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The Image of Saudi Women in Website Advertisements: A Semiological Study (*)

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Abstract

Saudi women have currently enjoyed many privileges, especially considering the Kingdom's Vision 2030, which stipulated the empowerment of Saudi women and the full opportunity for them to participate in all fields in a way that serves sustainable development within society. Given the importance of Saudi women and the presence of many goods and services that primarily target them, many famous websites within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia rely on the image of women to promote these goods and services. Hence, the problem of this study was determined in a main question, which is:

What is the role of language and image connotation in advertising discourse on websites in promoting goods associated with the image of Saudi women?

The semiotic study was adopted as one of the most important mechanisms for analyzing the advertising discourse of the image of women, relying on two basic semantic patterns, which are the linguistic pattern and the visual iconic pattern. This current study relied, in its theoretical framework, on Roland Barthes's approach to reading the image, as it is based on two important linguistic and semiotic elements, through which the image moves from the world of investigation to the world of imagination, which is open to several readings and interpretations, namely designation and inclusion, and the current study is one of the qualitative research that seeks an accurate and in-depth description of the image and uses the survey method and the tool of semiotic discourse analysis.

The study relied on the survey method, both descriptive and analytical. The researcher also used the method of systematic comparison and semiotic analysis to analyze the advertising image with all its contents. The study was conducted on a deliberate sample of the five most famous cartoon websites in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which are (Shein, Amazon, Extra, Noon, Namshi) with an advertising image for each of these advertising sites, which represent different activities of women's interests. The total sample amounted to five image advertisements. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which are:

(*) The Research was received on July 06, 2024, and accepted for publication on September 02, 2024.

- 1 -The advertisements sampled for the study did not reflect the true position occupied by women in society, nor did they focus on the professional, family, and social roles assigned to them. They paid all their attention to show women in the image of women and the body as if they were an integral part of the goods and products on which the advertisement focused.
- 2 -The study showed that all the advertisements under study depended on the image of women as the most important main tool that advertising discourse employed in building the visual image of the recipient, due to the communicative and semantic possibilities that this image provided by focusing on the iconic, linguistic, and implicit pattern and the meanings and connotations it carried, such as the situations that appeared. The woman in the advertisement, her body shape, and other connotations carried by the advertisements as a sample of the study.
- 3- The website advertisements under study used a set of rhetorical and visual methods to influence, persuade, and entertain by focusing on plastic signs, iconic signs, and linguistic signs.

Keywords: The Image of Saudi Women - Website Advertisements - A Symbiological Study.