Gender stereotypes in Jordanian commercial advertisements: Translation and ideology

Estereotipos de género en los anuncios comerciales de Jordania: Traducción e ideología

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Abstract: In Jordanian society, advertisements play a significant role in shaping the perception of women around the world. This study examines the depiction of women in commercial advertisements to expose embedded misogyny in advertising campaigns circulated in Jordan. Street and social media Arabic advertisements from 2014 to 2022 were collected and shared with twenty-two novice and experienced translators in Jordan via a digital survey. The study assesses how translators' choices are influenced by the source text's ideology. Analysis shows translators, regardless of experience, favor gender-neutral translations, ensuring the subversion of stereotypes. It emphasizes that adhering to literal translation risks endorsing offensive stereotypes and sexism. This highlights the importance of adopting a functional approach to translation to counteract stereotypical portrayals of women in advertising.

Keywords: Advertising translation; ideology; street advertising; social media advertising; gender stereotypes.

Resumen: En la sociedad jordana, la publicidad desempeña un papel clave en la formación de la percepción de la mujer en el mundo. Este estudio examina la representación de la mujer en los anuncios comerciales para exponer la misoginia arraigada en las campañas publicitarias que circulan en Jordania. Se recopilaron anuncios árabes en la calle y en las redes sociales de 2014 a 2022 y se compartieron con veintidós traductores noveles y experimentados de Jordania a través de una encuesta digital. El estudio evalúa cómo la ideología del texto de origen influye en las decisiones de los traductores al inglés. El análisis muestra que los traductores, independientemente de su experiencia, favorecen las traducciones neutras desde el punto de vista del género, lo que garantiza la subversión de los estereotipos. Destaca que adherirse a la traducción literal entraña el riesgo de respaldar estereotipos ofensivos y sexismo. Esto pone de relieve la importancia de adoptar un enfoque funcional de la traducción para contrarrestar las representaciones estereotipadas de la mujer en la publicidad.

Palabras clave: Traducción publicitaria; ideología; publicidad callejera; publicidad en las redes sociales; estereotipos de género.

INTRODUCTION

Beyond their function of promoting products and services, advertisements serve as mirrors reflecting current cultural trends and societal structures; they embody ideologies. Williamson (2010) claims that advertising discourse plays a pivotal role in shaping identities. She emphasizes that advertising functions as ideological brainwashing and mirrors everyday reality. In their annual report (2022), the 'Economic and Social Council of Jordan and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women' emphasizes the impact of the media on perpetuating stereotypical images of women. Participants in the

study assert that media outlets inadequately contribute to promoting gender equality or addressing women's issues. Some responses in their study go further, suggesting that commercial advertisements exploit and commodify women's bodies, asserting that the media does not do justice to women. Conversely, other participants advocate for a positive role for the media in empowering women through the promotion of series, lectures, seminars, and comprehensive coverage across various media channels. These practices, they suggest, would contribute to reshaping the status of women in social life and redistributing roles between women and men to achieve social equity.

Throughout history, the study of women in the media has been inherently connected to the feminist movement, which promotes genuine representations of gender roles and the female body. Katharina Lindner (2004) conducts a thorough study "Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002" that analyzes 1,374 print magazine advertisements. Lindner's research reveals that 78% of those advertisements feature stereotypical depictions of women, portraying them as mentally absent and vulnerable. Despite societal progress since the Women's Movement, these stereotypes persist, indicating a failure in media policies to support women's advancement. Lindner (2004) argues that this perpetuation of stereotypes reinforces women's dependence on men rather than promoting empowerment, contributing to violence against women and hindering their progress in society.

Concurrently, Kordrostamia and Laczniak (2021) employ cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling to analyze a plethora of current print advertisements. Their findings show the prevalence of stereotypical portrayals, depicting women as incompetent and vulnerable, emphasizing traditional roles as wives, mothers, lovers, and homemakers. Despite some progress in women claiming top positions as CEOs and politicians, there remains a stark disparity in occupational roles between men and women. In sum, the portrayal of women in the media fails to depict their struggle to break through the glass ceiling and assert their rights. Instead, advertisements perpetuate stereotypes, presenting women as vulnerable and reliant on male figures, and undermining their sense of empowerment.

These findings underscore the influence of women's portrayal in advertisements on societal perceptions of gender roles. Previous studies primarily focused on overt forms of advertising where the message is explicit and obvious. However, the study conducted by Reichl et al. (2018)

explores latent and nonobvious forms of sexism in print advertisements and their impact on gender perception, specifically examining whether the sexist advertisements contribute to increased sexual assault and abuse towards women. Their findings indicate that latent sexual content in advertisements not only fosters acceptance of sexual assault but also leads to a more insidious and harmful form of sexism. In alignment with these perspectives, our study focuses on latent sexism, aiming to uncover its nuanced manifestations in advertising and its potential implications for societal perceptions and behaviors related to gender.

While numerous studies have examined women's portrayal in commercial advertisements, a major gap exists in the exploration of digital advertisements, with most research focusing on print advertisements. In the area of digital advertisements, scholarship often centers on the sexual depiction of women. Farrell (1995) delves into the nuanced relationship between the feminist movement and commercial media.

Despite evident progress, she notes that the media still frames women's issues and the feminist movement in a manner that accommodates antifeminist viewpoints. She further emphasizes the vital role of media in shaping the public's understanding of feminism, which means that it can serve as a catalyst for renewed activism. Gerbner et al. (2002) explore the profound impact of television on audience conceptions and actions that are related to gender, minority, and age-role stereotypes. Their research reveals that exposure to gender stereotypes in advertising can significantly influence attitudes toward these stereotypes. Notably, individuals exposed to advertisements depicting women in stereotypical roles exhibited notably more negative attitudes, particularly regarding women's management skills, compared to those exposed to advertisements portraying women in professional roles that required such skills.

In the realm of advertising translation, the process is far from surface-level simplicity; instead, it proves to be complex and labor-intensive. This complexity is amplified by the necessity to navigate the social norms inherent in advertising. Culture, a paramount factor in persuasive advertisements, exerts a profound influence on societies, shaping them and influencing their "shared values" (Abokhoza et al., 2019).

Given its persuasive power, advertising molds cultural values and influences lifestyles by employing captivating visuals and persuasive language aimed at boosting sales. In addition, advertising assumes a

significant role in shaping our perceptions of gender roles. For advertisements to authentically mirror our communities and effectively promote services and products, it becomes imperative that they advocate for a non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media. In her paper "The Translation of Gender Stereotypes in Advertising," Nardi (2011) explores how gendered body representations and gender metaphors are translated as persuasive tools. She highlights the role of translators as "social agents" in discussing gender-related themes in advertising (p. 117). Translation entails a profound responsibility toward the community, it transcends the mere transference of words from one language to another.

When translating influential texts such as media and commercial materials, which have a remarkable impact on a wide range of audiences, it becomes imperative for translators to assume active roles. As Katan (1999) highlights, the translator serves as a 'cultural mediator,' playing an active role within the community. Through this involvement, the translator's agency extends to contributing to social change.

If translation is a form of interpretation, then the translator's agency in opting for functional approaches in translation would reflect their rationale for a communicative action that subverts stereotypes. While all the advertisements under study have been criticized on social media for perpetuating stereotypes, the study aims to delve into the survey participants' translations to ascertain whether they uphold the ideology of the source text (ST) or diverge from it. When translation is understood as a form of interpretation, the translation purpose determines the translator's choices (Nord, 2006). Nord believes that "almost any decision in translation is consciously or unconsciously guided by ideological criteria" (2003, p. 111). Therefore, it may be wise to take a prospective view of translation as being an activity geared toward a communicative aim or purpose. Every translation is intended to achieve a particular communicative purpose *vis-à-vis* the target audience, and if we analyze who the target audience will be and what they may need and expect, we might be better able to deliver a product that suits their needs and expectations.

The problem with a literal translation is that it would reinforce existing misogynist images. Our research endeavors to make a significant contribution to gender portrayal in the media sphere. We aim to bring attention to the misogynistic and sexist commercial (street and social media) advertisements prevalent in Jordan and advocate for change through translation.

1. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While the examination of female stereotypes in advertising has received a lot of attention in academia, our current research is designed to make a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge. Broadly surveying earlier studies (Courtney and Whipple, 1983; Lysonski, 1985; Kilbourne, 1999; Cortese, 1999; and Lazar, 2006), it becomes apparent that advertising often promotes sexist and distorted body image ideals. The literature extensively discusses the sexual depiction of women in the marketing industry.

However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has ever utilized Skopos Theory (Vermeer, 1989) and Ideology to analyze street and social media Arabic advertisements and their English translations. This represents a remarkable gap in the existing research and highlights a compelling need for exploration in this area. Our research aims to provide a thorough analysis of the current state of the misuse of women's images for marketing purposes and the role of translation in challenging such distorted images. The insights gained from this study will not only benefit researchers in academia but also assist company owners in shaping their future marketing strategies.

Previous studies have thoroughly analyzed women's depiction in print advertisements, delving into the roles they play in the community, their behaviors, activities, and how they are portrayed over time. Existing literature (Pollay, 1986; and Plakoyiannaki and Zotos, 2009) indicates a tendency in advertising to present women in clichéd, traditional, and decorative roles that diminish their abilities and potential. Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) further assert that advertising emphasizes the woman's place in the kitchen, her dependence on a man, and her perceived inability to make significant decisions. A longitudinal study by Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) spanning from 1958 to 1970 and 1972 reveals a predominant portrayal of women in passive and submissive roles.

Our current research contributes to the existing body of work on women's portrayal in the marketing industry. However, it diverges by focusing on the ideological perception of covert sexism in street and social media advertising through the lens of translation. The research, specifically, addresses the following:

1. How have gender-biased advertisements been received on social media?

2. How does translation reinforce or challenge women's stereotypical representation in advertisements in Jordan?

3. Have there been any adaptations to manage the ideology of the ST?

2. TRANSLATION OF IDEOLOGY IN ADVERTISING

The exploration of ideology in translation has become a predominant focus in research. Scholars such as Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) explore the concept of translation as a type of rewriting, examining ideology in literature and its correlation with the choices made by a translator. Tymoczko (2003) claims that "[s]ome of the most searching and revealing discussions of translation in the last decade have focused on questions of ideology…there has been a productive, ongoing academic dialogue about various facets of the issue, extending for years now, with contributions from people on all parts of the globe" (p. 181).

Indeed, large-scale research has been conducted on the interplay between ideology and translation; however, little attention has been given to the nuanced manner in which ideologies are embedded in the ST. Hatim and Mason (1997) draw a crucial distinction between the translation of ideology and the ideology of translation. The former involves the translator managing the existing ideology within the ST while the latter analyzes the impact of the translator's ideology on translation. They highlight the concept of ideology and explore strategies for navigating the author's ideological framework.

The ideology in advertising language may stem from collective consciousness and assumptions about various societal values related to religion, politics, race, or gender. Therefore, translating advertisements demands a delicate balance, preserving both the intent and the functional aspects of the ST. Advertisements play a persuasive role, and their translation must align with the function or "Skopos" of the text (Vermeer, 1989). The translator's approach hinges on the Skopos. As the goal is to persuade consumers to purchase a product, the translator must recreate the advertisement to influence and persuade the target customer within a

culturally specific context. In this area, the translator is not merely a faithful mediator between two texts; instead, navigating the ideology embedded in the text becomes a formidable challenge. In this context, the significance of the ST diminishes drastically when compared to other genres of text. In practical terms, achieving functional equivalence in advertising translation often involves adapting the text by omitting, adding, explaining, or replacing linguistic terms and visual elements.

Similarly, Bouziane (2016) explores the application of Skopos theory in translating English online advertisements into Arabic. She asserts that Skopos theory serves in "localizing adverts and adjusting them according to local norms" (p. 145) to maintain communication between advertisers and customers. Along the same lines, Zhu (2016) focuses on the indispensability of advertising in the market economy for conveying information to the public. He argues against a strict adherence to fidelity, stating that traditional methods alone no longer serve advertising well. Given that advertising language should be readable, catchy, clear, and convincing, translating advertisements requires content to maintain the marketing function of the ST in diverse markets. This prompts a discussion on the utilization of transcreation or foreign-language copywriting in marketing.

In her examination of ideology of the text and its impact on transcreating English advertisements into Arabic, Al-Omar (2020) deliberately adopts the term 'transcreation' over 'translation.' She highlights that this choice is not merely semantic; rather, it highlights the nuanced nature of advertising translation, which demands both adaptation and creativity to align with the expectations of the target consumers. Using 'transcreation' goes beyond a mere linguistic shift; it embodies the translator's visibility and agency. The translator, in the realm of transcreation, makes essential adjustments to both linguistic and visual elements, addressing aspects that could challenge the prevailing ideology of the ST or, conversely, reinforce it.

3. METHODOLOGY

To comprehensively understand the state of gender equality in Jordanian media, a qualitative research method is used. This involves a detailed analysis of women's misrepresentation in various commercial

street and social media advertisements. An online survey was circulated to gauge how translators perceive and handle such sexist content. After analyzing participants' feedback on sexist language in Arabic advertising, we proceed to analyze the translation approaches employed in the English version.

The analysis aims to determine whether translators contribute to perpetuating stereotypical gender roles or adopt a creative, gender-neutral rendering of Arabic advertisements. The broader discussion encompasses gender perspectives in social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions, addressing issues like gender-based violence, stereotypical role portrayals, women's limited political participation, and the impact of customs, traditions, and social norms.

This study quantifies gender-based discrimination embedded in social norms, particularly evident in sexist advertisements across various social media platforms. This study carries out a longitudinal analysis to navigate the evolving depiction of women in street and social media advertisements. Focusing on Jordanian women's portrayal in commercial advertisements posted on social media, the study utilizes iconographic material to delve into both visual and linguistic components. This paper stands as a cornerstone for the development community and media policymakers, providing profound insights to rectify the pervasive misrepresentation of women on online platforms.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey comprises three primary segments: a demographic section, inquiries pertaining to the ST (the advertisements), and questions addressing the target text (the translations). The initial segment of the survey findings is elucidated through graphical representations, facilitating a seamless comprehension of the data while emphasizing comparisons between the two streams within each graph.

Figure 1 presents the age distribution of the participants, revealing a noteworthy concentration in the 22-30 age group, signifying the predominant demographic. Conversely, individuals aged 46 years or older constitute the least represented category within the surveyed population.
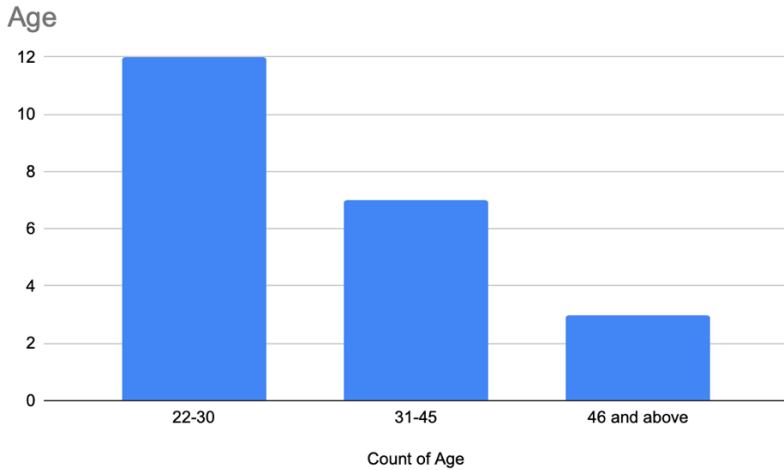
Figure 1. Age

Figure 2 provides insights into the years of translation experience within the study population. Given that a significant portion of participants falls under the age of 31, the prevailing option for years of experience is prominently less than a year, followed closely by the range of 1 to 5 years, constituting 36% and 32% of the responses, respectively.
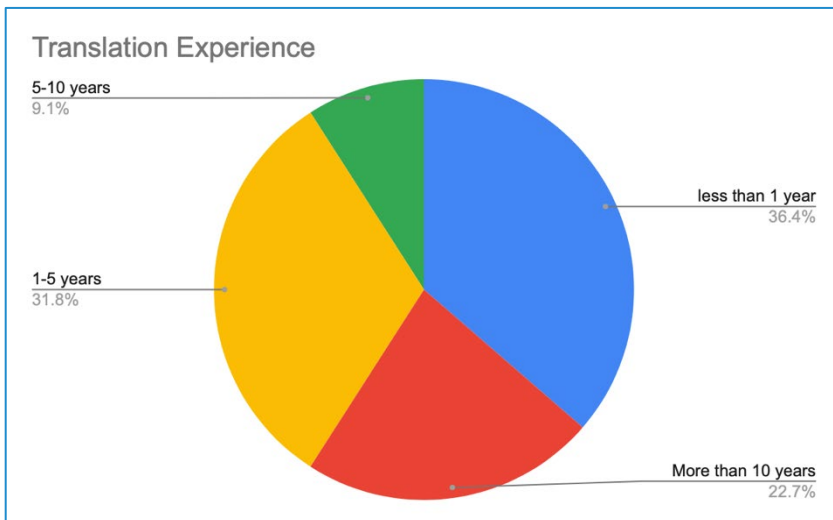
Figure 2. Years of experience

As depicted in Figure 3, a notable portion of the study population engages in freelance work, primarily driven by the prevalent perception of translation as part-time or supplementary work. Many individuals undertake translation alongside their primary job responsibilities. Given that a significant number of participants are in their twenties or are recent graduates, the prevailing occupational preference is that of a freelance translator. To address the economic dimension of translating advertisements, international companies might opt to hire novice translators for the task. These translators, who lack expertise in marketing translation, may simply perform a literal translation of the original advertising content, inadvertently leading to a loss of the intended auditory and pragmatic effects.

Figure 3. Workplace

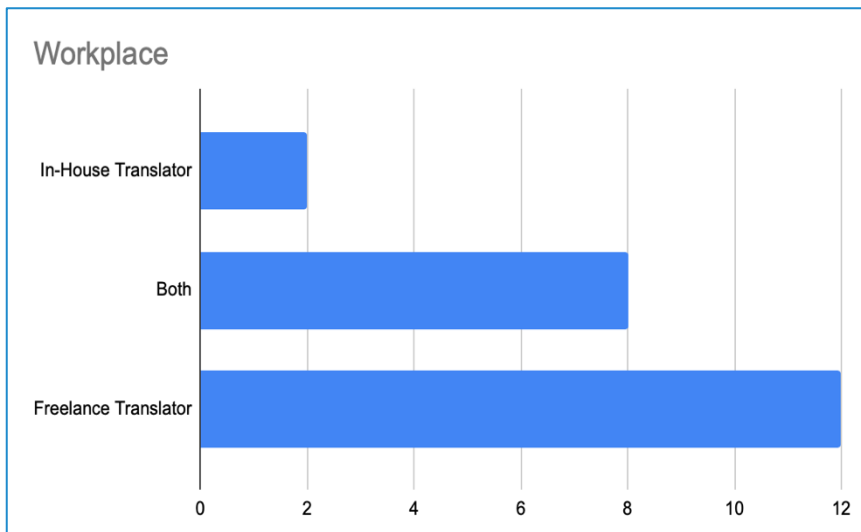The study data unequivocally refutes simplistic assertions regarding gender disparities in translating advertisements, at least within the scope of this study's items. Broadly, female participants tend to use gender-neutral language when translating the advertisements under study. The dataset is heterogeneous, with males comprising 54.5% and females constituting 45.5% of the total as illustrated in Figure 4.
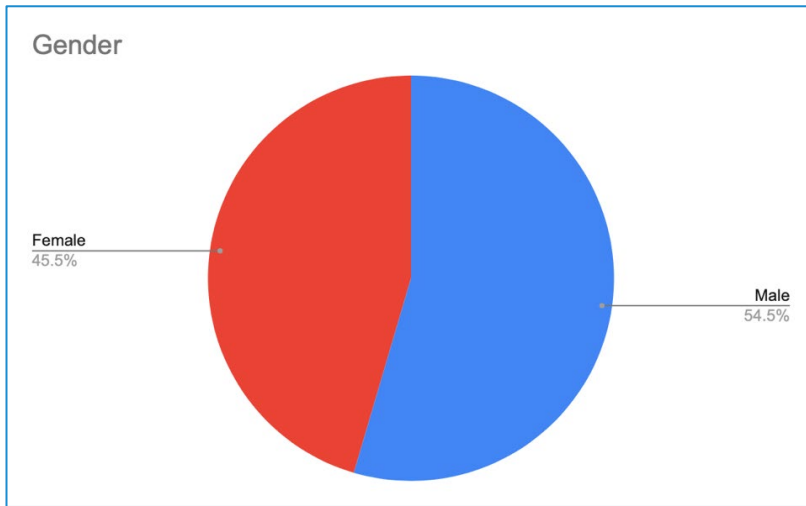
Figure 4. Gender

Moving to the analysis of the reception of the ST itself (the advertisements), the majority of participants perceive most advertisements as lacking innovation, unsuccessful, unacceptable, and lacking humor, as depicted in Table 1. The synthesis of "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" forms a single category, mirroring the synthesis of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree." The remaining percentage constitutes the neutral stance. Delving into the percentage breakdown for each category across advertisements 2-5, a substantial number of participants express disagreement regarding their innovativeness, with percentages of 55%, 68%, 77%, and 73% respectively. Likewise, the majority deems these advertisements unsuccessful, with percentages of 50%, 77%, 77%, and 82% respectively. On a related note, the two columns for each category along with the neutral stance (which was not demonstrated in the table) make up the 100%. Similar trends are observed in the third category, acceptability. For instance, 80% find the 2nd advertisement unacceptable, while 90% find the 3rd, 5th, and 6th advertisements unacceptable. The 4th advertisement follows suit, with 60% of participants finding it unacceptable. However, the 1st advertisement reveals a contrasting perspective. Most individuals find it innovative, successful, and acceptable.

Table 1. Second part of the survey (ST /Advertisements)

Ad. No.	Innovative		Successful		Acceptable	
	Agree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**
Ad. 1	55%	23%	45%	18%	50%	40%
Ad. 2	32%	55%	23%	50%	10%	80%
Ad. 3	32%	68%	14%	77%	0%	90%
Ad. 4	23%	77%	14%	77%	40%	60%
Ad. 5	27%	73%	9%	82%	10%	90%
Ad. 6	36%	23%	18%	46%	10%	90%
Ad. 7	59%	27%	50%	30%	60%	40%

Table 1 (continued). Second part of the survey (ST/Advertisements)

Ad. No.	Humorous		Gender-biased	
	Agree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**
Ad. 1	32%	36%	27%	41%
Ad. 2	27%	55%	59%	32%
Ad. 3	32%	64%	64%	23%
Ad. 4	18%	82%	55%	37%
Ad. 5	32%	68%	59%	27%
Ad. 6	9%	77%	59%	18%
Ad. 7	32%	27%	41%	32%

Shifting from the linguistic component to the visual component, most participants, as indicated in Table 2, express a desire to alter the visuals. For the 1st and 3rd advertisements, 54.5% express a preference for visual changes, while for the 2nd advertisement, the figure rises to 68%. The inclination to change visuals intensifies for the 4th and 6th advertisements with 77% expressing a desire for modifications. Conversely, in the case of the 5th and 7th advertisements, 54.5% and 77%, respectively, lean towards maintaining the existing visuals without alteration.

Table 2. Advertising visuals

Would you like to change the visuals in the advertisement?		
Ad. No.	**Yes**	**No**
Ad. 1	54.5%	45.5%
Ad. 2	68%	32%
Ad. 3	54.5%	45.5%
Ad. 4	77%	23%
Ad. 5	45.5%	54.5%
Ad. 6	77%	23%
Ad. 7	23%	77%

Proceeding to the analysis of the translations, the final segment of the survey discerns how participants exercise agency in managing the ideology of the ST. This is reflected in their choice of whether to adopt a gender-neutral translation or to preserve the ideology of the ST by choosing a gender-biased translation.

Table 3. Third part of the survey (Translations)

Ad. No.	Gender-neutral (functional)	Gender-biased (literal)	Other translations
Ad. 1/a	50%	18%	32% (functional)
Ad. 1/b	77%	23%	-
Ad. 1/c	82%	14%	4% (functional)
Ad. 2	50%	23%	15% (functional) 12% (literal)
Ad. 3	41%	50%	9% (literal)
Ad. 4	46%	23%	23% (literal) 8% (functional)
Ad. 5	41%	45%	14% (literal)
Ad. 6	50%	5%	14% (literal) 31 (functional)
Ad. 7	32%	46%	22% (literal)

As shown in Table 3, the prevailing choice among most participants is to opt for the gender-neutral option when translating the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 6th advertisements. However, a notable departure occurs with the 3rd advertisement, where half of the survey population leans towards the gender-biased option. Even when they propose their own translations, around 9% put forth literal biased translations. For the 5th advertisement, 45% of the participants choose the gender-biased option with 14% proposing literal translations. Turning to the last advertisement, 46% opt for a gender-biased translation with 22% proposing a literal gender-biased translation.
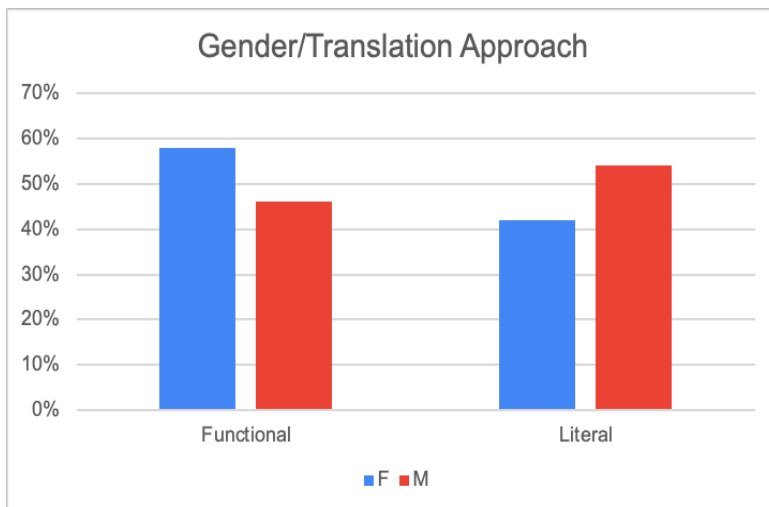
Figure 5. Gender/Translation approach

Among the participants, 58% of the females opt for functional translation, while 54% of the males tend to favor literal translation.

5. DISCUSSION

The seven advertisements under study are divided into two primary categories: street advertising and social media advertising. Considering the diverse narratives embedded in these advertisements, they were further organized into distinct thematic categories; marriage, food imagery, car analogy, and recycling. Notably, each category harbors an underlying layer of sexism veiled in humor. A comprehensive linguistic and visual

analysis was undertaken to unveil the nuanced dimensions of these advertisements and assess their reception within society. Furthermore, these advertisements were examined through the lens of translation, highlighting the complexity of conveying their underlying ideologies. This holistic approach provides a profound understanding of the multifaceted consequences of these advertisements, elucidating how they shape and reflect societal norms and values.

Moving to reception, the translators' reception aligns with the general public's perspective circulating on social media platforms, except for the first advertisement, where most translators did not see it as sexist. This disparity may be attributed to the difference in how individuals receive advertisements on street billboards and on social media compared to those in a survey. On billboards and social media, the audience's focus is primarily on the visual elements, and it is evident that the visual aspect of the first advertisement conveys stereotypes. However, in the survey, the design may influence readers to pay more attention to the linguistic components rather than to the visuals. In this specific advertisement, bias in the linguistic content is not as prominent as in the visuals due to the disparity in gender pronouns between Arabic and English. Visuals are processed more quickly by the general audience, contributing to their perception of bias.

A noteworthy issue emerges regarding the gender of the translator. Most female participants tend to opt for functional translation, whereas a significant number of male participants lean towards literal translation. This indicates that female translators demonstrate a heightened awareness of biases in advertisements and frequently exercise their agency to confront stereotypes through making some modifications to the text.

5.1. Exploring sexism in Jordanian street advertising

The first set of advertisements is from the domain of street advertising, an approach that harnesses outdoor promotional strategies in public spaces. Street advertising takes on diverse forms, including billboards, posters, street art installations, and transit advertising. Each of these mediums serves as a canvas for various companies to disseminate their messages and promote their products or services.

5.1.1. Advertisement (1) promoted by Toyota Motor Corporation

The first advertisement is made of three billboards created by Toyota Motor Corporation which appeared on the streets of the capital Amman during Valentine's Day in February 2020. The visual content remained consistent across the three billboards, featuring a red rose in the background. However, the distinction was in the linguistic content presented in Arabic: Figure 6 (a) "Do you not like her? #changeher;" Figure 6 (b) "Do you feel there is one more beautiful than her? #changeher;" and Figure 6 (c) "Is she costing you a lot of money? #changeher."

(a)   (b)   (c)
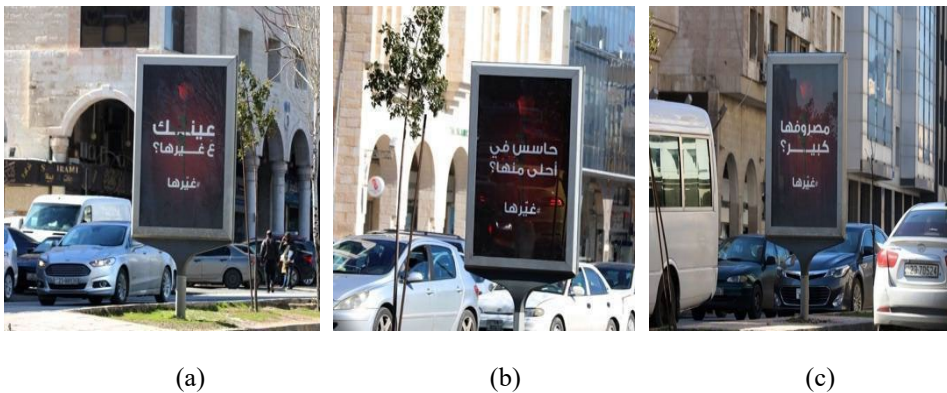
Figure 6. Three billboards promoted by Toyota Motor Corporation in 2020

The billboards caused an uproar within the Jordanian public which led the company to issue a statement clarifying that the advertisement was about Toyota cars and not women. The three advertisements in Figure (6) were replaced with a new billboard as illustrated in Figure (7), stating "It's a car! No need to argue over it. #changeit." Despite the company's clarification, the advertisement with its 'double meaning' still objectifies and commodifies women. Khader, president of the "Global Institute Executive", states: "We reject the private sector's attempts to depict women as a commodity that should be exchanged or traded in return for profit."[1]

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[1] The *Jordan Times* article "'Sexist" car advertisement draws ire': retrieved on 8/7/2023 from https://jordantimes.com /news/local/sexist-car-advertisement-draws-ire

Nims, the Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), also criticizes the advertisement and notes that it is "not only humiliating women but also men and the marriage relationship between them by showing that men can change their wives whenever they are bored with them."

Numerous English and Arabic posts on X (formerly known as Twitter) criticized the advertisement, decrying its overtly sexist and inappropriate portrayal of women. Zabalawi, a UN Woman, expressed her disapproval on February 18, 2020, in both English and Arabic, denouncing the campaign and its norms.[2]

The translators in our study perceive billboards differently than the general public on social media. While most of the translators view them as innovative and acceptable, as illustrated in Table 2, they raise questions about whether the billboards contain covert sexism, masked by the commercial nature designed to evoke emotional responses through humor.

It is worth noting that even though the billboards were not perceived as gender-biased, a significant portion of the translators went for the gender-neutral (functional) translation strategy for their translations of the three billboards:

1. 'Eyes drawn elsewhere? #ChangeIt' (billboard 1(a));

2. 'Your wallet feeling the pinch? #ChangeIt' (billboard 1(b));

3. and 'Spotlights elsewhere? Time for a switch-up! #ChangeIt' (billboard 1(c)).

In contrast, only a minority opted for a gender-biased (literal) translation; 'She no longer catches your eyes? #TimeForAChange' (billboard 1(a)), 'Is she high-maintenance? #TimeForAChange' (billboard 1(b)), 'Not finding her the prettiest? #TimeForAChange' (billboard 1(c)).

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[2] Zabalawi posted on February 18, "A disrespectful campaign deserves a disrespectful comeback! #غيرها #ToyotaMotorCorp #shame" with three new linguistic contents in Arabic for each billboard using the masculine form. She also expressed her disapproval in a follow-up post on X, "I think you need to learn business ethics before #marketing! Especially for a well-known, international brand like #Toyota #ToyotaMotorCorp such a disrespectful, ugly campaign. Bad marketing is NOT ALWAYS good marketing, especially when it's unethical #shame #غيرها."

Alternative translations that favored the functional approach for the billboards also came into play.

Figure 7. A fourth billboard created by Toyota Motor Corporation in response to the negative attitude of the Jordanian public toward the three billboards in Figure 6

The ideology of the text in advertisement (1) embodies the 'ideology of substitution' or the 'ideology' of replacement'. Within this framework, women are objectified by drawing comparisons to inanimate objects, suggesting that they can be easily replaced by another entity. The majority of the participants did not maintain the ideology of the ST and conveyed the Arabic linguistic content of the billboards in a gender-neutral translation. The rationale of their approach to the translation might be that the pronoun 'her' in the three advertisements was unclear as at first instance, it was understood to refer to 'women', creating a challenge in translation. Unlike English, Arabic is a gendered language, and a 'car' in Arabic takes the feminine form. In Arabic, the attached pronoun "ها" functions as both an object and a feminine pronoun. In English, we use distinct pronouns for these functions. Consequently, the ideology and the sexist language in the ST may not be overt, unlike the explicit nature of the suggested English translation. This distinction could explain why translators lean towards an alternative translation and opt for a gender-neutral approach.

This analogy between women and cars has also arisen on numerous occasions, as exemplified by a sticker found on the rear window of a taxi in Amman shown in Figure 8. It stated, " ولا . . . اصرف عليها بنزين وانبسط [literal translation: Spend money for fuel and have اصرف عليها مكياج وانجلط"

fun... instead of spending on her makeup and then having a stroke]. This comparison, which draws parallels between women and automobiles, has been recurrent, and the idea of substitution or replacement has been embraced, as evident in the Toyota billboards featuring the hashtag #ChangeIt.

Figure 8. Sticker on the rear window of a taxi spotted in Amman in 2022

5.1.2. Advertisement (2) promoted by 'Jeeny' Transportation Company

Figure 9. Billboard promoted by 'Jeeny' Transportation Company

Another billboard advertisement was created by 'Jeeny,' formerly known as Easy Taxi, a Middle Eastern transportation company headquartered in Riyadh, KSA, which was launched in 2014. This advertisement faced criticism for misusing gender stereotypes to promote their service in Amman in 2017 and featured a two-part message on how to hail a ride. In the first message, they suggested "Charm them with your beauty" with an 'X' sign underneath, a playful way to depict how one can hail a yellow taxi in Jordan. In the second image, the company encouraged viewers to use the application with the message "Take 'Easy'" and a checkmark. The advertisement depicted a man showing his hairy legs to hail a ride, but the man's face is not visible. This portrayal resembled scenes from movies where women entice taxi drivers to stop by showing some leg. One incident is in 'Sex in the City 2' where Carrie Bradshaw hails a taxi in Abu Dhabi by revealing part of her leg while wearing an *abaya* (a long dark-colored loose cloak worn by Muslim women). The *Jordan Times*, a Jordanian magazine, published an article on July 12, 2017, discussing the controversy among taxi drivers who found the advertisement "insulting' and "inappropriate."[3] Following the backlash, the ridesharing company issued an apology and removed the ad.

In contrast to the first Toyota advertisement that we discussed earlier, most of the participants in the survey were able to detect the underlying sexism and considered the 3rd advertisement to be gender biased. When it came to translating the message, half of the participants favored a gender-neutral (functional) approach, as exemplified by the translation "Need a Lift? Yell 'Taxi!' or 'Easy' it!" Some opt for a gender-biased (literal) translation strategy, characterized by translations such as "Flagging a Ride, 'Flaunt Your Hairy Legs' or 'Go Easy'." Notably, some participants suggested alternative functional translations. It is important to note that the individual featured in the billboard for this specific advertisement appeared to be male, which suggests that visual irony was employed to make the advertisement look innovative and successful, as perceived by most participants (as shown in the survey results). However, this does not make it acceptable or inoffensive. Most participants agreed that it remains gender-biased and inappropriate. In both the visual and linguistic dimensions of our analysis, most survey participants propose a change,

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[3] The *Jordan Times* article 'Taxi drivers protest 'insulting' Easy Taxi advertisement' (2017) retrieved on 8/7/2023 from https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/taxi-drivers-protest-insulting%E2%80%99-easy-taxi-advertisement

deeming the current visual representation inappropriate and similarly opting for a gender-neutral translation (linguistic dimension).

5.1.3. Advertisement (3) promoted by Osama Rice

Figure 10. Poster on the back of a public bus promoted by Osama Rice

The third advertisement is transit advertising (advertisements on buses, taxis, or trams) promoted by Ankara Resources Trading Company in Jordan which sells a basmati rice brand called 'Osama Rice'. The advertisement was released in March 2022 as a poster on public buses in the capital Amman and was immediately criticized by the Jordanian public on social media. The message of the advertisement "We promise you won't get divorced with Osama Rice" targets wives, arguing that they will guarantee safety in marriage if they use Osama basmati rice. Such a message is sexist as safety in marriage should not be determined by the quality or type of rice, nor by cooking. Jordanians reacted negatively and protests rose against the misogyny in the displayed advertisement.

Organizations such as the Feminist Movement in Jordan condemned the advertisement and encouraged boycotting the company on X.[4] After

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[4] On X, it posted "The Jordanian creativity in marketing!! Every time, they come up with an advertisement on juice, shawarma, a car, etc., always in the same way. We hope you reach out to them and teach them appropriate marketing methods. Do so without insults

the backlash and many posts condemning the advertisement on social media platforms and calling out the double meaning of masculine promotion in the advertisement as offensive to women and the foundations of family, the company decided to remove it from billboards and public buses. Throughout history, we have witnessed a multitude of advertisements that have confined women to the kitchen and culinary duties. This deeply ingrained ideology continues to contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypical gender roles, thereby fortifying a patriarchal society.

Remarkably, most of the study's participants are able to recognize such sexism and comment that the advertisement is inappropriate and unsuitable for the target language (TL) audience.[5] Even though the participants are able to recognize the embedded ideology of the advertisement, the majority has chosen a gender-biased (literal) translation, "Osama Rice: Your Recipe for a Divorce-Free Life, Dear Wife!" and less than half opt for the gender-neutral (functional) approach "Osama Rice: One Grain, Endless Love!"

Why do translators choose a gender-biased translation? Is it an intentional decision to perpetuate the ideology of the ST? Or is the ideology of the ST overlooked as the sexist language is implicit? The sexist approach in advertising where a connection to women is seen as enhancing sales should be discontinued.

Figure 11 presents a similar advertisement captured recently in October 2023 in Al-Karak City, Jordan. This billboard, promoted by Tiger Rice, mirrors a similar theme to the advertisement promoted by Osama Rice. It portrays half of a woman's face and says: my smile is incomplete without Tiger Rice. This billboard also perpetuates gender stereotypes that confine women to traditional cooking roles. It remains imperative to challenge and confront the harmful narratives that persist in Jordanian marketing.

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so that they don't complain about you. We have aged talking about the effect of gender jokes in normalizing violence against women. #Boycott_Osama_Rice."

[5] One comment said, "the fact that they associate something as simple as cooking with something as important as a successful marriage is extremely embarrassing." Another participant added, "this advertisement promotes a culture of hostility and disrespect towards women."

Figure 11. Billboard promoted by Tiger Rice spotted in Al-Karak City, Jordan

5.1.4. Advertisement (4) promoted by the Social Security Corporation (SSC)

Figure 12. Billboard promoted by the SSC

The fourth advertisement, sponsored by the SSC in 2006, conveys a message that gravely undermines the status of women. It does so by likening a woman to a mere commodity, one that can be guaranteed and, rather shockingly, increases her prospects of marriage through signing up for Social Security retirement benefits.

The advertisement says, "He took me guaranteed." The Corporation's goal is to boost the enrollment of participants; however, their marketing strategy backfired. The advertisement faced swift and widespread condemnation shortly after its release. Musa Al-Subaihi, the former spokesperson for the SSC, issued a statement in 2014 to address this controversy. He informed the media that the advertisement had been taken down from billboards in 2006, presumably in response to the initial backlash.[6]

Nevertheless, in 2014, new images of the advertisement resurfaced on social media platforms, reigniting the public's condemnation of the message it conveyed. This unexpected revival of the controversy served as a stark reminder of the advertisement's offensive and sexist nature.

Most of the participants in the survey demonstrated the ability to detect the underlying sexism in the advertisement and categorize it as gender biased. The survey participants' perspective aligns with the public's reception, with none finding it acceptable.

The majority push for changing the visual, deeming it inappropriate and offensive. Shifting from the visual to the linguistic content, a notable majority of participants lean towards a gender-neutral (functional) approach, exemplified by the suggested translation: "Your Path to Financial Security: Join the Benefits Club! - Social Security Corporation."

Meanwhile, a few favored a gender-biased (literal) translation strategy, as illustrated by the translation: "He Played his Cards Well. Social, Secured, and Enrolled, All in One Wife!" The question arises: Why do companies consistently portray women in advertisements that are not specifically targeting them? This advertisement was crafted by the SSC for Jordanian audiences, so it addressed both men and women. The rationale behind using a picture of a bride could be to manipulate the audience and catch attention by using a woman's image.

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[6] *Al Ra'i* Newspaper article (Arabic) published in September 2014, retrieved on 6/8/2023 from https://rb.gy/b2y7sh.

5.1.5. Advertisement (5) promoted by a recycling center

Figure 13. Poster at a recycling center in Amman

The fifth advertisement is a poster of a caricature to promote recycling, shown at a recycling center in the capital Amman near the 7th Circle.[7] However, their use of the caricature ended up objectifying women and comparing them to goods that could be reused and remanufactured into new products. Visuals play an important role in advertising and the association made between the visuals and the verbal text increases engagement by getting the attention of the viewer and improves persuasiveness. The poster generated a wave of adverse comments on social media and many people expressed their disappointment concerning the advertisement. Eman Zabalawi voiced her concerns on her X account about the quality of marketing efforts, questioning the performance of the key players involved.[8]

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[7] *Albawaba* magazine published an article "Offensive Caricature Raises Questions About Women's Rights in Jordan" on January 25, 2021.

[8] On January 24, 2021, Zabalawi posted, "When #marketing fails! So disappointed to see such a thing in our country! Copywriter? Designer? Printing house? Agency? No one stopped this nonsense! #Jordan #ابو_محجوب"

The translators' reception in recognizing the ideology of the advertisement closely aligns with the public's perspective, as the majority of participants deem the content inappropriate, sexist, innovative, unacceptable, unsuccessful, and lacking in humor. Despite this undeniable recognition of sexism, it is noteworthy that a significant majority opts for a gender-biased (literal) approach, translating it as "It's Umm Mohammad. I'm here to recycle her. Who knows, maybe she'll come back to me as Shakira." This translation reflects a more discriminatory perspective, possibly driven by the notion that the humorous tone veils the underlying offensiveness. This could potentially be the underlying reason for the inclination not to alter the visuals. Moreover, the suggested translation prominently features the name of the celebrated singer Shakira, a recognized feminist icon. This inclusion might serve as an additional justification for the prevalent tendency to choose this specific rendering, even when it entails a sexist and offensive translation. The literal translation, echoing the ideology of the Arabic text, similarly aligns with the concept of "replacement," as previously noted in the initial advertisements. Nevertheless, the underlying ideology in this specific advertisement is concealed beneath the guise of 'recycling,' thereby exacerbating the objectification of women.

5.2. Sexism in Jordanian social media advertising

Social media advertising refers to the use of promotional material using digital platforms such as emails, Facebook, X, or Instagram. There has been a rapid growth in the use of social media advertising in Jordan, where advertisements are added to digital mediums to reach a wider audience in a shorter time. The two social media advertisements discussed in the following section are taken from two social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) and categorized as food metaphors. This rhetorical device, commonly used in advertising of comparing women to edibles to be consumed, has been employed to appeal to consumers and usually targets men. Historically, women have been associated with food because they have been assigned the role of nourishers: the "human fetus depends upon the edibility of the placenta, and the newborn upon the edibility of breast milk" (Douglas, 2013, p. 250). Moreover, women have been portrayed as nourishers, reflecting the fact that historically, their roles have been confined to domestic spaces, notably the kitchen. Modern advertisements also continue to hypersexualize women with food

metaphors to arouse a sexual desire that will persuade the consumer to buy the product. This form of promotion of sexual consumption where the pleasure of food is tied to the pleasure of sexual satisfaction reinforces gender stereotypes and the objectification of women.

5.2.1. Advertisement (6) promoted by Mahmoudia Motors

(a)   (b)

Figure 14 (a) is a billboard inside City Mall, Amman
Figure 14 (b) is a social media advertisement on City Mall's Facebook page

The sixth billboard advertisement is part of promotional material by Mahmoudia Motors, the official dealer of Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles in Jordan. The billboard, as shown in Figure 14 (a), was displayed in 2019 in City Mall, a big shopping center in Amman, and depicts a woman wearing a skirt made of noodles and fish, and next to her there is a Jaguar car with the following printed in bold: "Savour and win." Our focus in this section is on Figure 14 (b), which is a post added to City Mall's Facebook page in September 2019 with the following translated caption "Shop at City Mall and get a chance to win a JD1,000 voucher, an annual membership at Gold's Gym, and a 2019 Jaguar F-PACE at the end of the campaign! *Terms and conditions apply."[9] The comments on the

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[9] City Mall's Facebook post retrieved on 28/6/2023 from https://web.facebook.com /100064972260688/_posts/10156530656727039/

Facebook page depict the advertisement as humorous with specific comments targeting the chances of winning the car. One tweet condemned the advertisement saying, "Have you seen worse than this in City Mall?"

The survey participants' response closely mirrors that of the general public as they deem the content unhumorous, sexist, unacceptable, and unsuccessful, with an exception for its innovative attribute. However, the rationale behind this innovative trait is unclear. Is it attributed to the inclusion of a woman's image, or perhaps the portrayal of a woman's skirt as noodles? The majority advocates for a visual overhaul, indicating a consensus for change. Moreover, the usage of food imagery and the women-food analogy, wherein women are metaphorically equated to consumable items to be enjoyed, is reflected in the visual representation, where the woman's skirt is depicted as noodles. This connection between the visual elements and the linguistic content in Arabic contributes to a derogatory portrayal. The use of terms like "enjoy" and "satisfy" further accentuates the objectification of women, diverting the focus from shopping at the mall to reducing the woman to a mere commodity for pleasure. For the translation part, it is positive that most participants favor the adoption of a gender-neutral (functional) translation approach such as "Satisfy your Cravings at City Mall: Monthly Prizes and a 2019 Jaguar F-Pace Grand Prize" and only a few opt for a gender-biased (literal) approach, aiming to faithfully replicate the ideology of the ST. However, without visual modifications, the current depiction in the advertisement would remain offensive.

5.2.2. Advertisement (7) promoted by Burgerizz restaurant

At first glance, 'Burgerizz', a restaurant in Amman, seems to promote mozzarella sticks, an item on their menu. However, the advertisement contains a double message that can be read as misogynist, which is translated idiomatically as "hey sexy," suggesting hitting on mozzarella sticks as men hit on women. This advertisement was added to Burgerizz's social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) on December 12, 2021, with the caption "لا للتحرش. اطلبها من اهلها" [the English version "no to harassment, ask her for marriage]. Why not pick a mozzarella stick?!" [10]

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[10] Burgerizz Instagram post retrieved on 2/7/2023 from https://www.instagram.com/p/CXYgZ6Ko9_7/

(a)   (b)

Figure 15. Advertisement by Burgerizz on Instagram

Unlike the previous advertisement, the comments on Burgerizz's social media platforms seem to find the advertisement to be a play on words that is creative and humorous.[11] Solidarity Is Global Institute (SIGI), a non-governmental and non-profit organization that was established in Amman in 1998, condemned the advertisement on its website and demanded its removal, however, the restaurant decided to keep the advertisement on its social media accounts. The survey participants viewed the advertisement as innovative, successful, acceptable, and humorous, despite acknowledging its gender bias. What adds to the complexity is their preference to abstain from altering the visuals, deeming them appropriate. This choice sheds light on their inclination towards gender-biased literal translation "Hey there, Mozzarella Bella." The survey participants' translations follow a literal approach. The reason could be that the Arabic word "mozzah" is used in colloquial Arabic to refer to a tall and beautiful woman, imbuing it with a sense of admiration rather than offense.

A similar restaurant in Amman called 'Hashburger' also promoted one of their sandwich items 'The Blonde' on Instagram in 2022 with the

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[11] Comments on their Instagram and Facebook pages applauded the pickup line, hailing it as "creative," "funny," and as having the "best design."

following English caption, illustrated in Figure 16, "Beautiful, Attractive, Delicious, But it's not a girl it's a sandwich. Come give it a try in HASH."
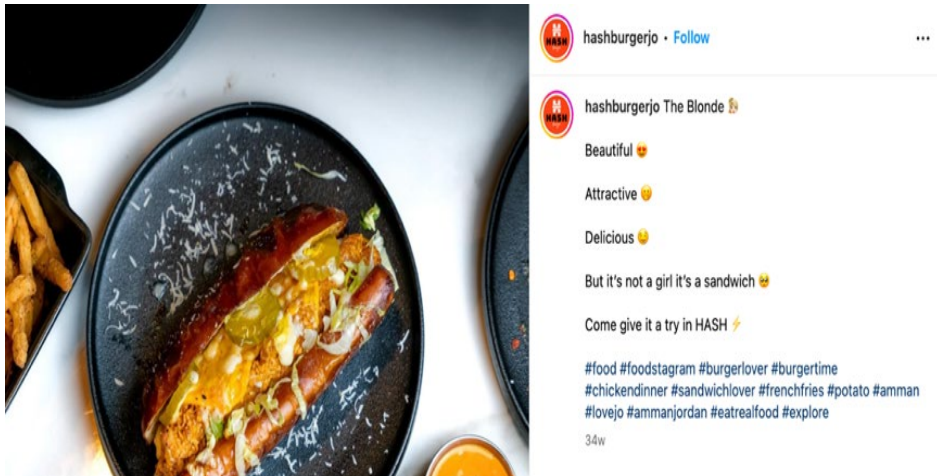

Figure 16. Instagram post by Hashburger

After one of the researchers of this paper commented on the post, calling it out as 'sexist', the post was deleted but the name of the sandwich has remained unchanged, and Hash Burger continues to promote it on its Instagram account using the sexist form. The woman-food analogy has been seen in other forms as well, particularly as Facebook posts, with analogies made between covered women (hijabi) vs. uncovered women (non-hijabi) and wrapped or sealed products such as the pictures in Figure 17 (a), (b), and (c) that have been collected from Facebook posts. The image in Figure 17 (a) compares a wrapped piece of candy to a covered woman, and the unwrapped piece attracting the flies and insects to an uncovered woman. In this comparison, being covered entails protection, chastity and being preferred by men, while uncovered women would be judged as tainted and filthy. The second image in Figure 17 (b) asks the question, 'Which piece of chocolate would you choose? The wrapped one or the unwrapped one?' The third image as illustrated in Figure 17 (c) also compares a covered woman to a wrapped frozen chicken that can be kept safe in the freezer, and an uncovered woman to one that is marinated and ready to be cooked and enjoyed by men.

(a)   (b)   (c)

Figure 17. Three Facebook posts illustrating examples
of the woman-food analogy

Many of these analogies are circulated on social media platforms. Whether comparing covered women to wrapped pieces of candy, wrapped frozen chicken, or even concealed letters, screen protectors, or mobile phone cases, these analogies do more harm in our societies. They are intended to encourage women to cover their heads with the Islamic head-covering, however, the analogies are inappropriate. They objectify women and perpetuate the notion of male superiority while degrading both covered and uncovered women. The choice of wearing a hijab should not be linked to marketing.

CONCLUSION

This study delves into the portrayal of women in Jordanian advertisements, elucidating how these depictions perpetuate and reinforce gender stereotypes. An examination of various gender-biased advertisements reveals a prevalent over-representation of women as vulnerable, accommodating, and subordinate figures, thereby reinforcing traditional gender roles. The persuasive role of advertisements necessitates catering to all consumers, including women, with ample alternatives available to promote products in today's market. The advertisements under study consistently depict women in traditional roles as housewives rather than professionals, contributing to a narrative that suppresses women. This research delves into more than just examining how women are depicted in Arabic advertisements. It further investigates the translator's role in either

upholding the source text's ideology or exercising their agency to manage the advertisements by employing a functional approach to maintain neutral unsexist language. These advertisements, tied to prominent companies deeply ingrained in the culture, bear the responsibility to promote a culture devoid of sexist gender norms. Addressing women's misrepresentation in the media requires the formulation of clear policies by feminist organizations, media entities, international corporations, translators, translation scholars, and critics. These policies should advocate for fairness, equality, and transparency while addressing the prevalent sexist practices in advertising.

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