eat from a pot before your wedding...

The words “eat” and “pot” denote a woman’s gender role of cooking because the two lexical items are related to the verb “cook” and in the African traditional setting, cooking is associated with women.

Voice over 1: Royco cubes have a powerful aroma and taste to any meal.

A man’s role of appreciating women and their work is evident in the above voiceover. He does not take part in the cooking but knows how a meal prepared using *Royco cubes* tastes.

A different slant on the portrayal of the socially constructed gender roles is seen in the *Fresh fry* advert. The dialogue below reveals this:

Son: *Dad, it is your turn to make breakfast (The man is seen preparing breakfast - Samosas and sausages using Fresh fry and serves them with juice to the Family).*

Wife: *Darling, that was wonderful. You wash the dishes darling, we’re going shopping.*

A man is assigned stereotypical gender roles for a woman. He makes breakfast, serves breakfast to the family and washes dishes. A wife takes up the social gender roles of shopping and decision making since she is the one who assigns her husband the domestic duties (washing) to undertake as she leaves for shopping. Advertisers use role-reversal to highlight the changing ideology in the present world with regard to gender roles. She decides for the man what he should do although in a gentle and loving manner:

“ You wash the dishes darling, we’re going shopping.”

A man’s voiceover reiterates, verbally, what is written:

Voice over 1: Fresh fry, life’s full of flavor.

This voiceover connotes a man’s gender role of being a final decision maker about the use of the advertised product.

From the *Tea leaves* advert, a woman says:

I was a nurse because I wanted to serve the community.

A woman has been assigned the gender roles of community service/care and cooking. These roles portray a woman as a person who is loving, caring and sympathetic. Due to such stereotypical attributes, she has taken up a profession that will give her an opportunity to serve and care for others. The relationship between aesthetics and women is also brought out in this advert. Women find pleasure in looking attractive so that they are recognized and admired by others, especially men:

Daughter: *...dad said you look smart in a nurse’ attire.*

The daughter wants to be a nurse because she wants to appear smart like her mother in the uniform of a nurse. The husband in this advert is the decision maker and whatever he says is believed to be right. His daughter trusts and believes in everything that he says,

Daughter... because daddy said you look smart in a nurse' attire."

Children in African societies have been socialized to the fact that their fathers are heads of the households and whatever fathers say is believed to be right and has to be followed without a question. Another role of a man depicted is that of appreciation. The man appreciates how women appear and how well cooked their meals are. In this advert, the husband appreciates how tea entertains and has a good taste. Therefore, the language used in these adverts, apart from the *Fresh fry* advert, to a large extent portray women negatively in terms of their demeaning roles and attributes compared to those of men. Generally, the social responsibilities of cooking, serving, cleaning, washing and care-giving assigned to women are revealed in the language of these adverts.

4.3 Health/Medicine: In this category, the language used in the adverts of *Eno* and *Supanet* is analyzed. In the *Eno* advert, a man's voiceover and the caption says:

Voice over: Eno gets to the stomach ready to act. Use Eno for first relief of stomach upsets. Eno works in seconds.

This language is gender neutral since it does not reveal any gender dimensions in terms of roles and attributes.

In the *Supanet* advert, a woman's voiceover and caption says:

Woman: "Protect your loved ones from the risk of malaria at the looming mosquito with Supanet, the most effective all night mosquito protection. Supanet, sweet dreams."

A woman is depicted as loving, caring and motherly from this advert. She is concerned with the well being of her child whom she protects against the looming mosquitoes by use of *Supanet*. This observation is biased against men who are also capable of giving care and love like in the *VCT* advert where a man admits that he is a loving father. In the image, the man is holding his son passionately.

4.4 Personal hygiene products: This is part of the verbal conversation that emerges between a nurse and a mother in the language of the *Diaper* advert:

Nurse: *When a child doesn't sleep well, he might not eat well, and that is not good development. To develop properly, a baby needs 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night.*

Mother: *(exclaims) 12 hours!*

Nurse: *Yes, and only if not disturbed by wetness and because cloth nappy cannot protect him from wetness. You should put him in a diaper.*

This language reveals that women are assigned the gender roles of child-care and nursing by society. Women do everything possible to ensure that their children develop properly and are comfortable including seeking medical care for them. This is one of the reasons why women are considered to be gentle, loving and caring. Since her child is not feeding and sleeping well, she has gone for consultation from an expert (nurse) to find a solution to these problems. She has been advised to use Diapers instead of nappies.

The caption and a man's voiceover in the *Nice and Lovely* advert says,

"Nourishes and moisturizes dry skin. Nice and Lovely, look and feel naturally beautiful".

The choice of words used in this advert such as: *nourish*, *nice*, *lovely*, *naturally* and *beautiful* connotes feminine attributes. Culturally, women are concerned with beauty and aesthetics. The stylistic device of internal rhyme has been used to emphasize the goodness of *Nice and lovely*. Thus, “*Nourishes and moisturizes...*” sounds musical and therefore, beautiful to the ear, which seems to extend to the body.

In both the *Nice and Lovely* and *Diaper advert* the language used is biased against men. As mentioned earlier, fathers would also love to see their children grow comfortably. For, example, in the *Treasure account advert*, a father struggles to save money for his son on an appropriate account because he wants him to live a comfortable life. Similarly, men would equally want to appear neat and handsome just as women do.

4.5 Money and Banking: Under this category, we have the *Kiss 100 one million shillings prize*, the *treasure account* and the *UAP insurance* adverts. The caption next to the photograph in the *One million shillings prize from Kiss 100* reads:

“WIN 1,000,000/-. JOIN CAROLINE AND NYAMBANE EVERY MORNING.

The caption does not bring out any feminine or masculine gender roles and attributes. The language is therefore gender neutral because the names (proper nouns) used addresses both a man (*NYAMBANE*) and a woman (*CAROLINE*).

The caption next to the photograph in the *Treasure account* advert reads:

“*Not every saving you make for your child is suitable...*”

The written language is gender neutral since it neither elevates nor demeans any of the sexes. However, if it is read in relation to the photograph, the language is biased against women. This is because the picture next to the caption has male characters only and therefore, the pronoun “*you*” seem to refer to a man. It emerges that men are the ones concerned with money and banking issues and therefore, it can be implied that the “*you*” being referred to is the financial controller.

In the *UAP insurance* advert, the conversation below emerges amongst a group of women concerning insurance matters:

1st woman: *Oh, dream on. We can't get a group life insurance. We are unemployed.*

2nd woman: *Yes, we can. My husband says anything is possible.*

Man: *UAP now introduces club member's life. A group life covers for the unemployed, self employed and retired members of clubs and societies.*

1st woman: *Did your husband ever say how we can get the insurance?*

Man: *UAP puts your needs first. For more information just call....UAP insurance, be on the safe side.*

These women are discussing the possibility of them being insured as a group because they are unemployed. One of them assures the rest that it is possible because her husband had said so. The gender role of a man as a financial controller, decision maker and an expert in financial matters is denoted in the language of this advert. The women in the advert are

not employed meaning that men (their husbands) are the ones providing for them. Since men are the decision makers and experts in financial matters, they have to be consulted on financial matters “...my husband says anything is possible.”

The man further explains how UAP insurance operates, something that women are not aware of. Women seek advice from the more informed and wise people who are men. Women are portrayed as people who cannot make important decisions on their own, are timid in matters concerning finances and cannot stand on their own because they want to open a group insurance. This is a wrong assumption that men are always decision makers, financial controllers and experts in the domain of money and banking. Today, many women have also ventured into the field of money and banking either as the owners of some financial institutions, employees, savers or even experts in the same.

4.6 Electronics:

Motorola mobile phone, Sony radio and Money maker pump adverts are discussed under this category. In the *Motorola* advert, across the belly of a young, tall, slender woman in dark goggles, is the phrase:

“*Moto Midnight*”,

When the above phrase is looked at in isolation, it does not reveal any aspects of gender dimension. Therefore, the language is gender neutral since it does not reveal any aspects of gender roles and/or attributes.

The language used in the *Sony advert* on the other hand has a gender dimension. The caption reads:

“*if da bass in your place isn't in your face, da bass patrol will be on your case!*”

Under the photographs the imperative sentence reads:

“*Be da man wid da bass.*”

Masculinity has been marked in this language. Electronics are assumed, in the Kenyan cultural context, to be a male dominated world. This is because men are assumed to be more skilled in handling electronic devices than women. This seems to explain why the booming sound that the *Sony radio* produces is being compared to *bass*, a pitch of voice expected of a man in the world of music. This argument portrays a man as powerful, authoritative and domineering just like the powerful and strong booming sound produced by the *Sony radio*. The *Money maker pump* is an agricultural machine used by farmers to irrigate their crops. Advertisers persuade potential buyers that once the pump is used, farmers are able to harvest more and therefore earn more money from the sale of the produce. In the advert, there is a conversation between two men, who are both farmers. This is part of the conversation:

1st man: Eee Njoroge, prepare yourself we are going to school now

2nd man: I want to ask you Onyango. Why do your crops do well without rains and why have you been able to take all your children to secondary schools?

1st man: (Even you don't know that I have bought those two pieces of Otieno's farm)

It is revealed from their conversation that some of the socially assigned gender roles of a man in a family are to take children to school, pay fees, control farming, buy and own land.

4.7 Building and construction

In the *Nguvu cement* advert, it is written:

“This egg holds the key to building a home that will last. Ubora wa kudumu (the goodness that last).”

When the written language is analyzed in relation to the photograph against the caption of a man, there is an assumption that building and construction is a man’s gender role. In this context, men are being portrayed as strong and skilled because the labour required for construction requires strong and skilled people who use strong material for construction. Okoth (2000) notes that, in contemporary Africa, hegemonic masculinity is defined by physical strength and bravado.

In the *Mabati simba* advert, the caption next to the photo reads:

“This Simba protects. Trust the strength of Simba to keep you safe.”

The lion is used as a trademark to symbolize strength and power alluded to *Mabati simba*. The lion as an animal is strong, tough and powerful, the attributes that are compared to an African man in the Kenyan context as in other African societies. This depicts that men are assigned the gender role of security apart from construction and provision of shelter because of their strength and power.

Building, construction and provision of security and shelter emerge as the dominant gender roles assigned to men in the language of adverts in the category of building and construction. In this case, the language in both cases is gender biased against women because, in real life and even in the contemporary society, there are cases where women equally undertake the above mentioned roles. For example, among the *Maasai* community, building a house is a woman’s role.

4.8 Education: The caption above a man in the *Retirement Benefit Authority’s (RBA)* advert says:

“When I graduated from the medical school, my journey to retirement begun.”

The written sentence alone does not reveal any gender biasness. However, when it is analyzed in relation to the photograph of a male medical doctor, then gender biasness comes in. The personal pronoun “I” can be said to refer to the medical doctor. RBA being a scheme for employees, it is assumed that men are the breadwinners for their families. A man in this advert is a doctor, one of the professions considered prestigious in society. This portrays him as intelligent, skilled and powerful. It is important to know that women medical doctors exist too.

5. Summary of the Results: The objective of the study was to investigate the representation of gender in the language of adverts, and how the representation is marked through femininity and masculinity in relation to the human rights. The tables below give a

summary of the gender role stereotypes and attributes from the language of the selected adverts:

5.1 Gender Role Representation: Gender roles are a set of societal norms dictating what types of behaviors are considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for a person based on their actual or perceived sex. These are usually centered on opposing conceptions of femininity and masculinity, although there are myriad exceptions and variations. The specifics regarding these gendered expectations may vary substantially among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout a range of cultures. Table 2.0 summarizes the dominant gender roles represented among males and females in the language of the identified adverts:

Table- 2.0 Dominant gender roles in language

Gender Roles	M	F
Cleaning	1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Financial controller	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
Care-giving	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Decision making	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
Cooking	1 (33%)	2 (67%)
Appreciating	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
Security	3 (100%)	0 (0)
Building and construction	2 (100%)	0 (0)
Breadwinner	3 (100%)	0 (0)
Total	25	15

Source: Field data

Women and men are associated with specific gender roles as summarized in table 2.0 above. Women take a lead in performing domestic chores in products and services that are culturally female oriented like *Omo*, *Dettol*, *Diapers*, *Roiko* and so on. These products and services are associated with domestic chores like cooking (67%), care giving (75%), and cleaning (75%), among others. Such socially constructed women gender roles are demeaning and less challenging in society. Men characters are not portrayed in socially women assigned roles in the product advertised except in one instance where a man cooks, serves and cleans (Cf *Freshfry* advert). Male main characters are observed participating in culturally male oriented products and services. These include money and banking, construction and electronics. They take up roles such as financial controllers (89%), security (100%), building and construction (100%), decision making (89%) and banking (89%) among others. The gender roles assigned to men are more prestigious, challenging and powerful than those of women.

5.2 Gender attributes representation: Gender attributes are behaviors expected by society of individuals on the basis on being born either female or male. Whereas "sex" is a biological term based on an individual's reproductive organs and genes, "gender" is a

psychological and cultural term. Particular social attributes are associated with femininity and masculinity in the language used. Table 3.0 below gives a summary of the gender attributes from the language of the selected adverts:

Table-3.0 Dominant masculine and feminine attributes

Gender attributes	M	F
Submissive	1(20%)	4 (80%)
Dependent	1(20%)	4 (80%)
Powerful	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
Authoritative	4 (80%)	1(20%)
Loving/caring	4 (40%)	6 (60%)
Beautiful	3 (100%)	0 (0)
Soft and gentle	0 (0)	4 (100%)
Strong	2 (100%)	0 (0)
Clever/skilled	3 (100%)	0 (0)
Total	25 (100)	15 (100)

Source: Field data

The above table reveals that the male gender attributes such as being strong (100%), powerful (80%), independent (80%) and authoritative (80%) uplift, empower and glorify them whereas the feminine attributes such being soft and gentle (100%), submissive (80%) and loving and caring (60%) demean and subordinate women in society. This is a form of linguistic discrimination against women in adverts.

6. Discussion: From the sampled adverts, it is evident that the language of advertising is constructed with a gender bias through gender role stereotyping and gender attributes. The gender roles and attributes in the selected adverts reflect the existing power relations in society. Women, according to the findings, are stereotyped and unified in their common attributes of beauty, love, care, cleanliness, gentleness, submissiveness and dependence. They are mostly seen in domestic settings performing domestic chores like cooking, serving, care-giving and cleaning. Men are assumed to compete and succeed in prestigious roles like controlling finances, decision making, providing security and shelter. In a patriarchal society like Kenya's, male physique is exclusively big, strong and unconquerable while the female is invariably frail and vulnerable to harsh conditions, justifying women's need for men's physical protection (Kabira, 2001). Due to this assumption, men have been associated with attributes such as leadership, power to protect and ability to act skillfully and authoritatively.

Prestigious and challenging occupations like medicine, building and construction, money and banking are taken up by male characters while females take up roles like nursing or house-wives which are considered to be less prestigious and less challenging by society. Having listened to and viewed these adverts, it is seen that the language used does not create a positive, well balanced or rational image of women. The language reflects attitudes

that exclude, degrade and demean women but uplift, empower and glorify men. This is misleading to the growing girl child and women since it may cause them to fail in pursuing careers like medicine and accounting assuming that they are male oriented.

7. Conclusion: Although a degree of progress has been made in advertisers' response to gender equality and equity, our central conclusion is that andocentric bias still exists in the Language of advertising. It is observed that the adverts try as much as possible to be faithful to the gender roles and attributes assigned by society to males and females. We expect to see a new social reality like the incredible change in women's and men's social status, occupation and roles reflected in the language of modern adverts. This is partly because the roles of men and women have changed so much in the recent past. Women are now taking up gender roles and attributes that were initially assigned to men and men are doing the same for the assigned women gender roles. For example, many women are now going out to work, are breadwinners and decision makers for their family and so on. Some men on the other hand are staying at home to carry out domestic chores like cooking, cleaning and care-giving. We expect to see a new social reality of the balance of power and responsibilities reflected in adverts on a large scale.

Therefore, gender bias must be eliminated if we have to uphold to the principles of fairness and equity for all which are the hallmark of any modern society. It is important to free women from the oppressive patriarchal gender roles and traits that society has imposed upon them. This will give women an opportunity to compete equally with men in education, socially and economically, helping eradicate poverty in order to achieve vision 2030.

8. Recommendations: The designers of adverts should be gender sensitive in their use of language because of its wider implications, not only to the growing girl-child and women, but also to young boys' views and attitudes in general. Okoth (2000) notes that, during adolescence, gender plays a key part in social life. At this stage, dominant gender images and roles in mass media may tend to reinforce cultural expectations amongst adolescents. Since mentalities and social attitudes cannot be changed only by legislation, constant sensitization of the mass (both male and female) through adverts should be reinforced. This should be an agenda as the world looks forward to attaining the vision of education for sustainable development.

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